Al-Islam.org
Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project
Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)

The Rights of God

حقوق الله

Right n. 1: The Greatest Right of God

حق الله الأكبر

فأَمَّا حَقُّ اللهِ الأَكْبَرُ فَإِنَّكَ تَعْبُدُهُ لا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئاً، فَإِذَا فَعَلْتَ ذَلِكَ بإخلاصٍ جَعَلَ لَكَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ أَنْ يَكفِيَكَ أَمْرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَيَحْفَظَ لَكَ مَا تُحِبُّ مِنْهَما.

Then the greatest right of God incumbent upon you is that you worship Him without associating anything with Him. When you do that with sincerity, He has made it binding upon Himself to give you sufficiency in the affairs of this world and the next and to keep for you whatever of them[1] that you like.

Aims of the Prophets

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

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولاً أَنِ اعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُواْ الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ هَدَى اللّهُ وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلاَلَةُ فَسِيرُواْ فِي الأَرْضِ فَانظُرُواْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

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

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

Man's Intrinsic Belief in Unity

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

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُولَدُ عَلَى الفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ وَيُهَوِّدَانِهِ وَيُمَجِّسَانِه

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 – The coordination between divine regulations and human nature

2 – The intrinsic inclination of man to submit to God, which is called Islam and the one who does so is called a Muslim.
Regarding this intrinsic human inclination to God, Imam Ali said:

فَبَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رُسُلَهُ وَوَاتَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْبِيَاءَهُ لِيَسْتَأْدُوهُمْ مِيثَاقَ فِطْرَتِهِ.

"Then God appointed His Apostles among them and sent the Prophets one after another so that they ask the people to honor their natural divine inclinations."[3]
In another sermon we read:

وَ كَلِمَةَ الإِخْلاصِ فَإِنَّها الْفِطْرَةُ.

"The statements of Unity and Purity of God are indeed in harmony with man's intrinsic nature."[4]

Turning to God at Times of Hardship

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

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

Now that we have recognized the intrinsic nature of man's inclination to God, and that the Prophets were appointed to invite man to honor this intrinsic Godliness, we will attend to the first and most important rights as described by Imam Sajjad – that is worshipping God and abandoning paganism. First, we

should see what is meant by worshipping and paganism, and what acts are considered worshipping or related to paganism.

The Meaning of Worshipping

Worshipping is defined as expressing one's insignificance and being humble. This is not proper unless it is done for God who is the possessor of all nobility, blessings, beauties and grandeur. There are two forms of worshipping. One form of worshipping is what we see when one prostrates to God and is absolutely subjected to His will. The second form of worshipping is the voluntary verbal form to which we are invited.[6] The difference between obedience and worshipping is that obedience is used for God and the people too, while worshipping is exclusively used for God. One can be obedient to his parents, spouse or God, but he can worship only God.

The Meaning of Servant in the Qur'an

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

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلَى الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالأُنثَى بِالأُنثَى

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

In another verse the Almighty God said:

ضَرَبَ اللّهُ مَثَلاً عَبْدًا مَّمْلُوكًا لاَّ يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ

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

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

إِن كُلُّ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا

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

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

ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا

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

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلاً مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصا

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

وَ اذْكُرْ عَبْدَنا أَيُّوبَ إِذْ نادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطانُ بِنُصْبٍ وَ عَذَابٍ

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

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

إِنَّنِي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

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

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

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

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

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

The other meaning of worshipping or servitude is self-humiliation accompanied by the recognition of

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

قُلْ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللّهِ مَا لاَ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلاَ نَفْعًا وَاللّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

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

In another verse He said:

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

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

In another verse we read:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُواْ رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

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

The Range of Worshipping in Islam

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

a - Gratitude is worship

Expressing one's gratitude is defined as worshipping in many of the verses of the Holy Qur'an. First let us define gratitude, and then review some of the relevant verses of the Holy Qur'an. Expressing one's gratitude has been defined to be the act that is either verbal or spiritual and mental. It implies respect for and humbleness before the One who has sent us His Blessings for which we must be grateful. Another

form of gratitude is the proper application of blessings that we are given. For example, one way of expressing our gratitude for the eyes is looking at the Signs of God and taking heed therefrom:

قُلِ انظُرُواْ مَاذَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا تُغْنِي الآيَاتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَن قَوْمٍ لاَّ يُؤْمِنُونَ

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

Imam Ali said:

(الأبرارُ) غَضُّوا أَبْصَارَهُمْ عَمّا حَرَّمَ اللهُ عَلَيهِمْ وَوَقَفُوا أَسْمَاعَهُمْ عَلى العِلْمِ النَّافِعِ لَهُم.

"The pious ones close their eyes to the forbidden sights, and dedicate their ears to hearing useful knowledge."[9]

Imam Ali said:

شُكْرُ كُلِّ نِعْمَةٍ الوَرَعُ عَمَّا حَرَّمَ اللهُ.

"Gratitude for each blessing is piety, abstinence and avoiding the divinely forbidden things."[10]

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

Usage of Gratitude in Leadership and Management

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

وَلا يَكُونَنَّ الْمُحْسِنُ وَالمُسِيءُ عِنْدَكَ بِمَنزِلَةٍ سَواءٍ، فَإِنَّ فِي ذٰلِكَ تَزْهِيداً لِاهْلِ الإحْسانِ فِي الإحْسانِ، وَتَدْرِيباً لِاهْلِ الإساءَةِ عَلَى الإساءَةِ.

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

Regarding this issue the Holy Qur'an says:

أَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

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

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

Moral Aspects of Gratitude

Gratitude consists of the following:

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

Imam Sadiq said the following regarding the recognition of blessings:

مَنْ أَنْعَمَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ نِعْمَةً فَعَرَفَهَا بِقَلْبِهِ فَقَدْ أَدَّى شُكْرَهَا.

"Whoever recognizes that something he received is a blessing from God has indeed expressed his gratitude."[12]

Imam Sadiq said:

وَأَدْنَى الشُّكْرِ رُؤْيَةُ النِّعْمَةِ مِنَ اللهِ.

"The lowest level of gratitude is to recognize that God is the source of the blessings that we receive."[13]

Imam Ali said:

الثَّنَاءُ بِأَكْثَرَ مِنَ الإِسْتِحْقَاقِ مَلَقٌ، وَالتَّقْصِيرُ عَنِ الإِسْتِحْقَاقِ عِيٌّ أَوْ حَسَدٌ

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

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

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ كُلُواْ مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُواْ لِلّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

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

بَلِ اللَّهَ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُن مِّنْ الشَّاكِرِينَ

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

b - Earning a Living as a Form of Worshipping

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

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيراً لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

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

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

العِبَادَةُ سَبْعُونَ جُزْءاً أَفْضَلُهَا طَلَبُ الحَلالِ.

"There are seventy parts in worshipping, the most excellent of which is seeking to earn a legitimate income."[16]

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

مَنْ طَلَبَ الدُّنْيَا اسْتِعْفَافاً عَنِ النَّاسِ وَسَعْياً عَلَى أَهْلِهِ وَتَعَطُّفاً عَلَى جَارِهِ لَقِيَ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَوْمَ القِيَامَةِ وَوَجْهُهُ مِثْلَ القَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ البَدْرِ.

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

Passing Away while Working

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

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

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

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

In another tradition Musa ibn Bukayr quoted on the authority of Imam Kazim : "Whoever seeks a

legitimate income for himself and his family is like a soldier who is engaging in a holy war." 21

Seek Your Sustenance from God by Hard Work

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

لا تَفْعَل ذَلِكَ! افْتَحْ بَابَكَ وَأَبْسِطْ رِزْقَكَ وَاسْتَرْزِقِ اللهَ رَبَّكَ.

*"Do not do that! Open your shop's doors and seek your sustenance from God—your Lord."*22

Hard-working Worshippers are Superior to Idle Ones

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

رِجَالٌ لَّا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاء الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ

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

قَالَ (كَانُوا أَصْحابَ تِجارَةٍ فَإِذَا حَضَرَتِ الصَّلاةُ تَرَكُوا التِّجَارَةَ وَانْطَلَقُوا إلى الصَّلاةِ وَهُمْ أَعْظَمُ أَجْراً مِمَّنْ لمَ يَتَّجِرْ).

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

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

مَنْ وَجَدَ مَاءً وَتُراباً ثُمَّ افْتَقَرَ فَأَبْعَدَهُ اللهُ.

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

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

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

c – Supplications for Worshipping

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

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

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

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

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُواْ لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُواْ بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

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

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

Praying Cures Spiritual Ailments

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

Calamities Cause Man to Turn to God

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

problems, he turns to God. The Almighty God said:

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَى بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُو دُعَاء عَرِيضٍ

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

Traditions on Supplications

There is a tradition from the Prophet Muhammad that says:

الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ العِبَادَةُ.

"Supplication is a form of worship."[26]

In another tradition, Imam Sadiq was asked:

مَا تَقُولُ في رَجُلَينِ دَخَلا المَسْجِدَ جَميعاً كَانَ أَحَدُهُما أكْثَرَ صَلاةً وَالآخَرُ دُعَاءً، أَيُّهُمَا أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: «كُلٌّ حَسَنٌ.»
قَالَ: «قَدْ عَلِمْتُ، وَلَكِنْ أَيُّهُمَا أَفْضَلُ؟» قَالَ: «أكْثَرُهُمَا دُعَاءً. أَمَا تَسْمَعُ قَوْلَ اللهِ تَعَالى: "أُدْعُوني أسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ" »
وَقَالَ: «هِي العِبادَةُ الكُبرَى. »

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

d - Looking can be Worshipping

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

النَّظَرُ إلى العَالِمِ عِبادَةٌ والنَّظَرُ إلى الإمَامِ المُقْسِطِ عِبَادَةٌ وَالنَّظَرُ إلى الوَالِدَينِ بِرَأفَةٍ وَرَحمَةٍ عِبادَةٌ وَالنَّظَرُ إلى الأخِ
يَوَدُّهُ في اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عِبادَةٌ.

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

*worshipping."*28

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

Worshipping Under all Circumstances

Our religion tells us that we must worship God under all circumstances. We should know that God is always present. Various states such as happiness or sadness, poverty or affluence, health or illness should not affect our worshipping of God. Some people only remember God when they are in trouble and need Him.

The Almighty God said:

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

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

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

Take Pleasure in Worshipping

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

> ألا إنَّ لِكُلِّ عِبادَةٍ شِرَّةً ثُمَّ تَصِيرُ إلى فَتْرَةٍ، فَمَن صَارَتْ شِرَّةُ عِبَادَتِهِ إلى سُنَّتِي فَقَدِ اهْتَدَى، وَمَنْ خَالَفَ سُنَّتِي فَقَدْ ضَلَّ وَكَانَ عَمَلُهُ فِي تَبَابٍ. أمَا إنِّي أُصَلِّي وَأَنامُ وَأصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ وَأَضْحَكُ وَأَبْكِي. فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَن مِنْهاجِي وَسُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي.

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

He also said:

وقال: كَفَى بِالمَوتِ مَوعِظَةٌ وَكَفى بِاليَقِينِ غِنىً وكَفَى بِالعِبادَةِ شُغلاً.

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

Imam Sadiq said:

لِكُلِّ أَحَدٌ شِرَّةٌ وَلِكُلِّ شِرَّةٌ فَتْرَةٌ، فَطُوبَى لِمَن كَانَتْ فَتْرَتُهُ إلى خَيْرٍ.

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

Hafs ibn Bakhtari quoted Imam Sadiq :

لا تُكْرِهُوا إلى أَنْفُسِكُمُ العِبادَةَ.

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

Being Moderate in Worshipping

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

يَا عَلِيُّ، إنَّ هَذا الدِّينَ مَتِينٌ فَأَوْغِلْ فِيهِ بِرِفْقٍ وَلا تُبَغِّضْ إلى نَفْسِكَ عِبَادَةَ رَبِّكَ فَإنَّ المُنْبَتَّ – يعني المُفْرِط – لا ظَهراً أَبْقَى وَلا أَرْضاً قَطَعَ. فَأَعْمَلْ عَمَلَ مَنْ يَرْجُو أَنْ يَمُوتَ هَرِماً وَاحْذَرْ حَذَرَ مَنْ يَتَخَوَّفُ أَنْ يَمُوتَ غَداً.

“O Ali! This religion is strong; therefore enter into it with gentleness. Do not make the worship of your Lord hateful for yourself, for the one who has fatigued his mount and is unable to continue his journey –

that is, the one who is excessive – has neither a riding animal nor can he travel.. Therefore act as one who hopes to die in old age, but be cautious with the caution of one who is afraid that he will die tomorrow."[33]

Imam Sadiq said:

مَرَّ بِي أَبِي وَأَنَا بِالطَّوَافِ وَأنا حَدَثٌ وَقَدِ اجْتَهَدْتُ في العِبَادَةِ فَرَآني وَأَنَا أَتَصَبَّبُ عَرَقاً فَقَالَ لي: يَا جَعْفَرُ يا بُنَيَّ! إنَّ اللهَ إذا أَحَبَّ عَبْداً أَدْخَلَهُ الجَنَّةَ وَرَضِيَ عَنْهُ بِاليَسِيرِ.

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

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

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

أَمَّن يَهْدِيكُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَن يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ أَإِلَهٌ مَّعَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

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

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

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِن بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا وَيَنشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُ وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

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

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

وَإِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْا رَبَّهُم مُّنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَذَاقَهُم مِّنْهُ رَحْمَةً إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُم بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

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

Moreover, in another verse we read:

فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلْكِ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

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

In addition, we read:

قُلِ اللّهُ يُنَجِّيكُم مِّنْهَا وَمِن كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ

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

Jesus is not the Lord: Trinity is Rejected

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

Blasphemy

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

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قالُوا إِنَّ اللهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قُلْ فَمَن يَمْلِكُ مِنَ اللهِ شَيأً إِنْ أَرادَ أَن يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَ أُمَّهُ
وَ مَن في الأَرضِ جَمِيْعاً و للهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَواتِ وَ الارضِ وَ ما بَيْنَهُما يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشآءُ وَ اللهُ علَى كُلِّ شَيءٍ قَديرٌ

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

[***The Holy Qur'an, al-Maida 5:17***]

In another verse we read:

لَّقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُواْ إِنَّ اللّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلاَثَةٍ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَـهٍ إِلاَّ إِلَـهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنتَهُواْ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

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

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

مَّا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلاَّ رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ كَانَا يَأْكُلاَنِ الطَّعَامَ انظُرْ كَيْفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ الآيَاتِ ثُمَّ انظُرْ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

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

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

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللّهِ عِبَادٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ فَادْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُواْ لَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

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

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

وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ لاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَكُمْ وَلا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ وَإِن تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى لاَ يَسْمَعُواْ وَتَرَاهُمْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لاَ يُبْصِرُونَ

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

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

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْاْ إِلَى كَلَمَةٍ سَوَاء بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلاَّ نَعْبُدَ إِلاَّ اللّهَ وَلاَ نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلاَ يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضاً أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَقُولُواْ اشْهَدُواْ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

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

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

Blasphemy in Worshipping

The same is stressed regarding the worshipping of God:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَى إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاء رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

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

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

سئل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله عن تفسير قول الله عز وجل: "فَمَنْ كانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَآءَ رَبِّهِ..". فَقالَ: «مَنْ صَلَّى مُرَاءاةَ النَّاسِ فَهُوَ مُشْرِكٌ. وَمَنْ زَكَّى مُرَاءاةَ النَّاسِ فَهُوَ مُشْرِكٌ. وَمَنْ صَامَ مُرَاءاةَ النَّاسِ فَهُوَ مُشْرِكٌ. وَمَنْ حَجَّ مُرَاءاةَ النَّاسِ فَهُوَ مُشْرِكٌ. وَمَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلاً بِمَا أَمَرَهُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مُرَاءاةَ النَّاسِ فَهُوَ مُشْرِكٌ. وَلا يَقْبَلُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَمَلَ مُراءٍ.»

"The Prophet was asked about the interpretation of the words of Allah, the Exalted: ***"Whoever expects to meet his Lord..."*** (***18:110***) *. The Prophet said: Whoever says his prayers in order to show off is ascribing partners to God)because he is establishing the people to be the ones for whom he prays(. Whoever pays the alms tax to show off is ascribing partners to God. The same holds true for whoever*

fasts or performs the Hajj or performs a divinely ordained deed just to show off. God does not accept the deeds of the hypocrites."[35]

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

الرَّجُلُ يَعْمَلُ شَيْئاً مِنَ الثَّوَابِ لا يَطْلُبُ بِهِ وَجْهَ اللهِ إنمَّا يَطْلُبُ تَزْكِيَةَ النَّاسِ يَشْتَهِي أنْ تُسْمَعَ بِهِ النّاسُ فَهَذا الَّذِي أَشْرَكَ بِعِبادَةِ رَبِّهِ. مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ أَسَرَّ خَيراً فَذَهَبَتِ الأَيَّامُ أَبَداً حَتىّ يُظْهِرَ اللهُ لهُ خَيراً وَمَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يُسِرُّ شَرّاً فَذَهَبَتِ الأَيَّامُ أَبَداً حَتىّ يُظْهِرَ اللهُ لهُ شَرّاً.

"If one does a good deed with the intention of showing off, and not to please God, and likes the people to admire him, then he is ascribing partners to God in his acts of worshipping. No one's secret good deeds will be hidden forever. God will make them known one day. No one's secret evil deeds will be hidden forever. God will make them known one day."[36]

What is it Like

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

حُنَفَاء لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاء فَتَخْطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوِي بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ

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

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

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

The Ummayad Clan and Blasphemy

Imam Sadiq said:

إنَّ بَني أُمَيَّةَ أطلَقُوا لِلنَّاسِ تَعْليمَ الإيمَانِ وَلَمَ يُطلِقُوا تَعْلِيمَ الشِّرْكِ لِكَيْ إذا حَمَلُوهُم عَلَيهِ لَمَ يَعْرِفُوه.

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

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

Invisible Blasphemy

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

إنَّ الشِّرْكَ أَخْفى مِنْ دَبِيبِ النَّمْلِ عَلى صَفَاةٍ سَوْدَاءَ في لَيْلَةٍ ظَلْماءَ

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

Imam Sadiq said:

كَانَ المُؤمِنُونَ يَسُبّونَ مَا يَعْبُدُ المُشْرِكونَ مِن دُونِ اللهِ فَكانَ المُشرِكُونَ يَسُبُّونَ مَا يَعْبُدُ المُؤمِنُونَ، فَنَهى اللهُ المُؤمِنِينَ عَن سَبِّ آلِهَتِهِم لِكَيْلا يَسُبَّ الكُفّارُ إلَهَ المُؤمِنِينَ فَيَكونَ المُؤمِنُونَ قَد أَشْرَكُوا بِاللهِ مِنْ حَيْثُ لا يَعْلَمُونَ. فقَالَ اللهُ تَعالى:

وَلاَ تَسُبُّواْ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللّهِ فَيَسُبُّواْ اللّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّهِم مَّرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ

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

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

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

1. The pleasures of this world and the life to come.
2. Manshoor-i-Javid, v.2, p.58.
3. Nahjul Balaghah, Subhi Salih, Sermon no.1
4. Nahjul Balaghah, Subhi Salih, Sermon no. 10
5. Al-Shafi, v.1, p.40.
6. Al-Mufradat, article on 'Abd'
7. Aqrab al-Mawarid.
8. This refers to the ascension of the Prophet of God via a creature called al-Buraq which carried the Prophet from the al-Haram Mosque in Makkah to al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The Arabic word 'al-buraq' comes from the word 'barq' which means light. We also know that angels are created from light and therefore this might imply that the ascension was a transportation based on the speed of light, as we see in the modern theory of relativity by Albert Einstein.
9. Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon the the Pious ones, 193.
10. Safinah al-Bihar, v.1, p.710
11. Nahjul Balaghah, Subhi Salih, Letter no.53.
12. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.96, tradition no.15
13. Safinah al-Bihar, v.1, p.710
14. Nahjul Balaghah, Fayz al-Islam, Hikmat no.339
15. Tafsir-i-Namuneh, v.24, p.128
16. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.12, p.11
17. Ibid. Tradition no.5.
18. Imam al-Sajjad
19. Imam al-Baqir
20. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.12, p.9, Ch.4, Tradition no.1
21. Ibid. p.11, Tradition no.4
22. Ibid. p.8, Tradition no.11
23. Ibid. Tradition no.14
24. Ibid. Tradition no. 13
25. Kar wa Huquq-i-Kargar, p.119
26. Majma'ul Bayan, v.8, p.528
27. Ibid. p.529
28. Majmu'ah Waram, v.2, p.175
29. Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.3, p.437
30. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.85
31. Ibid. p.86
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid. p.87
34. Ibid. p.86
35. Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.3, p.314.
36. Ibid. p.319
37. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.14, p.96.
38. Al-Shafi, v.1, p.146.

Right n. 2: The Right of Your Self

حق النفس

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ نَفْسِكَ عَلَيْكَ فَأَنْ تَسْتَوْفِيَهَا فِي طَاعَةِ اللهِ فَتُؤَدّي إِلَى لِسَانِكَ حَقَّهُ وَإِلَى سَمْعِك حَقَّهُ وَإِلَى بَصَرِكَ حَقّهُ وَإِلَى يَدِكَ حَقَّهَا وَإِلَى رِجْلِك حَقَّهَا وَإِلَى بَطْنِكَ حَقَّهُ وَإِلَى فَرْجِكَ حَقَّهُ وَتَسْتَعِينَ باللهِ عَلَى ذَلِك.

And the right of yourself incumbent upon you is that you employ it in obeying God; then you deliver to your tongue its right, to your hearing its right, to your sight its right, to your hand its right, to your leg its right, to your stomach its right, to your private part its right, and you seek help from God in all that.

Therefore, we must respect the rights of our body parts that God has given us in order to honor ourselves. We should seek God's help in doing so.

The Meaning of One's Self

Some researchers consider the self to imply our souls. We read:

أَخْرِجُواْ أَنفُسَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَكُنتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

"...Yield up your souls: this day shall ye receive your reward, – a penalty of shame, for that ye used to tell lies against God, and scornfully to reject of His signs!"" [The Holy Qur'an, al-An'am 6:93]

Others consider it to mean our inner thoughts, or our hearts as in:

وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

"...And know that God Knoweth what is in your hearts, and take heed of Him; and know that God is Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing." [The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:235]

We can also see this meaning in the following verse:

تَعْلَمُ ما في نَفْسي وَ لا أَعْلَمُ ما في نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلّامُ الْغُيُوبِ.

"…Thou knowest what is in my heart, though I know not what is in Thine, for Thou knowest in full all that is hidden." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Maida 5:116***]

In other places self is used in its natural context as in the following verse:

وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَإِلَى اللّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

"…But God cautions you (***to remember***) ***Himself; for the final goal is to God."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, Al-i-Imran 3:28***]

In other places, self is used to refer to our physical body, which needs food, water and air to survive. Once these are cut off from the self, it will perish. Sheikh Tabarsi has commented that there are three meanings for the self: the spirit, one's nature, and sometimes used to show that we are placing a stress on something. An example of the use of self to imply spirit is found in the following verse:

يُخَادِعُونَ اللّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلاَّ أَنفُسَهُم وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

"Fain would they deceive God and those who believe, but they only deceive themselves, and realize (***it***) ***not!"*** [***The Holy Qur'an al-Baqarah 2:9***]

Self as Viewed by the Qur'an

As Sheikh Tabarsi said the Arabic word '*nafs'* meaning 'self' is used to mean the spirit or the soul as we can read in the following verse:

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَى عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَى إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"It is God that takes the souls (***of men***) ***at death; and those that die not*** (***He takes***) ***during their sleep: those on whom He has passed the decree of death, He keeps back*** (***from returning to life***), ***but the rest He sends*** (***to their bodies***) ***for a term appointed verily in this are Signs for those who reflect."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Zumar 39:42***]

Another example where self is used to mean the soul is found in the following verse:

وَاتَّقُواْ يَوْماً لاَّ تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَن نَّفْسٍ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلاَ يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

"Then guard yourselves against a day when one soul shall not avail another nor shall

intercession be accepted for her, nor shall compensation be taken from her, nor shall anyone be helped (from outside).” [***The Holy Qur’an, al-Baqarah 2:48***]

In another place, it is used to imply our soul or heart as in the following verses:

وَاذْكُر رَّبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعاً وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالآصَالِ وَلاَ تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

“And do thou (O reader!) Bring thy Lord to remembrance in thy (very) soul, with humility and in reverence, without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings; and be not thou of those who are unheedful.” [***The Holy Qur’an, al-A’raf 7:205***]

قَالُواْ إِن يَسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخٌ لَّهُ مِن قَبْلُ فَأَسَرَّهَا يُوسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ قَالَ أَنتُمْ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَاللّهُ أَعْلَمْ بِمَا تَصِفُونَ

They said: "If he steals, there was a brother of his who did steal before (him)." But these things did Joseph keep locked in his heart, revealing not the secrets to them. He (simply) said (to himself): "Ye are the worse situated; and God knoweth best the truth of what ye assert!" [***The Holy Qur’an, Yusuf 12:77***]

رَّبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ إِن تَكُونُواْ صَالِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلأَوَّابِينَ غَفُورًا

“Your Lord knoweth best what is in your hearts: If ye do deeds of righteousness, verily He is Most Forgiving to those who turn to Him again and again (in true penitence).” [***The Holy Qur’an, Bani Israil 17:25***]

Self as Viewed by Scholars

Sadr ul-Muta’alliheen Shirazi quoted al-Sheikh ul-Raees Abu Ali Sina from Shafa: “There are three divisions for the self. At first we have the plant self, that is the first degree of perfection for an organic natural being having the ability to feed and grow. The second division is the animal self, that is the first perfection of an organic natural being which only has the ability to feel and move combined with will. The third is the human self which is the perfection of an organic natural being with the ability to think, understand and draw conclusions. Then the various properties and characteristics of these divisions are presented.”[1]

In the twenty-second chapter of Risalat Fosoos al-Hikam, Abu Nasr Farabi known as “the second teacher” said the following regarding the self: “Indeed the perfection of the self is in the recognition of God’s first right incumbent upon oneself. This will result in a state of self-confidence.”

Mr. Elahi Ghomsheyee made the following comments on this: “There are many aspects of the speaking self. It is called the lascivious self because it is highly inclined to animal lustful desires. As lust overtakes it, the self considers obscene acts to be beautiful ones. Thus, it is called the adorning self. As it uses trickery to do his animalistic acts, and is deceitful: it is called the deceitful self. As it returns to his own nature and blames himself whenever he commits a wicked act, it is called the reproachful self.

As whenever it is freed from his eagerness for animalistic lustful desires it benefits from mental pleasures it is called the confident self. Whenever it totally submits to the will and pleasure of his true lover being God and destroys his own will and pleasure, then it is called the pleased self. For a confident self, the only form of pleasure and perfection is derived from the recognition of God’s first right, that is to purify the soul from the filthiness of the body.”[2] We shall discuss these aspects of the self as viewed in the Qur’an.

Various Aspects of the Self in the Qur’an

1) The Lascivious Self

The lascivious self is that which orders us to fulfill its lustful desires. This is man’s biggest enemy. The greatest religious men have always sought God’s help to fight themselves. We read the following in the Holy Qur’an:

وَمَا أُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلاَّ مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّيَ إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely my Lord is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." [***The Holy Qur’an, Yusuf 12:53***]

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

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى

فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى

“And for such as had entertained the fear of standing before their Lord's (tribunal) and had restrained (their) soul from lower desires, their abode will be the Garden” [***The Holy Qur’an, al-Nazi`at 79:40-41***]

What is meant in this verse is that man should restrain himself and fight his carnal desires. The

Commander of the Faithful said:

النَّفْسُ مَجْبُولَةٌ بِسُوءِ الأَدَبِ وَالعَبْدُ مَأمُورٌ بِمُلازَمَةِ حُسْنِ الأدَبِ وَالنَّفْسُ تجْرِي بِطَبْعِها في مَيدانِ المُخَالَفَةِ وَالعَبْدُ يُجْهِدُها بِرَدِّها عَن سُوءِ المُطالَبَةِ، فَمَتى أطْلَقَ عِنَانهَا فَهوَ شَرِيكٌ في فَسادِها، وَمَنْ أعَانَ نَفْسَهُ في هَوى نَفْسِهِ فقَدْ أشْرَكَ نَفْسَهُ في قَتْلِ نَفْسِه.

"The soul is inclined towards evil deeds, and a servant has the responsibility of directing it towards good deeds. The soul tries to resist, but the servant tries to control the bad desires of the soul. Whenever a servant lets his soul free to do as it wishes, he is a partner in the corruption and the crimes committed by the soul. Whoever aids his own soul to fulfill his carnal desires has indeed taken part in killing himself."[3]

Imam Sadiq said:

أَقْصِرْ نَفسَكَ عَمّا يضُرُّها مِن قبلِ أنْ تُفارِقَكَ وَاسْعَ في فَكاكِها كَما تَسْعى في طَلَبِ مَعيشَتِكَ فإنَّ نَفْسَكَ رِهينٌ بِعَمَلِكَ.

"Hinder your soul from bringing you harm and prevent losses before you depart from it. Try to free it from its illegitimate desires as hard as you try to earn a living, since the soul is subject to your deeds."[4]

Fight the Instincts

Imam Ali said:

أَفْضَلُ الجِهادِ مجَاهَدَةُ المَرْءِ نَفْسَهُ.

"The most excellent holy war is one's fighting against his own selfish desires."[5]

The Noble Prophet said:

إنَّ الشَّديدَ لَيسَ مَنْ غَلَبَ النّاسَ، وَلكنَّ الشَّديدَ مَن غَلبَ عَلى نَفْسِه.

"A strong man is not one who overcomes the people. Rather a strong man is one who can overcome his self."[6]

Imam Ali said:

خالِف نَفْسَكَ تَسْتَقِمْ وَخالِطِ العُلَماءَ تَعْلَمْ.

"Fight yourself to avoid any deviations and live an upright life. Associate with the people who possess

knowledge so that you can learn and get freed from ignorance."[7]

He also said:

مَنْ قَوِيَ عَلى نَفْسِهِ تَناهَى في القُوَّةِ.

"Whoever overcomes himself has attained the highest ranks of power."[8]

Stronger Than One Who Lifts Rocks

Once when the Prophet was passing by a group of people, he saw a man who was lifting a heavy rock. The people were amazed at his strength and admired him. When they told the Prophet about him, and his might, the Prophet asked:

أَفَلا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِمَا هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنهُ؟ رَجُلٌ سَبَّهُ رَجُلٌ فَحَلِمَ عَنهُ فَغَلَبَ نَفْسَهُ وَغَلَبَ شَيطَانَهُ وَشَيْطانَ صَاحِبِهِ.

"Do you want me to tell you about someone who is stronger than him? Whoever is insulted by others but restrains himself, controls his anger and overcomes the devil within himself and the devil inside the one who insulted him, is stronger than this man who is lifting heavy rocks."[9]

2) The Reproachful Self

So far, we have discussed the verses and traditions regarding the lascivious self that continuously drives us towards doing evil deeds. The other aspect of our soul that constantly blames us for our bad deeds is called the reproachful self. The Holy Qur'an calls this aspect of our soul as witness in the following verse:

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ

"I do call to witness the Resurrection Day; and I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit: (Eschew Evil)." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Qiyamah 75: 1-2***]

The Imam has been quoted by Ali ibn Ibrahim to have said that what is meant by the "self-reproaching spirit" is man's self which disobeys and then blames itself.

When someone commits a sin, he is blamed by himself and the call of conscience tortures him. The psychologists have called this reproaching force within us as our moral conscience, and the Qur'an has

called it the reproachful self. This implies that this reproaching force is our human spirit that is a part of us, and has always existed in mankind.

Treating Loss of Hope

Once when Imam Sajjad was circumambulating the Holy House of God, he noticed that some people had gathered somewhere in the mosque. He asked what had happened, and he was told that a man called Muhammad ibn Shihab al-Zuhri had suffered from a psychological illness and seemed to have lost his mind. He did not speak at all, and his family had brought him to Mecca hoping that he might talk to the people he saw there.

When Imam Sajjad finished performing the circumambulation ceremonies, he went to see that man. The man recognized Imam Sajjad when he saw him. When Imam Sajjad asked what was wrong with him, he said: "I have become this way because I killed an innocent man when I was a governor. Such a murder of an innocent man has devastated a governor, and the blaming of his reproaching self has caused him psychological ailment; and the shame of committing a sin has shut up his mouth. Now he is like an insane man."

Imam Sajjad who felt that he had really lost hope in being forgiven by God said: "I am more worried about the sin of your losing hope in God's Mercy than that of killing an innocent man. Pay the full compensation for his blood money to his family members." The man said: "I tried, but they did not accept it." Then Imam Sajjad said: "Watch their house and see when they leave it to attend the prayers. Then drop the bags full of their blood money into their house."[10] By recognizing the influence of the reproachful self or the moral conscience, Imam Sajjad treated that man's psychological problem.

3) The Adorning Self

One of the aspects of the human soul is that it attempts to present wicked deeds as nice ones by somehow adorning them and making them look good to us, thereby encouraging us to perform them. There are two cases cited from the Holy Qur'an below.

Joseph and His Brothers

When Jacob's children took their brother Joseph away from their father and dropped him in a well and left him there, their self-adorned their deeds and fooled them:

وَجَآؤُوا عَلَى قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ وَاللّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ

"They stained his shirt with false blood. He said: "Nay, but your minds have made up a tale (that may pass) with you, (for me) patience is most fitting: Against that which ye assert, it is God (alone) Whose help can be sought"..." [***The Holy Qur'an, Yusuf 12:18***]

Their father recognized their evil deed. He warned them that it was their minds that had made up a tale. This implies that when selfish desires overwhelm and we let them overcome our mind and spirit, then even the most horrible crimes such as killing or abandoning one's brother might be so adorned in our mind that we consider them holy and obligatory deeds. This guides us towards the recognition of a psychological principle.

Once excessive tendencies towards a certain issue are coupled with moral wickedness, they will dull our senses and make things look different than they really are in our mind. Therefore, proper recognition of facts and realities, and correct judgment is impossible without self-purification. In this verse, we see how the adorning self-caused Joseph's brothers to throw him into a well abandoning him there, and fake a story to fool their father into believing their tale. On another occasion, they returned from Egypt and brought their father the news of their brother's act of stealing. But their father did not believe them and said:

قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ عَسَى اللّهُ أَن يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

Jacob said: "Nay, but ye have yourselves contrived a story (good enough) for you. So patience is most fitting (for me). Maybe God will bring them (back) all to me (in the end). For He is indeed full of knowledge and wisdom." [***The Holy Qur'an, Yusuf 12:83***]

Samiri

We read in the Holy Qur'an that when Moses was about to go to Mount Tur (Mount Tabor) to receive the Ten Commandments, he told the people that it would take him thirty days. However, his trip was extended to forty days by God. Samiri fooled the children of Israel during the last ten days and made them worship the calf. When Moses returned and encountered that situation, at first he blamed his brother Aaron. However, once he realized that Aaron was not at fault, and it was Samiri's fault, he blamed Samiri.

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكَ يَا سَامِرِيُّ

قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوا بِهِ فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ أَثَرِ الرَّسُولِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذَلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِي نَفْسِي

"(Moses) said: "What then is thy case, O' Samiri?" He replied: "I saw what they saw not: so I took a handful (of dust) from the footprint of the Apostle, and threw it (into the calf): thus did my soul suggest to me."" [***The Holy Qur'an, Ta-Ha 20:95-96***]

Samiri was a corrupt selfish man. He was able to use his ingenuity, courage and dexterity to deploy the

weakness of the children of Israel to make a great sedition. Thus, they ignored all of the previous teachings of Moses and started to worship a calf. In this situation, Samiri claimed that his evil deeds were rooted in his adorning soul by saying: "Thus did my soul suggest to me."

Hasan al-Basri: The Samiri of the Nation

There is a tradition in Ihtijaj by Tabarsi that states: "When the Commander of the Faithful conquered Basra, the people gathered around him. Among the people, Hasan al-Basri was writing down what Imam Ali had said. Imam Ali asked him what he was doing. He said: "I am recording your words to be saved for the future." Then the Commander of the Faithful said:

أَما إنَّ لِكُلِّ قَومٍ سامِرِيّاً وَهَذا سَامِرِيُّ هذِهِ الأُمَّةِ، إنَّهُ لا يَقُولُ: لا مِساسَ، وَلكِنَّهُ يَقُولُ: لا قِتالَ

"O people! Beware that there is a Samiri for each nation. Know that Hasan Bassri is the Samiri for this nation. The only difference is that Samiri did not let anyone approach him, but this man tells the people that we should not fight, even with the corrupt people."[11]

The Imam was referring to Hasan al-Basri's anti-war propaganda regarding the Battle of Jamal.

4) The Confident Self

Confidence is one of the highest ranks for the self. We read in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ

ارْجِعِي إِلَى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي

(***To the righteous soul will be said:***) ***"O*** (***thou***) ***soul, in*** (***complete***) ***rest and come back thou to thy Lord, - well pleased*** (***thyself***)***, and well-pleasing unto Him! Satisfaction! Enter thou, then, among My devotees! Yea, enter thou My Heaven!"*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Fajr 89:27-30***]

How wonderful is God's invitation to the righteous whose faith has helped them attain confidence, complete rest and satisfaction to return to him: an invitation to a return combined with the pleasure of both sides. Then he will be crowned with servitude; will be dressed in the garment of servitude; will attain the position of especial ones, and shall enter Heaven.

This refers to a form of peace and tranquility after turmoil and attaining the utmost degree of certitude, recognition, and witnessing of God. Kashefi interprets this as: “O’ the self that is confident by remembering Me when granted blessings, and by patience and perseverance during times of hardship. Thus now that you are pleased with the blessings that I have granted you, return to what I have promised.”

The Confident Self at the Time of Death

The peace with which the confident self–departs from this material world and joins eternity is the most beautiful demonstration of the nobility of the confident self. Sudayr Seyrafi quoted the following on the authority of Imam Sadiq regarding this state: “I asked Imam Sadiq : O’ grandson of the Prophet! May I be your ransom! Does a believer feel bad about his spirit being taken out of his body at the time of death? Imam Sadiq replied:

> لا وَاللهِ! إنَّهُ إذا جَاءَهُ مَلَكُ المَوتِ لِيَقْبِضَ رُوحَهُ جَزِعَ عِندَ ذلِكَ، فَيَقولُ ملَكُ المَوتِ: «لا تجْزَعْ! فَوالَّذي بَعَثَ محَمَّداً لأنَا أَبَرُّ بِكَ وَأَشْفَقُ عَليكَ مِن والِدٍ رَحِيمٍ لَو حَضَرَكَ، إفتَحْ عَينَيْكَ فانْظُر.» (قال) ويُمَثَّلُ له رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلّى اللهُ عَلَيه وآلهِ وَأَمِيرُ المُؤمِنينَ وفَاطِمَةُ والحَسَنُ والحُسَينُ والأئِمَّةُ مِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِمْ عليهِمُ السلامُ فَيُقالُ لهُ: «هذَا رَسُولُ اللهِ وأمِيرُ المُؤمِنِينَ وفَاطِمَةُ وَالحَسَنُ والحُسَينُ والأئِمَّةُ عليهِمُ السّلامُ رُفَقَاؤكَ.» (قال) فيَفْتَحُ عَينَيهِ فَيَنْظُرُ فَيُنادي رُوحَهُ مُنادٍ مِن قِبَلِ رَبِّ العِزَّةِ فَيَقولُ: «يَا أَيَّتُها النَّفْسُ المُطْمَئِنَّةُ إلى محَمَّدٍ وأَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ ارْجِعِي إلى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً بالولايَةِ مَرْضِيَّةً بالثَّوابِ فَادْخُلِي في عِبادِي؛ يَعني محَمَّداً وَأَهْلَ بَيتِهِ، وَادخُلِي جَنَّتي.» فَما مِن شَيءٍ أحَبُّ إليَه مِن اسْتِلالِ رُوحِهِ واللُّحُوقِ بِالمُنادي.

‘No. I swear by God! When the angel of death comes he becomes anxious and distressed. However, the angel tells him: “Do not be distressed! I swear by God who appointed the Prophet that I am even kinder to you than a merciful father – if he was present here. Open your eyes and look.” Then the Prophet , Imam Ali , the Blessed Fatima , al–Hasan, al–Husayn, and the Imams are represented to him.

It is said to him: This is the Prophet and Imam Ali, the Blessed Fatima, al–Hasan, al–Husayn and the Imams , your friends.’ He opens his eyes and sees, and the caller calls out to his soul from the Glorious Lord, saying: “O Confident self who has attained peace via Muhammad and his household. Return to your Lord pleased with the friendship of Imam Ali and the reward of your Lord. Join My servants Muhammad and his household, and enter My Heaven.” Nothing will be more desirable for him than the drawing out of his soul and joining the Caller!’[12]

Fighting Selfish Desires to Attain Perfection

One must first recognize and abandon all his selfish desires before he can attain human perfection. This has been quoted by Majashe on the authority of the Noble Prophet of Islam who was the first perfect man ever. It is recorded in Ghawali al–La`ali that a man called Majashe went to see the Prophet , asked him the following questions, and got the following replies:

Question: “O’ Prophet of God! What is the way of recognition of God?”

Answer: “Recognition of the self.”

Question: “What is the way to agree with God?”

Answer: “To disagree with the self.”

Question: “What is the way to please God?”

Answer: “To raise the wrath of the self.”

Question: “What is the way to approach God?”

Answer: “To abandon the desires of the self.”

Question: “What is the way to obey God?”

Answer: “To disobey the wants of the self.”

Question: “What is the way to remember God?”

Answer: “To fight the self.”

Question: “What is the way to get closer to God?”

Answer: “To stay away from the self.”

Question: “What is the way to get accustomed to God?”

Answer: “To fear the self”

Question: “What is the way to attain all this?”

Answer: “Seeking God’s help against one’s self.”[13]

If one practices what the Prophet has instructed us to do in this tradition, then he can attain true mysticism. Man can only attain inner peace and illumination if he abandons wicked traits and adorns himself with perfection. He should first abandon all his wickedness, and then he should adorn himself with perfections. Finally, man should polish the beauties of his self, refine them, and make them transparent.

The Jurisprudents’ View on the Rights of the Self

Finally, we will discuss the jurisprudents’ view on the rights of the self. One of the highly valuable aspects of the human self is his life. Nothing can be equated with it. The Holy Qur’an says the following

regarding the value of man's life:

مِنْ أجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنا عَلى بَنِي إسْرَائيلَ أنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفساً بِغَيرِ نَفْسٍ أوْ فَسادٍ في الأرْضِ فَكَأنَّما قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعاً وَ مَن أحْياها فَكَأنَّما أحْيا النَّاسَ جَمِيعاً

"On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone slew a person – unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land – it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people...." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Ma'ida 5:32***]

The Holy Qur'an determines a very bad punishment for killing a believer. This is considered to be the worst crime:

وَمَن يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُّتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَآؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا

"If a man kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein (***for ever***)***: And the wrath and the curse of God are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nisaa 4:93***]

The Holy Qur'an also says:

وَلاَ تَقْتُلُواْ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللّهُ إِلاَّ بِالحَقِّ وَمَن قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لِوَلِيِّهِ سُلْطَانًا فَلاَ يُسْرِف فِّي الْقَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا

"Nor take life – which God has made sacred – except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, we have given his heir authority (***to demand qisas***[14] ***or to forgive***)***: but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped*** (***by the Law***)***."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, Bani Israil 17:33***]

The law of equality that is meant for punishing those who kill others is presented by the Qur'an:

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَاْ أُولِيْ الأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"In the Law of Equality there is (***saving of***) ***life to you, O ye men of understanding; that ye may restrain yourselves."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:179***]

We can classify killing into three groups: intentional, pseudo-intentional, and unintentional. The remaining kin of the person killed have the option to kill or accept the financial compensation[15] in case

of intentional killing, or forgive altogether.

In a pseudo-intentional killing in which no weapon like a gun, or a knife is used, and there has been no intention to kill, but to deliver a blow to the other, the remaining kin of the murdered person can only receive the financial compensation. In the case of unintentional killing, there is only the possibility of financial compensation.[16]

The Qur'an views the Law of Equality as a means of saving lives in the society, while still leaving room for financial compensation or forgiving. According to the jurisprudents' views, the financial compensation or the blood-money for the life of a free person is either one of the following:

1 One hundred camels that have attained six years of age

2 Two hundred cows

3 One thousand sheep

4 Two hundred silk dresses

5 One thousand 'Mithqal-e-Shar'i'[17] of gold

6 Ten thousand Dirhams.[18]

We should also note that the compensation for the blood money for women is half of that for men.

1. Afsar Arbaeh, v.8, p.53
2. Hikmat-e-Ilahi Aam wa Khaas, p.31-32.
3. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v.2, p.270.
4. Ibid. p.310
5. Sharh-e-Ghurar wa Durar, Aqa Jamal Khansari, v.2, p.462.
6. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v.2, pg.270.
7. Sharh-i-Ghurar wa Durar, v.3, p.462
8. Ibid. v.5, p.254.
9. Majmu'ah Waram, v.2, p.10.
10. Majmu'ah Waram, v.2, p.4.
11. Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.3, p.392.
12. Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.5, p.577.
13. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.2, p.270.
14. The option to kill or to accept financial compensation in case of intentional killing.
15. 'Qisas' in Arabic.
16. Mukhtasar al-Manafi', Kitab al-Diyat, p.294.
17. Mithqal Shar'i is a unit of weight equal to 3.456 grams.
18. Ibid.

Right n. 3: The Right of the Tongue

حق اللسان

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ اللّسَان فَإِكْرَامُهُ عَنِ الْخَنَى وتَعْوِيدُهُ عَلَى الْخَيْرِ وَحَمْلُهُ عَلَى الأَدَب وَإِجْمَامُهُ إلاّ لِمَوْضِعِ الْحَاجَةِ وَالْمَنْفَعَةِ لِلدِّينِ وَالدُّنْيَا وَإِعْفَاؤُهُ عَنِ الْفُضُول اُلشَّنِعَةِ الْقَلِيلَةِ الْفَائِدَةِ الَّتِي لا يُؤْمَنُ ضَرَرُهَا مَعَ قِلَّةِ عَائِدَتِهَا. وَيُعَدُّ شَاهِدَ الْعَقْلِ وَالدَّلِيلَ عَلَيْه وَتَزَيُّنُ الْعَاقِلَ بعَقْلِهِ حُسْنُ سِيرَتِهِ فِي لِسَانِهِ. وَلا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ.

And the right of the tongue is that you consider it too noble for obscenity, accustom it to good, direct it to politeness,1 do not use it except in situations of needs and benefits of the religion and this world, and refrain from any meddling in which there is little to be gained; and there is no security from its harm that accompanies its small benefits. It2 is the witness to and the evidence of the existence of the intellect. The demonstration of an intelligent person's intellect is through his reputation of good speech.3 And there is no power but in God the High, the Great.

In the previous chapter, Imam Sajjad instructed us to use all our faculties, i.e. ourselves to obey God, and respect the rights of our body parts which are the means by which we act. In this chapter we will start the discussion of the rights of our body parts by first discussing the rights of the tongue.

Our Tongue is Our Greatest Blessing

Undoubtedly, the tongue and the ability to speak are the greatest blessings that God has bestowed on man in His Creation. This has been explicitly stated in the following verse:

خَلَقَ الْإِنسَانَ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ

***"He has created man: He has taught him speech* (*and intelligence*).*"* [*The Holy Qur'an, al-Rahman 55:3-4*]**

Speech has been described as meaning "uncovering" an object in Arabic. Our tongue expresses our inner thoughts and feelings. Our speech uncovers our inner thoughts and expresses what we think. If it was not for our ability to speak, we would be quiet just like animals and there would be no more discussion, explaining and understanding among men.

Different Languages as a Sign of God

The Almighty God stated in the Holy Qur'an:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالِمِينَ

"And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors: verily in that are Signs for those who know." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Rum 30:22***]

This clearly expresses that the existence of various colors, races, and languages among mankind is one of the signs of God.

Language as a Means of Getting to Know Others

There are various ways to get to know each person. One of these ways is through speech. Each person introduces his own personality when he talks. Our speaking clearly expresses our inner purity or wickedness. One can tell whether you are a good man or a corrupt one. Imam Baqir said:

المَرْءُ مخْبُوءٌ تَحْتَ لِسَانِهِ.

"A man is hidden under his tongue."[4]

The tongue will unveil the curtain and display our real character.

The Nature of Verbal Sins

Imam Ali said the following about the tongue:

جِرْمُهُ صَغيرٌ وَجُرمُهُ ثَقِيلٌ

"Its mass is small, but its sin is great."

This wise saying clearly states how our little tongue can be used to create great sins. Each of the body parts that God has given us has a specific characteristic and purpose. Some have certain limitations, too. For instance, the eye can only see certain colors. The ears can only hear sounds. The hands can only feel through touching. However, the tongue has a wide range of application extending from wickedness and corruption to goodness and prosperity. If used in a good sense it can lead to human prosperity and if used in an evil way, it can be the biggest means by which Satan can misguide us.

The Effect of the Tongue on Social Improvement or Corruption

There are various ways to achieve social improvement or corruption. Speaking is one of the most effective means in this respect. A fluent speaker can direct the human society towards noble characteristics and human values. Likewise, he can lead the society towards moral and spiritual decay and corruption. He can easily agitate the still nation and excite them to move and change their lives, or direct the aroused feelings of a society towards calmness and pacification.

For example, when Imam Ali was martyred the news was spread throughout the Muslim community. When the news of his martyrdom in the prayer niche reached Sham, all the people there were surprised. They were so influenced by the speeches delivered against Imam Ali by the men hired by Mu`awiyah that they asked themselves, “Did Ali pray?” The extent of the influence of the tongue is so much that as you can see the most pious man who lived his whole lifetime to establish the prayer, is presented as being one who does not pray in the minds of the people of Sham.

Busr ibn Arta’ah and the Hamdan Tribe

When Mu`awiyah sent Busr ibn Arta`ah to the Hamdan Tribe to rule, Busr ibn Arta`ah exercised so much oppression and committed so many crimes that no one dared to object. At this time, a brave lady called Sawdah went to Sham (Syria) to defend the sacred religion and the people. When Mu`awiyah was informed of her arrival he was surprised. He said that he had been trying to arrest her with no result. Now she had gone there on her own.

He admitted her to the court. When she entered, she bitterly greeted Mu`awiyah. Mu`awiyah said: “See! You had to come and greet me.” She replied: “Do not be proud of your rule. There is a term for everything. It will soon end. Do not be so attached to your position since it will not last.”

Mu`awiyah said: “O’ Sawdah! Do you remember the days of war when you sang heroic poetry among the soldiers of Ali? What was your goal then? Was it not my destruction? Sing them now.” Sawdah said: “Your oppression has made me forget everything. Now I have come to complain against the oppression of Busr ibn Arta`ah. He has oppressed us. He has confiscated the people’s property, and has murdered the men.” Mu`awiyah said: “Now I will send you to him to treat you as he pleases.”

Then Sawdah said: “May God bless the pure body that is buried, with whom justice was buried too.” Mu`awiyah said: “Whom are you referring to?” She replied: “I am referring to my Master, Imam Ali . You should know that I had a similar complaint that I expressed to Imam Ali before. He was alone, and wanted to start his prayer. When he noticed me, he asked the reason.

When I told him that I had come to complain against his governor, he touched his beard and his eyes overflowed with tears and he said: “O’ God! Be a witness that I did not send my governor to oppress your servants.” He then wrote the order to fire the governor and handed it to me. Now you threaten me

instead of considering my complaint. This is the difference between Imam Ali and you." Mu`awiyah got upset and wrote a letter to Busr ibn Arta`ah to stop his crimes and acts of oppression.

Thus, we can see that the tongue can be used as an effective tool. It is so effective that it can even be used to change the views of a cruel man such as Mu`awiyah. Then Mu`awiyah said: "It was Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib who made you too proud by saying: If I were the gatekeeper of Heaven I will tell the Bani Hamdan tribe to safely enter Heaven."[5]

The Effect of Eloquent Speech

Now we shall cite another example. There were many letters exchanged between Imam Ali and Mu`awiyah. Among them, there is one that Imam Ali wrote and handed to an eloquent man called al-Tirimma to deliver to Mu`awiyah. Al-Tirimma traveled to Sham. After meeting `Amr ibn al-`Aas and Yazeed, he visited Mu`awiyah. He was so eloquent in speech that he was able to influence them all. Mu`awiyah decided to use al-Tirimma's eloquence for his own purposes.

Thus he said: "O' Arab! Will you accept what I donate to you?" He replied: "Why not? Why should I not accept your gifts while I wish to take away your life?" Mu`awiyah ordered that he be paid ten thousand Dirhams and said: "If it is not enough please say so. I will order more to be paid to you." Al-Tirimma said: "Order them to give me more money. You are not paying out of your own father's pocket anyway. Order them to give me another ten thousand Dirhams." Then Mu`awiyah ordered that he be paid another ten thousand Dirhams. Then al-Tirimma said: "Order them to give another ten thousand Dirhams to make it thirty thousand Dirhams since there is only one God."

After a while when al-Tirimma did not receive the additional ten thousand Dirhams he had asked for, he said: "Are you making a fool out of me? It seems like words were just a breeze from over a hill." Then Mu`awiyah ordered that he be paid the money. `Amr ibn al-`Aas asked al-Tirimma: "How did you find the benevolence of the Commander of the Faithful."[6]

Al-Tirimma said: "This is the property of the Muslims. One of God's servants has obtained it from God's treasures. What is his role in this?" Then Mu`awiyah said: "This made the world seem dark to me." Then he called in his secretary and dictated a boastful letter in reply to Imam Ali's letter. Al-Tirimma said: "O' Mu`awiyah! Are you threatening a duck with water? I swear by God that Imam Ali has a big rooster that can store all your soldiers in its gullet." Mu`awiyah said: "He is right. That is Malik al-Ashtar."

When al-Tirimma left, Mu`awiyah said: "If I give you all that I possess, you will not even give me one tenth the services that this Bedouin gives Ali." `Amr ibn al-`Aas said: "If you had the same position that Ali has relative to the Prophet, we would have been much more loyal to you." Mu`awiyah said: "May God break your teeth. By God your words were harsher to me than his words."[7]

Imam Sajjad advised us to get used to using our tongue in a good way. When used in this way, it becomes so strong that it can even defeat an enemy like Mu`awiyah, and make life bitter for him.

The Philosophy behind Silence

There is a certain stress placed on silence in some traditions. This stress is such that we can prefer silence to speaking. What is the philosophy behind this silence? When is it recommended?

As said, the tongue reflects what is in the heart. It expresses one's inner feelings and thoughts. It portrays one's character and personality. There are also possible harms due to its use. Imam Ali said:

اللِّسَانُ سَبُعٌ إنْ خُلِّيَ عَقَرَ.

"The tongue is a beast that will cause an injury when unleashed." 8

He also said:

إعجَبُوا لهَذا الإنسَانِ يَنْظُرُ بِشَحْمٍ وَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِلحْمٍ وَيَسْمَعُ بِعَظْمٍ وَيَتَنَفَّسُ مِن خَرْمٍ

*"Be amazed at man who sees using a piece of fat, talks using a piece of meat, hears using a piece of bone, and breathes through a hole."*9

The Tongue: Most Instrumental in Entering Heaven or Hell

Sahl al-Sa'edi quoted on the authority of the Noble Prophet that:

مَنْ يَتَكَفَّلُ لي مَا بَينَ لحِيَيْهِ ورِجْلَيْهِ أَتَكَفَّلُ له بِالجَنَّةِ

"Whoever guarantees to safeguard what is between his/her lips and his/her legs, 10 *then I shall guarantee Heaven for him/her."*11

وَقَدْ سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ عَنْ أكْثَرِ ما يُدْخِلُ النَّاسَ الجَنَّةَ، فَقَالَ: «بِتَقْوى اللهِ وَحُسْنِ الخُلُق.» وَسُئِلَ عنْ أكْثَرِ مَا يُدْخِلُ النَّاسَ النَّارَ، قالَ: «الأَجْوَفانِ: الفَمُ وَالفَرْجُ.»

*The Noble Prophet was asked about the means most influential in taking people to Heaven. He replied: "Piety and good temper." He was asked about the means most influential in taking people to Hell. He replied: "The two hollows: the mouth and the vulva."*12

Ma`adh ibn Jabal asked the Noble Prophet : “Shall we be held responsible for what we say?” The Prophet said:

ثَكَلَتْكَ أُمُّكَ يا بْنَ جَبَلٍ! وَهَل يَكُبُّ النَّاسَ (في جَهَنَّمَ) عَلى مَناخِرِهِم إلاّ حَصَائِدُ أَلْسِنَتِهِمْ؟

“O Ibn Jabal! May your mother be bereft of you! Does anything else throw people down on their faces (*in Hell*) *other than the harvest of their tongues?”*13

In all these traditions from the Prophet of God , we see that avoiding verbal abuse and preventing our tongue from engaging in sin is the best source of man’s prosperity and an important factor in taking him to Heaven. Anas ibn Malik quoted on the authority of God’s Prophet :

لا يَسْتَقِيمُ إيمَانُ عَبْدٍ حَتىّ يَستَقيمَ قَلبُهُ، وَلا يَسْتَقيمُ قَلبُهُ حَتىّ يَسْتَقيمَ لِسَانُهُ، وَلا يَدخُلُ الجَنَّةَ رَجُلٌ لا يَأْمَنُ جَارُهُ بَوَائِقَهُ.

*“A servant’s faith is balanced only when his heart is directed to God and his heart is directed to God only when his tongue is on the straight path. A man whose neighbor is not safe from his harmful conduct will not enter Heaven.”*14

What we see in this tradition is that the balance of faith depends on the balance of the heart, and that the balance of the heart depends on the balance of the tongue. Therefore, if you do not watch your tongue, you cannot have peace anywhere within you.

Silence: The Easiest Form of Worship

Safwan ibn Saleem quoted on the authority of God’s Prophet :

ألا أُخْبِرُكُم بِأَيْسَرِ العِبادَةِ وَأَهْوَنِهَا عَلى البَدَنِ؟ الصَّمْتُ وَحُسْنُ الخُلُقِ.

*“Do you want me to inform you about the easiest form of worship and the lightest on the body? It is silence and having a good temper.”*15

Al-Barra` ibn `Azib narrated that an Arab came to the Prophet and asked him to teach him something to enable him to go to Heaven. The Prophet said:

أَطْعِمِ الجَائِعَ وَاسْقِ الظَّمْآنَ وأْمُرْ بِالمَعْروفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ المُنْكَرِ، فَإِنْ لَمَ تُطِقْ فَكُفَّ لِسَانَكَ إلاّ مِنْ خَيرٍ.

“Feed the hungry. Quench the thirst of the thirsty. Advise the people to do good deeds and admonish

them against evil deeds. If you are not able (to do that), then just guard your tongue from whatever is not good."[16]

The Noble Prophet of God said:

> لِسَانُ المُؤمِنِ وَرَاءَ قَلْبِهِ، فَإذا أرَادَ أنْ يَتَكَلَّمَ تَدَبَّرَهُ بِقَلْبِهِ ثُمَّ أمْضَاهُ بِلِسانِهِ، وإنَّ لِسَانَ المُنافِقِ أَمامَ قَلْبِهِ فَإذا هَمَّ بِشَيءٍ أَمْضَاهُ بِلِسَانِهِ وَلَمَ يَتَدَبَّرْهُ بِقَلْبِهِ.

"A believer's tongue is located behind his heart. Whenever he wants to talk, he first presents his words to his heart. If the heart approves of what he wants to say it issues an order to the tongue to utter the words. However, if the heart does not issue a permit, then the lips stay sealed. But a hypocrite's tongue is in front of his heart. Whenever he intends to say something, he utters it without the approval of his heart."[17]

It has also been narrated that some people were talking together in Mu`awiyah's palace. Al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays was quietly sitting in a corner. They asked him: "O' Aba Bahr! Why don't you talk?" He said: "If I lie, I shall fear God. Moreover, if I tell the truth, I shall fear you. Thus it is best that I do not talk at all."[18] The importance of silence became clear from the traditions cited. We learned that man could remain secure from the dangerous potential of committing a sin in talking by remaining silent.

An intelligent person first trusts his words to his intellect and conscience to judge before uttering them. If the intellect and conscience do not give him permission to express those words, then he remains silent. The traditions that encourage us to remain silent are meant to free us from the potential bad consequences of bad talk. It is obvious that talking is an important factor in the development of man and the society as stated before.

What Corrupts the Tongue

Researchers in ethics say that there is a cause of corruption for everything. The tongue is not an exception to this. Many things will corrupt it. Nearly twenty causes have been cited for the corruption of the tongue.

1) Talking in Vain

Talking in vain will only waste our time and is one of the causes of corruption of the tongue. The Noble Prophet said:

> مِنْ حُسْنِ إسْلامِ المَرْءِ تَركُهُ ما لا يُعْنِيهِ.

"One of the signs of the excellence of a Muslim's submission to God is his leaving what does not

concern him."[19]

2) Over talking

The Noble Prophet said:

طُوبى لمِنَ أَمْسَكَ الفَضْلَ مِن لِسانِهِ وَأطلَقَ الفَضْلَ مِن مَالِه

"Blessed be the one who restrains his tongue from excessive speech and gives his excess wealth in charity to the needy."[20]

3) Bad Talk

Examples of bad talk are attending the get-together sessions of some women, meetings of those who drink, and talking with the corrupt, the rich, the rulers and the kings. The Noble Prophet said:

إنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالكَلِمَةِ يَضْحَكُ بها جُلَساؤهُ يَهْوي بهَا أبْعَدَ مِن الثُّرَيّا.

"One who says something to make the people laugh has deviated from his position as a human being, and has fallen down like one who falls down from a star, even farther than that!"[21]

The Prophet also said:

أعْظَمُ النّاسِ خَطايا يَومَ القِيامَةِ أكْثَرُهُم خَوضاً بِالباطِلِ

"The greatest in sins on Resurrection Day are those who have delved the most into wrong."

Then he referred to the Qur'an where those who have gone to Hell say:

وَكُنّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ الْخائِضِينَ

"We delved into wrong and were playing around" (***74:45***) [22]

Salman has been quoted as saying:

أكْثَرُ النّاسِ ذُنوباً يَومَ القِيامَةِ أكْثَرُهُم كَلاماً في مَعْصِيَةِ اللهِ

"The most sinful people on the Resurrection Day are those who have spoken the most in disobedience

to God."[23]

4) Arguing

Arguing and teasing are factors that will corrupt the tongue. Islam has ordered us not to argue since it is blameworthy. The Noble Prophet said:

لا تُمارِ أخاكَ وَلا تُمازِحْهُ وَلا تَعِدْهُ مَوعِداً فَتُخْلِفْهُ.

"Do not argue with, tease, or break the promise you have made to your brethren."[24]

The Prophet also said:

لا يَسْتَكْمِلُ عَبْدٌ حَقِيقَةَ الإيمَانِ حَتىّ يَدَعَ المِراءَ والجِدالَ وإنْ كانَ حَقّاً.

"A servant cannot attain full faith unless he quits verbal arguments even if he is right."[25]

He also said:

مَن تَرَكَ المِراءَ وهُوَ مُحِقٌّ بُنِيَ لهُ بَيتٌ في أعْلى الجَنَّةِ، ومَنْ تَرَكَ المِراءَ وهُو مُبْطِلٌ بُنِيَ له بَيتٌ في رَبَضِ الجَنَّةِ.

"Whoever knows he is right but quits arguing shall be given a residence in a high heavenly place. Whoever knows that he is wrong and quits arguing shall be given a residence in a low heavenly place."[26]

5) Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse or expression of animosity to get one's right or property is another factor that corrupts the tongue. Abu Hurayrah quoted on the authority of God's Prophet :

مَن جادَلَ في خُصومَةٍ بِغَيرِ عِلْمٍ لمَ يَزَلْ في سَخَطِ اللهِ حَتىّ يَنْزِعَ.

"Whoever argues in a dispute without true knowledge shall remain subject to God's wrath until he desists."[27]

The Noble Prophet also said:

إنَّ في الجَنَّةِ لَغُرَفاً يُرى ظاهِرُها مِن باطِنِها وبَاطِنُها مِن ظاهِرِها أعَدَّها اللهُ تَعالى لِمَنْ أَطْعَمَ الطَّعَامَ وَأطابَ الكَلامَ.

"There are rooms in Heaven, the exterior of which can be seen from their interior and the interior of which is visible from their exterior. God has prepared them for those who feed the hungry ones, and are pleasant in speech."[28]

Thus, the Prophet instructs all Muslims to be polite in speech, and not to use bad or obscene language. Muslims are instructed to attract other people's love and friendship by using good words.

6) Excessive Eloquence

The Blessed Fatima quoted on the authority of her noble father :

شِرارُ أُمَّتي الَّذِينَ غَذَوا بالنَّعِيمِ يَأكُلونَ أَلْوَانَ الطَّعامِ وَيَلْبَسونَ أَلْوانَ الثِّيابِ وَيَتَشَدَّقونَ في الكَلامِ

"The most wicked people in my nation are those who are feeding off divine blessings by eating various dishes and wearing colorful clothing, but speak using an excessively eloquent language."[29]

We can realize that we should not overburden ourselves by using excessively eloquent language when talking with others. Rather we should try to use nice words and expressions to express important topics.

7) Swearing

Swearing is considered bad in Islam. It is one of the factors that corrupt the tongue. The Noble Prophet said:

إيّاكُم وَالفُحشَ فإنَّ اللهَ لا يُحِبُّ الفُحشَ ولا التَّفَحُّشَ

"Beware of swearing since God does not like swearing and those who are used to swearing."[30]

In another tradition we read that the Noble Prophet said:

الجَنَّةُ حَرامٌ عَلى كُلِّ فاحِشٍ أنْ يَدْخُلَها.

"Heaven is forbidden to whoever is used to swearing. He cannot enter it."[31]

In another tradition we read that the Prophet told Ayeshah:

يا عَائِشَةُ، لَو كَانَ الفُحْشُ رَجُلاً لَكَانَ رَجُلَ سُوءٍ

"O Ayeshah! If swearing could appear like a man it would be an evil man."

Swearing is one of the very bad characteristics. Whoever gets used to swearing should try to treat himself. Swearing is defined to be the expression of vulgar things. One who swears is trying to hurt the other person, and hurting others is certainly forbidden. It may be the result of associating with bad people who use obscene language. This has also been declared to be bad in Islam.

An Arab went to see the Prophet and said: “Please give me some advice.” The Prophet said:

عَلَيكَ بِتَقوى اللهِ، وإن امْرُؤٌ عَيَّرَكَ بِشَيءٍ يَعْلَمُهُ مِنكَ فلا تُعَيِّرْهُ بِشَيءٍ تَعْلَمُهُ فِيه يَكُنْ وَبالُهُ عَلَيهِ وَأَجْرُهُ لكَ. وَلا تَسُبَّنَّ شَيئاً مِن خَلقِ اللهِ.

“I advise you to fear God. If someone blames you for what is in you, do not blame him for what you know that may lie in him. Thus, he will suffer from the ill consequences of his deeds and you will prosper from your good deeds. Also never revile any of God’s creatures.”

The man took the Prophet’s advice and never swore at anyone.32

We learn from this tradition that we should never use our knowledge of other people’s weaknesses to harm their honor. Ayaz ibn Samar told the Prophet of God: “O Prophet of God! A relative of mine who is lower than me in rank swears at me. Should I swear at him in defense?” The Prophet said:

المُتَسَابّانِ شَيْطانانِ يَتَعاوَنانِ وَيَتَهاتَرانِ

*“Whenever two people revile each other they are like two Satans helping each other and making false accusations against each other.”*33

8) Cursing

Cursing is also another factor that corrupts the tongue. Whoever curses others is pushing them away from the circle of God’s Mercy. This issue has been referred to in several verses of the Holy Qur’an. God has cursed many and has deprived them of his Mercy. An important case is that of Satan:

وَ إنَّ عليكَ لَعْنَتي إلىَ يَوْمِ الْدِّينِ

"And My curse shall be on thee till the Day of Judgment." [***The Holy Qur’an, Sad 38:78***]

Those who conceal the truth are also cursed:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَى مِن بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ أُولَـئِكَ يَلعَنُهُمُ اللّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّاعِنُونَ

"Those who conceal the clear (Signs) We have sent down, and the Guidance, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, - on them shall be God's curse, and the curse of those entitled to curse." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:159***]

Those who lie were also cursed as in the following verse:

فَمَنْ حَآجَّكَ فِيهِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْاْ نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءنَا وَأَبْنَاءكُمْ وَنِسَاءنَا وَنِسَاءكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَل لَّعْنَةُ اللّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ

"If anyone disputes in this matter with thee, now after (full) knowledge hath come to thee, say: "Come! Let us gather together, - our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves: Then let us earnestly pray, and invoke the curse of God on those who lie!" [***The Holy Qur'an, Al-i-Imran 3:61***]

The pagans and the Jews who were awaiting the coming of the Prophet Muhammad refused to believe in him after they recognized him. We read in the following verse that they too are cursed:

وَلَمَّا جَاءهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُواْ مِن قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ فَلَمَّا جَاءهُم مَّا عَرَفُواْ كَفَرُواْ بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّه عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

"And when there comes to them a Book from God, confirming what is with them, - although from of old they had prayed for victory against those without Faith, - when there comes to them that which they (should) have recognized, they refuse to believe in it but the curse of God is on those without Faith." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:89***]

The Prophet and Imam Ali cursed several people. The Prophet cursed Abu Sufyan in seven places.[34] Imam Ali has been narrated to have quoted on the authority of God's Prophet :

سَبْعَةٌ لَعَنَهمُ اللهُ، وَكُلُّ نَبيٍّ مُجابٌ: المُغَيِّرُ لِكِتابِ اللهِ والمُكَذِّبُ بِقَدَرِ اللهِ و المُبَدِّلُ سُنَّةِ رسولِ اللهِ والمُسْتَحِلُّ مِن عِتْرَتي ما حَرَّمَ اللهُ وَالمُتَسَلِّطُ في سُلْطانِهِ لِيُعِزَّ مَن أذَلَّ اللهُ وَيُذِلَّ مَن أعَزَّ اللهُ وَالمُسْتَحِلُّ لِحُرَمِ اللهِ وَالمُتَكَبِّرُ عَلى عِبادَةِ اللهِ.

"There are seven groups of people who were cursed by God and His Prophet :

1- Those who change the Divine Book.

2- Those who deny divine decrees

3- Those who change the Prophet's traditions

4- Those who make permissible the violation of the rights of my progeny that God has forbidden

5- Those who use their power and rule to belittle one whom God has honored, and those who use their power and rule to honor one whom God has debased

6- Those who make lawful what God has forbidden.

7 - Those who are haughty in worshipping God.

Believers Do Not Curse

The Noble Prophet said:

المُؤْمِنُ لَيسَ بِلَعّانٍ.

"A believer does not curse others."[35]

It is even forbidden to curse animals in Islam. Overall, we can conclude that cursing men, animals and objects is forbidden, except for some instances of the infidels, the hypocrites and those who have usurped the rights of Imam Ali and his descendants.

9) Lustful Songs

The next factor that corrupts the tongue is listening to lustful songs. Consider the following verses:

ذَلِكَ وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ حُرُمَاتِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ عِندَ رَبِّهِ وَأُحِلَّتْ لَكُمُ الْأَنْعَامُ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ

"Such (is the Pilgrimage): whoever honors the sacred rites of God, for him it is good in the Sight of his Lord. Lawful to you (for food in Pilgrimage) are cattle, except those mentioned to you (as exception): but shun the abomination of idols, and shun the word that is false." **[*The Holy Qur'an, al-Hajj 22:30*]**

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا

"Those who witness no falsehood, and, if they pass by futility, they pass by it with honorable (avoidance)." **[*The Holy Qur'an, al-Furqan 25:72*]**

The Arabic expressions that are translated into "shun the word that is false" and "witness no falsehood" in the above verses of the Holy Qur'an have been interpreted by Shuham and Ibn Abi Amir and Abi Basir

(in *al-Kafi*) and others as implying lustful music. The following verse is also said to refer to lustful music aimed at corrupting the people.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

"But there are, among men, those who purchase idle tales, without knowledge (or meaning), to mislead (men) from the Path of God and throw ridicule (on the Path): for such there will be a Humiliating Penalty." [***The Holy Qur'an, Luqman 31:6***]

However, there are two groups of traditions regarding poetry. Religious poetry is considered to be good in one group of traditions. Other traditions consider lustful poetry to be bad.

10) Joking Around

Joking around is considered to be bad in Islam. The Noble Prophet said:

لا تُمارِ أَخاكَ وَلا تُمازِحْهُ

"Avoid arguing with your brethren and abstain from excessive joking around."[36]

The Prophet also said:

إنّي لأَمْزَحُ ولا أقُولُ إلاّ حَقّاً.

"I tell jokes, but only say the truth."[37]

The Prophet's Jokes

The Prophet told some nice jokes. As an example, consider the following. One day an old lady went to see the Prophet . The Prophet said: "An old lady does not go to Heaven." The old lady started to cry. Then the Prophet said: "On that day you will not be old. You will be young. God said the following in the Holy Qur'an:"

إِنَّا أَنشَأْنَاهُنَّ إِنشَاءً فَجَعَلْنَاهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا

"We have created (their Companions) of special creation, and made them virgin - pure (and undefiled)." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Waqi`ah 56:35-36***]

Imam Ali said:

مَا مَزَحَ امْرُؤٌ مَزْحَةً إلاّ مَجَّ مِن عَقْلِه مَجَّةً.

"A person does not jest but that something of his intellect is cast out." 38

11) Making Fun of Others

Scholars in ethics have considered making fun of people as one of the factors that corrupt the tongue. God said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَومٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَى أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاء مِّن نِّسَاء عَسَى أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الاِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

"O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: It may be that the (***latter***) ***are better than the*** (***former***)***: Nor let some women laugh at others: It may be that the*** (***latter are better than the*** (***former***)***: Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by*** (***offensive***) ***nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness,*** (***to be used of one***) ***after he has believed: And those who do not desist are*** (***indeed***) ***doing wrong."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Hujurat 49:11***]

The first principle referred to in this verse is respecting the Muslims. Muslims should respect each other in social encounters. Materialists have a different world outlook than Muslims. Materialists respect one for his physical beauty, but Muslims respect man's moral values. In the above verse, making fun of others is forbidden. Men are unaware of each other's inner thoughts and feelings. It may be that an ugly man has a very beautiful character. He might be made fun of for his looks, but if others knew him well they would never make fun of him. That is why it is not allowed to make fun of anyone.

The Psychological Motivation behind Making Fun of Others

A form of inferiority complex is considered a psychological root of making fun of other people. That is why respectable people never make fun of anyone. Those who make fun of others also enjoy insulting others. They have a sort of vicious attitude. Beasts attack the people physically, and they attack the people's honor.

Imam Sajjad's Views on Clowns

A clown once pulled off Imam Sajjad's cloak. The Imam did not say anything. The people followed the clown and took back the cloak. They brought it back and put it on Imam Sajjad's shoulder. Imam Sajjad asked: "Who did that?" The people said: "It was a clown who makes the people laugh." Then Imam Sajjad said:

انَّ للهِ يَوماً يَخْسَرُ فِيه المُبْطِلونَ.

“Tell him that there is a day for God in which those who indulge in vain and futile acts will not gain anything but loss.”[39]

It is Forbidden to Make Fun of the Crippled

Some people are crippled for some reason. They lose their physical health. If people make fun of those who are crippled, then they will get hurt. They will get hurt due to being made fun of and due to not being healthy. That is why Imam Ali said the following in his supplications:

إاللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ نَفْسي أوَّلَ كَريمَةٍ تَنْتَزِعُها مِن كَرائِمِي وَأَوَّلَ وَديعَةٍ تُرْجِعُها مِن وَدَائِعِ نِعَمِكَ عِنْدي.

“O God! Make my soul the first of the my precious possessions that You take from me, and the first trust that you return to me from among Your blessings entrusted to me.”[40]

Imam Husayn said:

وَمَتِّعْني بِجَوارِحِي وَاجْعَلْ سَمْعي وَبَصَري الوارِثَيْنِ عَنِّي وانْصُرْني عَلى مَن ظَلَمَني

“O Lord! Make me benefit from all my body parts. Let my eyes and ears be my inheritors, (*i.e. protect me from becoming crippled*)*, and give me victory over everyone who oppresses me.”* [41]

AL-Jahiz and the Effect of Making Fun of Others

Al-Ja□iz was an educated man who lived in the ninth century. Many books and writings have remained from him. He was a very ugly man. He was always supported by the Abbasid Caliphs since he expressed his opposition to Ali . One day he told his students that he was never belittled as much as he was done by a lady once. She had run across him once and asked him to follow her. She had taken him to a sculptor, and said to him: “That is it.” Then she walked away. When he asked the artist what the story was, he was told that the lady had ordered the artist to make a sculpture of Satan. The artist had told her that he could only make the sculpture if he sees Satan. Then the lady had brought him in and shown him to the artist as a model for Satan.

12) Divulging Secrets

Another factor that corrupts the tongue is divulging other people’s secrets. This is considered bad in Islam. The Noble Prophet said:

إذا حَدَّثَ الرَّجُلُ الحَديثَ ثُمَّ التَفَتَ فَهِيَ أمَانَةٌ

"When someone says something and goes away, what he said is left as a trust near the one who hears him."[42]

He also said:

الحَدِيثُ بَيْنَكُم أَمانَةٌ.

"What others tell you is entrusted to you."[43]

Imam Hasan has been narrated as saying:

إنَّ مِنَ الخِيانَةِ أنْ تُحَدِّثَ بِسِرِّ أخِيكَ.

"It is an act of treachery to speak of your brethren's secrets."[44]

13) Fake Promise

One of the factors that corrupt the tongue is making fake promises upon which one does not act. Acting upon what you promise is one of the signs of divine men. We read the following in the Holy Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَوْفُواْ بِالْعُقُودِ

***"O ye who believe! Fulfil (all) obligations."* [The Holy Qur'an, al-Ma'ida 5: 1]**

The Noble Prophet said:

العِدَةُ دَيْن

"A promise is a debt."[45]

God has mentioned Isma'il to be strictly true to what he promised:

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَّبِيًّا

"Also mention in the Book (the story of) Isma'il: He was (strictly) true to what he promised, and he was an apostle (and) a Prophet." [The Holy Qur'an, Maryam 19:54]

14) False Swearing or Statements

Lying is a great sin. It will result in the loss of one's honor. Many Qur'anic verses and traditions outline the wickedness of lying. Abu Sa`eed was quoted to have heard the Prophet supplicate to God as follows:

اللَّهُمَّ طَهِّر قَلْبي مِن النِّفَاقِ وَفَرْجِي مِن الزِّنَا وَلِسَاني مِن الكَذِبِ.

"O God! Please purify my heart from hypocrisy, purify me from acts of fornication, and purify my tongue from lying." 46

Imam Baqir said:

إنَّ الكَذِبَ هُوَ خَرابُ الإيمَانِ.

*"Lying is the ruin of man's faith."*47

The Commander of the Faithful said:

لا يَجِدُ عَبْدٌ طَعْمَ الإيمَانِ حَتىّ يَتْرُكَ الكَذِبَ جِدَّهُ وَهَزْلَهُ.

*"No man shall taste faith unless he abandons lying, be it serious or as a joke."*48

A man told the Prophet : "O' Prophet of God! Would a believer commit a sexual sin?" He said: "Maybe sometimes." The man asked: "Would a believer tell a lie?" The Prophet answered:

إِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكَذِبَ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللّهِ وَأُوْلـئِكَ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ

Never! God the Exalted said: ***"It is those who believe not in the Signs of God that forge falsehood...."***49 [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Na*** ***l 16: 105***]

It was quoted on the authority of Imam Hasan Askari:

حُطَّتِ الخَبائِثُ في بَيْتٍ وَجُعِلَ مِفْتاحُهُ الكَذِبُ.

*"All evil deeds were placed in a room and lying was made its key."*50

This implies that if one lies he will fall into sin.

Finding the Roots of Lying

The Noble Prophet said:

لا يَكْذِبُ الكاذِبُ إلاّ مِن مَهانَةِ نَفْسِه.

"One only tells lies because of his feeling of being lowly."[51]

On the other hand, honesty is rooted in a feeling of self-security and confidence. One day Hajjaj extended his sermon when he was lecturing on the pulpit. A man cried from the crowd: "It is time for prayer. Cut it short. Neither time will stop in respect for you nor will God accept your apology." Hajjaj became upset about this open statement in public and had the man imprisoned.

When the man's relatives went to see Hajjaj and told him that the man is insane, Hajjaj said that he had to confess to this fact himself. They went to see the man and told him to confess to being insane to be freed. The man said: "God has created me healthy and intelligent. I am not mad. Why should I falsely confess to being insane?" Then Hajjaj was told about what the man said. Hajjaj respected his honesty and freed him.[52]

15) Gossiping

Gossiping will also corrupt the tongue. Before proceeding, we must clarify what is meant by gossiping. The late Shaheed Thani defined gossiping as ascribing things to someone behind their back that they dislike, and with the intention of belittling him.[53] Abu-Dharr was questioned about the meaning of gossiping. He replied: "Saying what might hurt your Muslim brother if he hears it behind his back."[54] Gossiping is forbidden in Islam. Sheikh Mortazavi has declared gossiping to be forbidden, and has used the following verse to support his view:[55]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيراً مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it. But fear God: For God is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Hujurat 49: 12***]

The act of gossiping is bad since both the speaker and the listener are attacking a defenseless person. It is as if one eats the flesh of his dead defenseless brother and the other one attacks one who is not present there to defend himself. Four points are stressed in the Qur'an in this regard:

1 Muslims and brothers in faith are just like our brothers.

2 A Muslim's honor is just like his flesh.

3 Gossiping behind his back to hurt his honor is like eating his flesh.

4 The fact that he is absent and is unable to defend himself is similar to him being dead. It is not right to attack a dead defenseless person.

That is why Imam Ali has said:

الغِيبَةُ جُهْدُ العاجِزِ.

"Backbiting is the endeavour of the weak."[56]

The second verse regarding this issue is:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَن تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

"Those who love (to see) scandal published broadcast among the Believers, will have a grievous Penalty in this life and in the Hereafter: God knows, and ye know not." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Noor 24: 19***]

Man is a social creature and the society in which he lives is like his house. He should safeguard it just as he safeguards his house and prevent the influence of any corruption into the society. Islam seriously fights whatever corrupts the society. Gossiping is also seriously fought with because it unveils hidden flaws. Islam does not like this and instructs people to cover up each other's faults. The third verse regarding this issue is:

لاَّ يُحِبُّ اللّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوَءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلاَّ مَن ظُلِمَ وَكَانَ اللّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا

"God loveth not that evil should be noised abroad in public speech, except where injustice hath been done; for God is He who heareth and knoweth all things." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nisaa 4: 148***]

We must realize that any form of evil in public speech has been forbidden here. Thus gossiping is forbidden. The fourth verse in this regard is as follows:

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ

"Woe to every (kind of) scandal-monger and-backbiter." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Humaza, 104: 1***]

Some commentators have said that this verse was revealed about al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah who used to gossip behind the Prophet's back and made fun of him up front.

Gossiping is Forbidden as Expressed by Traditions

There are many traditions that stress the bad effects of gossiping. The Noble Prophet said:

كُلُّ المُسْلِمِ عَلى المُسْلِمِ حَرامٌ: دَمُهُ وَمالُهُ وَعِرْضُهُ.

"Everything of the Muslim is to be respected by Muslims: his life, his wealth and his honor."[57]

Fayz Kashani has declared that gossiping is a cause of violation of one's honor. Jabir and Abu Saeed have both quoted on the authority of God's Prophet :

إيّاكُم والغِيبَةَ فإنَّ الغيبَةَ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الزِّنا. فإنَّ الرَّجُلَ قَد يَزني فَيَتوبُ اللهُ عَلَيهِ. وإنَّ صَاحِبَ الغِيبَةِ لا يُغْفَرُ له حَتىّ يَغْفِرَ له صَاحِبُهُ.

"Avoid gossiping since it is worse than committing fornication. Sometimes a man might make a mistake and commit fornication. Once he gets sorry and repents, God will accept his repentance. But if one gossips his sin will not be forgiven unless the one behind whose back he gossips forgives him."[58]

The Important News of the Night of Ascension

Anas quoted on the authority of God's Prophet :

مَرِرْتُ لَيْلَةَ أُسرِيَ بي عَلى قَومٍ يَخمِشُونَ وُجوهَهُم بِأظافِيرِهِم، فَقُلتُ: يا جِبرَئِيلُ، مَن هؤلاءِ؟ قالَ: هؤلاءِ الّذِينَ يَغتابُونَ النّاسَ وَيَقَعونَ في أعْراضِهِم.

"On the night of the Ascension, I ran across a group of people who were scratching their faces with their nails. I asked Gabriel about them. He said: These are the people who have gossiped behind the people's backs and have caused the loss of people's honor."[59]

Gossiping and Immediate Reaction

It is natural that for every action there is a reaction. What is the reaction to gossiping? Al-Barra` said: "The Prophet delivered a sermon. All those who were freed were also there and heard his sermon. The Prophet said:

يا مَعْشَرَ مَن أسْلَمَ بِلِسانِهِ وَلَمَ يُؤمِنْ بِقَلبِهِ! لا تَغْتابُوا المُسلِمِينَ ولا تَتَّبِعوا عَوراتِهِم، فإنَّه مَن تَتَبَّعَ عَورَة أخِيهِ تَتَبَّعَ اللّهُ عَورَتَهُ، ومَن تَتَبَّعَ اللّهُ عَورَتَهُ يَفْضَحْهُ وَلَو في بَيتِهِ.

"O those who have confessed faith but do not really have faith! Do not gossip behind the Muslims' backs. Do not pursue their hidden secrets. Whoever does so, God will pursue his hidden secrets, and when God does that He will disgrace him although it may be in his own house."[60]

Sheikh Sadooq quoted on the authority of the Prophet :

مَن مَشَى في غِيبَةِ أخِيهِ وَكَشْفِ عَورَتِهِ كانَتْ أوَّلُ خُطْوَةٍ خَطاها وَضَعَها في جَهَنَّمَ وَكَشَفَ اللهُ عَورَتِهِ عَلى رُؤوسِ الخَلائِقِ. وَمَن اغْتابَ مُسلِماً بَطُلَ صَومُهُ وَنُقِضَ وُضوؤهُ فَإنْ ماتَ وهوَ كَذلكَ ماتَ وهوَ مُسْتَحِلٌّ لما حَرَّمَ اللهُ.

"One who gossips behind his Muslim brother's back and intends to divulge his secrets is taking a step towards Hell. God will make his hidden secrets known to the public. Whoever gossips behind a Muslim's back loses the acceptance of his fasting and ablution. If he dies in this state, he has died as one who has allowed what God has forbidden."[61]

It is obvious that the loss of the reward of the fasting and the prayer is meant here. Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of God's Prophet :

الغِيبَةُ أسْرَعُ في دِينِ الرَّجُلِ المُسلِمِ مِن الآكِلَةِ في جَوفِهِ.

"Gossiping works faster than a cancerous cell in destroying a Muslim's faith."[62]

Therefore, we can say that gossiping is like the cancer of the religion. Al-Mufaddal ibn `Umar quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq :

مَن رَوى عَلى مُؤمِنٍ رِوايَةً يُريدُ بها شَينَهُ وَهَدْمَ مُروَّتِهِ لِيَسْقُطَ مِن أعْيُنِ النّاسِ أَخْرَجَهُ اللهُ تَعالى مِن وِلايَتِهِ إلى وِلايَةِ الشَّيطانِ فَلا يَقْبَلُه الشَّيطانُ.

"One who talks against a believer and intends to harm him, belittle him or harm his honor shall be cast out of divine friendship by God and entrusted to Satan. Even Satan shall not accept him."[63]

Gossiping is Not Limited to Acts of the Tongue

Gossiping is not limited to acts of the tongue. Rather it could be any kind of act that has the same purpose behind it. It is forbidden by the tongue since it shows the flaws of a brother to another brother. Therefore, it is also forbidden in any other form. Imitating the way a crippled person walks is also another form of gossiping since it shows his flaw. It is even worse. A woman went to see Ayeshah.

When she left Ayeshah pointed at her implying that she is short. God's Prophet said: "You gossiped behind her back."[64]

The Listener is a Partner in Gossiping

God's Prophet said:

المُسْتَمِعُ للغِيبةِ صِنوُ المُستَغِيبِ.

"One who listens to gossip is a partner in gossiping."[65]

Therefore, he has a share of the punishment for this sin unless he verbally condemns the act of gossiping, interrupts it, or leaves the meeting. Even if he cannot do so, he should consider it bad in his mind. If he verbally opposes what is said but is internally in agreement with it, then he is a hypocrite. God's Prophet said:

مَنْ أُذِلَّ عِندَهُ مُؤمِنٌ وهُوَ يَقدِرُ عَلى أنْ يَنْتَصِرَ لهُ فَلَم يَنْصُرْهُ أذَلَّهُ اللهُ يَومَ القِيامَةِ عَلى رُؤوسِ الخَلائقِ.

"Whoever sees a believer is belittled in front of him and can help him but does not do so, shall be belittled by God in public in the Hereafter."[66]

He also said:

مَنْ رَدَّ عَن عِرْضِ أخِيهِ بِالغَيبِ كانَ حَقّاً عَلى اللهِ أنْ يَرُدَّ عَن عِرضِهِ يَومَ القِيامَةِ.

"On the Resurrection Day God shall protect the honor of whoever protects a brother's honor in his absence."[67]

He also said:

مَنْ ذَبَّ عَن عِرْضِ أخِيهِ بِالغَيبِ كانَ حَقّاً عَلى اللهِ أنْ يُعْتِقَهُ مِن النّارِ.

"It is incumbent upon God to protect from the Fire of Hell one who defends a brother's honor in his absence."[68]

The Motivations for Gossiping

1 – Anger, jealousy or grudge

2 – Making fun of others

3 – Seeking nobility

4 – Ascribing wicked deeds to others

5 – Peer pressure

6 – Knowing that someone will inform someone else of one's flaws

7 – Sympathy

8 – Acting amazed at what wicked acts are performed

How to Cure the Bad Habit of Gossiping

One of the ways to treat the bad habit of gossiping is to educate the person about its bad consequences in this world and the Hereafter. It is also important to eliminate the internal motivations for gossiping. It is helpful to remember that one will be subject to God's wrath. It is also important to realize that it does not help to fool oneself.

In case gossiping is done due to peer pressure, it is best to realize that God's pleasure is more important than that of our peers. One should also realize that gossiping with other motivations like sympathy and the like is in itself a violation of divine decrees and is not considered a religiously motivated act.

Gossiping and the Freedom of Speech as Viewed by Islam

How much freedom of speech is there in Islam? What are the limits to the freedom of speech, if any? There is no doubt that Islam allows the freedom of speech as we read:

فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُوْلائِكَ الَّذِيْنَ هَداهُمُ اللهُ وَ أُوْلائِكَ هُمْ أُوْلُواْ الْأَلْبابِ

"So announce the good news to My Servants, – Those who listen to the Word, and follow the best (meaning) in it: those are the ones whom God has guided, and those are the ones endued with understanding." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Zumar 39: 16-17***]

This act of listening to the Word and following the best is only possible where there is freedom of speech. Imam Ali has been quoted as saying:

أُنْظُرْ إلى ما قَالَ وَلا تَنْظُرْ إلى مَن قَالَ.

"Look at what is said, not at who has said it."[69]

Imam Ali said:

خُذُوا الحِكْمَةَ وَلَو مِن أهْلِ الضَّلالِ. خُذُوا الحِكْمَةَ وَلَو مِنَ المُشْرِكينَ.

*"Accept words of wisdom even if uttered by those who have gone astray. Accept wisdom even if it is expressed by the infidels."*70

The Way the Immaculate Imams Encountered Opposing Views

A study of the way the Immaculate Imams encountered opposing views shows that they all stressed good treatment of those with opposite views. As an example we can cite people like Sa`d ibn Waqqas, Abu-Musa Al-Ash`ari and many others who did not pledge allegiance to Imam Ali in the beginning of his Caliphate. Imam Ali did not bother any of them. He also tried not to fight with those who broke their covenant and tried to enter a fight with him as much as possible. We can cite people like Talḥah and Zubayr as examples.

We read the following in Wasa`il al-Shī`ah: "Indeed Ali never ascribed paganism to those who fought with him. He only said that they are those of our brothers who have oppressed us."71 Also Imam Sadiq treated people like Ibn Abi'l-`Awja` well. Therefore, there is no doubt about the freedom to speak. Rather Islam forbids any form of abuse and anarchy.

The Jurisprudents' View on the Value of the Tongue

At last, we shall study the jurisprudents' view on the value of the tongue. The jurisprudents have stated that there is full compensation for cutting off a healthy person's tongue. Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Hilli said:72 "There is full compensation for a healthy tongue. If the tongue of a healthy person is partially damaged, there is partial compensation for it based on the amount of his ability left to express the twenty-eight letters of the alphabet.73 There is one-third compensation for a damaged or stuttering tongue." 74

The grand Ayatollah Khu'i said: "When the tongue is so damaged that it is not useful for the purpose it is supposed to serve, one does not consider how much of it is damaged. Rather the compensation for the tongue depends on the degree of loss of the ability to speak. For example, if one fourth of the tongue is cut, but the person can only utter one fourth of the words then there is half compensation.

If one half of the tongue is cut, but only one fourth of the letters cannot be uttered by the person damaged, then there is only one-fourth compensation required. Thus, the compensation for the tongue does not depend on the geographical location or the language of the person whose tongue has been damaged. Rather it depends on the degree of loss of the ability to utter the letters."75

1. In the other version we read: ".. and refrain from any meddling in which there is nothing to be gained, express kindness to people and speak well concerning them." Then the rest follows.

2. The tongue.
3. His tongue and good speech are like an ornament for his intellect.
4. Muntaha al-Amal, v.2, p.358.
5. A'lam al-Nisa, v.2, p.270; Zanan-i-Ghahreman, v.1, p.169.
6. Referring to Mu'awiyah.
7. Maktab-i-Islam Magazine, Year 4, No.2, p.46.
8. Nahjul Balaghah, Fayzul Islam, Hikmat no.57.
9. Nahjul Balaghah, Fayzul Islam, Hikmat no.7
10. i.e. his/her tongue and sex organs.
11. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, v.5, p.192
12. Ibid. p.193.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda. p.194
16. Ibid. p.195.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., v.5, p.198.
19. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, v.5, p.200.
20. Ibid. p 204.
21. Al- Mahajjah al-Bayda, v.5, p.207.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, v.5, p.208.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid. p.211.
28. Ibid. p.213.
29. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, p.214.
30. Ibid. p.215.
31. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, v.5, p.215.
32. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, p.217.
33. Ibid. v.5, p.217.
34. Safinah al-Bihar, v.2, p.513.
35. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, v.5, p.219
36. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, v.5, p.231.
37. Ibid. pg.232.
38. Nahjul Balaghah, Fayzul Islam, Hikmat no.442.
39. Manaqib Ibn Shahrashub, v.4, p.158.
40. Nahjul Balaghah, Fayz al-Islam, Sermon No. 206.
41. A part of Du'a 'Arafah, Tatamat al-Muntaha, p.256.
42. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, v. 5, p.37.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, v. 5, p.237 .
46. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, p.241.
47. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.329.
48. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.340.
49. Safinah al-Bihar, v.2, p.473.

50. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v.2, p.100.
51. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v.2, p.100.
52. Koodak, Guftar-e-Falsafi, v.2, p.45, quoted from Thamarat al-Awraq, p.233.
53. Makasib, p.41.
54. Ibid.
55. Makasib.
56. Sharh Ghurar wa Durar, Khansari, v.1, p.268.
57. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, v.5, p. 251.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, v.5, p.252
61. Ibid. p.254.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid. p.255.
64. 'Ilm-e-Akhlaq-e-Islami, (Farsi translation of Jami'al-Sa'dat) v.2, pp.393-396.
65. Ibid.
66. Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. Daramadi bar Huquq-e-Islami, p.271, quoted from Ithbat al-Huda, translated by Jannati, v.1, p.46.
70. Ibid.
71. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.11, p.62.
72. Mukhtasar al-Nafi', p.300.
73. He was referring to Arabic. Obviously this can be adjusted for other languages accordingly.
74. Mukhtasar al-Nafi', p. 300.
75. Mabani Taklimat al-Minhaj, v.2, p.290.

Right n. 4: The Right of Hearing

حق السمع

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ السَّمْعِ فَتَنْزِيهُهُ عَنْ أَنْ تَجْعَلَهُ طَرِيقًا إِلَى قَلْبِكَ إلا لِفُوهَةٍ كَرِيمَةٍ تُحْدِثُ فِي قَلبكَ خَيْرًا أَو تَكْسِبُ خُلُقًا كَرِيمًا فَإِنَّهُ بَابُ الْكَلامِ إِلَى الْقَلْب يُؤَدِّي إِلَيْهِ ضُرُوبُ الْمَعَانِي عَلَى مَا فِيهَا مِن خَيْرٍ أَو شَرّ. وَلا قُوَّةَ إلا باللهِ.

And the right of hearing is to keep it pure by not making it the direct pathway to your heart, except for noble words that establish some good in your heart or grant you a noble trait. Indeed hearing is the gateway through which various concepts reach the heart —whether good or evil. And there is no power but in God. [1]

The Almighty God said:

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلاً مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

"Say: It is He who has created you (and made you grow), and made for you the faculties of hearing, seeing, feeding and understanding. Little thanks it is ye give." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Mulk 67:23***]

The Role of Hearing in Development

When man is born, he is not familiar with the creatures in this world, but he slowly gets acquainted with them. One of the means of acquiring such recognition is the faculty of hearing. We hear things and they are recorded in our minds. Imam Ali said to someone seeking advice:

أيها السائل! إِسْتَمِعْ ثُمّ اسْتَفْهِم ثُمَّ اسْتَيْقِنْ ثُمَّ اسْتَعْمِلْ.

"O questioner! Listen first, and then understand. Then believe and put what you have learned into practice."[2]

Thus, we realize that the key to understanding, believing and putting things into practice is our hearing. Therefore, hearing can be considered our social sense, and in this sense, it can be considered more important than seeing.

What is sound?

Sound is produced from vibration. Human voice is the product of the vibration of our vocal cords. It has been proven that sound will not be transmitted in a vacuum. However, we should not think that air is the only media for the transmission of sound. Sound can be propagated in liquids, gases and solids. It propagates in liquids faster than in gases. Solids propagate sound even faster than liquids do. There are three parts to the ear: the external ear, middle ear and inner ear.

The external ear consists of the pinna[3] and the ear canal. The pinna is made of cartilage and is so formed as to act as a receiving antenna in charge of guiding the incoming sound waves towards the ear canal. The ear canal is nearly three centimeters long, and produces wax to prevent the entry of dirt and insects into the ear. The middle ear is separated from the ear canal by the eardrum. The middle ear normally contains air and is connected to the back of the pharynx by the Eustachian tube. There are delicate bones in the middle ear.

When sound waves enter the ear and touch the eardrum, these delicate bones vibrate and transfer these signals to a liquid inside the ear. The hearing cells that are there sense these changes and transmit the information to the brain. In simple terms, that is how we hear. Our hearing ability depends on the position of the source of sound, our physical state, the way we eat, and our age.

Anatomy and Physiology of the Ear

What is the ear?

The ear is the organ of hearing. The parts of the ear include:

External Ear or Outer Ear, consisting of:

1) Pinna or auricle – the outside part of the ear.

2) External auditory canal or tube – the tube that connects the outer ear to the inside or middle ear.

3) Tympanic membrane – also called the eardrum. The tympanic membrane divides the external ear from the middle ear.

4) Middle ear (tympanic cavity), consisting of:

A) Ossicles – three small bones that are connected and transmit the sound waves to the inner ear. The bones are called: malleus,[4] incus,[5] stapes.[6]

B) Eustachian tube – a canal that links the middle ear with the throat area. The Eustachian tube helps to equalize the pressure between the outer ear and the middle ear. Having the same pressure allows for the proper transfer of sound waves. The Eustachian tube is lined with mucous, just like the inside of the nose and throat.

5) Inner ear, consisting of:

A) Cochlea (contains the nerves for hearing)

B) Vestibule (contains receptors for balance)

C) Semicircular canals (contain receptors for balance)

How do we hear?

Hearing starts with the outer ear. When a sound is made outside the outer ear, the sound waves, or vibrations, travel down the external auditory canal and strike the eardrum (tympanic membrane). The eardrum vibrates. The vibrations are then passed to three tiny bones in the middle ear called the ossicles. The ossicles amplify the sound. They send the sound waves to the inner ear and into the fluid-filled hearing organ (cochlea).

Once the sound waves reach the inner ear, they are converted into electrical impulses that the auditory nerve sends to the brain. The brain then translates these electrical impulses into sound.

The Ear Relative to the Eyes and the Heart

Now let us address the question of why the ear is usually mentioned before the eyes and the heart in the Holy Qur'an. Let us look at a few verses in this regard:

قُلْ مَن يَرْزُقُكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاء وَالأَرْضِ أَمَّن يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ والأَبْصَارَ

"Say: Who is that sustains you (in life) from the sky and from the earth? Or who is it that has power over hearing and sight?" [***The Holy Qur'an, Yunus 10:31***]

إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولـئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْؤُولاً

"Surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Israa 17:36***]

Also in Na□l 16:78, Baqarah 2:7, Ha-Mim 41:20 and many other verses hearing and the ears have been mentioned before seeing and the eyes. Scientists have mentioned several reasons for the superiority of the ear over the eye. At first we should realize that the range of frequencies we could detect via our hearing is wide. The ratio of the highest frequencies we can hear to the lowest is nearly one thousand. However, our sight is much more limited.

We can only sense a small fraction of the wavelengths. We cannot see the infrared or the ultraviolet. The eyes are also very vulnerable and might easily be damaged if we look at the sun or an eclipse, or ultraviolet light emitted while welding is in progress. However, the ears are much stronger. In addition, our viewing angle is very limited, while we can hear sounds coming to us from all directions. These seem to be the physical reasons for the superiority of hearing to sight, but it seems that hearing is more powerful than sight in self-reconstruction and spiritual enlightenment.[7]

The Jurisprudents' View on the Value of the Ear

In addition to the rights of the hearing that we discussed, the ear has certain worth expressed in Islamic jurisprudence. Al-Mu□aqqiq al-Hilli said: "The compensation to be paid for both ears is full compensation: Each ear's compensation is one half of the full compensation. The compensation for the earlobe is one-third of the full compensation whether it be torn or punctured.[8]

In addition, in the Farsi editions of the Treatise of the Muslim Jurisprudents we read: "If you cut both ears off, or make them deaf you must pay the full compensation. If you only cut or damage one ear, you must pay half compensation. If one cuts someone else's earlobe he should do his best to please him."[9]

1. In the other version it is followed by: "The right of your hearing is to keep it pure from listening to backbiting and listening to that to which it is unlawful to listen."
2. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.456.
3. The largely cartilaginous projecting portion of the external ear.
4. The outermost of a chain of three small bones of the mammalian middle ear.
5. The middle bone of a chain of three small bones in the ear of a mammal.
6. The innermost ossicle of the ear of mammals.
7. Avvalin Daneshgah va Akharin Payambar, v.15, pp.101-106.
8. Mukhtasar al-Manafi', p.300, and Mabani Taklimat al-Minhaj, v.2, p.282.
9. The Treatise of al-Khu'i, p.503.

Right n. 5: The Right of the Sight

حق البصر

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ بَصَرِكَ فَغَضُّهُ عَمَّا لا يَحِلُّ لَكَ وتَرْكُ ابْتِذَالِهِ إلاّ لِمَوضِعِ عِبْرَةٍ تَسْتَقْبلُ بهَا بَصَرًا أَو تَسْتَفِيدُ بهَا عِلْمًا، فَإِنَّ الْبَصَرَ بَابُ الِاعْتِبَارِ.

And the right of your sight is that you lower it before everything which is unlawful to you. And that you abandon using it except in situations in which you can take heed in such a way that you gain insight or acquire knowledge by it. Indeed the sight is the gateway to reflection.

Both vision and the eyes are considered here. For example, consider the following verse:

وَمَا أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ إِلاَّ كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ

"And the Decision of the Hour (***of Judgment***) ***is as the twinkling of an eye."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Na□l 16:77***]

Also, consider the following verse:

وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالأَبْصَارَ وَالأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

"And He gave you hearing and sight and intelligence and affections: that ye may give thanks (***to God***)***."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Na□l 16:78***]

It also covers the concept of insight. For example, consider the following verse:

قُلْ هَـذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَاْ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللّهِ وَمَا أَنَاْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

"Say thou: "This is my way: I do invite unto God, - on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes, - I and whoever follows me. Glory to God! And never will I join gods with God!" [***The Holy Qur'an, Yusuf 12:108***]

The Vision System: A Multidisciplinary One

The vision system is so important in our understanding that it is given special consideration in psychology. It is so important in physics because it is related to light and optics. It is given especial consideration by philosophers because it is important in discovering mysterious things. It is of especial consideration in biology because it is an important part of the human body. Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that it is the subject of study of several fields of science.

Proper Use of the Eyes

God the Almighty advised us about the importance of the eyes in the Holy Qur'an:

أَلَمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُ عَيْنَيْنِ

"Have We not made for him a pair of eyes?" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Balad 90:8***]

The eyes are man's most important means of communicating with the outside world. The eyes are so amazing that they force us to be humble to our Creator. However, some people do not make proper use of them:

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيراً مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لاَّ يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لاَّ يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لاَّ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُوْلَـئِكَ كَالأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ

"Many are the Jinns and men we have made for Hell: They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle, - nay more misguided: for they are heedless (***of warning***)***."***[***The Holy Qur'an, al-A'raf 7:179***]

There is a tradition from the Prophet of God regarding the above verse [al-Balad 90:8] which reads: "God told the children of Adam:

يا بْنَ آدَمَ! إنْ نازَعَكَ لِسانُكَ في ما حَرَّمْتُ عَلَيكَ فَقَد أَعَنْتُكَ عَليهِ بِطَبَقَتَينِ فَأَطْبِقْ. وإنْ نازَعَكَ بَصَرُكَ إلى بَعضِ ما حَرَّمْتُ عَلَيكَ فقَدْ أَعَنْتُكَ عَلَيهِ بِطَبَقَتَينِ فَأَطْبِقْ.

"O Children of Adam! I have given you two lips. If your tongue tries to make you commit a forbidden act, close your lips. I have given you eyelids. If your eyes try to make you commit a forbidden act, close your eyelids."[1]

The eyes must be closed to what is forbidden by God. We read the following about the unbelievers in the Holy Qur'an:

الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاء عَن ذِكْرِي وَكَانُوا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعًا

"(Unbelievers) whose eyes had been under a veil from remembrance of Me, and who had been unable even to hear." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Kahf 18:101***]

In this verse, we read that the unbelievers did not close their eyes to what is forbidden to look at. Rather they closed their eyes from what reminds man of God. They did not hear even though they had the hearing faculty. In fact, the unbelievers disabled their most useful faculty to seek the truth and realize the realities. It is interesting to note that God says that their eyes had been under a veil from His remembrance. Thus, they could not see God's signs. They went astray due to not seeing the truth. We cannot see God's remembrance with our eyes. Rather we see His signs that remind us of him.

Looking at One's Creation

One proper use of the eyes is in cases that the Qur'an has pointed out. The Qur'an invites us to look at our own creation in the following verse:

فَلْيَنظُرِ الْإِنسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ

خُلِقَ مِن مَّاء دَافِقٍ

يَخْرُجُ مِن بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ

"Now let man but think from what he is created! He is created from a drop emitted proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Tariq 86:5-7***]

Thus, the Qur'an directs man to consider how he is created from sperm to realize what we are.

Looking at Food

The second instance that the Qur'an invites man to look to is to consider what he eats. The Qur'an says:

فَلْيَنظُرِ الْإِنسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ

"Then let man look at his food, (***and how We provide it***)***"*** [***The Holy Qur'an, 'Abasa 80:24***]

The closest thing to man that exists outside our body but becomes a part of us when eaten is food. If we do not eat, we will die soon. That is why the Qur'an stresses food items, especially those derived from plants and trees. There are various interpretations of this verse. Some consider this looking to be considering whether what we have obtained for eating is from legitimate means or not. Others consider food for the mind, too. Imam Baqir said:

عِلمُهُ الّذي يأخُذُهُ، عَمَّنْ يأخُذُهُ

*"Look and see from whom you get your knowledge."*2

There are many occasions in the Qur'an where we are instructed to look such as:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولاً أَنِ اعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُواْ الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ هَدَى اللّهُ وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلالَةُ فَسِيرُواْ فِي الأَرْضِ فَانظُرُواْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ.

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

We also read:

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ يُنشِئُ النَّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَةَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

"Say: Travel through the earth and see how God did originate creation; so will God produce a later creation: for God has power over all things." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-'Ankabut 29:20***]

It is Forbidden to Look at Unfamiliar Women

قُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

وَقُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاء بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاء بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُوْلِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاء وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِن زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: And God is well acquainted with all that they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O ye Believers! Turn ye all together towards God, that ye may attain Bliss." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nur 24:30-31***]

In these verses, we are advised to look down when we encounter an unfamiliar woman.[3] We cannot close our eyes since then we cannot walk or we might fall down on the ground. However, by limiting our view we can reduce the amount that we see. Thus, we restrict our looking at the forbidden. As said before God has admonished men and women against looking at each other. There are many traditions that have expressed the ill effects of such looks.

Muhammad ibn Yaqoob quoted on the authority of Muhammad ibn Yahya on the authority of Ahmad ibn Muhammad on the authority of Ibn Fazzil on the authority of Ali ibn Aqabeh on the authority of his father that he heard Imam Sadiq say:

النَّظْرَةُ سَهْمٌ مِن سِهامِ إبْلِيسَ مَسْمومٌ، وَكَم مِن نَظْرَةٍ أوْرَثَتْ حَسْرَةً طَويلَةً

"A look is like a poisonous dart from the darts of Satan. How many a look has caused long-lasting regret."[4]

The similitude between a look and a dart is because a dart will pierce through when it hits the target. A dirty look will also tear down the veils of modesty and chastity. Some dirty looks might lead to a long-lasting sorrow. There are many people whose life is ruined due to a dirty look. Then they cannot compensate for this all lifelong. They will be sorry but it will be of no use. Ibn Abi Umayr quoted on the authority of Al-Kaheli on the authority of Imam Sadiq :

النَّظْرَةُ بَعدَ النَّظرَةِ تَزْرعُ في القَلبِ الشَّهْوَةَ وكَفَى بِها لِصاحِبِها فِتْنَةً.

"One look after another will sow the seeds of desire in the heart, and it is sufficient temptation for the person."[5]

Imam Sadiq said:

مَنْ نَظَرَ إلى امْرَأةٍ فَرَفَعَ بَصَرَهُ إلى السَّماءِ لَمَ يَرْتَدَّ إليَهِ بَصَرُهُ حَتىّ يُزَوِّجَهُ اللهُ مِن الحُورِ العِينِ.

"If one sees a woman but turns away his eyes and looks at the sky, he will be rewarded with a 'Hoori'[6] *in Heaven."* [7]

However, there are exceptions that are discussed below.

Exceptions

We learned from the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the sayings of Imam Sajjad that it is not permitted to look at divinely forbidden sights. Now we will point out exceptions to this rule in Islam. One such case is looking at a woman with whom you want to marry. There is a chapter in Wasa`il al-Sh`ah on this subject. The first tradition in this chapter is as follows.

Muhammad ibn Yaqub quoted on the authority of Ali ibn Ibrahim, on the authority of his father, on the authority of Ibn Abi Amir, on the authority of Ayoub ibn Khazar, on the authority of Muhammad ibn Muslim who asked Imam Baqir :

"Can a man who intends to marry a woman look at her?" Imam Baqir said: "Yes, since he wants to buy the most expensive thing."[8] This tradition only discusses the permission to look. There are other traditions that clarify things more.

Ali ibn Ibrahim quoted on the authority of his father on the authority of Hisham ibn Salim, Himad ibn Isa and Hafs ibn Bakhtari on the authority of Imam Sadiq :

لا بَأْسَ بأنْ يَنظُرَ إلى وَجْهِها وَمَعاصِمِها إذا أرادَ أنْ يَتَزَوَّجَها.

"When one intends to marry a woman, it is fine for him to look at her face and her wrists."[9]

In another tradition from Abi Al-Ash`ari on the authority of Hasan ibn al-Sani, Imam Sadiq was asked: "How is it if a man who intends to marry a woman looks at her carefully. He looks at her face and the back of her head." Imam Sadiq replied: "When he intends to marry her it is fine for him to look at her face and the back of her head."[10] There are also other traditions in this respect that permit looking without lustful intentions.

The Look of a Male Doctor at a Female Patient

Another exception to this rule applies to a female patient whom no one but a male doctor can treat. This is expressed in Chapter 130 of Wasa`il al-Sh`ah. The first tradition in this chapter reads: "Muhammad ibn Yaqoob quoted on the authority of Muhammad ibn Isa, on the authority of Ali ibn al-Hikam, on the authority of Abi Hamzah al-Thumali that Imam Baqir was asked:

> سَأَلْتُهُ عَن المَرْأةِ المُسْلِمَةِ يُصِيبُها البَلاءُ في جَسَدِها إمّا كَسْرٌ وَإمّا جُرْحٌ في مَكانٍ لا يَصلُحُ النَّظَرُ إلَيهِ يَكونُ الرَّجُلُ أرْفَقَ بِعلاجِهِ مِن النِّسَاءِ، أيَصلُحُ لهُ النَّظَرُ إلَيها؟ قَال: إذا اضْطُرَّتْ إلَيهِ فلْيُعالجْها إنْ شاءَتْ.

"Consider when a Muslim woman is ill, injured or a part of her body is broken in a place that cannot be looked at. If the male doctor is more expert in treating her than women, can he look at her body?" The Imam said: "If she is compelled to do it, then let him treat her if she wishes."[11]

Looking at Bedouin Women and Women under the Protection of Islam

Another exception is looking at Bedouin women and those who live under the protection of Islam. There are two traditions on this issue in Chapter 112 of Wasa`il al-Sh`ah. Muhammad ibn Yaqoob quoted on the authority of Ali ibn Ibrahim on the authority of his father on the authority of al-Nawfeli on the authority of al-Sak'kooni on the authority of Imam Sadiq that God's Prophet said:

> لا حُرْمَةَ لِنساءِ أهْلِ الذِّمَّةِ أنْ يُنْظَرَ إلى شُعُورِهِنَّ وَأَيْدِيهِنَّ.

"It is not forbidden to look at the hair or the hands of women who live under the protection of Islam."[12]

Muhammad ibn Yaqoob quoted on the authority of some of the companions, on the authority of Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Isa, on the authority of Ibn Mahboob, on the authority of Ibad ibn Sohayb, on the authority of Imam Sadiq :

لا بَأسَ بِالنَّظَرِ إلى رُؤوسِ أهْلِ تِهامَةَ وَالأعْرابِ وأهْلِ السَّوادِ والعُلوجِ لأنَّهُم إذا نُهُوا لا يَنْتَهونَ. (قال) والمَجْنُونَةُ وَالمَغْلوبَةُ على عَقْلِها لا بَأسَ بالنَّظَرِ إلى شَعْرِها وَجَسَدِها ما لَمَ يَتَعَمَّدْ ذلِكَ.

"There is no harm in looking at the head and the hair of the people of Tihamah, Bedouin women, (*women from*) *the people of the lowlands* (*of Iraq*) *and infidels, since such women will not abstain* (*from displaying themselves*) *when they are forbidden."* (*He said*)*; "And there is no harm in looking at the hair and body of the possessed or mentally disturbed women as long as there are no bad intentions."*[13]

An Educational Look

Imam Sajjad said: "Indeed sight is the gateway to learning." Educational looks can help us learn and gain benefits. Haroun wrote to Imam Kazim :

"Please advise me tersely." The Imam replied:

مَا مِنْ شَيءٍ تَراهُ عَينُكَ إلاّ وفِيهِ مَوعِظَةٌ.

"There is nothing on which you look in which there is no advice for you."[14]

Imam Ali said:

مَا أكْثَرَ العِبَرَ وأَقَلَّ المُعْتَبِرَ.

"How many lessons are there to learn, and how few those who learn them!"[15]

He also said:

مَن اعْتَبَرَ أبْصَرَ ومَنْ أبْصَرَ فَهِمَ وَمَن فَهِمَ عَلِمَ.

"Whoever looks in order to learn will gain insight. Whoever gains insight will understand. Whoever understands will attain ranks of having knowledge."[16]

There is a tradition that is about the time Imam Ali passed by the Mada'in palace and saw the ruins of the palace of Khosrow about to collapse. One of his companions remembered the poem by Ibn Ya'fur as follows: "Winds started blowing in their ruins as if they all had a meeting place to which they rush." Then Imam Ali said: "Why did you not recite the following verses of the Holy Qur'an:

كَمْ تَرَكُوا مِن جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ وَزُرُوعٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ وَنَعْمَةٍ كَانُوا فِيهَا فَاكِهِينَ كَذَٰلِكَ ۖ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ فَمَا بَكَتْ

عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنْظَرِينَ

"How many were the gardens and springs they left behind, and corn-fields and noble buildings, and wealth (and conveniences of life), wherein they had taken such delight! Thus (was their end)! And We made other people inherit (those things)! And neither Heaven nor earth shed a tear over them: nor were they given a respite (again)." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Dukhan 44:25-29***]

These verses are related to Pharaoh and his tribe. They committed many atrocities but were finally destroyed. Their land and rule fell into the hands of the Israelites, they themselves sank at sea, and nothing could save them. Such events should be looked upon with an educational look, and we should learn from them.

Imam Ali al-Naqi and Al-Mutawakkil

Masoudi has recorded that when the agents of Mutawakkil forced their way into Imam Ali al-Naqi's house to search and did not find anything they let Mutawakkil know that. He was drunk in his palace and ordered them to bring the Imam there. When the Imam was brought in, he respected him, had him sit next to himself and offered him a drink of wine.

The Imam said: "Excuse me. Wine has never entered into my blood and body." Mutawakkil said: "Then tell me some poems." The Imam said: "I am not acquainted with poetry." Mutawakkil insisted. Then the Imam said some beautiful poems in Arabic as follows:

باتوا على قُلَلِ الأجْيالِ تَحْرِسُهُمْ غُلْبُ الرِّجالِ فَلَمْ تَنْفَعْهُمْ القُلَلِ

وَ اسْتُنْزِلُوا بَعْدَ عِزٍّ عَن مَعاقِلِهِمْ وَ أُسْكِنوا حُفْراً يا بِئسَ ما نَزَلوا

ناداهُمْ صارِخٌ مِنْ بَعْدِ دَفْنِهِمْ أينَ الأساوِرُ وُ التِّيْجانُ وَ الحُلَلُ

أينَ الوُجُوهُ الَّتِي كانَتْ مُنَعَّمَةً مِن دونِها تُضْرَبُ الأسْتارُ وَ الكِلَلُ

فَأفْصَحَ القَبْرُ عَنْهُمْ حِينَ سائَلَهُمْ تِلْكَ الوُجُوهُ عَلَيها الدُّودُ تَنْتَقِلُ

قَدْ طالَما أكَلُوا دَهْراً وَ قَدْ شَرِبُوا فَأصْبَحُوا اليَومَ بَعْدَ الأكْلِ قَدْ أُكِلُوا

“They lived at the highest points of their palaces for a while;
they were guarded there and protected by their especial guards;

however, these high points were of no use for them;
they fell down from their strong castles in which they lived with honor;
and became residents of the ditches of their graves;

How bad a place to which they descended;
after they were buried there, a call came;
as to what had happened to all those jewels, bracelets and crowns?;

What had happened to all those wealthy and happy faces?
They were forgotten and lost.

A call came from the grave responding;
that the faces have become homes for worms;
they were busy eating for a long time;
but their dawn came and they became eaten themselves.”[17]

When Mutawakkil heard these poems, he cried so hard that tears rained down on his face. Some even say that he put down his cup of wine. Yes, this is the outlook that can be educational. However, Mutawakkil did not gain any benefits from this lesson! The story of Orwe Salm has been quoted by Mohaddith Qumi on the authority of Imam Sadiq as follows:

“The Prophet David left his house while he was reading the Psalms, and birds and beasts were singing along with him. He went to a mountain where the worshipper called Ezekiel lived. He asked Ezekiel if he would let him in. However, Ezekiel did not grant him permission to enter. David cried. Then God revealed to Ezekiel not to hurt David .

Thus, he let David enter. David asked him: “Have you ever decided to commit any sins?” He said: “No.” Then David asked: “Have you ever become proud of your deeds?” He said: “No.” David asked: “Have you ever become inclined to this world?” He said: “Yes.” Then David asked: “How then do you get rid of the love for this world?” He said: “I go to the valley.”

Then Ezekiel took David to the valley where there was a metal couch on which there was a skull. There was a tableau beside the couch on which it was written: “This is the skull of Orwe Salm. He ruled for one thousand years. He built one thousand towns. He married one thousand young women. He finally reached this point where the dirt is his bed and worms are his companions. Whoever sees this should not be fooled by this world.”[18] This is a lesson to take heed of.

Eye Anatomy and Physiology

How the Eye Sees

The eye is a complex organ composed of many small parts, each vital to normal vision. The ability to see clearly depends on how well these parts work together. Light rays bounce off all objects. If a person is looking at a particular object such as a tree, light is reflected off the tree to the person's eye and enters the eye through the **cornea**. Next, light rays pass through an opening in the **iris**, called the **pupil**. The iris controls the amount of light entering the eye by dilating or constricting the pupil. In bright light, for example, the pupils shrink to the size of a pinhead to prevent too much light from entering. In dim light, the pupil enlarges to allow more light to enter the eye.

Light then reaches the **crystalline lens**. The lens focuses light rays onto the retina by bending (refracting) them. The cornea does most of the refraction and the crystalline lens fine-tunes the focus. In a healthy eye, the lens can change its shape (accommodate) to provide clear vision at various distances. If an object is close, the **ciliary muscles** of the eye contract and the lens becomes rounder. To see a distant object, the same muscles relax and the lens flattens.

Behind the lens and in front of the retina is a chamber called the **vitreous body**, which contains a clear, gelatinous fluid called **vitreous humor**. Light rays pass through the vitreous before reaching the retina. The **retina** lines the back two-thirds of the eye and is responsible for the wide field of vision that most people experience. For clear vision, light rays must focus directly on the retina. When light focuses in front of or behind the retina, the result is blurry vision.

The retina contains millions of specialized photoreceptor cells called **rods** and **cones** that convert light rays into electrical signals that are transmitted to the brain through the optic nerve. Rods and cones provide the ability to see in dim light and to see in color, respectively.

The **macula**, located in the center of the retina, is where most of the cone cells are located. The **fovea**, a small depression in the center of the macula, has the highest concentration of cone cells. The macula is responsible for central vision, seeing color, and distinguishing fine detail. The outer portion (peripheral retina) is the primary location of rod cells and allows for night vision and seeing movement and objects to the side (i.e., peripheral vision).

The **optic nerve**, located behind the retina, transmits signals from the photoreceptor cells to the brain. Each eye transmits signals of a slightly different image, and the images are inverted. Once they reach the brain, they are corrected and combined into one image. This complex process of analyzing data transmitted through the optic nerve is called **visual processing**.

Eye Movement

Extraocular muscles

The stabilization of eye movement is accomplished by six extraocular muscles that are attached to each eyeball and perform their horizontal and vertical movements and rotation. These muscles are controlled by impulses from the cranial nerves that tell the muscles to contract or to relax. When certain muscles contract and others relax, the eye moves. The six muscles and their function are listed here:

1) Lateral rectus — moves the eye outward, away from the nose
2) Medial rectus — moves the eye inward, toward the nose
3) Superior rectus — moves the eye upward and slightly outward
4) Inferior rectus — moves the eye downward and slightly inward
5) Superior oblique — moves the eye inward and downward
6) Inferior oblique — moves the eye outward and upward

There are five different types of eye movements:

1) Saccades — looking from object A to object B
2) Pursuit — smoothly following a moving object
3) Convergence/divergence — both eyes turning inward/outward simultaneously
4) Vestibular — eyes sensing and adjusting to head movement via connections with nerves in the inner ear
5) Fixation maintenance — minute eye movements during fixation

Eyelids, Eyelashes, Conjunctiva

The eyelids are moveable folds of skin that protect the front surface of the eyes. They close the eyes and blink, which moistens the surface of the eyes and removes debris. The eyelashes (also called cilia) are hairs that grow at the edge of the eyelids and remove minute particles of debris away from the surface of the eyes. The conjunctiva is the thin, transparent, mucous membrane that lines the eyelids and covers the front surface of the eyeballs. The section that lines the eyelids appears red in color because it contains many blood vessels. The section that covers the cornea appears white because of the sclera behind it.

Tear Production and Elimination

Tears perform vitally important functions:

1) Carry bacteria-fighting compounds to the eye
2) Carry nutrients to and waste products away from the eye
3) Keep the eye moist

4) Provide a smooth refracting surface
5) Remove debris from the eye

Tear components are produced by the **lacrimal gland**, several other small glands, and cells within the eyelid. As the eyelid closes, tears are swept downward, toward the nose, and enter the **puncta.**[19] As the eyes blink, tears are forced through narrow channels into the **lacrimal sac**. Once the muscles relax and the eye opens, the tears move from the sac to the **nasolacrimal duct** and into the nose. This accounts for stuffy, runny noses when crying.

Aqueous Humor Production and Elimination

Aqueous humor is nutritive watery fluid produced by the ciliary body through the **ciliary body processes** and secreted into the posterior chamber (i.e., space between the iris and the lens). It maintains pressure and provides nutrients to the lens and cornea. Aqueous humor diffuses through the pupil into the anterior chamber (between the lens and cornea) and is reabsorbed into the venous system by two routes:

1) Through the trabecular meshwork[20] into the canal of Schlemm, which carries it into the venous system: Responsible for 80–90% of aqueous drainage.

2) Through the anterior ciliary body directly into larger blood vessels:[21] Responsible for 10–20% of aqueous drainage.

The Jurisprudents' Views on the Worth of the Eyes

Imam Khomeini said: "The compensation for two eyes is the same as the full compensation. There is half of full compensation for each eye. The compensation for one whose vision is blurry, is cross-eyed, sees double images, has small eyes, can see better at night than in the daytime, cannot see at night, or has another eye disease is the same as one whose eyes are perfect.

If there is a white spot in the black of the eye in such a way that his sight is not affected, then there is full compensation for damaging this eye. However, if the white spot in the black of the eye has limited the person's sight, there is partial compensation relative to the amount of vision for damaging the eye. This is so if it can be properly detected. If not, the compensation is somewhat in between." [22]

We also read the following regarding the compensation for the eye: "The compensation for both eyes is equal to that of the whole person."[23] Then it is written in the same source that there are no differences among the companions on this issue. The following tradition from Abdullah ibn San'an on the authority of Imam Sadiq also supports this: "The compensation for each organ of which man has a pair is half of both."

Thus the compensation for each eye is half of full compensation and there is no difference between a perfect eye and a defective one in this respect."[24] When the great Ayatollah Golpayegani was asked

about the compensation for blinding one eye of a girl, he said: “The compensation for one eye of a female is half of the full compensation for a woman.” This implies that the worth of the eyes is equal to that of life.

1. Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.5, p.581.
2. Tafsir al-Safi, v.2, p.789.
3. Here the word ‘unfamiliar’ is used for one who is not ‘Mahram’. In this sense, for women, all men except those mentioned in the above verse are unfamiliar.
4. Al-Kafi, v.5, p.559.
5. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah.
6. Hoori is used the Holy Qur’an to refer to the believers’ companions in Heaven. “So, and We shall join them to Companions with beautiful, big and lustrous eyes” (Sura Dukhan, 44:54). We can read in the footnotes of verses 52:20 and 44:54 of Yusuf Ali’s translation of the Holy Qur’an: “Hur implies the following ideas: (1) Purity, possibly the word ‘Hawariyun’ as applied to the disciples of Jesus, is connected with this root; (2) Beauty, especially of the eyes, where the intense white of the eyeballs stands out against the intense black of the pupils, thus giving the appearance of luster, and intense feeling, as opposed to dullness or want of expression; and (3) Truth and goodwill.”
7. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah.
8. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, v. 14, p.59.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, v. 14, p. 172.
12. Ibid. p. 149.
13. Ibid. p. 150.
14. Safinah al-Bihar, ‘Ibr, v.2, p. 146.
15. Safinah al-Bihar.
16. Ibid.
17. Muntaha al-Amal, v.2, p.400.
18. Safinah al-Bihar, v.2, ‘Ibr, p. 146.
19. The openings in the upper and lower lids, close to the nose.
20. The collagen cords that form a spongelike, three-dimensional net.
21. Called uveal-scleral outflow pathway.
22. Tahrir al-Wasilah, v.2, p.572.
23. Mabani Takmilat al-Minhaj, v.2, p.272.
24. Majma’ al- Masa’il, v.3, p.255.

Right n. 6: The Right of the Legs

حق الرجلين

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ رِجْلَيْكَ فَأَنْ لا تَمْشِي بهِمَا إلَى مَا لا يَحِلُّ لَكَ وَلا تَجْعَلْهُمَا مَطِيَّتَكَ فِي الطَّرِيقِ الْمُسْتَخِفَّةِ بأَهْلِهَا فِيهَا فَإِنَّهَا حَامِلَتُكَ وَسَالِكَةٌ بكَ مَسْلَكَ الدِّينِ وَالسَّبْقُ لَكَ، وَلا قُوَّةَ إلا بالله.

And the right of your legs is that you walk not with them toward that which is unlawful for you. And you should not direct them in the way that will lead the person they carry to being debased. Your legs will carry you in the direction of the religion and they will help you go ahead. And there is no power but in God.[1]

Almighty God says:

أَلَهُمْ أَرْجُلٌ يَمْشُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَيْدٍ يَبْطِشُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا قُلِ ادْعُواْ شُرَكَاءكُمْ ثُمَّ كِيدُونِ فَلاَ تُنظِرُونِ

"Have they feet to walk with? Or hands to lay hold with? Or eyes to see with? Or ears to hear with? Say: "Call your 'god-partners', scheme (your worst) against me, and give me no respite!" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-A'raf 7:195***]

We also read:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُواْ مِمَّا فِي الأَرْضِ حَلاَلاً طَيِّباً وَلاَ تَتَّبِعُواْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

"O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the evil one, for he is to you an avowed enemy." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:168***]

How Do God's Special Servants Walk

The Almighty God expresses twelve special characteristics of His special servants in Chapter Furqan of the Holy Qur'an. The first of these characteristics is regarding the way they walk as we read in the following verse:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلامًا

"And the servants of (God) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!"" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Furqan 25:63***]

This means that they walk so calmly that they reject haughtiness.[2] Thus, the first characteristic of God's especial servants is that they reject haughtiness, pride and selfishness that can even become manifest in the way one walks. This is because man's moral characteristics are usually displayed through his behavior.

God's Important Decree on This Issue

The following verse revealed an important decree to the Prophet :

وَلاَ تَمْشِ فِي الأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّكَ لَن تَخْرِقَ الأَرْضَ وَلَن تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولاً

"Nor walk on the earth with insolence: for thou canst not rend the earth asunder, nor reach the mountains in height." [***The Holy Qur'an, Bani Isra'il 17:37***]

This verse points out that haughty people stomp their feet on the ground so that others are informed when they walk. They raise their necks up to the sky so that they can show their superiority to others. The reason why some people get this way is that they forget themselves and become haughty.

In an interesting tradition from the Noble Prophet we read: "One day when the Prophet was walking in an alley he saw that people had gathered in one place. He asked for the reason. He was told that there was a mad man there and the people were attracted to his insane and funny acts. The Prophet called the people and said: Do you want me to introduce to you the very insane? Everyone was quiet and listened whole-heartedly. Then the Prophet said:

المُتَبَخْتِرُ في مَشْيِهِ، النّاظِرُ في عِطْفَيهِ، المحرِّكُ جَنْبَيهِ بِمِنْكَبَيهِ الّذي لا يُرجَى خَيرُهُ ولا يُؤمَنُ شَرُّهُ فَذلكَ المجَنُونُ، وَهذا المُبْتَلى.

The one who walks with pride, constantly looks on either side and throws up his shoulders as he walks, from whom good is not expected and from whose evil people are not secure - that is the insane one. This man (*whom you saw*) *is afflicted* (*with an illness*)*".*[3]

Humbleness does not mean that one should be lethargic when he walks. Rather one must be humble but take firm steps that show his determination and power.

The Way the Prophet Walked

There is a section on the way the Prophet walked in Makarim ul-Akhlaq. In one tradition in this section we read: Imam Ali said:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلّى اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَآلِه إذا مَشى تَكَفّأَ تَكَفّؤاً كَأَنَّمَا يَتَقَلَّعُ مِن صَبَبٍ، لَمَ أَرَ قَبْلَهُ وَلا بَعْدَهُ مِثْلَهُ.

"When the Prophet walked he inclined forwards as if he was going downhill (*even though he was not in a hurry*)*. I never saw anyone else walk this way before or after him."*[4]

One of the companions of the Prophet said:

مَا رَأَيْتُ أَحَداً أَسْرَعَ في مَشْيَتِهِ مِنْ رَسُولِ الله صَلّى اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَآلِه كَأَنَّما الأرْضُ تُطْوَى لهُ وإنّا لَنَجْهَدُ أنفُسَنا وَإنّه لغَيرُ مُكْتَرِثٍ.

"I have never seen anyone walk faster than the Prophet did. It was as if the Earth was contracted for him. We would strive (to catch up with him) but he did not pay attention to it."[5]

Ibn Abbas said:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلّى اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَآلِه إذا مَشى مَشْياً يُعْرَفُ أنَّهُ لَيسَ بِمَشْيِ عاجِزٍ ولا بِكَسْلانَ.

"When the Prophet of God walked, he neither walked like one lacking in strength nor like the lethargic ones."[6]

Luqman's Will on How to Walk

We read the following in the Holy Qur'an regarding Luqman's will to his son:

وَلا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

"And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth; for God loveth not any arrogant boaster." **[*The Holy Qur'an, Luqman 31:18*]**

In the next verse we read:

وَاقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِن صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ

"And be moderate in thy pace, and lower thy voice; for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass." **[*The Holy Qur'an, Luqman 31:19*]**

We read in a tradition from the Prophet of God :

مَن مَشَى عَلى الأرْضِ اخْتِيالاً لَعَنَتْهُ الأرْضُ وَمَنْ تَحْتَها وَمَن فَوقَها.

"The Earth, everyone on it and everyone in it curse whoever walks with pride on the Earth."[7]

In another tradition recorded in Amali we read that the Prophet admonished against walking with pride

and haughtiness and said:

مَنْ لَبِسَ ثَوباً فاغْتَالَ فِيهِ خَسَفَ اللهُ بهِ مِن شَفِيرِ جَهَنَّمَ وَكانَ قَرينَ قارُونَ لأنَّهُ أوَّلُ مَن اخْتالَ فَخَسَفَ اللهُ بِهِ وَبِدارِه الأرْضَ.

"Wboever wears a garment and gets too proud and makes a show of it, then God will make him sink into edge of Hell. He will be the companion of Qarun (Korah), since Qarun was the first man who established haughtiness. God made him and his house sink into the earth."[8]

We also read that Imam Sadiq said:

باب اَنَّ الإيمانَ مَبثوثٌ لجوارح البدن كلها: و رِجْلاَهُ اللّتانِ يَمشيِي بهما

"God has made faith incumbent upon all our body parts and has divided it amongst them. He has made it incumbent upon our legs not to walk towards committing sins, rather to walk in ways to please God."[9]

Witnesses on the Resurrection Day

God the Almighty said in the Holy Qur'an:

الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَى أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

"That Day shall We set a seal on their mouths. But their hands will speak to us, and their feet bear witness, to all that they did." [***The Holy Qur'an, Ya-Sin 36:65***]

He also said:

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them as to their actions." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nur 24:24***]

There have been various views on how the body parts will witness:

1 Some believe that on that Day God will make them understand and empower them to talk, and they will talk. It is not surprising for the Creator who initially created this power in us to create it in our body parts.

2 Some believe that on that Day God will only empower them to talk but they will not understand. They

will just express the facts to God.

3 Others believe that our body parts will certainly carry the effects of what was done by them during our lifetime. The appearance of these effects is like them witnessing. This view can also be seen a lot in the day-to-day sayings like "your eyes witness to your not having slept." A Persian poet said: "The color of the face witnesses about the secret within."[10]

Let's Take Steps to Help Fulfill the Believers' Needs

Regarding the rights of the legs Imam Sajjad said: "And the right of your legs is that you walk not with them toward that which is unlawful to you. And you should not direct them in the way that will lead the person they carry to being debased." Therefore, we must make an effort to help fulfill the believers' needs if we want to improve ourselves. Ali ibn Ibrahim quoted on the authority of his father, on the authority of Himad, on the authority of Ibrahim ibn Omar Yamani, on the authority of Imam Sadiq :

مَا مِنْ مُؤمِنٍ يَمْشِي لأخِيهِ المُؤمِنِ في حَاجَةٍ إلاّ كَتَبَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لهُ بِكُلِّ خُطْوَةٍ حَسَنَةً وَحَطَّ عَنْهُ بِها سَيِّئَةً وَرَفَعَ لهُ بِها دَرَجَةً.

"A believer does not move to help fulfill another believer's needs but that God will record a good deed for him for every step he takes, and wipe out one of his wrong-doings and raise him in rank."[11]

We also read in Makarim ul-Akhlaq that Imam Sajjad said:

"You have no escape from standing upon the narrow bridge (*Al-Sirat* [*over Hell*])*, so you should see to it that your legs do not slip and cause you to fall into the Fire."*[12]

The People Entering Hell

God informs us about this event in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

وَإِن مِّنكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَى رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوا وَّنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا

"Not one of you but will pass over it: this is, with thy Lord, a Decree which must be accomplished. But We shall save those who guarded against evil, and We shall leave the wrongdoers therein, (***humbled***) ***to their knees."***[***The Holy Qur'an, Maryam 19:71-72***]

There is extensive discussion among the interpreters of the Qur'an regarding what is meant by the phrase "you shall all enter Hell" in this verse. Some believe that it means all the people will approach it whether they are good or bad. They believe that the good people will then be released, but the wicked ones will be placed there. They use the similarity in the wording in Arabic that is used in this verse, and

that used in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an about Moses and what happened to him to support this view:

وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاء مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ

"And when he arrived at the watering (place) in Madyan, he found..." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Qasas 28:23***]

Others believe that this does not imply just an approach to Hell. Rather it means that all the people will enter Hell. However, believers are saved from the Fire and the unbelievers will remain there. The last sentence of the verse and the related traditions all support this view. Jabir ibn Abdullah was asked about this verse. He pointed to both his ears and said: I heard with both my ears that the Prophet said the following. May I get deaf from both ears if I lie:

الوُرودُ (يعني) الدُّخُول. لا يَبْقى بَرٌّ وَلا فاجِرٌ إلا يَدْخُلُها فَتَكُونُ عَلى المُؤمِنِينَ بَرداً وَسَلاماً كَما كانَتْ عَلى إبْراهِيمَ، حَتىّ أنَّ للنّارِ (أو قالَ: لِجَهَنَّمَ) ضَجِيجاً مِن بَرْدِها. ثُمَّ يُنَجّي اللهُ الّذينَ اتَّقَوا وَيَذَرُ الظّالِمِينَ فِيها جِثِيّاً.

"Entry in this verse means really going in. There are no good-doers or bad-doers that will not enter Hell. However, the Fire will cool off for the believers and it will be safe for them just as it was for Abraham, until the Fire [*or he said: Hell*] *will cry out from* (*the excessive*) *cold. Then God will rescue the pious people and abandon the oppressors in it, in a state of humiliation."*[13]

In another tradition from the Prophet we read:

تَقُولُ النّارُ لِلمُؤمِنِ يومَ القِيامَةِ: جُزْ يا مُؤْمِنُ، فقَدْ أطْفَأَ نُورُكَ لَهَبي

"On the Resurrection Day the Fire will tell the believer: "Pass through, O believer, for your light has extinguished my flames."[14]

The other traditions regarding the Bridge over Hell that is finer than hair and sharper than a sword also support this view. In a tradition from the Prophet he said:

يَرِدُ النّاسُ النّارَ ثُمَّ يَصْدُرونَ بِأعْمالِهِم، فَأوَّلهُمُ كَلَمْعِ البَرْقِ ثُمَّ كَمَرِّ الرّيحِ ثُمّ كَحَضْرِ الفَرَسِ ثُمَّ كالرّاكِبِ ثُمّ كَشَدِّ الأرْجُلِ ثُمَّ كَمَشْيِه..

"All the people will enter Hell but leave it according to their deeds. Some come out like a flash of lightning, some come out with the speed of a strong wind, others will come running out like a fast-running horse. Some come out like a horse that is walking. Some will come out like a person that is

walking fast and some leave it like a person walking at a normal speed."[15]

The Ankle

The ankle is a complex mechanism. What we normally think of as the ankle is actually made up of two joints: the **subtalar joint**, and the **true ankle joint**. The true ankle joint is composed of 3 bones, seen above from a front, or anterior, view: the **tibia** which forms the inside, or medial, portion of the ankle; the **fibula** which forms the lateral, or outside portion of the ankle; and the **talus** underneath. The true ankle joint is responsible for up and down motion of the foot.

Beneath the true ankle joint is the second part of the ankle, the subtalar joint, which consists of the **talus** on top and **calcaneus** on the bottom. The subtalar joint allows side-to-side motion of the foot. The ends of the bones in these joints are covered by **articular cartilage**. The major ligaments of the ankle are: the **anterior tibiofibular** ligament, which connects the tibia to the fibula.

The **lateral collateral** ligaments, which attach the fibula to the calcaneus and gives the ankle lateral stability; and, on the medial side of the ankle, the **deltoid** ligaments, which connect the tibia to the talus and calcaneus and provide medial stability. These components of your ankle, along with the muscles and tendons of your lower leg, work together to handle the stress your ankle receives as you walk, run and jump.

The Hip

The hip is a ball-and-socket joint where the head of the femur articulates with the cuplike acetabulum of the pelvic bone.

The Knee

The bones of the knee, the **femur** and the **tibia**, meet to form a hinge joint. The joint is protected in front by the **patella**.[16] The knee joint is cushioned by **articular cartilage** that covers the ends of the tibia and femur, as well as the underside of the patella. The lateral **meniscus** and medial meniscus are pads of cartilage that further cushion the joint, acting as shock absorbers between the bones. Ligaments help to stabilize the knee. The **collateral ligaments** run along the sides of the knee and limit sideways motion.

The **anterior cruciate ligament**, or **ACL**, connects the tibia to the femur at the center of the knee. Its function is to limit rotation and forward motion of the tibia. The posterior cruciate ligament, or PCL located just behind the ACL limits backward motion of the tibia. These components of your knee, along with the muscles of your leg, work together to manage the stress your knee receives as you walk, run and jump.

The Jurisprudents' Views on the Worth of the Legs

Now we will discuss the jurisprudents' view on the value of the legs. Imam Sajjad gave us many useful moral suggestions regarding the rights of the legs. But the question here is the jurisprudents' view on their worth. We read the following in Mabani Takmilat al-Minhaj: "There is full compensation for cutting off both legs. The compensation for each leg is half that amount. It does not make any difference whether the leg is cut off from the joints, the knees or the thighs." 17

There is full compensation for cutting off all the toes. We read the following in Mukhtasar ul-Manafi': "There is full compensation for both legs. There is half compensation for each leg. The place where the legs meet the knees is the limit. The compensation for the toes is the same as that for the fingers of the hands."18

1. In the other version it is followed by: "You have no escape from standing upon the narrow bridge (al-sirat [over Hell]), so you should see to it that your legs do not slip and cause you to fall in the Fire."
2. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.15, footnote on p.147.
3. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v.15, p.149.
4. Makarim al-Akhlaq, p.22.
5. Tafsir-i-Namuneh, v.15, p.153.
6. Makarim al-Akhlaq, p.22.
7. Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.4, p.207.
8. Ibid.
9. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.34.
10. Tafsir-i-Namuneh, v.18, p.431.
11. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.197.
12. The Complete Edition of the Treatise on Rights, Imam Sajjad; research and translation by Dr. Ali Peiravi and Ms. Lisa Zaynab Morgan.
13. Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.3, p.353.
14. Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.3, p.354.
15. Ibid. p.353.
16. The kneecap.
17. Mabani' Takmilat al-Minhaj, v.2, p.314.
18. Mukhtasar al-Manafi', p.301.

Right n. 7: The Right of the Hand

حق اليد

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ يَدِكَ فَأَنْ لا تَبْسُطَهَا إِلَى مَا لا يَحِلُّ لَكَ فَتَنَالَ بِمَا تَبْسُطُهَا إِلَيْهِ مِنَ اللهِ الْعُقُوبَةَ فِي الآجِلِ، وَمِنَ النَّاسِ بِلِسَانِ

اللائِمَةِ فِي الْعَاجِلِ، وَلا تَقْبضَهَا مِمَّا افْتَرَضَ اللهُ عَلَيْهَا وَلَكِنْ تُوقّرَهَا بقَبْضِهَا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ مِمَّا يَحِلُّ لَهَا وبَسْطِهَا إلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّا لَيسَ عَلَيْهَا، فَإذَا هِيَ قَدْ عُقِلَتْ وَشُرِّفَتْ فِي الْعَاجِلِ وَجَبَ لَهَا حُسْنُ الثَّوَاب فِي الآجِلِ.

And the right of your hand is that you stretch it not toward that which is unlawful to you. Should you do so, you will be chastised by God in the future. And you are not secure from the blameful tongue of the people now, either. Do not prevent your hands from performing what God has made obligatory for them. You should honor your hands in such a way as to prevent them from engaging in many of the deeds that are not allowed for them. You should let them engage in many deeds that are not harmful for them. If they are used by the intellect and with honor now, then they are bound to receive a good reward in the future.[1]

Hand is used in several contexts:

1 – It is sometimes used to represent possession of rule as in the following verse:

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَن تَشَاء وَتَنزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّن تَشَاء وَتُعِزُّ مَن تَشَاء وَتُذِلُّ مَن تَشَاء بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَىَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Say: "O God! Lord of Power (and Rule), Thou givest power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest: Thou enduest with honour whom Thou pleasest, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: In Thy hand is all good. Verily, over all things Thou hast power." [***The Holy Qur'an, Al-i-Imran 3:26***]

2 – In other places, it is used to indicate stinginess or generosity as in the following verse:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُواْ بِمَا قَالُواْ بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاء وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيراً مِّنْهُم مَّا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا وَأَلْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاء إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ كُلَّمَا أَوْقَدُواْ نَارًا لِّلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللّهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الأَرْضِ فَسَادًا وَاللّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

The Jews say: "God's hand is tied up." Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for the (blasphemy) they utter. Nay, both His hands are widely outstretched: He giveth and spendeth (of His bounty) as He pleaseth. But the revelation that cometh to thee from God increaseth in most of them their obstinate rebellion and blasphemy. Amongst them we have placed enmity and hatred till the Day of Judgment. Every time they kindle the fire of war, God doth extinguish it; but they (ever) strive to do mischief on earth. And God loveth not those who do mischief." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Ma'ida 5:64***]

3 – In other places, it is used to refer to possession of power as in the following verse:

وَاذْكُرْ عِبَادَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ أُولِي الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ

"And commemorate Our Servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, possessors of Power and Vision." [***The Holy Qur'an, Saad 38:45***]

Hand as a Source of Corruption

Even though our two hands are such important God-given blessings that have a compensation equal to full compensation for one's life, they are also considered to be the source of corruption as we can read in the following verse:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُم بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

"Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (***the meed***) ***that the hands of men have earned, that*** (***God***) ***may give them a taste of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back*** (***from Evil***)***."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Rum 30:41***]

Undoubtedly crimes are committed using hands, and affect both the individuals and the society. There will also be reactions to these deeds. We read in the following verse:

وَمَا أَصَابَكُم مِّن مُّصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَن كَثِيرٍ

"Whatever misfortune happens to you is because of the things your hands have wrought, and for many (***of them***) ***He grants forgiveness."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Shura 42:30***]

Thus, we realize that many misfortunes that we experience are a direct result of our own deeds, and are sometimes divine punishment. We read in the following verse:

وَأَنفِقُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ وَلاَ تُلْقُواْ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوَاْ إِنَّ اللّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

"And spend of your substance in the cause of God, and make not your own hands contribute to (***your***) ***destruction; but do good; for God loveth those who do good."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:195***]

Therefore, we are admonished against doing evil deeds that will result in our own destruction. We are encouraged to give charity and do good deeds. Sometimes we use our hands with which we must build our homes to destroy them as we read in the following verse:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِن دِيَارِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ مَا ظَنَنتُمْ أَن يَخْرُجُوا وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُم مَّانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ فَأَتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُم بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

"It is He Who got out the Unbelievers among the People of the Book from their homes at the first gathering (of the forces). Little did ye think that they would get out: And they thought that their fortresses would defend them from God! But the (Wrath of) God came to them from quarters from which they little expected (it), and cast terror into their hearts, so that they destroyed their dwellings by their own hands and the hands of the Believers. Take warning, then, O ye with eyes (to see)!" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Hashr 59:2***]

This verse refers to the Jews who destroyed their own castles from within. It may also have some philosophical connotations.

Murder Committed by Hands

The most painful aspect of the story of the two sons of Adam is the murdering of one by the other. When God accepted the offering from one of them but rejected that of the other one, the latter threatened to kill the former. In response the brother said:

لَئِنْ بَسَطْتَ إِلَيَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِيَ إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَكَ ۖ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"If thou dost stretch thy hand against me, to slay me, it is not for me to stretch my hand against thee to slay thee: for I do fear God, the Cherisher of the Worlds." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Mai'da 5:28***]

Now let us look at the traditions about hands. In *Usul al-Kafi*, there is a whole chapter on the hand and other body parts, and what God has made incumbent upon them. Imam Sadiq said:

وَفَرَضَ اللهُ عَلى اليَدَينِ أنْ لا يَبْطِشَ بِهِما إلى مَا حَرَّمَ اللهُ وأنْ يَبْطِشَ بِهِما إلى ما أَمَرَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَفَرَضَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِما مِنَ الصَّدَقَةِ وَصِلَةِ الرَّحِمِ والجِهادِ في سَبِيلِ اللهِ والطَّهُورِ للصَّلاةِ

"And God made it incumbent upon the hands not to extend out for what God has forbidden, and do what the Almighty God has decreed for them including giving charity, establishing the ties of kinship, fighting in the way of God, and making ablutions for the prayers."[2]

Then Imam Sadiq recited the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلاةِ فاغْسِلُواْ وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُواْ بِرُؤُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ

"O ye who believe! When ye prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands (and arms) to the elbows; rub your heads; and your feet to the ankles..." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Mai'da 5:6***]

There are several uses for hands mentioned in the Qur'an. We will briefly refer to some of them here.

Pledge of Allegiance with Hands

The hand is used to pledge allegiance to someone. Consider the following verse in this regard:

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

"God's Good Pleasure was on the Believers when they swore Fealty to thee under the Tree: He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down Tranquility to them; and He rewarded them with a speedy Victory." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Fath 48:18***]

Usually hand-shaking is used in making a deal. It is also used to declare one's allegiance to someone, and one's readiness to acknowledge his power and to obey him. This is a form of a deal which brings mutual responsibilities. One accepts to obey the other, and the other one accepts to protect and defend him. Ibn Khaldoon wrote: "When they wanted to pledge allegiance with the leader, they placed their hands in his hands, like what a seller and a buyer do."[3]

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَن نَّكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهُ اللَّهَ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيما

"Verily those who plight their fealty to thee do no less than plight their fealty to God: the Hand of God is over their hands: then anyone who violates his oath, does so to the harm of his own soul, and anyone who fulfils what he has covenanted with God, - God will soon grant him a great Reward." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Fath 48:10***]

This pledge of allegiance by the men was done by shaking hands. However, for women to pledge allegiance, a bowl of water was used to provide an intermediate media. The Prophet would put his hands in water, and the women would touch the water to pledge allegiance to him. The pledge of allegiance of the people with the Prophet and the Immaculate Imams was meant to indicate their loyalty to them, and its breach was considered a great sin. Imam Musa ibn Ja'far said:

ثَلاثٌ مُوبِقاتٌ: نَكْثُ الصَّفْقَةِ وَتَرْكُ السُّنَّةِ وَفِراقُ الجَماعَةِ.

"There are three sins which will cause one's destruction: breaching one's allegiance, abandoning the tradition (of the Prophet), and separation of oneself from the society."[4]

We do not intend to discuss all aspects of allegiance here. It is sufficient to note that the hands are used to pledge allegiance

.

Payment of the Jizyah with the Hand

One of the uses for hands mentioned in the Qur'an is the payment of 'Jizyah'. 'Jizyah' is a form of tax paid by the non-Muslims who live under the protection of the Islamic state. The tax is paid in return for the protection they receive. We read in the following verse:

قَاتِلُواْ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّهِ وَلاَ بِالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَلاَ يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلاَ يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُواْ الْجِزْيَةَ عَن يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ

"Fight those who believe not in God nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by God and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (***even if they are***) ***of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Tawbah 9:29***]

The payment of this tax is an indication of submission to the decrees of Islam and the Holy Qur'an. It is a form of tax on individuals, not their land or property. Several treaties have been signed regarding this issue. We cite one as an example here. In the treaty between Khalid ibn Walid and the Christians we read: "This is a letter from Khalid ibn Walid to Salvaba ibn Nastoofa[5] and his tribe.

I sign this treaty with you for tax and defense. Based on this treaty, you are under our protection. We can charge you this tax as long as we protect you. Otherwise, we have no rights. This treaty is signed in the month of Safar of the twelfth year after the migration of the Prophet to Medina."[6]

The Anatomy of the Hand

The hand is composed of many small bones called **carpals, metacarpals** and **phalanges**. The two bones of the lower arm – the **radius** and the **ulna** – meet at the hand to form the wrist.

The median and ulnar nerves are the major nerves of the hand, running the length of the arm to transmit electrical impulses to and from the brain to create movement and sensation.

The skeleton of the hand is subdivided into three segments: the **carpus** or **wrist bones;** the **metacarpus** or **bones of the palm;** and the **phalanges** or **bones of the digits**.

The Carpus (Ossa Carpi)

The **carpal bones,** eight in number, are arranged in two rows. Those of the proximal row, from the radial

to the ulnar side, are named the **navicular, lunate, triangular,** and **pisiform;** those of the distal row, in the same order, are named the **greater multangular, lesser multangular, capitate,** and **hamate.**

Common Characteristics of the Carpal Bones

Each bone (excepting the pisiform) presents six surfaces. Of these the *volar* or *anterior* and the *dorsal* or *posterior surfaces* are rough, for ligamentous attachment; the dorsal surfaces being the broader, except in the navicular and lunate. The *superior* or *proximal,* and *inferior* or *distal surfaces* are articular, the superior generally convex, the inferior concave; the *medial* and *lateral surfaces* are also articular where they are in contact with contiguous bones, otherwise they are rough and tuberculated. The structure in all is similar, viz., cancellous tissue enclosed in a layer of compact bone.

Bones of the Proximal Row (upper row)

The Navicular Bone (os naviculare manus; scaphoid bone)

The navicular bone is the largest bone of the proximal row. It has received its name from its fancied resemblance to a boat. It is situated at the radial side of the carpus, its long axis being from above downward, sideways, and forward. The **superior surface** is convex, smooth, of triangular shape, and articulates with the lower end of the radius. The **inferior surface,** directed downward, sideways, and backward, is also smooth, convex, and triangular, and is divided by a slight ridge into two parts, the lateral articulating with the greater multangular, the medial with the lesser multangular.

On the **dorsal surface** is a narrow, rough groove, which runs the entire length of the bone, and serves for the attachment of ligaments. The **volar surface** is concave above, and elevated at its lower and lateral part into a rounded projection, the **tubercle,** which is directed forward, provides attachment to the transverse carpal ligament, and sometimes is the origin to a few fibers of the abductor pollicis brevis.

The **lateral surface** is rough and narrow, and provides attachment to the radial collateral ligament of the wrist. The **medial surface** presents two articular facets; of these, the superior or smaller is flattened of semilunar form, and articulates with the lunate bone; the inferior or larger is concave, forming with the lunate a concavity for the head of the capitate bone.

The Lunate Bone (os lunatum; semilunar bone)

The lunate bone may be distinguished by its deep concavity and crescentic outline. It is situated in the center of the proximal row of the carpus, between the navicular and triangular. The **superior surface,** convex and smooth, articulates with the radius. The **inferior surface** is deeply concave, and of greater extent from before backward than transversely: it articulates with the head of the capitate, and, by a long, narrow facet (separated by a ridge from the general surface), with the hamate. The **dorsal** and **volar surfaces** are rough, for the attachment of ligaments, the former being the broader, and of a somewhat rounded form. The **lateral surface** presents a narrow, flattened, semilunar facet for

articulation with the navicular. The **medial surface** is marked by a smooth, quadrilateral facet, for articulation with the triangular.

The Triangular Bone (os triquetum; cuneiform bone)

The triangular bone may be distinguished by its pyramidal shape, and by an oval isolated facet for articulation with the pisiform bone. It is situated at the upper and ulnar side of the carpus. The **superior surface** presents a medial, rough, non-articular portion, and a lateral convex articular portion that articulates with the triangular articular disk of the wrist. The **inferior surface,** directed sideways, is concave, sinuously curved, and smooth for articulation with the hamate.

The **dorsal surface** is rough for the attachment of ligaments. The **volar surface** presents, on its medial part, an oval facet, for articulation with the pisiform; its lateral part is rough for ligamentous attachment. A flat, quadrilateral facet, for articulation with the lunate, marks the lateral surface, the base of the pyramid. The **medial surface,** the summit of the pyramid, is pointed and roughened, for the attachment of the ulnar collateral ligament of the wrist.

The Pisiform Bone (os pisiforme)

The pisiform bone may be known by its small size, and by presenting a single articular facet. It is situated on a plane anterior to the other carpal bones and is spheroidal in form. Its **dorsal surface** presents a smooth, oval facet, for articulation with the triangular: this facet approaches the superior, but not the inferior border of the bone. The **volar surface** is rounded and rough, and gives attachment to the transverse carpal ligament, and to the Flexor carpi ulnaris and Abductor digiti quinti. The **lateral** and **medial surfaces** are also rough, the former being concave, the latter usually convex.

Bones of the Distal Row (lower row)

The Greater Multangular Bone (***os multangulum majus; trapezium***)—The greater multangular bone may be distinguished by a deep groove on its volar surface. It is situated at the radial side of the carpus, between the navicular and the first metacarpal bone. The **superior surface** is directed upward and towards the middle; medially it is smooth, and articulates with the navicular; laterally it is rough and continuous with the lateral surface. The **inferior surface** is oval, and forms a saddle-shaped surface for articulation with the base of the first metacarpal bone.

The **dorsal surface** is rough. The **volar surface** is narrow and rough. At its upper part is a deep groove, running from above obliquely downward and towards the middle; it transmits the tendon of the Flexor carpi radialis, and is bounded laterally by an oblique ridge. This surface gives origin to the Opponens pollicis and to the Abductor and Flexor pollicis brevis; it also affords attachment to the transverse carpal ligament. The **lateral surface** is broad and rough, for the attachment of ligaments. The **medial surface** presents two facets; the upper, large and concave, articulates with the lesser multangular; the lower, small and oval, with the base of the second metacarpal.

The Lesser Multangular Bone (os multangulum minus; trapezoid bone)

The lesser multangular is the smallest bone in the distal row. It may be known by its wedge-shaped form, the broad end of the wedge constituting the dorsal, the narrow end the volar surface; and its four articular facets touching each other, and separated by sharp edges. The **superior surface,** quadrilateral, smooth, and slightly concave, articulates with the navicular. The **inferior surface** articulates with the proximal end of the second metacarpal bone; it is convex from side to side, concave from before backward and subdivided by an elevated ridge into two unequal facets.

The **dorsal** and **volar surfaces** are rough for the attachment of ligaments, the former being the larger of the two. The **lateral surface,** convex and smooth, articulates with the greater multangular. The **medial surface** is concave and smooth in front, for articulation with the capitate; rough behind, for the attachment of an interosseous ligament.

The Capitate Bone (os capitatum; os magnum)

The capitate bone is the largest of the carpal bones, and occupies the center of the wrist. It presents, above, a rounded portion or head, which is received into the concavity formed by the navicular and lunate; a constricted portion or neck; and below this, the body. The **superior surface** is round, smooth, and articulates with the lunate. The **inferior surface** is divided by two ridges into three facets, for articulation with the second, third, and fourth metacarpal bones, that for the third being the largest. The **dorsal surface** is broad and rough. The **volar surface** is narrow, rounded, and rough, for the attachment of ligaments and a part of the Adductor pollicis obliquus.

The **lateral surface** articulates with the lesser multangular by a small facet at its anterior inferior angle, behind which is a rough depression for the attachment of an interosseous ligament. Above this is a deep, rough groove, forming part of the neck, and serving for the attachment of ligaments; it is bounded superiorly by a smooth, convex surface, for articulation with the navicular. The **medial surface** articulates with the hamate by a smooth, concave, oblong facet, which occupies its posterior and superior parts; it is rough in front, for the attachment of an interosseous ligament.

The Hamate Bone (os hamatum; unciform bone)

The hamate bone may be readily distinguished by its wedge-shaped form, and the hook-like process which projects from its volar surface. It is situated at the medial and lower angle of the carpus, with its base downward, resting on the fourth and fifth metacarpal bones, and its apex directed upward and lateralward. The **superior surface,** the apex of the wedge, is narrow, convex, smooth, and articulates with the lunate.

The **inferior surface** articulates with the fourth and fifth metacarpal bones by concave facets that are separated by a ridge. The **dorsal surface** is triangular and rough for ligamentous attachment. The **volar**

surface presents, at its lower and ulnar side, a curved, hook-like process, the **hamulus,** directed forward and sideways. This process gives attachment, by its apex, to the transverse carpal ligament and the Flexor carpi ulnaris; by its medial surface to the Flexor brevis and Opponens digiti quinti; its lateral side is grooved for the passage of the Flexor tendons into the palm of the hand.

It is one of the four eminences on the front of the carpus to which the transverse carpal ligament of the wrist is attached; the others being the pisiform medially, the oblique ridge of the greater multangular and the tubercle of the navicular laterally. The **medial surface** articulates with the triangular bone by an oblong facet, cut obliquely from above, downward and medialward. The *lateral surface* articulates with the capitate by its upper and posterior part, the remaining portion being rough, for the attachment of ligaments.

The Jurisprudents' View on the Value of the Hands

In Islamic jurisprudence the hands are so highly valued that one-half of full compensation is decreed for each one. The compensation for both hands is equal to full compensation for one's life: "The compensation for chopping off both hands is equal to the full compensation for one's life. The compensation for each hand is half of that amount. There is no discord among the jurisprudents on this issue."[7]

There are many traditions to support this. We can refer to the traditions that hold that there is full compensation for body parts of which we have two, like the eyes, the hands and the legs. Hisham ibn Salim quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq : "There is full compensation for parts of which we have two, and half compensation for each."[8]

Imam Khomeini said: "There is full compensation for both hands. There is half compensation for each hand. The left or the right hands are not any different in this respect. There is half compensation for one who only has one hand either through birth or through losing one hand before."[9]

He also said: "What is the extent of the hand that is so valuable? It extends from the joints that connect the palm of the hand to the wrist. The compensation for the fingers is half of full compensation too." [10]

Trustworthiness Makes the Hands Valuable

It was said that the blood money to compensate for both hands is equal to that for one's life. Once Abu'l-`Ala`al-Ma`arri went to see Sayyid Morteza to object to the chopping off of fingers as a penalty for theft. He said: "How is it they chop-off a hand worth five hundred Mithqals[11] of gold for stealing only one quarter of a Dinar?" Abu'l 'Ala who was an infidel did not agree with this ruling.

Then Sayyid Morteza replied: "The nobility of trustworthiness has raised the value of the hand, but the humility of treachery reduces it. Then try to understand the Wisdom of your Lord." In another reference

the reply is recorded as: “It is the guarding of property that has raised the value of the hand, but transgression of property reduces its value. Then try to ponder over the Wisdom of your Lord.” There was another man present who replied: “The hand is highly valued when it is oppressed. But it loses its value when it oppresses.”

There are many other sayings in this regard which all support the idea that the hand is valuable as long as it is trustworthy, but it loses its value when used in treachery, for stealing or oppression.12

1. If the hands are not used to engage in what is forbidden.
2. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.36.
3. Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldun, p.209
4. Tafsir Namuneh, v.22, p.70, quoted from Bihar al-Anwar, v.67, p.185.
5. The Christian chief.
6. Tafsir Namuneh, v.7, p.357, quoted from Tafsir al-Minar, v.10, p.294.
7. Mabani Tuklimat al-Minhaj, v.2, p.299.
8. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, v.19, p.217.
9. Tahrir al-Wasilah, v.2, p.578.
10. Ibid.
11. A unit of weight equal to 4.25 grams.
12. Rawzat al-Jinnat, v.1, p.271.

Right n. 8: The Right of the Stomach

حق البطن

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ بَطْنِكَ فَأَنْ لا تَجْعَلَهُ وِعَاءً لِقَلِيلٍ مِنَ الْحَرَامِ وَلا لِكَثِيرٍ، وَأَنْ تَقْتَصِدَ لَهُ فِي الْحَلالِ وَلا تُخرِجَهُ مِنْ حَدِّ التَّقْوِيَةِ إِلَى حَدِّ التَّهْوِينِ وَذَهَابِ الْمُرُوَّةِ، وَضَبْطُهُ إِذَا هَمَّ بالْجُوعِ والظمأ فَإِنَّ الشَّبْعَ الْمُنْتَهِي بصَاحِبِهِ إِلَى التُّخمِ مَكْسَلَةٌ وَمَثْبَطَةٌ وَمَقْطَعَةٌ عَنْ كُلِّ بِرٍّ وَكَرَمٍ. وَإِنَّ الري الْمُنْتَهِي بصَاحِبِهِ إِلَى السُّكْرِ مَسْخَفَةٌ وَمَجْهَلَةٌ وَمَذْهَبَةٌ لِلْمُرُوَّةِ.

And the right of your stomach is that you make it not into a container for a little of that which is unlawful to you or a lot of it. You should be determined to eat what is lawful and not exceed the bounds of strengthening to the extent of belittling your stomach1 to the point that you lose your manliness. And you should restrain it whenever you are extremely hungry or thirsty, since getting really full will cause indigestion, sluggishness, indolence, and it will hinder you from nobility and any good deeds. And drinking too much will make you feel drunk, light-headed, ignorant, and take away your manliness.

.

Imam Sajjad has described our stomach as a container for food that we must fill with moderation. We

must only fill it with legitimate foods and drinks. We should do all we can to strengthen ourselves, but we should not forget moderation.

Man Needs Food

All men need food. We cannot survive if our food supplies are cut off. Some people thought that the Prophet did not need to eat food. The Holy Qur'an rejects this idea and says:

وَمَا جَعَلْنَاهُمْ جَسَدًا لَّا يَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُوا خَالِدِينَ

"Nor did We give them bodies that ate no food, nor were they exempt from death." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Anbiyaa 21:8***]

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

وَقَالُوا مَالِ هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونَ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا

"And they say: "What sort of an apostle is this, who eats food, and walks through the streets? Why has not an angel been sent down to him to give admonition with him?" [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Furqan 25:7***]

The Qur'an instructs us to think about our need to eat:

ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَىٰ طَعَامِهِ

"Then let man look at his food, (***and how We provide it***)***: For that We pour forth water in abundance, and We split the earth in fragments..."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, Abasa 80:24-26***]

The food we eat becomes the closest thing to us. After we eat something, it changes somewhat and part of it gets absorbed and turns into energy and some of it is taken to our cells or stored somewhere in the body and becomes a part of us. We will die of hunger if we cannot get enough food to eat. That is why the Holy Qur'an has placed a special emphasis on food ingredients, and more importantly on plants and vegetables. Have you thought about what is meant by "let man look at his food" in the above verse?

Obviously, it does not mean that we should just look and see what we eat. This means that we should carefully study the structure and makeup of our foods' ingredients, and consider how each affects our body. Then we should think about how food is prepared for us by God through a renewable cycle of creation. Some people have stressed the need to consider whether it is obtained legitimately or not.

In the traditions from the Immaculate Imams the food for the mind has been stressed – that is we should be careful about how we acquire our knowledge. Imam Baqir said: "You should carefully consider from whom you acquire knowledge."2

Imam Sadiq has also stressed this point. When we look at the verse and see what follows in the above verse, we can realize that food for the body is implied, because there is a discussion of rain, splitting the earth, and the flourishing of plants which make up our food. Of course, we should consider both – food for the body and food for the mind. We should see how revelations to the hearts of the Prophets bear fruits that are then stored in the hearts of the Immaculate Imams . Then this knowledge pours out, reaches the hearts of the believers, and yields the fruits of faith and piety.3

Who Creates Food

There are several verses in the Holy Qur'an regarding the creation of foods and drinks.

أَفَرَأَيْتُم مَّا تَحْرُثُونَ أَأَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ لَوْ نَشَاء لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا فَظَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُونَ

"See ye the seed that ye sow in the ground? Is it ye that cause it to grow, or are We the Cause? Were it Our Will, We could crumble it to dry powder, and ye would be left in wonderment." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Waqi`ah 56:63-65***]

Notice how it is stressed that the people plant the seeds in the ground, but it is God who makes them grow. The Prophet said:

لا يَقُولَنَّ أَحَدُكُم "زَرَعْتُ" وَلْيَقُلْ "حَرَثْتُ،" فإنَّ الزَّارِعَ هُوَ اللهُ.

*"Do not say: I grew the plants. Say: I planted the seeds. This is because it is God who makes them grow."*4

Thus, we are reminded that God is the Creator of all things. If He wills, He can destroy whatever we plant.
In the next verse, we can see the stress on the creation and source of the water that we drink:

أفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ أَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُونَ لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ

"See ye the water which ye drink? Do ye bring it down (***in rain***) ***from the cloud or do We? Were it Our Will, We could make it salt*** (***and unpalatable***)***: then why do ye not give thanks?"*** [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Waqi'ah 56:68-70***]

Here we are called in to judge ourselves on who creates water and brings down the rain, makes the rivers flow, makes the plants grow, and produces our food. Hopefully we can realize the Majesty of God.

Psychological Effects of Food

Scientists agree that food has both good and bad physical and psychological effects on us. Research laboratories are well-equipped to measure the chemical composition of foodstuff and how they affect our body. However, the psychological effects of what we eat have not yet been totally measured. Imam Sadiq said:

إنَّ اللهَ تَبارَكَ وَتَعالى لَمَ يُبِحْ أكْلاً وَلا شُرْباً إلاّ لِمَا فِيهِ المَنْفَعَةُ وَالصَّلاحُ، وَلَمَ يُحَرِّمْ إلاّ ما فِيهِ الضَّرَرُ وَالتَّلَفُ وَالفَسادُ.

"The Almighty God only allowed some things for us to eat and drink due to their benefit and good effects on us, and only forbade us some things due to their harmfulness and ill effects."[5]

The leaders of Islam have all been concerned about the good and bad physical and psychological effects of what we eat and drink.

Drinking Blood Makes One Ruthless

Imam Sadiq expressed the reason why it is forbidden to drink blood:

شِربُ الدَّم) يُسِيءُ الخُلُقَ وُيُورِثُ القَسْوَةَ لِلقَلْبِ وَقِلَّةَ الرّأفَةِ وَالرَّحمَةِ وَلا يُؤمَنُ أنْ يُقْتَلَ وَلَدُهُ وَوالِدُهُ(.

"Drinking blood will make you bad-tempered and ruthless. It will reduce your kindness and mercy so much that you might even kill your own son or father."[6]

The Effects of Drinking Wine

Imam Sadiq expressed the reason why we are forbidden to drink wine or alcoholic drinks:

إنَّ مُدْمِنَ الخَمْرِ كَعابِدِ وَثَنٍ، ويُورِثُهُ الارْتِعاشَ وَيَهْدِمُ مُرُوَّتَهُ وَتَحْمِلُهُ عَلى أنْ يَجْسُرَ عَلى المَحَارِمِ مِنْ سَفْكِ الدِّماءِ وَرُكوبِ الزِّنا، وَلا يُؤْمَنُ إذا سَكِرَ إنْ يَثِبَ عَلى مَحارِمِهِ.

"An alcoholic is like an idol-worshipper. It (alcohol) causes him to tremble and his manliness is destroyed. It induces him to venture into what is forbidden such as bloodshed and fornication. Moreover, even his closest relatives are not secure from being molested by him when he is drunk."[7]

The Physical Effects of Alcohol

Alcohol can easily enter the bloodstream after consumption and can quickly spread throughout the body. Alcohol has a profound effect on almost every organ and system in the body.[8]

1 Alcohol will influence our brain[9] and disable our brain cells. It might cause the rupturing of the tine blood veins, coagulation of blood, or stoppage of the circulation of blood in the brain. Thus, it will lead to a partial or a severe brain stroke that will sometimes cause a drop in blood pressure and result in paralysis.[10]

2 Alcohol will cause various illnesses such as shaking of the hands or the feet, lack of control of our body parts,[11] and weakness of our senses.[12] It also causes insomnia.[13]

3 Alcohol will harm the tongue and our sense of taste. It will reduce the amount of saliva and cause a disorder in its reproduction. It will also cause stomach upset, indigestion, throwing up mixed with clogged blood. It will cause many illnesses in our stomach and intestine and result in ulcer and serious diarrhea.

4 It will weaken the liver,[14] and cause it to swell. It will harden the kidneys and cause pain in the stomach. It might even cause jaundice.[15]

5 Alcohol is not usable in the body. Therefore, if we drink, it will enter our blood stream and destroy the white blood cells. It might even cause such a drop in our blood pressure that we might have a brain stroke.

6 One of the major ill effects of drinking alcohol is its influence on the lungs. Alcohol will travel along with our blood stream into our lungs, and it will irritate the lung and cause it to swell. This will result in destruction of calcium and end in tuberculosis.

7 Another ill effect of drinking alcohol is damage to the cardiovascular system.[16]

Alcohol Causes Insanity

Alcoholic drinks are the main cause of insanity. The statistics[17] show that most insane people are those who have been drinking for many years in their life. There are nearly two hundred thousand such cases in France. Nearly ninety percent of the insanities in England have been alcohol related.[18]

Genetic Effects of Alcohol

Alcohol has a bad effect on the cells of a baby. A German scientist has proved that this influence will genetically affect three generations, even if they do not drink.[19] That is why Islam has forbidden drinking alcohol. Imam Sajjad stressed that we should keep our stomachs void of forbidden things. The Prophet said:

مَلْعونٌ مَنْ جَلَسَ عَلى مَائِدَةٍ يُشْرَبُ عَلَيها الخَمْرُ.

"Whoever sits with those who are drinking is deprived of God's Mercy."[20]

Ayatollah Dastghayb quoted from Sayyid Abul Ali Mawdoody's Tangh: "The U.S. government used many ways to fight alcoholism. It used magazines, newspapers, lectures, and seminars, even movies to combat alcoholism. It spent more than eight million dollars, and published more than ten million pages of advertisement against it. Over a period of fourteen years, it spent over two hundred fifty million dollars to enforce the law to abolish alcoholic beverages.

It imprisoned three hundred and thirty-five persons, fined people over sixteen million dollars, and seized over four hundred and fifty million dollars' worth of property. All this was of no use. It finally gave up and abolished that law in 1932 and totally freed drinking alcohol."[21]

On the other hand, even though drinking alcoholic beverages was like drinking water for the Arabs in the Age of Ignorance, when Islam came it forbade drinking alcohol and abolished it in a very short time. Thus, it saved Muslims from all the ill effects of alcohol and alcoholism. Scientists today are well aware of the physical effects of alcohol. However, they cannot measure its moral impacts on the loss of manliness and moral values.

Some people are careful about the cleanliness of their living quarters, and the suitability of their food. Should they suspect the least bit of poisoning in their food, they will refuse to eat it. However, they do not care at all about their spiritual well-being, and listen to anything. Imam Ali said:

مَالي أرَى النّاسَ إذا قُرِّبَ إلَيهِمُ الطّعامُ تَكَلَّفوا إنَارَةَ المَصابيحِ لِيُبصِروا ما يُدْخِلونَ بُطونَهُم ولا يَهْتَمّونَ بِغِذاءِ النَّفْسِ بأنْ يُنِيروا مصَابِيحَ أَلْبابِهِم بِالعِلْمِ لِيَسْلَمُوا مِن لَواحِقِ الجَهَالَةِ وَالذُّنوبِ في اعْتِقادَاتِهِم وَأعْمالِهِم؟

"I am amazed at the people who turn on the light to see what they eat when they want to dine in the dark, but do not care about food for their mind. They do not care to illuminate their intellect with the light of knowledge to be safe from making mistakes out of ignorance and wrong beliefs."[22]

Imam Hasan said:

عَجِبتُ لمَنْ يَتَفَكَّرُ في مأكولِهِ كَيفَ لا يَتَفَكَّرُ في مَعْقولِهِ فَيُجَنِّبَ بَطْنَهُ ما يُؤذِيه وَيُودِعَ صَدْرَهُ ما يُرْدِيهِ!

"I am amazed at the people who consider what they eat but do not think about the food for their mind. They guard their stomachs from harmful things, but do not guard their hearts and minds against things that will harm them."

There are many traditions in Islam about proper diet, and proper things to eat or drink. There is a lot of

information about useful or harmful meats, fats, sweets, confectioneries, beans and vegetables. Suayd ibn Ghofleh went to see Imam Ali once at lunchtime.

He narrated: “I saw that Imam Ali was sitting down around the tablecloth with a dried piece of bread made of whole barley. I went to his servants and asked them why they were so inconsiderate not to grind the barley to make flour for the bread for the Imam . They said it was based on his personal orders. Then I returned to the Imam and asked him the reason. Imam Ali said that he had learned this from the Prophet .”23 Imam Sadiq said: “Solomon’s bread was made of whole barley.”24

Ahmad ibn Harun went to see Imam Ridha . Imam Ridha ordered food to be served. They spread the tablecloth and brought some food. There were no fresh green vegetables there. The Imam did not eat, and told his servant: “Do you know that I will not eat unless there are some green vegetables on the table? Go and bring some.” Then the servant went and brought some green vegetables, and the Imam started to eat.”25

The Most Important Advice

The Almighty God said in the Qur’an:

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُواْ زِينَتَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وكُلُواْ وَاشْرَبُواْ وَلاَ تُسْرِفُواْ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

“O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for God loveth not the wasters.” [***The Holy Qur’an, al-A’raf 7:31***]

It has been proved that this is the most important advice for our health. Scientists have done extensive research and have concluded that the roots of many diseases lie in excess food not being absorbed and remaining in the body. This excess fat causes an excessive pressure on the heart. It also serves as a ready place for various infections and diseases. Therefore, the first step to achieve health is to burn off all excessive fat. The main cause of this fat accumulation in the body is overeating and wastefulness. Therefore, we should eat moderately to avoid this ugly condition.

Haroon’s Christian Doctor

Sheikh Tabarsi wrote in Majma’ul Bayan that Haroon ul-Rashid had a Christian doctor in his court. He was a renowned doctor. Once he told one of his Muslim assistants: “I can see no traces of medical advice in your heavenly Book while the most useful knowledge is that of religion and the body.” The Muslim scholar replied: “God the Almighty has summarized all of medicine into one-half of a verse and has said:

وكُلُواْ وَاشْرَبُواْ وَلاَ تُسْرِفُواْ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

"Eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for God loveth not the wasters." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-A'raf 7:31***]

The Prophet has also given the following medical advice:

المَعِدَةُ بَيتُ الأدْواءِ وَالحِمْيَةُ رَأسُ كُلِّ دَواءٍ وَأعْطِ كُلَّ بَدَنٍ مَا عَوَّدْتَهُ.

"The stomach is the home for all illnesses. Abstinence is the best drug, and give your body what you have made it accustomed to."

The Christian doctor said: "Your Book and your Prophet have left nothing for Jalinus[26] in medicine."[27]

Avoid Getting Full

The Noble Prophet said:

الأَكْلُ عَلى الشَّبْعِ يُورِثُ البَرَصَ.

"Eating beyond satiation will cause leprosy."[28]
He also said:

لا تُمِيتوا القُلُوبَ بِكَثْرَةِ الطَّعَامِ وَالشَّرَابِ، فَإنّ القُلوبَ تَمُوتُ كَالزُّروعِ إذا كَثُرَ عَلَيها المَاءُ.

"Do not cause your hearts to die by overeating or over-drinking. Hearts die just as crops do when they are over-watered."[29]

Avoid Forbidden Meals

The Prophet said:

مَن أَكَلَ لُقْمَةَ حَرامٍ لمَ تُقْبَلْ لهُ صَلاةٌ أرْبَعِينَ ليَلَةً وَلمَ تُسْتَجَبْ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ أرْبَعِينَ صَباحاً، فَكُلُّ لحْمٍ يُنْبِتُهُ الحَرامُ فَالنَّارُ أوْلى بِهِ

"The prayers of one who eats a morsel of what is forbidden will not be accepted for forty nights and his calls and supplications will not be answered for forty days. Flesh grown from forbidden food deserves to be burnt in the Fire."[30]

The Prophet said:

إذَا وَقَعَتِ اللُّقْمَةُ مِن حَرامٍ في جَوفِ العَبْدِ لَعَنَهُ كُلُّ مَلَكٍ في السَّماوَاتِ وَالأرْضِ، وَما دَامَتِ اللُّقْمَةُ في جَوفِهِ لا يَنْظُرُ اللهُ إليَهِ، وَمَنْ أَكَلَ لقْمَةً مِن الحَرامِ فقَدْ باءَ بِغَضَبٍ منَ اللهِ فإنْ تابَ تابَ اللهُ عَلَيهِ وإنْ ماتَ فالنّار أوْلى بهِ..

"When a morsel of what is forbidden enters the stomach of a person, every angel in the heavens and on the earth curses him. As long as the morsel is in his body, God will not look upon him. Whoever eats a morsel of what is forbidden has earned God's wrath. If he repents, God will turn to him in forgiveness, and if he dies (*without repentance*) *then he is more deserving of the Fire."*[31]

Regarding the legitimate meals, the Prophet said:

مَن أَكَلَ الحَلالَ أرْبَعِينَ يَوماً نَوَّرَ اللهُ قَلبَهُ وَأجْرى الحِكْمَةَ مِن قَلْبِه عَلى لِسَانِهِ.

"God will illuminate the heart of one who eats what is lawful for forty days, and will make wisdom flow from his heart to his tongue."[32]

The Secret to Good Health

The Prophet said:

مَنْ أكَلَ الطَّعامَ على النَّقاءِ وأَجَادَ الطَّعامَ تَمَضُّغاً وَتَركَ الطَّعامَ وَهُو يَشْتَهِيهِ وَلَمَ يَحبِسِ الغائِطَ إذا أتَى لَمَ يَمْرُضْ إلاّ مَرَضَ المَوْتِ.

"Whoever adheres to hygienic principles regarding eating, and chews his food well, stops eating while he is still not full and does not put off going to the toilet when needed, will not suffer from any illnesses until death."[33]

Imam Sajjad has instructed us to avoid excesses in eating, and practice moderation. We discussed the harms of overeating before. Now let us discuss the harms of undereating and hunger. Hunger is one of the most dangerous human conditions. A hungry person acts as if he forgets his faith and religious beliefs. He turns into a beast in an attempt to get some food to alleviate his hunger.

There was a major revolution in Basra in the 9th century. During his several years of rule, Sahib Zany committed many mass executions. He killed thousands of men, women and children. Those who survived hid in the daytime and left their hiding places at night in search of some food to eat. There was no more work to be done. No one worked on the land, and no one raised animals.

Therefore, deprivation and hunger prevailed. The people ate the cats and the dogs for some time. Then they started to eat the corpses of the dead. Even sometimes, they killed the weak people and ate them. It has been recorded in history that a woman was seen crying while she had a chopped-off head in her

hands.

When asked about the reason she cried and said: “The hungry people surrounded my weak sister, and were waiting for her to die so that they could eat her. They attacked her, killed her, tore her into pieces, and ate her. They oppressed me because they did not give me a share of her meat. They gave me her head, but it is hard to eat!”[34] Notice how she had lost her feelings and senses, and cried over the hard to eat share of hers from her sister’s torn apart body!

The Jurisprudents’ Rule on the Stomach

If anyone hits someone else in the stomach and causes him an injury to the extent that he loses control over his urination and bowl movement, then he must pay one-third of the full compensation or blood money according to the jurisprudents’ rule.[35] This is based on the following tradition. Sokuni quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq : “A man had beaten another one in the stomach so hard that he messed up his pants. Then they asked Imam Ali on how to punish him. Imam Ali said: “He should either deliver an equal blow to his stomach or receive one-third full compensation in return.”

1. By over-eating and over-drinking.
2. Tafsir al-Burhan, v.4, p.429.
3. Tafsir Namuneh, v.26, p.146.
4. Majma’ al-Bayan, v.9, p.223; Ruh al-Bayan, v.9, p.332.
5. Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, v.3, p.71.
6. Ibid.
7. Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, v.3, p.71.
8. In the following footnotes we present the effects of alcohol on the most researched organs or organ systems.
9. The brain is the seat of human thought and consciousness. Therefore any impairment of the brain’s function can lead to drastic changes in a person’s personality and behavior. Even though the brain makes up only two percent of the body’s weight, it takes up about 20 percent of the body’s blood. Since blood is the main medium through which alcohol is spread in the body, the brain is flooded with alcohol whenever you drink. Alcohol can affect the brain’s function and the function of the nervous system in general by several methods including: direct toxic effects, withdrawal, nutritional deficiency, liver disease and head trauma among others.

   One of the direct toxic effects of alcohol is its ability to change the production of neurotransmitters. Alcohol has a detrimental effect on many neurological processes such as temperature regulation, sleep cycle and coordination. Also, chronic alcoholics may suffer from a condition known as Korsakoff’s syndrome. Korsakoff’s syndrome (KS) is a neurological disorder in which one’s short term memory is nearly non-existent. Those that are afflicted with KS are unable to remember events that occur after the onset of the symptoms.

   Perhaps the most obvious effect of alcohol is the actual physiological damage it does to the brain of an alcoholic. Some of the factors that determine how and to what degree one’s brain is damaged by alcohol include age, gender and family history but are not limited to just these. In order for the nervous system to function properly signals must be relayed to and from the brain. Neurotransmitters are essential for nerve-to-nerve communication. They travel between the junctions, known as a synapse, between two nerve cells. Neurotransmitters stimulate receptors on the surface of nerve cells, which in turn carry the signal down the nerve and on to other nerves.

   The production of receptors is very sensitive and can fluctuate in response to chemical and environmental factors. Factors that increase the sensitivity of receptors tend to down-regulate, or decrease the production of receptors while factors that

inhibit a receptor tend to up-regulate or increase the production of receptors. Up and down-regulation allow the nervous system to maintain a balance of neurotransmitters and receptors. Glutamate, an amino acid, is the major excitatory neurotransmitter in the human brain. There is sufficient research to support the fact that even in small doses alcohol can affect the function of glutamate. This interference can affect memory among other things and may cause the loss of short-term memory during periods of over-drinking.

Alcohol has an inhibitory effect on glutamate, which causes the glutamate receptor to be up-regulated, especially in the hippocampus, an area of the brain responsible for memory and related to epileptic seizures. Alcoholics suffering from alcohol withdrawal often suffer from glutamate over-activity due to the up-regulation of the glutamate receptor. Glutamate over-activity has been related to cell death as caused by strokes and seizures. Malnutrition in alcoholics results in a deficiency in thiamine and magnesium, which may also contribute to glutamate over-activity. Another neurotransmitter that is affected by alcohol is gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA).

It is the main inhibitory neurotransmitter of the central nervous system. Alcohol acts as an inhibitory agent for GABA much like it does for glutamate. GABA receptors are up-regulated in alcoholics and when the inhibitory effect of alcohol is lost, GABA over-activity occurs. GABA over-excitation often results in withdrawal seizures – delirium tremens (DT) also known as rum fits. Alcohol also disrupts the function of various other neurotransmitters including serotonin, endorphins and acetylcholine. Serotonin affects moods, appetite and sleep. Stimulation of serotonin in conjunction with the release of endorphins cause the feeling of pleasure that many people get when intoxicated.

Acetylcholine is the key neurotransmitter in controlling cardiovascular mechanisms, including the dilation of blood vessels. It has also been suggested that alcohol may affect the level of catecholamines, a neurotransmitter that has been observed to be suppressed in patients with Korsakoff's syndrome. The toxic effects of alcohol may cause the nervous system to lose control of many of its functions.

10. A study published in the February issue of Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, utilized sophisticated brain scans called functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). The research was headed by Susan F. Tapert, Ph.D., UCSD assistant adjunct professor of psychiatry and a clinical psychologist at the Veterans Affairs Health Care System. She notes that "our findings suggest that even young and physically healthy individuals risk damaging their brains through chronic, heavy use of alcohol."
11. Another effect of long-term alcohol consumption is the loss of muscular coordination. Alcohol damages a part of the brain known as the cerebellum. The cerebellum controls coordinated actions such as walking or swinging a bat. Damage to the cerebellum resulte in loss of coordination and can appear as imbalance and staggering.
12. Drinking alcohol has subtle effects on personality and emotions. It also impairs cognitive abilities such as perception, learning and memory. One of the most severe side effects of chronic alcohol consumption is Korsakoff's syndrome (KS). Patients suffering from KS have virtually no short-term memory. This condition is also known as anterograde amnesia. Alcoholics who develop KS can remember nothing past the day that the syndrome first set in.

Though KS does not affect long-term memories, in effect leaving a person's IQ intact, KS sufferers often are no longer able to function as normal members of society due to their complete lack of short-term memory. Perhaps the most obvious effect of alcohol on the nervous system is the physiological damage that it does to the brain. The areas of the brain that are most affected include the limbic system, diencephalon, cerebral cortex and cerebellum.

13. Chronic insomnia is complex and often results from a combination of factors, including underlying physical or mental disorders. One of the most common causes of chronic insomnia is depression. Other underlying causes include arthritis, kidney disease, heart failure, asthma, sleep apnea, narcolepsy, restless legs syndrome, Parkinson's disease and hyperthyroidism. However chronic insomnia may also be due to behavioral factors including the misuse of caffeine, alcohol or other substances; disrupted sleep/wake cycles as may occur with shift work or other nighttime activity schedules, and chronic stress.
14. The liver is where all alcohol must eventually go to be processed and neutralized. It follows that the liver is damaged

from heavy, chronic alcohol consumption.

15. Scientists have long understood that alcohol abuse can lead to chronic diseases like cirrhosis of the liver. But in recent years, researchers have discovered that alcohol – in some cases only a few drinks a day – can make the liver and pancreas more susceptible to injury.

16. The heart can pump over 300 litres of blood in an hour. Since the blood is the primary medium for transporting ingested nutrients, in this case alcohol, it delivers alcohol straight to the heart and other parts of the cardiovascular system. In recent studies, it has been shown that heavy drinking causes serious damage to various parts of the cardiovascular system. For example, it causes the heart muscles to develop a disease known as cardiomyopathy. Also, heavy drinking increases the risk of unsteady heartbeat, high blood pressure and hemorrhagic stroke.

17. Published statistics indicate that there are over 18 million alcoholics living in America.

18. "Balahaye Ijtima'i", quoted from Tandorost Magazine.

19. Ibid.

20. Safinah al-Bihar, v.1, p.427.

21. Gunahane Kabire, v.1, p.253

22. Safinah al-Bihar, v.2, p.84.

23. Koodak (Guftar-i-Falsafi), v.1, p.249.

24. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v.3, p.103.

25. Koodak, v.1, p.251.

26. Same as Galen 131-210 A.D. There were many who contributed to the present day medicine as we know it – from Hippocrates (Bukrat) , Plato, Aristotle and Galen to our present day researchers. Hippocrates (460-370 B.C) is the symbol of the first creative period of Greek medicine and is aptly known as the 'Father of medicine'. Plato and Aristotle (384-322 B.C) also contributed to the basis of Greek medicine in its original state; while Galen nurtured it to quite a degree.

27. Fehrist-i-Ghurar al-Hikam, p.13.

28. Fehrist-i-Ghurar al-Hikam, p.25; Makarim al-Akhlaq, p.147.

29. Makarim al-Akhlaq, p.150.

30. Safinah al-Bihar, v.1, p.24.

31. Makarim al-Akhlaq, p.150.

32. Mahajjah al-Bayda, v.3, p.204.

33. Makarim al-Akhlaq, p.146.

34. Tatamat al-Muntaha, p.380.

35. Mabani' Taklimat al-Minhaj, v.2, p.371.

Right n. 9: The Right of the Private Part

حق الفرج

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ فَرْجِكَ فَحِفْظُهُ مِمَّا لا يَحِلُّ لَكَ وَالاستِعَانَةُ عَلَيْهِ بغَضِّ الْبَصَرِ ـ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْ أَعْوَنِ الأَعْوَانِ ـ وَكَثْرَةُ ذِكْرِ الْمَوتِ وَالتَّهَدُّدِ لِنَفْسِكَ باللهِ وَالتَّخويفِ لَهَا بهِ، وَباللهِ الْعِصْمَةُ وَالتَّأْييدُ وَلا حَوْلَ وَلا قُوَّةَ إلا بهِ.

And the right of your private part is that you should protect it from everything that is unlawful for

you and help it by lowering your eyes – this is certainly the best way to help it. And you should also remember death often, and threaten yourself with God and try to make yourself fear God.[1] **Preservation from sin and receiving help in so doing are possible by God's help. There is no strength or power but in Him.**

What Imam Sajjad means by "protecting your private parts" is covering it from other people's eyes. Consider the following verse:

وَقُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ

"And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Nur 24:31***]

Imam Sadiq said:

كُلُّ آيَةٍ في القُرآنِ في ذِكْرِ الفُروجِ فَهِي مِن الزّنا إلاّ هَذه الآيَةَ فإنهَّا مِن النَّظَر.

"Every verse in the Qur'an in which the private parts are mentioned is with regard to protecting it from fornication, except for this (*above*) *verse in which it means to protect the private parts from being seen."*[2]

Sexual Instincts

Sexual instincts are among the major forces in man to derive pleasure in life. These strong instincts attract men and women towards each other. The love they have for each other makes them work hard to unite with one another. That is why sex and marriage have always been a hot topic of discussion in all religious or scientific gatherings. There have been many theories related to this issue. Some of these theories are extremist while others are normal.

Extremist Theory

Those who believe in sexual freedom including the followers of Freud have adopted an extremist theory. Freud whose ideas are based on sex has extended out of the domain of influence of sexual instincts to affect many other natural instincts that are in reality very independent of sex. He considers this instinct to be the main foundation of human culture and civilization. Freud thinks that seeking sexual pleasure and fulfillment is not limited to adulthood and exists throughout our lifetime. He considers a baby's sucking of the mother's breast to be sexually motivated and pleasing.

Freud bases his psychological theories on sexual failures. He thinks that when sexual desires are not fulfilled due to social restrictions, they are forced into the subconscious where they lend themselves to

severe stress and psychological illnesses. Freud believes that all the various forms of psychological problems are rooted in the sexual instinct.

Thus, a psychoanalyst must become very aware of the person's experiences in order to treat him. Freud's opponents disagree with his idea that sexual instincts are the root of all psychological illnesses. Freud's mistake lies in his considering unusual sexual emotions to be the source of nervous or psychological illnesses. He fails to consider the person's social, economical or material environment. For example, when a simple worker has psychological problems due to lack of income, poverty and hunger, his illness is not rooted in sex. To treat him we must provide him with better work opportunities, not satiate him sexually![3]

The Church and the Other Extreme

The followers of the Church, some religions, some philosophers and some teachers of ethics have considered sex to be an animal act and have called it filthy. By going to the other extreme, they have totally abandoned sex. Saint Jerome always used to say: "Let us chop off the tree of marriage by celibacy." In the Church, we see great scholars like Paules who was one of the heads of the Church. He never married and advised all men and women not to marry.

In his first treatise addressed to Qarantian we read: "About what you wrote to me, it is better for men not to touch women. However, in order to avoid fornication, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. The husband must fulfill his wife's rights. The wife should fulfill the husband's rights. I wish all men were like me, but each person has a divinely given gift. Some are this way. Others are that way. Thus, I tell those who are single and the widowed women, that it is best for them to remain like me. But if they cannot restrain themselves, it is better for them to marry since it is better to marry than burn in the Fire of Hell."[4]

Islam Takes the Balanced View

Islam condemns both extremist views. The Commander of the Faithful has considered going to either extreme to be out of ignorance. He said:

لا يُرَى الجَاهِلُ إلاّ مُفْرِطاً أو مُفَرّطاً.

"The ignorant one will only be seen either exceeding the bounds or falling short."

Taking a moderate stance regarding sexual instincts is liked by God and is according to the nature of our creation. In the moderate method, sexual instincts are neither let loose, nor are they totally abandoned. The law and social ethics support the fulfillment of this natural instinct in a moderate degree, and the means for its proper fulfillment are provided. In the method that is supported by God's Prophets, people

are instructed that God has encouraged the people to get married. On the other hand, any form of sexual deviation or being loose is seriously fought with, and human societies are advised against these things.

Islam and Marriage

The Almighty God has expressed one of the main characteristics of believing men or women in the following verse:

> وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ فَمَنِ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ

"Who abstain from sex, except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or (the captives) whom their right hands possess, – for (in their case) they are free from blame: But those whose desires exceed those limits are transgressors." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Muminun 23:5-7***]

Islam has ordered its followers to get married since sexual instincts are the most difficult to control. Islam has ordered us to make love with our legal wives or our slaves. This implies both permanent and temporary wives. There is also a mention of the misconception by the Christians who considered any sexual contact to be wrong, and went so far that the Catholic priests and the nuns did not marry all their life long and considered marriage to be contrary to their spiritual position. The Noble Prophet of Islam has paid attention to sexual instincts in his teachings and has instructed his followers not to follow celibacy. God's Prophet said:

> مَن أَحَبَّ فِطرَتي فَلْيَسْتَنَّ بِسُنَّتي، وَمِن سُنَّتي النِّكاحُ.

"Whoever likes my nature should follow my traditions. One of my traditions is marriage."[5]

Marriage and Immunity from Sin

God's Prophet said:

> يا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبابِ! مَن استَطَاعَ مِنْكُم الباهُ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، فَإِنَّه أَغَضُّ لِلبَصَرِ وَأَحْسَنُ لِلفَرْجِ، وَمَنْ لَمَ يَسْتَطِع مِنكُم فَلْيُدْمِنِ الصَّوْمَ فإنَّ له وَجَاءً.

"O young people! Any of you who have the means to marry should do so since this is the best way to protect your eyes from corrupt and treacherous looks, and to guard the private parts from sin and immodesty. Whoever does not have the means to marry should fast continually since fasting can reduce

lust."[6]

Marriage as the Firm Foundation of Life

Islam encourages its followers to establish a family and considers the family to be the most beautiful thing in the sight of God. The Noble Prophet of God said:

ما بُنِيَ في الإسْلامِ بِناءٌ أَحَبُّ إلى اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَأَعَزُّ مِن التَّزْويجِ.

"There is no establishment in Islam dearer to God the Almighty than marriage."[7]

Therefore, we must speed up the establishment of marriage. Imam Sadiq narrated that once the Prophet climbed up on the pulpit and after praising God said:

أيُّها النّاسُ! إنَّ جبرَئيلَ أتَاني عَن اللَّطيفِ الخَبيرِ فَقالَ: إنَّ الأبْكارَ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الثَّمَرِ على الشَّجَرِ: إذا أَدْرَكَ ثَمَرَهُ فَلَم يُجْتَنَى أَفْسَدَتْهُ الشَّمْسُ وَنَثَرَتْهُ الرِّياحُ، وَكَذلِكَ الأبْكارُ: إذا أدْرَكْنَ ما يُدْرِكُ النِّساءُ فَلَيْسَ لَهُنَّ دَواءٌ إلاّ البُعُولَةَ وإلاّ لَم يُؤْمَنْ عَلَيهِنَّ الفَسادُ، فإنَّهُنَّ بَشَرٌ.

"O people! Gabriel came to me from the threshold of God and said: Virgin girls are like the fruits on a tree. When they ripen, they should be plucked. Else, they will be spoiled due to exposure to the rays of the sun, and they will be scattered about due to the blowing of the wind. When girls mature and feel sexual inclinations, there is no remedy for them but a husband. If they do not get married, they are not secure from corruption since they are human (and are not immune from making mistakes)."

Marriage Provides a Garment

The Holy Qur'an has considered the chastity of men and women and has said:

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ

"They are your garments and ye are their garments." [***The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2: 187***]

Our garments cover up our sex organs and protect us against many bad conditions such as heat, cold and bad weather. Marriage will help us stay clean and pure. The Noble Prophet said:

مَن أَحَبَّ أنْ يَلْقى اللهَ طاهِراً وَمُطَهَّراً فَلْيَتَعَفَّفْ بِزَوجَةٍ.

"Whoever likes to meet God in a pure and purified state should protect his chastity by means of

marriage."[8]

The Prophet Disapproved of Abandoning Marriage

Those who have the means to get married and establish a family in order to save the Muslims from committing sins should do so. Islam blames those who do not do so for various reasons. Consider the following case for example. A man called Akkaf went to see God's Prophet . The Prophet asked: "Are you married?" He said: "O' Prophet of God! No." Then the Prophet asked: "Are you healthy and wealthy?" He said: "Yes." Then the Prophet said:

> وَيْحَكَ يا عَكّافُ! تَزَوَّجْ تَزَوَّجْ فإنَّكَ مِن الخَاطِئينَ، تَزَوَّجْ وإلاّ فأنْتَ مِن المُذنِبينَ، تَزَوَّجْ وإلاّ فأنْتَ مِن رُهْبانِ النَّصارَى، تَزَوَّجْ وإلاّ فأنْتَ مِن إخْوانِ الشَّياطِينِ.

"Woe be to you, Akkaf! Marry, marry, for now you are of the wrongdoers! Marry, else you will be among the sinners! Marry, else you will be of the Christian monks! Marry, else you will be among the brothers of Satan!"[9]

In another tradition, we read that Imam Ridha narrated that a woman told Imam Baqir : "I am a Mutabattil." Imam Baqir asked: "What do you mean by that?" She said: "I intend to never get married." Imam Baqir asked: "Why?" She said: "In order to attain nobility." Then Imam Baqir said: "Forget it. If there was any nobility in not getting married, the Blessed Fatima Zahra was more suitable to have recognized this nobility, and there is no one who can supercede her in nobility."[10] From these traditions, we realize that the leaders in Islam have advised men and women against celibacy so that they remain chaste.

Islam and Avoiding Women

A few of the companions of the Noble Prophet of God decided to avoid having sexual intercourse with their wives, eating breakfast and sleeping at night. Um Salmah realized this and told this to the Prophet . The Prophet went to them and asked:

> أتَرْغَبونَ عَن النِّساءِ؟ إني آتِي النِّساءَ وآكُلُ بِالنَّهارِ وأَنامُ بِاللَّيلِ، فَمَنْ رَغَبَ عنْ سُنَّتي فَلَيْسَ مِنّي.

"Do you abstain from (going to) your wives? I go to my wives, eat in the daytime and sleep at night. Whoever forsakes my tradition is not from me."[11]

Adultery is a Major Sin

Those who do not establish a family may commit adultery and fall into disaster. The Holy Qur'an considers adultery to be an evil deed and says:

وَلاَ تَقْرَبُواْ الزِّنَى إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاء سَبِيلاً

"Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (***deed***) ***and an evil, opening the road*** (***to other evils***)***."*** [***The Holy Qur'an, Bani Israil 17:32***]

This short verse stresses three important points:

1) The verse does not state: "Do not commit adultery." Rather it says do not even approach this wicked deed. This verse shows that although adultery is a very bad deed, there are some other deeds that might ultimately lead to it. Acts like flirting, looking, nudity, not wearing the veil, reading dirty books, viewing pornography, and going to centers of corruption or being in a private place with another person of the opposite sex are all preparatory actions which might lead to adultery.

2) This verse clearly expresses the extreme degree of wickedness of adultery.

3) This verse states that adultery will also pave the way for other forms of corruption in the society.

The Philosophy behind Forbidding Adultery

1) The first problem with adultery is that it will lead to social disorder. The relationship of the father and children will become unclear. This clear father-child relationship will provide life-long support for the children. Adultery will eliminate this order. Let us think for one moment that adultery is permitted in the whole world and marriage is abolished. In such a world, none of the children born will be supported. There is also no love for these children - the love that is so critical in the raising of people who will not be criminals later. Then the whole world will turn into a big zoo where all forms of violence prevail.

2) Adultery is also a cause of the personal and social struggles between those who run the centers of corruption. The detailed account of what goes on in massage parlors and sex homes shows that many other crimes are committed where adultery is practiced.

3) It has been proven by theory and in practice that adultery leads to many contagious sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) many of which are life-threatening.[12]

4) Adultery is usually followed by abortion since the women who commit adultery never like to keep the baby. They even think it will be an obstacle to their future practice of adultery.

5) We should not forget that the purpose behind marriage is not satiating our sexual instincts. Rather cooperating in the establishment of a joint life, the achievement of peace of mind, having a companion, raising children and cooperation in many social affairs are also major goals in marriage. These are not possible unless men and women are dedicated to each other through marriage and adultery is forbidden.

Moving Statistics

First, let us look at the statistics related to sexually transmitted diseases (STD) in the United States.

STD Statistics

One in five people in the United States has an STD[13]. Two-thirds of all STDs occur in people 25 years of age or younger. One in four new STD infections occur in teenagers. Cervical cancer in women is linked to HPV.[14] Hepatitis is 100 times more infectious than HIV.[15] Two-thirds of Hepatitis B (HBV[16]) infections are transmitted sexually. HBV is linked to chronic liver disease, including cirrhosis and liver cancer. STDs, other than HIV, cost about $8 billion each year to diagnose and treat.

One in five Americans have genital herpes, yet at least 80 percent of those with herpes are unaware they have it. At least one in four Americans will contract an STD at some point in their lives. HPV is the most common STD in the United States. More than 5 million people are infected with HPV each year. Less than half of adults aged 18 to 44 have ever been tested for an STD other than HIV/AIDS. At least 15 percent of all infertile American women are infertile because of tubal damage caused by pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which is the result of an untreated STD. Next let us look at the world statistics on abortion.

World-Wide Abortion Statistics

Currently 54 countries allow abortion, which is about 61 percent of the world's population[17]. According to the pro-abortion Center for Reproductive Law and Policy in New York, 97 countries that constitute about 39 percent of the population, have abortion laws that make it illegal. The Alan Guttmacher Institute reports approximately **22** million legal abortions were reported in 1987. It is estimated that between four and nine million were not reported, totaling **26-31** million legal abortions in 1987 alone. There were a total of **10-22** million "clandestine" abortions, bringing the total worldwide figure to **36** and **53** million abortions.

The Effects of Adultery in This World and the Hereafter

So far, we discussed the philosophy behind forbidden adultery and its wicked effects and a brief account of the relevant statistics in the West. Now we shall point out some of the traditions regarding the punishment of adultery in this world and the Hereafter. Imam Ali narrated that he heard God's Prophet

say:

في الزِّنا سِتُّ خِصالٍ؛ ثَلاثٌ في الدُّنْيا وَثَلاثٌ في الآخِرَةِ. فأمّا اللّواتي في الدُّنيا فَيَذْهَبُ بِنُورِ الوَجْهِ وَيَقْطَعُ الرِّزْقَ وَيُسَرِّعُ الفَناءَ. أمّا اللّواتي في الآخِرَةِ فَغَضَبُ الرَّبِّ وَسُوءُ الحِسابِ وَالدُّخُولِ (أو الخُلود) في النّارِ.

"There are six bad effects of adultery. Three of them are in this world and the other three are in the Hereafter. The effects of adultery in this world are as follows:
1 – Adultery takes away one's sincerity and divine illumination.
2 – Adultery stops the arrival of one's share of daily bread.
3 – Adultery speeds up man's destruction.

The three effects of adultery in the Hereafter are as follows:

1 – Adultery will raise the anger of the Lord.
2 – Adultery will make the Reckoning difficult,
3 – Adultery will result in entry (or remaining forever) in the Fire of Hell."

Adultery Brings Poverty and Destruction

God's Prophet said:

الزِّنا يُورِثُ الفَقْرَ وَيَدَعُ الدِّيارَ بَلاقِعَ.

"Adultery causes poverty and turns habitations into wasteland."[18]

These are the evil results of adultery. Adultery will also cause sudden death. Imam Baqir narrated that it is written in Imam Ali's book that God's Prophet said:

إذَا كَثُرَ الزِّنا مِن بَعْدي كَثُرَ مَوْتُ الفُجأَةِ.

"When adultery becomes widespread after me, there will be frequent occurrences of sudden deaths."[19]

The Final Punishment for Adultery

Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Al–Husayn quoted on the authority of Dho'aib ibn Waqid on the authority of Husayn ibn Zayd that Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of his forefathers on the authority of the Prophet :

ألا وَمَنْ زَنى بِامْرَأةٍ مُسْلِمَةٍ أَو يَهُودِيَّةٍ أو نَصْرانِيَّةٍ أو مجُوسِيَّةٍ، حُرَّةٍ أو أَمَةٍ، ثُمَّ لم يَتُبْ مِنهُ وَماتَ مُصِرّاً عَلَيهِ فَتَحَ اللهُ تَعالى لَهُ في قَبْرِهِ ثَلاثَمِائَةِ بَابٍ يَخْرُجُ مِنْها حَيّاتٌ وَعَقَارِبُ وَثُعْبانٌ مِنَ النّارِ، فَهُوَ يَحْتَرِقُ إلى يَومِ القِيامَةِ. فإذا بُعِثَ مِن قَبْرِه تَأذّى النّاسُ مِن نَتْنِ ريحِهِ فَيُعْرَفُ بِذلِكَ وَبِما كانَ يَعْمَلُ في دارِ الدُّنيَا حَتىّ يُؤمَرُ بِه إلى النّارِ.

"Beware! If a man commits adultery with a Muslim, Jewish, Christian or Magian woman– be it a free woman or a slave – and reaches the time of death without repenting, and persists on doing this wicked deed, God will open up three hundred gates into his grave from which snakes, scorpions and large serpents enter into it from the Fire. He will burn until the Resurrection Day. When he is raised from his grave, people will be tormented by his stench. He will be known by that and by his evil deeds in this world, until he will be taken into the Fire."[20]

Yes, this is the punishment for the people who commit adultery. They will be thrown into the Fire of Hell.

Staying Chaste by Remembering Death

Imam Sajjad has expressed ways to remain chaste. The first thing to do is not view forbidden scenes. The second way is to remember death a lot. Now let us look at the following verse:

وَجَاءتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ

"And the stupor of death will bring Truth (before his eyes): This was the thing which thou wast trying to escape!" [***The Holy Qur'an, Qaf 50: 19***]

Death is like a state of being drunk. One will get so anxious when he realizes that he is going to be transferred from this world into the other world. He might even lose his mind realizing that he has to cut off all ties with this world with which he is used to, and he will enter a new world. Then he will be covered with fear, and experience a feeling similar to being drunk.

What is Death

There is a tradition from Imam Sajjad which states that he was asked: "What is death?" He replied:

المَوتُ) لِلمُؤْمِنِ كَنَزْعِ ثِيابٍ وَسخَةٍ قَمْلَةٍ وَفَكِّ قُيودٍ وَأغْلالٍ ثَقيلَةٍ وَالاسْتِبْدالِ بِأفْخَرِ الثِّيابِ وأطْيَبِها وأوْطى المَراكِبِ(وَآنَسِ المَنَازِلِ. وَلِلكافِرِ كَخَلْعِ ثِيابٍ فاخِرَةٍ وَالنَّقْلِ عَن مَنازِلَ أَنيسَةٍ وَالاسْتِبْدالِ بِأوسَخِ الثِّيابِ وأخْشَنِها وأوْحَشِ المَنَازِلِ وأعْظَمِ العَذابِ.

"For a believer, death is like removing dirty, lice-infested clothes and unfastening heavy chains and locks, in exchange for the most beautiful and best garments, the most comfortable mounts and the most delightful dwellings. However, for an unbeliever, death is like taking off the most magnificent clothes and

moving out of loved houses, in exchange for the filthiest and coarsest clothes, the most desolate of dwellings and the greatest punishment."[21]

Imam Husayn's Interpretation of Death

Imam Husayn also presented a beautiful interpretation of death for his companions as follows:

> صَبراً بَني الكِرامِ! فمَا المَوتُ إلاّ قَنْطَرَةٌ تَعْبرُ بِكُم عن البُؤسِ وَالضَّرّاءِ إلى الجِنانِ الواسِعَةِ وَالنَّعيمِ الدّائِمَةِ، فَأَيُّكُم يَكْرَهُ أنْ يَنْتَقِلَ مِن سِجْنٍ إلى قَصْرٍ؟ ومَا هُوَ لأعْدائِكُم إلاّ كَمَنْ يَنْتَقِلَ مِن قَصْرٍ إلى سِجْنٍ وَعَذابٍ. إنَّ أبي حَدَّثَني عَن رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلّى اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَآلِهِ أنَّ الدُّنْيا سِجْنُ المُؤمِنِ وَجَنَّةُ الكَافِرِ، وَالمَوتُ جِسْرُ هؤلاءِ إلى جِنانِهِم وَجِسْرُ هؤلاءِ إلى جَحِيمِهِم.

"O children of noble men! Persevere! Death is nothing but a bridge transferring you from hardship and suffering to the vast gardens of Heaven and lasting blessings. Which of you dislikes moving from a prison into a palace? However, death for your enemies is only as one transferred from a palace into a prison and punishment. My father quoted on the authority of God's Prophet that this world is like a prison for believers and Heaven for unbelievers. Death is a bridge for these (*believers*) *to their Gardens and a bridge for those* (*unbelievers*) *to their Fire."*[22]

Imam Sadiq's Interpretation of Death

Imam Sadiq was asked to describe death. He said:

> هُوَ لِلمُؤمِنِ كَأطْيَبِ رِيحٍ يَشَمُّهُ فَيَنْعَسُ لِطِيبِهِ فَيَنْقَطِعُ التَّعَبُ وَالألَمُ كُلُّهُ عَنْهُ، وَلِلكَافِرِ كَلَسْعِ الأفاعِي وَلَدْغِ العَقارِبِ وَأَشَدَّ.

"Death for the believer is like breathing in a most pleasant breeze, the fragrance of which makes him slumber and all tiredness and pain comes to an end, but for the unbeliever it is like the biting of snakes and the sting of scorpions and even more severe."

Imam Ali said the following about the time of death when the curtains to the Unseen are drawn aside and the angels enter:

> فَإنَّكُم لَو قَد عَايَنْتُم مَا قَد عَايَنَ مَن مَاتَ مِنْكُم لجَزَعْتُم وَوَهَلْتُم وَسَمِعْتُم وَأطَعْتُم وَلكِنْ مَحْجوبٌ عَنْكُم ما قَد عَايَنوا وَقَرِيبٌ ما يُطْرَحُ الحِجابُ.

"If you could see what the dead see, you would be distressed and terrified and (*as a result*) *you would hear and obey* (*God's words*)*. However, what they see is veiled from you, and soon the veil will be*

drawn aside for you (and you too will see)!"[23]

The Reality of Death

It is often thought that death implies an ending and total destruction while this is in contradiction with what is said in the Holy Qur'an and intellectual reasoning. From the view of the Qur'an death is an existing affair. It is just a form of transferring from one world to another. That is why death has been interpreted to be a return of our soul to the angels in the Qur'an.

Three days in a person's life are said to be awesome for man in many Islamic traditions. They are the day on which he is born, the day he dies and sees the world beyond death, and the day on which he enters the Reckoning Ordeal and sees decrees that did not exist in this world."[24] God said the following about John the son of Zachariah regarding these three days:

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا

***"So Peace on him the day he was born, the day that he dies, and the day that he will be raised up to life (again)!"* [*The Holy Qur'an, Maryam 19:15*]**

It is also said in the Qur'an that Jesus said:

وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدتُّ وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا

"So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)"! [The Holy Qur'an, Maryam 19:33]

Imam Sadiq said:

ذِكْرُ المَوْتِ يُمِيتُ الشَّهَواتِ.

"The remembrance of death kills desires."[25]

God's Prophet said:

اذْكُرُوا هادِمَ اللَّذّاتِ... الموتُ.

"Remember the destroyer of pleasures."

He was asked: "O Prophet of God! What is the destroyer of pleasures?"

He said: “Death.”

Imam Sajjad said that remembering death would destroy lust. Man should remind himself of divine chastisement since this will also help destroy lust. It is also important to seek God’s help as the Imam said. If young people remember God and consider Him to be watching over all that they do, they will succeed and be saved. Joseph said:

وَمَا أُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلاَّ مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّيَ إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

“Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely my Lord is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.” [***The Holy Qur’an, Yusuf 12:53***]

He entrusted himself to God and he was saved.

The Jurisprudents’ Views on the Punishment for Fornication

Islam has established rules and limitations to fight such a socially disastrous act that destroys the foundations of family life. If these rules and limitations are adhered to, then the Muslim society will be pure and there will be security for the family members. This issue has been addressed in the Holy Qur’an:

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِئَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُم بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication, - flog each of them with a hundred stripes: Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by God, if ye believe in God and the Last Day: and let a party of the Believers witness their punishment.” [***The Holy Qur’an, al-Nur 24:2***]

There are three important instructions in this verse:

1 – The punishment for adultery or fornication for both men and women is prescribed.

2 – The Qur’an stresses that in interpreting this verse, we should rely on our faith in God and the Hereafter, not on our own feelings and emotions. The punishment should be carried out as stated. There is a tradition from God’s Prophet in this regard. According to this tradition, some rulers who have reduced this punishment by one lash will be brought to trial in the Hereafter and asked for the reason they did so. They will say that they did so to have mercy on the people. Then God will tell them: “Were you kinder to them than I am?” Others who have hit an extra lash will be brought to trial in the Hereafter

and asked for the reason they did so. They will say that they wanted to force the people to abandon committing sins. Then God will say: “Where you wiser and more knowledgeable than I am?” Then He will order that both of them be thrown into the Fire of Hell.

3 – The verse stresses that other believers should be present at the scene of the punishment since the aim of this punishing is not just for those who commit fornication to learn a lesson, rather it is meant to be a lesson for other people, too. This is because moral corruption might spread from the individuals involved to others in the society. As the case has been brought to court, there is no need to protect the honor of those who have committed fornication. They should be introduced to the people and punished in public so that others realize that they should respect the law.

The punishment for fornication has been prescribed to be one hundred lashes for men and women in this verse. This is a general decree. There are exceptions for this rule that we will point out. Certain conditions have been stated to be necessary for the punishment.

1 – The first condition is maturity. Thus, this does not apply to children who are not mature.

2 – The second condition is freedom of will. This applies if fornication is done with free will. Thus, someone who is raped will not be punished.

3 – The third condition is sanity. If the man or woman who commits fornication is insane, this punishment will not apply.[26]

4 – Imam Khomeini added: “It should also be added that the person who commits fornication should be aware of the punishment for fornication. Else this punishment will not apply.”[27]

The exception to the above rule is for adultery that is when a married man who can make love with his wife or a married woman who can make love with her husband commits fornication. Another exception to this rule is committing incest. The third exception is committing rape. The punishment for these crimes is death.

Conditions

1 – To prove that fornication has been committed four just men, three just men plus two just women, or two just men plus four just women must witness that they have seen it take place.

2 – The place of committing fornication where they witness to have seen fornication take place should be the same for all witnesses.

3 – The time of committing fornication that they witness to should be the same.

4 – All the witnesses should witness in one court meeting.

5 – It is not acceptable if the four witnesses witness to have seen four different people commit fornication.

6 – It is not acceptable if the four witnesses who witness to have seen fornication take place cannot recognize the woman involved.

4 – Whenever three of the witnesses unite in their witnessing but the fourth person does not witness or disagrees with them, then the punishment of 'Qazf'– malicious accusation means that someone associates fornication or sodomy with a certain person[28] will be decreed for the three who witnessed.[29]

1. In the other version it is followed by:" The right of your private part is that you protect it from fornication and guard it against being looked upon."
2. Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.3, p.588.
3. Bozorgsal wa Jawan (Guftar-i-Falsafi), v.1, p.205, quoted from Andishehaye Freud, p.35, p.70.
4. Ibid., v.1, p.195, quoted from Zanashoyee wa Akhlaq-i-Islami, pp.46-52.
5. Makarim al-Akhlaq, p.196.
6. Ibid. p.197.
7. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v.2, p.531.
8. Ibid. v.2, p.530.
9. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v.2, p.530.
10. Bozorgsal wa Jawan, v.1, p.194.
11. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.14, p.8.
12. The widespread disease called AIDS is just one example. A report published in the USA Today on May29, 2001 states that although AIDS was initially discovered in 1981, the death toll from it has exceeded 21.8 million people in 2000. The following is according to the Joint United Nations Programme HIV/AIDS UNAIDS "AIDS epidemic update" of December 2001. Twenty years after the first clinical evidence of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome was reported, AIDS has become the most devastating disease humankind ever faced. Since the epidemic began, more than 60 million people have been infected with the virus. HIV/AIDS is now the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa. Worldwide, it is the fourth biggest killer.

At the end of 2001, an estimated 40 million people globally were living with HIV. In many parts of the developing world, the majority of new infections occur in young adults, with young women especially vulnerable. About one-third of those currently living with HIV/AIDS are aged 15-24. Most of them do not know they carry the virus. Many millions more know nothing or too little about HIV to protect themselves against it. Eastern Europe – especially the Russian Federation – continues to experience the fastest growing epidemic in the world with the number of new HIV infections rising steeply. In 2001, there were an estimated 250,000 new infections in this region, bringing to 1 million the number of people living with HIV. Given the high levels of other sexually transmitted infections, and the high rates of injection drug abuse among young people, the epidemic looks set to grow considerably.

In Asia and the Pacific, an estimated 7.1 million people are now living with HIV/AIDS. The epidemic claimed the lives of 435,000 people in the region in 2001. The apparently low national prevalence rates in many countries in this region are dangerously deceptive. They hide localized epidemics in different areas, including some of the world's most populous countries. There is a serious thread of major, generalized epidemics. But, as Cambodia and Thailand have shown, prompt, large-scale prevention programmes can hold the epidemic at bay. In Cambodia, concerted efforts, driven by strong political leadership and public commitment, lowered HIV prevalence among pregnant women to 2.3% at the end of 2000 – down by almost a third from 1997. AIDS killed 2.3 million Africans in 2001. The estimated 3.4 million new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa in the past year mean that 28.1 million Africans now live with the virus. Without adequate treatment and care, most of them will not survive the next decade. Recent antenatal clinic data show that several parts of southern Africa

have now joined Botswana with prevalence rates among pregnant woment exceeding 30%.

In West Africa, at least five countries are experiencing serious epidemics, with adult HIV prevalence exceeding 5%. However, HIV prevalence among young adults continues to fall in Uganda, while there is evidence that prevalence among young people (especially women) is dropping in some parts of the continent. In the Middle East and North Africa, the number of people living with HIV now totals 440,000. The epidemic's advance is most marked in countries (such as Djibouti, Somalia and the Sudan) that are already experiencing complex emergencies. While HIV prevalence continues to be low in most countries in the region, increasing numbers of HIV infections are being detected in several countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Pakistan.

A larger epidemic also threatens to develop in the high-income countries, where over 75,000 people acquired HIV in 2001, bringing to 1.5 million the total number of people living with HIV/AIDS. Recent advances in treatment and care in these countries are not being consistently matched with enough progress on the prevention front. New evidence of rising HIV infection rates in North America, parts of Europe and Australia is emerging. Unsafe sex, reflected in outbreaks of sexually transmitted infections, and widespread injection drug use are propelling these epidemics, which at the same time are shifting more towards deprived communities.

An extimated 1.8 million adults and children are living with HIV in Latin American and the Caribbean – a region that is experiencing diverse epidemics. With an average adult HIV prevalence of approximately 2%, the Caribbean is the second-most affected region in the world. But relatively low national HIV prevalence rates in most South and Central American countries mask the fact that the epidemic is already firmly lodged among specific population groups. These countries can avert more extensive epidemics by stepping up their responses now.

13. American Social Health Association.
14. Human papilloma virus.
15. Human Immunodeficiency virus.
16. Hepatitis B virus.
17. International Family Planning Perspectives, 16:59, June 1990; USA Today, 8/8/96.
18. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Kitab al-Nikah, Abwab Nikah Mahram, Bab 3, Tradition no. 11, v.14, p.233.
19. Ibid. p.231.
20. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Kitab al-Nikah, v.14, p.233.
21. Kifayat al-Muwahhidin, v.3, p.203.
22. Ma'ani al-Akhbar, v.2, p.196.
23. Nahj al-Balaghah, Fayz al-Islam, Sermon no.20.
24. Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.3, p.327.
25. Majmu'ah Waram, p.268.
26. Mabani' Takmilat al-Minhaj, p.169.
27. Tahrir al-Wasilah, v.2, p.456.
28. The punishment for 'Qazf' is 80 lashes for a man or a woman.
29. Mabani' Takmilat al-Minhaj, Tahrir al-Wasilah wa Sharh-i-Lum'ah, Section on Fornication.

Source URL:
https://www.al-islam.org/a-divine-perspective-on-rights-a-commentary-of-imam-sajjads-treatise-of-rights/rights-god#comment-0