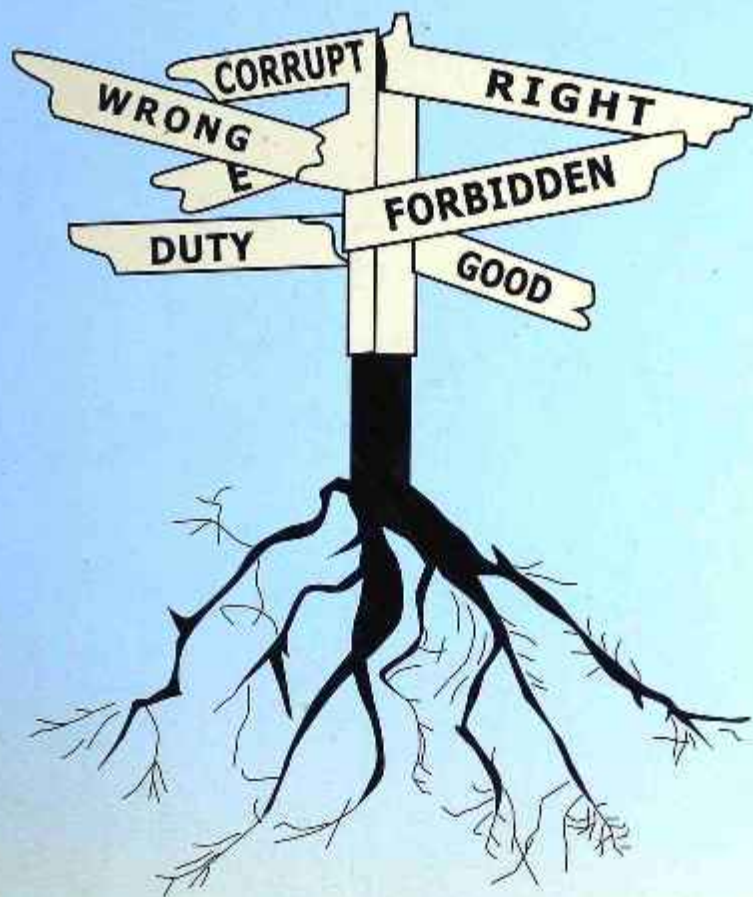




P.E.T. PUBLICATIONS

ETHICS (AKHLAQ)



ISLAM



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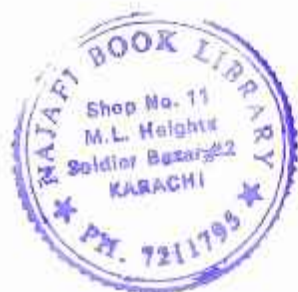
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PREFACE

BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM

The Peermohamed Ebrahim Trust has the pleasure to present this book on Akhlaq i.e. Ethics. No claim is laid herein to dealing with the subject from the so-called scientific point of view or to study the abstract conception of morals in their psychological perspective. On the other hand it is just an attempt to put forward what morals an individual must inculcate according to the teachings of Islam so as to cater to the highest development of his personality both as an individual as well as a member of society. In other words **the book presents ethics in its applied form as taught by Islam.**

All religions of the world provide a code of behaviour to be followed by an individual in this life and so does Islam. But the most prominent differentia possessed by Islamic Ethics is that it bases all moral activity on the conception of the life Hereafter, so as to confine the actions in this life to what would earn a life of eternal peace in the existence Hereafter.

As is obvious, it would be futile to search in this book, for any scientific treatment of the psychological reactions of an individual, man women or child on the group of whom he may be a

component part, or of the effect of the group psychological workings on the individual thought or action. The book leaves all that to the learned philosophers and thinkers and bases its entire theme and effort on the simple fact that an individual acts and acts with volition. It therefore proceeds to lay down - rather to state what Islam has laid down - as to how an individual should exercise that volition of activity so as to be not only an acceptable member of the society here in his life but also to make a good harvest in the life Hereafter.

Needles to say, the conception of the life Hereafter is based on the belief in God or Allah as Islam puts it. Therefore the ethics of human behaviour taught by Islam presupposes the ever-present consciousness by an individual of the existence of Allah as Omnipresent, Omniscient and as representing the highest Good from the ideological point of view. This ever-present consciousness is therefore the first requirement of all ethical behaviour. In Islamic terminology it is called "TAQWA" sometimes translated as Fear of God or as Piety. Call it whatever we may, the fact remains that Taqwa is the fundamental trait of human conduct in Islam. Accordingly the book starts with a discussion of this important subject of Islamic Ethics and proceeds to lay down guidelines as to how an individual should behave himself according to the teachings of Islam not only with

reference to the injunctions of the Holy Quran but also to those injunctions further expounded by the Holy Prophet (s.a.) and his Holy Ahlul Bait (a.s.) through words and deeds.

Trustees,
Peermahomed Ebrahim Trust,

FOREWORD

THE ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF GOOD LIFE

“But seek, by means of what Allah has given you, the abode of the Hereafter and do not forget your share in this world. Do good to others as Allah has done good to you, and do not seek not mischief in the earth. Verily, Allah does not loves not the mischief-makers”. (28:77)

This is the fundamental principle enunciated by the Holy Quran for man to base and model his life upon. According to this principle the aim of life should be the comfort of the Hereafter but at the same time one need not give up his worldly comforts and enjoyment totally.

To the same effect the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: “The virtuous among you is not one who gives up the life here for the life Hereafter nor the one who gives up the life Hereafter for the life here, but of you the virtuous is he who exercises moderation and harmonises both the lives”.

Islam thus condemned asceticism and celibacy.

Chapter One

Piety

PIETY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

The basic trait of Islamic ethics is *Taqwa* which is derivative from the root "*Ittiqa*". The word *Ittiqa* has a very wide connotation. Briefly it means a constant belief and consciousness of Allah (s.w.t.) as the embodiment of the highest good. The word *Taqwa* is generally translated as Piety or sometimes as Righteousness. In a sense therefore it is the state of conviction in Allah (s.w.t.) as the embodiment of the highest good which enables an individual to strive to achieve that good and thereby also to suppress every urge to disobey Allah (s.w.t.) . On the whole it may be understood to mean to act in the true spirit upon Allah's Commandments – positive as well as negative. The following verses will make the import of *Taqwa* clear:

So fear (the wrath of) Allah as much as you can, and listen and obey and spend (in His way), for your own good. Whosoever is saved from his own greed, then such are those who are successful. (64:16)

How can you disbelieve when Allah's signs are recited to you, and His messenger (Muhammad) is in your midst? And whoever holds fast to Allah is surely guided to the right path. (3:101)

O people, verily We have created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes, so that you may recognise each other. Verily the most honoured of you with Allah is (he who) safeguards himself against evil with full awareness of divine laws. Verily Allah is all-knowing, all-aware. (49:13)

So his passion led him to slay his brother, and he slew him, and became one of the losers. (5:30)

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East or the West, but righteousness is this, that one should believe in Allah, and the last day, and the angels, and the book, and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the kindred, and the orphans, and the poor, and the wayfarer, and the needy, and for the emancipation of the slaves, and establish the prayer and pay the poor-tax, and those who fulfil their promise when they make a promise, and the patient ones in distress, and affliction, and in time of conflict; these are they who true to themselves,

and these are they who safeguard themselves with full awareness of divine laws.(2:177)

Who respond to their Lord, and establish prayer, and (conduct) their affairs with consultation among themselves; who spend (in the way of Allah) out of what We have given them. (42:38)

The retribution of evil is the equal of evil (done); but whosoever pardons and amends (makes reconciliation), his reward is (incumbent) on Allah. Verily He does not love the unjust. (42:40)

It should be borne in mind that piety is at the root of all virtues. It is a condition for acceptance of one's loyalty and service to Almighty Allah as the Verses referred to above makes it plain. By the term piety is meant protection against all those things which are damaging to one's life in the Hereafter.

There are number of stages in attaining that degree of piety. The foremost stage is to guard against unbelief and polytheism which the everlasting torment of Hell. In the second stage comes the avoidance of forbidden things and fulfilling the obligations. Thirdly are the commission of desirables and the avoidance of un-desirables. This stage of avoidance leads one

gradually to the zenith of piety, where one does not attend to anything except to the Sovereign Almighty Allah.

The more one becomes perfect in this matter, the more acceptable does his actions become. His actions led to Divine nearness, Divine love and Divine gnosis and high moral standing. The Almighty Allah has referred to this stage in the following verse:

O you who believe! Safeguard yourselves with full awareness of Allah's laws with reverence due to Him, and do not die but as those who have surrendered to Him. (3:102)

The Prophet said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! You should betake yourself to action with piety rather than abundance of action. The actions which are performed in a spirit of piety and righteousness are never light in merit. How can an action be light which is acceptable to Almighty Allah:

"So his passion led him to slay his brother, and he slew him, and became one of the losers." (5:30)

O' Abuzar! One does not attain piety unless he does take a severe reckoning of himself than he does of his partner. By means of such a reckoning

he shall become acquainted with the reality of his own self. One comes to know the source wherefrom one is fed, wherefrom he drinks, wherefrom he obtains clothing – whether he get all these requirements from lawful or unlawful sources. He shall then endeavour to obtain all these things lawfully.

O' Abuzar! The person who does not mind as to wherefrom his earnings come who does not mind about their unlawfulness shall have Almighty Allah leaving him to himself to be thrown into Hell in any way He chooses.

O' Abuzar! The dearest to Almighty Allah is the person who remains conscious of Divine Omni-presence. Most honoured in the eyes of Almighty Allah is the person who is righteous. The person who fears Almighty Allah amongst you is the most deserving for salvation.

O' Abuzar! Verily, the men of piety are those people who fear Almighty Allah. They avoid even those acts which it is not obligatory to avoid. They avoid them lest they be of a doubtful nature.

O' Abuzar! The persons who follows the Commandments of Almighty Allah in the matter of avoiding the unlawful and paying loyalty to

Him are those who remember Almighty Allah a great deal, even if their record of prayers, fasting and recitation of the Holy Quran may be below par.

O' Abuzar! Piety and avoidance of the unlawful is the basis of religion. The secret of religion is obedience and loyalty to Almighty Allah.

O' Abuzar! Adopt piety that you may become a top most worshiper. Among the actions of religion the most superior in merit is the avoidance of the unlawful.

O' Abuzar! The merit of knowledge is superior to the merit of worship. Supposing you perform prayers to such an extent that your back is bent like a bow. Supposing that you go on fasting till you become emaciated like the string of the bow. Without piety nothing of these things would be acceptable to Allah.

O' Abuzar! The person who avoided the unlawful, who adopted renunciation from evil attractions of the world surely are the favourites and friends of Almighty Allah.

THE RECOMPENSE FOR PIETY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

It is narrated that Imam Sadiq (a.s.) was approached for the exegesis of the Quranic Verse: O you who believe! Safeguard yourselves with full awareness of Allah's laws with reverence due to Him, and do not die but as those who have surrendered to Him. (3:102)

He replied : Piety has at its requirement that Almighty Allah's servants should obey Him. They should not commit sin. They should remain in perpetual remembrance of Almighty Allah. They should never forget Him. They should feel grateful for His bounties. They should not deny the worth of His bounties.

A little of action with piety is superior in merit to abundance of actions without the spirit of piety. The narrator asked him as to the nature of abundance of action without piety.

He replied to the following effect: Supposing a person does good to his neighbour, and his kinfolk to a great extent. He feeds the needy believers munificently. He plays host to a great number of guests yet he commits an unlawful action, when he seizes an opportunity. All his actions shall be

regarded as having been unsupported by piety. A little action supported by piety is as follows:

“If some one does not perform good and generous action to the same extent as the person mentioned above, and yet he does not avail of an opportunity to commit an unlawful act, then the action of the latter is superior in merit to the former.”

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) was approached by Umar Ibn Sajid who made his submission thus;

I get the honour of seeing you after a lapse of a number of years. I wish you to give me some piece of advice. In reply Imam (a.s.) said to the following effect:

Avoid the unlawful on the basis of piety. Adopt righteousness. Avoid what is forbidden by Almighty Allah. Be very eager in your loyalty and service to Almighty Allah. Be sure that your exertions in worship avail nothing without avoidance of the unlawful and adoption of righteousness.

Adopt an attitude of piety to Almighty Allah. Protect your faith by avoiding the unlawful.

It is incumbent on you to avoid the unlawful. All the stages of recompense with Almighty Allah are not achieved without avoiding the unlawful.

The most difficult part of the forms of worship is the avoidance of the unlawful.

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) was asked by someone as to who the persons of virtue were. His reply was: The person who avoids the things made unlawful by Almighty Allah.

According to another tradition he is reported to have said to the following effect:

To us, the believer is only the person who obeys our commands and who wishes eagerly to listen to what we say. Among the conditions of our following is that one should adopt piety, and righteousness. Embellish yourself with righteousness to deserve the graciousness of Almighty Allah by means of virtue. Keep yourself safe from the beguilement of the enemies so that Almighty Allah may raise your status.

The best man in point of virtue among you is he who hesitates at a doubtful thing and avoids it, who adores Allah in the best form and who performs his duties and obligations faithfully. He is the top denouncer of the world who avoids the unlawful.

The top worshiper is he who gives up sinning.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: The person who professes friendship for us should act as we act. He should seek help from virtue. Verily, the best thing which can be of help in this life and in the life Hereafter, is the righteousness. There is the obligatory gratitude for even boon one receives from Almighty Allah by keeping aloof of the unlawful things under an attitude of righteousness.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said to the following effect:

It is incumbent upon all of you people to adopt virtue, to avoid the unlawful, as well as the doubtful things. Virtue is part of the Faith which we hold and by which we serve Almighty Allah. We expect the same from our friends and our Shias (adherents). As such, do not put us to trouble in the matter of intercession, by the commission of unlawful things. Intercession in that case shall be difficult.

THE ADVANTAGES OF DOING GOOD AND ITS MODE

The Holy Prophet advised Imam Ali (a.s.): O Ali! Do good to the deserving and also to those who do not deserve because this virtue is not limited. It is just human to do good. To be good to the deserving is an act of kindness of yours towards him. Doing good to those who do not deserve is an exhibition of your worth.

MANIFESTATION OF SYMPATHY BY ANTS

How wonderfully mutual sympathy is exercised by the dumb creatures, can be observed in ants. It is a matter of common observance that if an ant carrying some load gets tired other ants immediately arrive to help it in taking over the burden. These days, the Muslims are ensnared in the slavery of non Muslims. Its reason is the recklessness of Muslims towards their brethren in faith. Beware! O, my brothers in faith! Get united and show sympathy towards your brothers! Then seize the opportunity which the time offers you and help them and fear the hereafter.

The phrase 'In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful' occurs at the beginning of every chapter of the Holy Quran, except one namely Surah Tauba/Baraat. It is used by Muslims before starting every work reading, eating, Sleeping or anything whatsoever. Islam teaches man to start every good effort with the Holy Name of Allah Who is Beneficent and Merciful, invoking His Mercy to bless his efforts with success.

The goal of Islam is to make a man "God minded"; it wants him to realise that he, by himself, is nothing, that all his efforts are fruitless unless rewarded by God with success. And that realisation is combined with the satisfaction that God is Beneficent and Merciful Who will not disappoint him in his hope and belief.

It is very amusing to note that the common image of Islam, in the eyes of non-Muslims is that of a religion whose god is wrathful like the god of old Testament, inflicting punishment on the spur of the moment. Do a mistake and you get a jolly good bang on your head!

They fail to realise that the very first sentence of Holy Quran describes Allah as Beneficent and Merciful, and that formula is used by every Muslim hundreds of times every day. And the Muslims believe that by invoking the Mercy of

Allah they get His limitless blessings in this world and also in the world hereafter.

Once when the Holy Prophet (s.a.) while passing a graveyard, he suddenly ordered his companions to get out of it in haste. On the return journey, he asked them to walk slowly. On being asked the reason of the first order and then of its change next time, the Prophet (s.a.) informed them that there was a man being chastised in one of those graves, on account of his wickedness. I did not like to remain in a place where a human being was being punished, though he was a wrong doer. Fortunately, at the next moment the child of that dead person was taken to a teacher to start his education. The teacher told him to recite In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. As soon as the innocent child invoked the Mercy of Allah, the Command came to the angels to change the punishment into the blessing of Allah.

Allah (s.w.t.) says: It is not becoming to My Mercy to punish the parent while the son calls Me Beneficent and Merciful. So in return journey the Prophet (s.a.) walked by that graveyard with comfort, glorifying the Mercy and Benevolence of Almighty Allah.

Let us return towards Allah (s.w.t.) every time we begin any work. The word Bismillah (In the Name

of Allah) may mean also 'For the sake of Allah' and 'To the service of Allah'. Thus this formula, if comprehended fully, will serve also to save us from wrong action and misdeed as certainly, it would be illogical to commit a mischief 'for the sake of Allah' and 'to his service' Let us remember Allah (s.w.t.) and we will become free of sins and errors.

VIRTUE AND VICE

Man is rewarded or punished for his deeds after death. If he has performed good deeds, he enters paradise straight away. If he has passed his life in vice and has been the victim of the temptations of wealth, lust of youth and egotism he will enter the first stage of the world hereafter as a poor and helpless beggar and nobody will be there to console him. At the time of death man becomes a victim of all its agonies and has no alternative but to face them. There are seventy valleys in the world hereafter of which he never considered. The disobedient Satan to whose persuasion he fell victim, also leaves him after he has accomplished his task. He now repents for being far away from salvation.

POPULAR NARRATION OF IMAM ALI (A.S.)

Another very popular narration derived from the speech of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) is quoted :

A man was lying on his death bed. A figure appeared before him and he asked 'who are you'. It replied 'I am your wealth'. The dying man said 'I am in distress how can you help me. It replied 'I will help you in treatment'.

He said, 'I have taken great pains to accumulate you. For this purpose I did not even care for the lawful and the unlawful and you will help me only this far. Come with me into my grave. His wealth replied 'I cannot do so but I can buy you a coffin'. After a while another figure appeared. The sick man asked who are you? It replied 'I represent your children' The sick man sighed and said I am in a very adverse state. I have taken so much trouble for you; used tactics did legal and illegal acts and accumulated wealth for you. What can you do for me now. He was replied to ' We are prepared to serve you as long as you are alive. After your death we will bury you. The sick man asked Nobody is there to go into the grave with me? The reply was 'No!' The sick man felt very sorry that he had brought up children with great pains and labour, educated them and did all he

could for them but still no one was prepared to accompany him.

After some time appeared a third figure. The sick man asked 'Who are you?' The reply was 'I represent your deeds'. The sick man asked, 'I am in great distressed, what can you do for me?' It replied 'I will do everything according to your deeds. I will even go into the grave with you. The sick man started, and said, 'For God's sake you do not accompany me into the grave. My deeds are not good. I have done many illegal things in acquiring wealth for me and my children. It replied 'I will not leave you. I will not even leave you on the day of Judgement. The sick man kept on entreating and imploring but all was in vain.

We should learn a lesson from this narration and never do wrong because our deeds will go with us. Faith and deeds together have been greatly emphasised in the Holy Quran. There seems to be no objective more important that these two things. This has been stressed because only verbal acknowledgement of faith does not make a man a true believer but has to be proven by his deeds also all his actions and deeds should be based on faith and performed for the sake and pleasure of Allah.

Chapter Two

Belief

THE MAGNIFICENT POWER OF BELIEF

Every individual forms his own estimate of himself and that basic estimate goes far towards determining what he becomes. You can do no more than you believe you can. You can be no more than you believe you are. Belief stimulates power within yourself. Have faith in faith. Do not be afraid to trust faith.

Get in harmony with Allah (s.w.t.), change your thoughts and your way of living. Believe and succeed. The secret is, have faith, believe and practice. As you train your mind to believe, defeatist tendencies are reversed, and every thing tends to move out of the area of the impossible into that of possible. Stop doubting and thinking negatively.

Charm is not procured from a bottle. It comes from the right thinking and honest living.

Goals are never reached unless they are first specifically formed in the mind. The more jealousy one has in one's nature the more critical one is of those who have accomplished things.

Never compare yourself or your achievements with others, but make your comparisons only with yourself. Do not defeat yourself by holding spiteful and jealous thoughts. Think straight, with love, hope and optimism and you will attain victory in life.

In any project, the important factor is your belief. Without belief there can be no successful outcome. This is fundamental. They conquer who believe they can conquer. Whatever your goal, you can attain it if you believe you can, and then keep on believing even when it is hard to believe.

Belief stimulates power within yourself. Have faith in faith. Do not be afraid to trust faith. Every day do the act of casting all doubts out of your mind. Never settle for anything less than all that you want to be. Do not impose self created limitations upon yourself. Keep on believing as long as you live and your effectiveness will be prolonged. Think of success, visualise success and you will set in motion the powerful force of the realisable wish.

METHODOLOGY OF BELIEF

1. Believe. As you train your mind to believe, everything tends to move out of the area of the impossible into that of the possible.
2. Never compare yourself or your achievements with others, but make your comparison with yourself.
3. A sign of mental health is to be glad when others achieve and to rejoice with them.
4. Make your life what you want to be through belief in Allah (s.w.t.) and in yourself.
5. Start living by faith, pray earnestly and humbly, and get into the habit of looking expectantly for the best.
6. Think, believe and visualise success.
7. Keep on believing as long as you live.

CONVICTION – YAQEEN

It should be born in mind, that the quality of conviction is a very high stage of faith. This term is applied in several meanings. It may refer to one's conviction in the Divine Will, to such a degree that its effect may be displayed in his person. He concentrated his mind on Almighty Allah, leaving aside all other thoughts. His attitude

of reliance, of submission and of surrender is perfect.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Everything has a measure and climax. The climax of *Tawakkal* and conviction is that one should not fear anyone, except Almighty Allah.

According to another narration he is reported to have said: A sign of the rectitude of conviction is that one should not do anything to please his fellow men which may merit Divine displeasure. He should not blame others for not having got something which Almighty Allah had not given him. Verily, the greedy person can neither amplify his sustenance nor can the displeasure of any one stand in the way of his apportioned sustenance reaching him.

Verily, Almighty Allah, in His Justice has bracketed happiness and ease with conviction and Divine Will. Sorrow and grief are bracketed with ones displeasure with the Divine Will.

A small action which is performed regularly and with conviction is superior in merit to that which is performed without conviction.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: None shall receive the recompense for faith except the one who is convinced that all trouble and ease or hardships and comforts have been apportioned

for him. It cannot be warded off. If it is warded off, he should think that it was not apportioned for him at all. It could not have overtaken him by the efforts of anyone or of his own. No one has the power to bring about profit or loss, sorrow or ease except Almighty Allah.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was deciding the cases of certain persons, sitting under an inclining wall. A man made the submission that he should not take a seat under the wall, which was likely to fall. He said that every one is protected by the time appointed for him. When he was free from his job, he rose up, moved away from under the wall, the wall fell down.

Saad Ibn Qais has narrated to the following effect: I found a person during the course of a battle. He was wearing very ordinary clothing; I was wonder-struck at this. I spurred my horse towards him. I found that he was Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). I asked him as to how it was that he was wearing such ordinary clothing in such heat of the battle, amongst many enemies.

His reply was to the following effect: O' Saad! Do you not know that the Almighty Allah has appointed a number of angels to guard every person. Two of them are scribe angels while two others keep guard on him. A man may be thrown

into a well. He may be in a situation of peril. It is only when the Divine dispensation so wills that they depart.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) had great affection for his slave named Qambar. When Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) went forth from his house, the slave joined him with his sword ready, lest some enemy might cause him injury.

One day Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) left the house in moon light night. Looking behind, he saw Qambar following him usual. He asked him as to how he had come along.

He made the submission that he had come out, lest someone might cause him injury. He asked him whether he would guard him against the heavenly beings or the denizens of the earth and then told him to go back, as no denizen of the earth could cause him injury without Divine Decree. Qambar accordingly went back.

The second stage of conviction is that one should have complete faith in the recompense and torment of the Hereafter and that it should have its effect portrayed in his thinking, and all his actions. Haaretha speaks of his conviction as though he sees with his eyes the Divine Exalted Throne, the people gathered for reckoning, the inmates of

Paradise enjoying its comforts, while the inmates of the Hell suffering its torment.

The third stage of conviction is that one should have such a faith on all those matters, the faith whereon it is obligatory, to such a degree that it is manifested in every act done by him and every word uttered by him without the least trace of doubt.

It is narrated of Imam Raza (a.s.) to the following extent:

The Faith is higher than Islam by one stage. Conviction is one stage superior to piety. Nothing is so rarely gifted to the progeny of Adam (a.s.) as conviction.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Holy Prophet (s.a.):

By conviction is meant a state of mind wherein a believer worships Almighty Allah as if he sees Him. In case, one does not feel as seeing Him, one should think that Almighty Allah is seeing Him. One should have the conviction that nothing can prevent him from getting what he has to get, and he can get nothing what is not destined for, under any circumstances.

On the eve of battle of Siffin, Amcerul Momineen (a.s.) was making preparations with his army. He was riding the steed of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) named *Murtajez*. The sword *Zulfiqar* was belted

to his waist. He had, in his hand, the spear of the Holy Prophet (s.a). Muawiya was advancing towards him slowly. Someone cautioned Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) to take necessary precautions for his safety lest the hard-hearted enemy fell upon him unawares. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to him to the following effect:

It is not unexpected of the hard-hearted enemy to do this, he being the leader of the unscrupulous people who have advanced against the authority of the rightful Imam. The powers of destiny, however, suffice as protective agents. There is no one for whose protection Almighty Allah has not appointed a number of angels. They keep him safe in every dangerous situation. It may be a situation of falling in a well, a well falling on him or some other deadly accident. When, however, the appointed hour of death approaches, they leave him. In the same way, when the hour of my death shall approach, the most dastardly fellow of this Ummat shall come forth and dye my beard with blood of my head. This is what I have learnt from the Holy Prophet (s.a). This is such a dispensation as cannot be thwarted.

The term conviction comprehends all the inner and outer meanings that have been expressed here.

RELIANCE ON ALLAH

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! If you want to become stronger than all, you should repose reliance on Almighty Allah. If you want to win honour over and above everyone else you should adopt piety and virtue. If you wish to be most well-to-do and independent you should depend more on what lies with Almighty Allah than what lies within your power.

O' Abuzar! If all the people act according to this Quranic verse it will suffice them:

“Whosoever fears (the wrath of) Allah, He will make for him a way (out for him). And provide him with sustenance from where he does not reckon. Allah is sufficient for him who relies on him, Verily Allah accomplishes His purpose. Allah has indeed prescribed a measure for every thing (65:2-3)

O' Abuzar! Almighty Allah says on oath of His own Majesty to the following effect:

A man does not adopt and prefer My pleasure to his own pleasure but he arranges for his becoming well-to-do and wealthy. In other words his mind becomes independent from the side of all Creation.

All his thinking becomes centred round the life of the Hereafter. The Heavens and the Earth become the guarantors of his sustenance. The sources of his sustenance are developed. Almighty Allah becomes sufficient for every trader in his trade in return for his having given up spurious trading and having adopted the divine pleasure as the goal.

It should be borne in mind that reliance, dependence and submission are great factors of Faith. There are a great number of Quranic verses and traditions in appreciation of the excellence of these qualities.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Patience is the foundation of loyalty to Almighty Allah. It means to be satisfied with the will of the Almighty Allah whether it conforms in favour or against one's own wishes. When a person acquiesces in Divine will, it shall, be as a matter of course, the good result of such an attitude.

According to another tradition, Imam (a.s.) is reported to have said:

The most cognizant of Almighty Allah's authority is the person who is the most acquiescent in the Divine will.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Almighty Allah sent a revelation to the Holy Prophet (s.a.) to the following effect:

What I withhold from granting to a believer, it is done so for his own personal good. He should acquiesce in My Will. He should bear patiently any hardships that he faces. He should express gratitude for the divine bounties bestowed upon him. That would entitle him to be enlisted among His most favourite and truthful servants.

It is narrated of Imam Mohammed Baqir (a.s.) as having said to the following effect: The person who has the gnosis of Almighty Allah's authority is the most entitled to adopt the way to submission and acquiescence. The person who acquiesces in Divine dispensation gets his recompense enhanced by Almighty Allah. The person who is offended at being the target of Divine dispensation, shall have, in any case, have that dispensation taking effect in his case, but he shall lose his right to recompense thereafter.

It is narrated that Imam Jafer al Sadiq (a.s.) was asked by someone as to the criteria of the identity of a believer so as to know whether he is really a true believer. His reply was to the following effect: You can do so by his attitude of acquiescence in Divine will, whether it profits him or harms him.

Whatever came to pass with the Holy Prophet (s.a.) was taken by him without any demur, without wishing that it would have been otherwise. How can a person be considered to be a believer who does not acquiesce in the Divine Will. One should be convinced that everything has been ordained by Almighty Allah. The person who gives no thought to anything except acquiescing to the Divine Will shall have his prayers granted as a matter of course. I guarantee this.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) reported Almighty Allah as having said:

O son of Adam! Obey Me. Do not remind Me of the things which you think shall benefit you. I know better wherein your good lies.

AN ACCOUNT OF RELIANCE ON THE ALMIGHTY ALLAH

On the basis of reliable authority Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) is narrated to have said: Riches and honour are revolving. They come to stay wherever they find reliance.

According to another tradition he is reported to have spoken of Almighty Allah as having revealed to Prophet Dawood (a.s.) to the following effect:

The person who reposes reliance in Me and who turns away from the creation, I cognise his sincerity of intent. I carve out a way for him, out of my trap that may have been laid for him between the earth and the sky.

The person who reposes reliance on any of My creation and depends thereon, shall have the heavenly means cut off from him. If I get to know of such intent in his mind, I would not care as to how and where he is destroyed.

In another tradition he is reported to have said to the following effect: Supposing a person attends to such affairs as are liked by Almighty Allah, then Almighty Allah shall attend to those affairs himself and He shall make provision himself thereof. The person who seeks for Divine help in the matter of the avoidance of sins, shall find Almighty Allah giving him His protection therein. The person to whose interest, Almighty Allah attends and whom He protects shall have nothing to worry for whatever kind of affliction that befall him. Because of his piety and righteousness he is enlisted among the people who enjoy Divine Protection, as Almighty Allah says:

A command from Us- verily, We are ever sending
(44:5)

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to the following effect:

You should hope for that which you have not the remotest idea in preference to what you are thinking of.

Prophet Musa (a.s.) went to fetch some fire. He was raised to the status of 'Kaleem' (one who has the honour to speak with Almighty Allah). He became a prophet. Queen Bilquis of Saba came out on the tour of her land. She won her honour to Islam. The magicians of Pharaoh came to uphold his prestige. They won their way to faith.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

Prophet Musa (a.s.) made a submission to Almighty Allah: O my Allah! You send me on an errand while You make me leave my minor children behind.

Almighty Allah said to him to the following effect: Are you not pleased that I should be their Protector and Sustainer?

Musa (a.s.) made the submission: Undoubtedly, you are the best of sustainers and the best of guardians.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) reported of Prophet Luqman (a.s.) to have said to his son:

O my son! The person who does not repose reliance on Almighty Allah in his search for sustenance should see that Almighty Allah created him and provided him sustenance under those conditions when he had no other means. It stands to reason that he shall provide him sustenance in that stage too.

- (1) In the womb of his mother, he was maintained in perfect comfort and protection against heat and cold. He provided him with all his needs.
- (2) At his birth, He left flow a stream of milk from his mother's breast by way of his sustenance whereby he got the strength for growth. His own planning and action had little to do in all this.
- (3) When he was weaned from the milk of his mother's breast he instilled love in the minds of his parents. They toiled and spent their earnings for him with perfect love and affection. He was fed as well as they could feed him. Now when he has grown up to manhood with the competence to earn for himself, he has begun to think of all sorts of meaningless thoughts. He has become

suspicious about Almighty Allah. He thinks it burdensome for him to pay the dues of the divine law. He begins to be miserly in his expenditure on his own household, lest the sustenance should diminish. His faith in Almighty Allah has been impoverished. He does not think that whatever has been given to him is for the purpose of spending to win the recompense in this life and in the life hereafter, such a person is certainly very undesirable.

THE EXCELLENCE OF RELIANCE ON THE ALMIGHTY ALLAH

Is narrated that Imam Jafer al Sadiq (a.s) said about the Satan saying: All persons are under my control except five who I am unable to beguile, by any means within my power.

- (1) The person who reposes reliance in Almighty Allah in all matters.
- (2) The person who is engaged in divine glorification all through the night and day.
- (3) The believer who wishes for his believing brother the same what he wishes himself to despair.

- (4) The person who does not give way, in the face of calamity.
- (5) The person who acquiesces in divine dispensation. He has no worry about his sustenance.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated Imam from Imam Raza (a.s) that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s), was asked about the state of one of his absentee companions. He was told that he was ailing. He went to his sick-bed and found him in the throes of death.

He took a seat near his bed and advised him to entertain the best of hopes of Almighty Allah. He said that he had very good hopes from Almighty Allah, but that he was worried about his sins, the same worry having brought him to death-bed. Imam (a.s) then said to him:

You hope that Almighty Allah shall pardon your sins, and double your good deeds. You should pin your hopes on him about your sins as well.

Do you not know the Holy Prophet (s.a.) has said: When during my/heavenly ascent I passed by the Sidra-tul-Muntaha, I cast a glance at its leaves and branches. I saw female breasts hanging down some branches. There was flowing milk out of some of them. From others it was honey that flowed. There was fat oozing from some of them. Others gave out

flour. From yet others, dropped fruits. There were apparels hanging from some of them. I wondered as to the place, where they were falling. Angel Jibraeel was not with me, from whom I could enquire. I had ascended higher beyond his limits. Almighty Allah then inspired my heart to follow the effect:

I have planted them at such height, that they may serve as sustenance for the young ones of your Ummat. Tell the parents of the young ones, that they should not worry about their sustenance, on account of poverty. I have created them, I shall provide them with sustenance as well.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated by Ameerul Momineen (a.s) that Almighty Allah revealed to prophet Dawood (a.s.) to the following effect:

O'Dawood ! you make up your mind on a certain matter. I too make a plan. If you acquiesce in my plan, I accept the same willingly. You shall achieve your objective. In case you do not take it willingly, you will land in trouble. You shall wear yourself out in working for your objective, and ultimately it will come to pass as I plan.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated by the Holy Prophet (s.a.) that Almighty Allah said:

The person who does not acquiesce in my will and who does not have faith in my plans, should choose some other lord for himself besides myself.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: The person who acquiesces in the Divine Will shall always enjoy happiness.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: The worldly gains are dispensed in accordance with worth and due measure. You shall surely get what is apportioned for you, howsoever weak and lean you may be. You shall not be able to ward off the hardship that is destined, by the dint of your power. Anything that has been lost to a person is gone. If he gives up hope for its recovery, he shall enjoy everlasting happiness. The person who is contented in the sustenance apportioned in his favour by Almighty Allah shall ever be happy and merry.

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said: Man is face to face with Divine bounties, Divine Will and the hardships of life. It behoves him to face hardships with patience, to submit to the Divine Will willingly and to be grateful for the Divine Bounties. It should be borne in mind, that there are a number of traditions in favour of the acquirement of these praiseworthy qualities. It is appropriate in this context to dilate thereupon.

SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL TAFWEEZ

By reliance (Tawakkal) on Almighty Allah, we mean that a man leaves all his affairs to the Divine Will. One should be convinced that all that comes to pass is part of the Divine Dispensation. No one can prevent the benefit, which the Almighty Allah may apportion for any person. His Omnipotence and Authority dominate everything else. In case He intends to stand in the way of some benefit reaching someone, the same cannot come to his hand, even if the world unites to bring that benefit to him.

It has been related in Al Kafi by Thikatul Islam that Jabir Ibn Abdullah Ansari in his old age met Imam Baqir (a.s.) He enquired of his welfare. Jabir submitted, O' my master! I love my old age more than my young age: my illness more than health and prefer death to life. 'Hearing this the Imam said: O' Jabir, one's choice is not as stated by you; I should love old age if Allah bestows and young age if He Wills. In the same way if He desires my illness I would love it and if He intends my health I would love it, if He wills my death I would be glad and if He allows me to live I would be

pleased. Jabir kissed the forehead of the Imam on hearing the above and submitted that Holy prophet (s.a.) had prophesised that I would see his son whose name would be the same as his own and he would spread learning in the way the agricultural land is slit open.

The term *tafweez* is synonymous with *tawakkul* (reliance) on Almighty Allah. One should have strong faith in this. One should never prefer the wishes of others to the wish of Almighty Allah. One should not depend on anyone else, nor upon one's own self, in any matter. One should regard the authority and power of man as altogether subservient to him.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Polytheism engendered in the hearts of the men more secretly than the track of the feet of an ant. Supposing a person takes off a ring from one finger and puts it on another finger with the object that it would remind him of a certain matter, shall be committing an act of the polytheism.

There are other things too of this kind which partake of the nature of polytheism. This would be the case when a man forsakes reliance on Almighty Allah and depends on changing the ring. In short when any affair is undertaken, wherein one for sake dependence on Almighty Allah and

depends on anything else, there is the case of polytheism.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the holy prophet (s.a) asked of Angel Jibraeel the meaning of *tawwakul* (reposing reliance in the Almighty Allah).

His reply was: By *tawakkul* is implied that a man should know that men has no say in the matter his profit or loss.

They can neither benefit him nor can they prevent any benefit reaching him. As such he should give up all hopes from them; the person who attains this status shall work in perfect dependence on Almighty Allah. He shall not pin any hope of the gain on any one except Almighty Allah. This is that *tawakkul* means.

Someone asked Imam Raza (a.s.) as to the meaning of *tawakkul*. His reply was. It implies that you should not fear anyone when you know that Almighty Allah is with you.

Acquiescence in the Divine Will means that one reposes complete reliance on Almighty Allah. Everything he does, he does so according to the Divine Commandments. Whatever comfort, hardship, indigence and affluence come to him should be regarded as in his own interests in as much as everything comes to happen under Divine

Will. Almighty Allah has the omnipotence to ward it off. Had it been expedient, it would have been barred, as a matter of course. He is not unkind as to do him any harm. He is not miserly as to want to withhold it from him. He is not un-knowing as not be in the know of ones interests. He is not hand-bound to give him what is of advantage to him. With perfect faith in these qualities one should gratefully accept what is granted to him. While in the pursuit of what is just and lawful according to Allah's command. One should not have the least complaint about it.

On the basis of the reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s) was asked as to the exegesis of the Quranic verse to the following effect:

Allah is sufficient for him who relies on Him.
(65:3)

His reply was: *Tawakkul* has a number of stages. One of them is that one should have complete reliance on Almighty Allah in all one's affairs. One should be agreeable to that comes to pass. One should have the conviction that Almighty Allah is never slack in looking after one's interests. He does not withhold his kindness from anyone. One should know that whatever has come to pass is under his command. One should leave to

him all one's affairs in perfect confidence. One's reliance should always be on him in every matter.

SURRENDER TO ALMIGHTY ALLAH TASLEEM

By *tasleem* is meant compliance with all the commands pertaining to doing or refraining from doing, given by Almighty Allah, the Holy Prophet (s.a.) and the Imams (a.s). One should regard them as in his best interests. One should be perfectly subservient to them. One should never be rebellious. One should never look upon them with displeasure.

But no, by your Lord, they will not be (true) believers until they make you a judge in what they dispute amongst themselves, and then do not find any vexation (at all) within themselves against what you decide, and submit with fullest submission. (4:65)

It should be borne in mind that these praiseworthy qualities are fundamental to Faith because other virtues and deeds hinge upon them. For example: one who reposes faith in Almighty Allah shall have given up all hope for men. He shall desist from all those sins which are perpetrated because of pinning hopes on fellow beings. One is prone to disobey Almighty Allah because of his eagerness to please others. One is apt to be zealous to work

according to divine commandments. One should not be slack in carrying out the religious rites of worship being free of the fear of all human beings he shall not ignore his responsibility of bidding the good and forbidding from the evil. He shall avoid making any changes in the legal directives, having nothing to do with flattering others. He shall not earn his sustenance by unlawful means, knowing that it is apportioned by Almighty Allah. He shall be saved from begging from other creatures. In this way, the grand majesty of Almighty Allah shall be ever more instilled in his mind. He shall look upon human beings as of no importance. On receipt of every boon, his love for the donor shall be enhanced, because of his faith in Almighty Allah as the Sustainer and the real Bestower. There are many stages in this attitude. One is ever in a state of tranquillity of his mind because of his conviction that everything is determined by Almighty Allah for his good as a part of his resignation to Divine will. He does not become embarrassed in the time of his affliction, rather he faces it patiently and is ever grateful to Almighty Allah. No sorrow or trouble overpowers him. He never ignores under these conditions his attitude of adoration towards Almighty Allah. He is not inimical to anyone, on the ground of not having received any favour from Him. He does not forget Almighty Allah when he receives a favour because

of his gratitude to him. He has no feelings of envy for any one for their greater possessions. He does not quarrel with other people in the matter of worldly things. His love for friendship for other fellow beings is based on seeking the pleasure of Almighty Allah. His acts of worship become sincere and altogether free from any hypocrisy. He is not shaken to sorrow or the vicissitudes and happenings of the world.

It is narrated that someone asked Bahlool as to how he was. His reply was:

“What do you want to know-the condition of a person at whose pleasure, the sky and the earth moves. Whatever happens in this earth and in the Heavens is on the basis of His will”.

The questioner observed that they were very tall claims whereupon Bahlool explained as follows:

I learnt very early that whatever takes place at the hands of Almighty Allah, is for the good and welfare of everyone. I therefore have made my will subservient to His Will. I have entrusted the reigns of all my planning to him. I have made my will as a part of His Will. So whatever is taking place is in consonance with my will, and desire.

There are innumerable advantages in adopting this attitude of mind. A person who surrenders himself completely to Divine Command gets all his doubts

and misgivings removed from his mind. He bows in obedience to all the directives received from Almighty Allah and the Holy Prophet (s.a.). He is free from all discussions of cause and effect. This attitude of mind is fundamental to religion. Many people are, however, misled by these or their ignorance of the same.

DIVINE WILL AND DESTINY

From what has been explained in connection with the meaning of *Tawakkul*, one should not be misled into thinking that a man under *Tawakkul* may sit behind the door of his house giving up all participation in the business of the world. All this is against the spirit of *Tawakkul*. Suppose a man throws himself into a well and says that he does it because of his *Tawakkul*. It is far from *Tawakkul* which, as we have said before, is to do one's best in accordance with the directives of Almighty Allah, and one should act accordingly. One should keep in mind the same measure which he has been commanded. One should not derive income from unlawful means. One should not give up the obligatory and approved forms of worship. One should not be greedy and accumulate more than what suffices his needs.

PRE-DESTINATION

It is narrated that Imam Jaffar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Do not give up seeking sustenance by lawful means. It is a support for you in religious matters. Bind the feet of the camel and then rely on the Almighty Allah. So you should endeavour in performing the rites of worship and thereafter rely on the Almighty Allah. You should think then that all your organs, your hands, your feet, your senses, your talents, your sustenance, your houses, your clothing, which have helped you to perform the rites of worship are all bestowed by Almighty Allah to you. Besides this it is Almighty Allah who bestowed upon men the great boon of right guidance and faith. Notwithstanding all these matters you should not think of negation of your discretion in the matter. You should attribute sinfulness and evil to your own self. Admit the same. Regard yourself as meriting punishment. Do not try to probe into the mysteries of pre-destination. It suffices for one that the leaders of the religion have spoken of it thus: Too much probing therein leads to misguidance. Our Imams (a.s.) have forbidden it.

There may be a few among the scholars who tried to go deep into the matter, yet escaped error. It is part of the surrender that one should just admit the

issues as explained by the scholars, which ones' intelligence is incompetent to grasp.

One should not, like Satan poke his nose into the issue and merit everlasting curses.

The Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar:

O! Abuzar! Safeguard Divine dignity. Always keep before your mind the compliance with the positive commandments and the prohibitions. You will find Him before you. By so doing you will find all the factors provided for any understanding that you may consider best in your interest before giving any attention thereto. Try to make acquaintance with Almighty Allah in the time of ease and comfort so as not to be oblivious of Him. You should perform rites of worship. You should pray for your good. You should be grateful for Divine Bounties. He shall be your friend in the time of trouble and adversity. He shall grant your prayer then.

DIVINE PLANNING

When you have to ask for anything, ask it of the Exalted Majesty of Almighty Allah. If you have to seek help, seek it from Almighty Allah.

If possible, worship Almighty Allah by surrendering to His will and with conviction of the

affairs of the Hereafter. If you cannot do it, then be patient. There is a great deal of goodness and recompense in facing the troubles and afflictions with patience. Verily, there is the succour of Almighty Allah, for an attitude of patience.

There is happiness and delight with sorrow and grief. There is an ease and comfort side by side with hardship in this life, as well as in the life of the Hereafter.

The same attitude has been approved for the consolation of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) by Almighty Allah, in the Chapter of the Holy Quran al-Insharah.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) knew on the basis of his Prophetic knowledge that his Companion Abuzar was to receive a great deal of trouble and distress at the hands of hypocrites of the Ummat. He taught him to try himself in the cause of expression of truth. In case he felt incompetent therefore, he should betake himself to patience.

He then consoled him to be patient in the face of troubles. He was to know that he would receive ease and comfort in the wake of troubles.

Abuzar did as he was commanded. The story has been told in the beginning of this book.

Chapter Three

Patience

PATIENCE

It should be borne in mind that patience is one of the adjuncts of acquiescence in Divine Will. This quality is the source of a lot of happiness in this life and in the life of the Hereafter. The best form of patience is that which one adopts by way of toil in giving up sins. It is a matter which is very disagreeable to the ego. Next to it come the toils in connection with rites of worship. Then comes the form of toil in the face of the troubles of this world.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Patience is like the faith. Just as one's body becomes useless and lifeless when the head is removed, so also one's faith is wasted in the absence of patience. This same subject has been dealt with in a number of traditions.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said: Paradise is encircled by troubles and afflictions and patience in the face of them. As such, whoever faces patiently shall as a matter of course enter Paradise.

Hell is encircled by pleasures and desires. The person who is enamoured of pleasures and desires shall be thrown into Hell.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: When a believer is placed in his grave, to his right stand prayers, to his left Zakat. The goodness that he may have done to his parents and kinsfolk stands at his head. His attitude of patience stands by his side.

The two angels of the grave arrive to interrogate him. Patience requires of its three companions, namely, prayers, Zakat and goodness, to help the man, failing which it would take upon itself to help him.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: There will be come a period of time when a kingdom will not be available to anyone without bloodshed and slaughter, nor shall one come by affluence without usurping the assets of others and without practicing miserliness. Mutual friendship will not be available with out giving up religion and without following the egoistic urges. Whoever happens to belong to that age, should put up with his poverty patiently, even though he may have the competence to get rich by practicing usurpation and miserliness. He should put up patiently with humiliation even though he may have the

competence to gain honour by following the wrong-doers. One should be patient on enmity on the part of others, which they display because of his goodness, even though he may have the competence to win their friendship by following them.

Almighty Allah shall grant him the recompense of the specially favoured and truthful ones, who have testified to my mission.

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) who said: My revered father at the time of his departure from this world, took me in his lap and said: O' my son! You should bear with patience the truth, however bitter it may appear.

THE KINDS OF PATIENCE

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said that patience is of three kinds; with the exertions of worship; with giving up of sins and with affliction and trial.

The person who faces trouble with patience and wards it off with the power of patience, shall have three hundred stages of merit from Almighty Allah. The distance between one stage and the next shall be as is the distance between the earth and the sky. The person who is patient with the exertions of worship shall have six hundred stages. The distance between one stage and the next shall be equal to the distance between one extreme of the

earth to the sky. The person who is patient with his giving up the sins shall have nine thousand stages in his favour. The distance between one stage and the next shall be equal to the distance between the extremes of the earth and the extreme of the Heavenly Throne.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: If a believer is involved in a trouble and puts up with it patiently, he shall have the recompense of one thousand martyrs from Almighty Allah.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said:

When Almighty Allah gathers His Creation on the Doomsday an announcer in a voice which shall be heard by all the Creation shall proclaim to the following effect:

"Where are the people who were patient!" Then shall come up a body of men. The angel shall advance to welcome them. They will ask as to how they fared with patience.

They shall reply to the following effect: "We put up patiently with the exertions of worship. We put up with the toil of giving up sin."

At this an angel shall proclaim on behalf of Almighty Allah : These people spoke the truth. Let them enter Paradise without reckoning!

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! Almighty Allah says to following effect:

I do not give weight to the words of a wise man, who speaks words of wisdom, but whose heart remains uninfluenced thereby and who does not act in accordance therewith. I accept his intent and wish. In case his intent and wish relate to subjects which I approve, I appreciate his silence as in the way of glorifying me. I will raise his prestige even if he does not utter a word.

Chapter Four

Sincerity

SINCERITY IN ACTION

It should be borne in mind, that these words emphasise the same subject as has been dilated upon before, namely Divine worship, Divine remembrance, gratitude, glorification, wisdom, gnosis and piety. All of them are worthy of appreciation only when they spring from the heart. If they are confined only to the words of the tongue while the heart remains uninfluenced without leading to resultant action, they are in the nature of hypocrisy and show. They do not relate to Almighty Allah. They will benefit neither the person himself nor anyone else. The words of wisdom, which form the basis of one's actions and which spring from the heart, shall be deemed really as words of wisdom. Other people also shall derive benefit there from. Even silence shall be part of wisdom. His action and conduct shall serve as sermons for others. It will be as if all his organs speak the language of wisdom.

Wisdom will spring from the fountain-head of the heart and, flowing from the tongue, shall reach all the organs of the body. The people shall gain guidance even by looking at him.

On the basis of reliable authority, a tradition says to the following effect: You should invite other people to the path of guidance without using the tongue. It implies that the actions which are performed with sincere intent for the sake of Almighty Allah have this importance.

In the same way, only that form of piety is predated, which springs from the heart with conviction of the Exalted Majesty of Almighty Allah with conviction in the life on the hereafter with all one's heart, convincing the mind of an attitude of fear and hope of Almighty Allah and righteous conduct in the wake thereof. All the things inwardly, as well as outwardly should be for the sake of Almighty Allah.

Supposing one gives up sinning for fear denunciation of the people, it amounts to polytheism and show. Similar is the case if the aim is some spurious worldly gain.

Loyalty to and worship of Almighty Allah under such circumstances is in the nature polytheism and show. It is not in the nature piety and righteousness. Almighty Allah had referred piety to the heart where He says:

That (is the command), whoever respects the signs of Allah, verily it from the piety of the hearts. (22:32)

DO NOT SAY WHAT YOU CAN NOT DO

Sensible people do not devalue themselves by empty talk. Man becomes unreliable thereby. He loses his importance. Besides, it is a serious matter to have one's hope shattered. Why should we not, therefore, utter words or make promise after due deliberation? What is the use otherwise of degrading oneself in the heat of passing emotions?

SINCERITY OF EFFORT

It means that the person who works for the Hereafter, is granted the capacity to do so. He shall have ten times his recompense. The person who works for this world, gets his reward like Satan, restricted to this world. He shall have nothing in the Hereafter.

It is clear from this that the hypocrites who work for display to the world shall get all that they work for in this life. They shall have nothing to hope for in the life to come.

Those who have sincerity of purpose may not get any reward in this life. They shall be fully recompensed in the Hereafter.

Almighty Allah does not allow any action to remain un-recompensed. Even the infidels attain to a state of the baser kinds of clairvoyance by concerted endeavours, although they are debarred from the blissfulness of the Hereafter.

A Muslim believer, on the other hand may perform the requirements of worship for all his life and yet remain unrecompensed in this world. His recompense is put off to the Hereafter. It may be so, because he may become conceited on the realisation of his recompense in this life.

It transpires from traditions that when a man's faith gets perfected, he ceases even to dream.

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) says to following effect: Nobody thanks the believer for the good he does. Nor does he win fame. He does not aim at being renowned. He acts for the pleasure Almighty Allah. As such, his acts of goodness go up high.

On the other hand the infidel is thanked profusely for any acts of goodness that may do He wins notoriety, in as much as he aims at display.

Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) is reported to have said to the following effect: "The people did not thank the Holy Prophet (s.a.) for his acts of goodness to them. They were ungrateful to him. They antagonised him. In the same way they are averse

to obey us and to give us the right due to Ahlul Bait. So is the case with our adherents. Few are the men who give the thanks for the good they do.”

It is related that Mufazzel bin Umar made submission to Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) to the following effect:

“Some of the learned men of the day are of the opinion that when Almighty Allah befriends a person, he appoints an angel to proclaim to the people to exalt him in honour as being the friend of Almighty Allah. Thus does He create esteem for him in the eyes of the people of the world. When, however, He is hostile to a person, He appoints an angel to proclaim to the people to hold him as their enemy, he being an enemy of His. Thus does he cause him to be antagonised by the people.”

Imam (a.s.) was reclining on a pillow at the time, and upon hearing this from Mufazzel he sat up straight and replied: It is not so. When a person is befriended by Almighty Allah the people get prepared to antagonise him and speak ill of him. They thereby sin against him. He gets the reward therefore.

When Almighty Allah is offended with anyone, the people make friends with him. They praise him very highly. They commit sin thereby.

He then added: Who can be a greater friend of Almighty Allah than Prophet Yahya bin Zakariyah? The people turned against him, and slew him outright.

Who can be a greater friend of and more beloved of Almighty Allah than Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Talib? What did the people do to him but to put him into troubles of all sorts? Who can be a greater friend of Almighty Allah than Imam Husain Ibn Ali (a.s.)? What cruelties did the people not heap on his head? In short he was martyred.

AVOIDING PERSONAL PUBLICITY DO IT ALL FOR ALLAH (S.W.T)

In the Holy Quran and as well as in the precepts of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) pride and conceit have been declared sins, and in the religious life, the Muslim has been trained to do every thing to please Allah. Remember, for such a devotion as prayer, on which depend the acceptance of all the good devotional acts and for fasting which is specially for Allah, we declare our intention to attain nearness to Allah.

And in *Jihad* (Holy war of defence) too it is restricted to *Fi Sabilillah*, in the way of Allah.

In giving alms to the beggar and in feeding the hungry, sincerity is absolutely essential.

It is mentioned in surah Dahar, and in the *Seerat* (Way) of the descendants of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) it is mentioned that in cooperating with the beggars, orphans and prisoners they stated that: "We feed you for the sake of Allah".

In performing a pilgrimage to the Holy shrine of Imam Husain (a.s.), which is considered the best of all the human acts, it is a condition that there must be sincerity.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY - CONTENTMENT

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! You should become self-sufficient by virtue of the affluence that Almighty Allah has granted you. Be contented with what He has bestowed upon you. Do not make yourself dependent on others. You will then be all the more self-sufficient and independent.

Abuzar asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.) as to what was implied by self-sufficiency?

His reply was: Suppose you get a meal for the day and a meal for the night. You should consider yourself self-sufficient. Do not become dependent on others. Do not beg anything of others.

The person who betakes himself to contentment, with the sustenance which the Almighty Allah has granted him, is the most self-sufficient and well to do.

It should be borne in mind, that self-sufficiency and affluence are not achieved without contentment. By self-sufficiency is implied the independence of one's mind. There are people who are self-sufficient by virtue of the self Sufficiency of the mind. They repose reliance in Almighty Allah only. They are not greedy of accumulating wealth. They do not pin their hopes on other human beings. There are others who are in possession of treasures of wealth but they look to be needy because of their greed for money and their love for riches. They are ever after accumulating added wealth. They undergo disgrace in the eyes of the people because of their greediness. The more they acquire, the greater is their greed for more. The world is like salty water. The more you drink it, the more thirsty you feel. So is the case of the seeker after worldly riches. The more one gets, the greedier he becomes.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said:

The person who is satisfied with just that which suffices his needs shall find even a little of this world becoming sufficient for him.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The person who is contented with the portion granted by Almighty Allah, is the most self-sufficient.

There are a number of other traditions on this subject, but what has been said should suffice for the presents.

SELF REFORMATION

The one, who longs for salvation and eternal bliss, should not relax vigil on his baser urges. He should ever remain on the look out for his shortcomings. He should never yield to self deception. He should set out in a way as if searching for the faults of an enemy.

One seldom admits the presence of faults within himself. But if one exerts to find out one's fault, he may come about a number of them.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: When a man sees any one of his own faults and avoids it, he comes to know of many other faults as well. One should ever be in search of his own mental stocktaking. One should be mindful that he has to be subjected to full reckoning of his mind, on the appointed Day. He must get prepared himself for it from now on. He should remember fully the explanations he shall have to give. Any

relaxation on his part shall affect his reckoning badly on the Day of Judgment.

The life that has been bestowed upon man is the most precious gift. Every moment of it can be used to earn eternal bliss. One should ever be mindful as to the engagement of each moment.

If one has spent it in righteous action, one should get the recompense therefore. If the moment is spent in sinfulness, one is sure to be exposed to Divine Chastisement. If one has done nothing, he shall be deemed to have wasted a very precious gift.

If a moment has been spent in righteous action, One should prompt one's self, to further righteous deeds. If a moment has been spent in sinfulness, one should snub his self, and prevent it from continuing such activities. One should adopt the ways of patience and pardon-seeking. It would be proper in such cases to seek good counselling, and resort to the study of the Holy Quran and traditions, by way of self-warning.

It is a matter of common observation that the human ego is like a restive colt. If it is not properly controlled, it makes for self destruction because of reckless capers and knocks. It also contributes to the ruin of the rider.

It is narrated, on the basis of reliable authority, that Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) said:

The person, who does not take stock of his doings everyday, is not from amongst us. It is necessary that one should make reckoning of his doings. In the case of good deeds he should pray to Almighty Allah for added capacity for doing good. In case one has drifted to, the sinful side, he should resort to penitence and pardon seeking.

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said to a person: Almighty Allah has appointed you as a physician of your mind. You should take care of its health by treating its ailments. You should note its working. One should cherish one's restraining conscience as one's son and companion, while the passionate ego should be looked upon as one's enemy, against whom one should wage a Holy war. One should cherish the righteous actions as one's father to be followed.

KEEPING AN EYE ON ONE'S OWN FAULTS

One should look upon his possessions as having been borrowed, to be returned to the real owner.

According to a tradition, one should withhold one's self from every harmful thing, one should bear in mind that the ego is held in mortgage with one's actions. One should endeavour to redeem the same

with same assiduity with which one works to earn one's livelihood.

Imam (a.s.) is reported to have said that one should endeavour to gain good wherewithal from one's mind. One should avail of the privilege of good health before getting ill, in the matter of gaining good wherewithal. One should also avail of the state of youthfulness before old age and of life before death for the purpose of gaining good wherewithal for the Hereafter.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) has said: Do not under-rate anything which is likely to benefit you on the Day of Judgment, nor take lightly anything that may prove harmful on that Day. The information that has been given by Almighty Allah is as reliable as one's own observation.

In his parting will to Imam Hasan (a.s.), Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: There are three moments for a believer, O' My son! He implores Almighty Allah in one, takes stock of his own mind in the second and enjoys the lawful pleasures in the third in the spirit of gratefulness.

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Take a reckoning of your ego, before the time of the final reckoning. There shall be fifty stops on the Day of Judgment,

each on of them being of a thousand years duration.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) says to the following effect: The person who does not seek out and correct his own faults becomes overpowered by greed and passions while the person who does not take stock of his ego leads a life worse than death.

Imam Ali Ibn Husain (a.s.) said: O' son of Adam! You shall have all you affairs properly arranged so long you are a guardian over your own ego. When you get to such a state of mind, you should adopt as your permanent attitude of mind, the fear of Almighty Allah. You should put on yourself the apparel of sobriety in life.

O' the sons of Adam! You have to die one day. You shall then be brought back to life, to stand for reckoning before Almighty Allah. You shall have to answer for your actions. Get prepared for answering from now onwards.

Chapter Five

Modesty

MODESTY AND FAITH

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! Be mindful of the presence of Almighty Allah. I swear by Almighty Allah who holds my life in His power, that when I get to answer the call of nature, I cover my head and face out of modesty because of the presence of the two angels who are always with me.

O Abuzar! Do you wish to go to Paradise? Then restrict your worldly desires and keep death always before you.

You should be mindful of Almighty Allah in a befitting manner.

You should not lose sight of the state of decay in the grave. One should exercise, full control over the passions of the ego, the sensual gratifications of the stomach, of the eyes and of the ears.

The person who longs for eternal bliss should defy the allurements of this life.

O' Abuzar! If you can acquire such a state of mind, you shall attain the height of the friendship of Almighty Allah.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) has spoken of a number of moral virtues, one among them being the sense of modesty. Modesty implies that one's ego is affected by affairs which merit censure. Modesty, as such has two kinds; One is the great virtue par-excellence, and the passport to eternal bliss. The second is the extreme fault, which is a source of ill luck and deprivation. The virtue of modesty is attained, when the faculty of distinction between right and wrong is developed. One feels put out of countenance when one faces a sinful situation, or when one feels inclined to be slothful in the discharge of one's responsibility to Almighty Allah. The Islamic Code has laid down clear limits in respect of such matters.

It is obvious that in a situation of sin, a man possessing modesty shall at once be reminded that Almighty Allah watches him. He shall have the belief that his actions shall be presented, as matter of course, as those of a member of the Ummat to the Holy Prophet (s.a.) and the Infallible Imams (a.s.). He knows it for certain that there are two scribe angels who are ever with him to record his deeds. If Almighty Allah were to remove the veils of Heavens, all the angels would witness his deed of sinfulness. He shall be put to shame on the Day of Judgement in the presence of all the creatures and the Prophets. With such Ideas in his mind and

with such a conviction, he will never give way to any untoward urges.

The unwelcome form of modesty implies that a person because of poor understanding may begin to regard as obnoxious an action which is, in fact, approved as righteous by the Islamic Code, and so abstain from doing it. Such an attitude stems from ignorance.

To take an example, one may feel ashamed to enquire about a point of the Code, which he may not be aware of. Such modesty may prove to be a source of eternal damnation. The Almighty Allah says to the following effect:

Allah does not feel embarrassed in (saying) the truth (33:53)

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Modesty is of two kinds; the modesty based on reason and modesty based on stupidity. Modesty based on reason proceeds from knowledge and intelligence. Modesty based on stupidity stems from ignorance.

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) says: Modesty is part of faith, while faith is the passport to Paradise. Modesty and faith are linked together. If one gives up on one of them, the other dies of itself.

A tradition lays down that the question of faith does not arise in the absence of modesty.

It is also laid down that a person who is possessed of three virtues, truthfulness, modesty and good manners, shall have his sin condoned and replaced by good deeds, howsoever numerous they maybe. Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) says: O' People! Have no modesty (shyness) in the matter of acquiring knowledge. The person with a narrow forehead is deficient in knowledge.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) has said to the following effect: Among the proverbs of the olden sages is one which is very commendable namely, one may do anything when he forsakes modesty.

This is implied to mean that the absence of modesty is the root cause of all vices.

The traditions speak of modesty as being of two forms. One form of it is grounded on stupidity and low intelligence. The second form is the power of Islam and Faith.

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said to the following effect:

Prophet Isa (a.s.) has said that one should put on a covering over his head when in the privacy of his home. As a matter of fact, Almighty Allah has apportioned modesty among his creatures just as He has apportioned the means of everyone's livelihood.

This tradition implies that one should put on a covering over his head when one goes to answer the call of nature. It is an unseemly act, and, as such, one should cover his head. One should also, at this occasion try to visualise one's inner faults and sins on observing one's filthy discharges. One should feel ashamed to think that the inner filth is even more offensive than the outer dirtiness. The Islamic code has made a reference thereto. The learned scholars have laid it down as a matter approved by the *Sunnah*, that one should as a matter of good manners cover one's head, when going into the privacy of the lavatory.

It is obvious that in this there is a double benefit to be gained, the observance of the demand of modesty as well as the protection of the brain against the stinking smell.

MODESTY AND MODERN CIVILIZATION

The hypocrites, men and women, are one from another. They enjoin evil and forbid good and withhold their hands (from spending in the way of Allah). They have forsaken Allah, so He has forsaken them. Verily, the hypocrites are the transgressors. (9:67)

Here at the risk of being branded as 'out-of date' we want to comment upon this materially

developed and spiritually decayed civilization of our time. A civilization in course of time reaches its highest peak; and then its glory turns into vain glory; it becomes drunk of its power and achievements. And then it goes down the path of decay; and finally, to death.

The modern civilization which is continuously 'enjoining evil' has, according to our thinking, long served its usefulness; and now it is heading towards self-destruction.

Today the scientists are steadily pushing mankind towards its extinction. Their energies are enslaved by their bosses to invent more and more lethal weapons. They are trying to preserve wildlife - and kill human beings.

And there is a tendency on the part of the ignorant minds to accept every trash as a Godsend revelation provided it comes from a man who has a string of letters after his name.

The ending result was that every kind of vice has been glorified and accepted into the Society. Adultery is preached to be a healthy thing for a marriage; persons of same sex enter into 'matrimony' with an encouraging nod from the 'priest'; pre-marital sexual relations have been accepted as the norm of the day; gambling is

practiced in place of worship; people are led to believe that drinking liquor is a pre-requisite of 'being civilised'. And religion has ceased to lead the people; it is being led by the masses. All these symptoms point to the advanced stage of deterioration of our civilization.

"Islam is naked; modesty is its garment" The Holy Prophet (s.a.).

Modesty is a virtue for men and women both, though it is more commendable in women.

But in our days, thanks to the modern civilization, man appears to be more modest than the woman.

This industrial age has turned woman into a piece of merchandise. No advertisement is eye-catching unless it has a woman's body in it, exposed to the various degrees of nudity. Films and television programmes are a flop unless they have sex appeal, and plenty of it. Magazines and books flourish on the lustful desire of man, by providing a lot of erotic material in writing words and painted photos. Hotels and restaurants, in gone by days, used to boast of their excellent and superb service. Now they arrange dances and strip-tease performances to satisfy the customers.

Commercial firms expressly say that their receptionists must have a "presentable appearance".

Even in political life a modest wife is considered a liability!

Woman has been selling her body since time immemorial. But never before was shamelessness given the glittering label of "art". Never before was immodesty the accepted norm of life. It is in this age that woman has lost her sense of self respect. There was a time when she was a coveted prize, to be pursued by man. Now she has put herself in show window. No more is she a hidden treasure to be discovered by her rightful husband. She is now a piece of beauty to be seen, selected and admired at every shop.

And this hoax has been given a blinding name: 'Freedom of woman'." But, as I see, it is man, not woman, who has made himself free to exploit the woman in every conceivable manner. Now in the name of freedom, she has been persuaded to discard all "superfluous clothes" and appear in public in bikini only; thus providing the man a chance to feast his eyes.

In the last century, when the Westerners penetrated in the heart of Africa they found some tribes who

were roaming naked. Those pioneers of "civilization" forced the tribes to wear clothes. Now those advocates of "civilization" are themselves discarding their clothes. One often wonders if the "primitive tribes" of last century were not more civilized than the rest of the world. After all, it is rest of the world which is now imitating the ways of that so-called "primitive society".

Chapter Six

Truth and Falsehood

TRUTHFULNESS

This is one of the highest qualities of man. It comprehends a number of good qualities and virtues. Truthfulness concerns both saying and doing. By saying one is protected against sin.

One does not avoid obedience to Almighty Allah under it. One does not miss to perform any Divine obligation. This is because, the believer claims conviction of the Exalted Majesty of Almighty Allah and of Paradise and Hell.

He shall not go against what He says. This claim shall be substantiated only if he never disobeys Him. If he goes against it, he shall be false in his claim. He shall thereby be repudiating his Faith in Almighty Allah, in Paradise and in Hell.

Among the adjuncts of truthfulness is that a truthful person is never remiss in the matter of approved forms of conduct. He shall always refrain from doing anything obnoxious. There is no one who does not claim that he is subject to the will of the Almighty Allah and that he wants to refrain from sin. An acquaintance with the Divine Commandments in respect of Paradise and Hell

demands that one shall observe the etiquette in his approach to Almighty Allah, the Monarch of Transcendent Majesty. He should not even think of missing the best. He thereby is ever desirous of nearness to Almighty Allah and Divine ghosis He shall gather limitless benefits from His extensively vast beneficence. Such conviction and Faith are opposed to one's missing the best.

He shall not look to anyone except Almighty Allah for his wants.

A man repeats several times in his prayers during the day to the following effect:

You (alone) we worship and from you (alone) we seek help. (1:5)

He shall be false in his own claim, if he disobeys Almighty Allah even in a trifling matter for, that in reality will be obedience to Satan instead of Allah (s.w.t.).

So is the person who seeks help from anyone except Almighty Allah. So is the person who is very zealous in worship when others are seeing him and in his rosaries, while he is negligent of his obligations and worship when he is alone.

AVOID LYING

Lying is such a serious offence that it can be called the basis of all human moral turpitude.

A man who lies is capable of doing every evil easily. His words lose all value in the eyes of the strangers as well as friends. His associates know well in their mind that the person is a liar, though they may not say so openly.

The liars, on the other hand think in their poor reason that they succeed in deceiving the world with falsehood. Those fools do not realise that the world possesses common sense much more than themselves, and it takes stock of every detail of them. What is the use then, of losing ones object by lying and earning blemish in addition. Besides, is it light misfortune that Allah's curses fall on the liar? What misfortune can be greater be than this?

And say to him who disputes with you therein after the knowledge has come to you (O Muhammad): "Come, let us summon our sons, and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, and then let us humbly pray and invoke the curse of Allah on the liars!." (3:61)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! There are four qualities that only a believer possesses. These are : Quietness, which is the first

part of Divine worship; Humility before the Almighty Allah, and modesty for the sake of the Almighty Allah towards His Creation; Divine reliance in all circumstances; Stringent means.

O' Abuzar! Aim at benefiting others and doing good even if you may not bring the same into practice. You shall not then be counted among the negligent ones.

O' Abuzar! The person who guards his sexual instincts and who controls his tongue from speaking nonsense and falsehood, shall enter the Paradise.

O' Abuzar! Is there anything, excepting what they utter from their tongues to lead them to Hell? You shall be safe till the time you are quiet. What you speak, you will have recompense recorded in your name, if it is in the nature of goodness. It will be a sin recorded if it is otherwise.

O'Abuzar! The person who makes it a habit to make other man laugh by his talk, shall be thrown into the abyss of Hell, which has a depth equal to the distance between the earth and the sky.

O' Abuzar! The person who speaks a lie is destined for destruction in hell. It is Hell. It is Hell.

O' Abuzar! The person who keeps quiet wins salvation. If you speak, speak the truth. Never give utterance to anything false.

Abuzar asked as to the manner of repentance on the part of a person who has spoken a lie intentionally.

His reply was: It is seeking forgiveness and performing timed prayers regularly, thus shall his sins be washed off.

It constitutes falsehood of action, if a person does not perform a good deed with due sincerity. His very performance proclaims that the man is false in conduct. In the heart of hearts, he is not working for the pleasure of Almighty Allah. If a man ponders over it, he shall realise that all good actions and deeds are grounded in truthfulness. Almighty Allah applauds the truthful ones, thus:

O you who believe! safeguard yourselves against evil with full awareness of Allah's laws and be (always) with the truthful. (9:119)

In the same way falsehood is the root of all sins and misdoings. There are a number of traditions and Quranic verses, which go to show that falsehood is a major sin. It also transpires from a number of traditions that falsehood, whether it is a

matter of fact or by way of buffoonery or joke, is unlawful in all cases.

There are certain situations wherein falsehood is approved, while truthfulness is disapproved. As for instance, the truthfulness which injures a believer is not allowed or where there is damage to his life. Such falsehood is incumbent, which, leads to saving a believer's life, or his freedom or his loss. Suppose a believer has placed in trust a piece of property with us. It would be incumbent upon us to deny, if an aggressor demands the same from us we may even swear an oath therefore. In such cases even *Taqiyyah* is allowed. For instance, we can tell him that the assets, which he demands are not with us. The person who has a truthful tongue generally as his conduct, accept him as pure.

According to another tradition this status was enjoyed by Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) in the eyes of the Holy Prophet (s.a.), for he was truthful and trustworthy.

According to another narration, Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said:

The first to testify truthfulness is Almighty Allah, for He knows that what He says is pure truth.

THE EVIL OF FALSEHOOD

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) said: Truthfulness is the adornment of speech.

In another tradition, he is reported to have said: Speak the truth for Almighty Allah says:

O you who believe! safeguard yourselves against evil with full awareness of Allah's laws and be (always) with the truthful. (9:119)

Avoid falsehood, as falsehood is away from the faith. The person who speaks the truth, who is near to salvation and forgiveness as a matter of fact. The person who speaks falsehood is on the brink of disgrace and ruin.

It is narrated that Imam Ali Ibn Hussain (a.s.) advised his sons to the following effect: Avoid speaking falsehood, whether in trifling or in an important matter, whether as a matter of fact, or out of fun. The person who speaks false in trifles, shall develop him the boldness to speak falsehood in important matters too.

It may mean that he is emboldened in respect of Almighty Allah. He is committing something against His command.

Do you not know that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) used to say: The person who always speaks the truth is enlisted among the truthful persons by Almighty Allah. The person who always speaks falsehood is enlisted as a liar.

On the basis of reliable authority, it narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said: Almighty Allah has provided locks to sins. Drinking is the key thereof. Speaking falsehood is worse than drinking.

He added: Speaking falsehood is destructive of the faith.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: It is a major sin to forge a lie against Almighty Allah, and the Holy Prophet (s.a.)

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said: The foremost to bear testimony to the falsehood of a liar will be Almighty Allah. Next will be the scribe angels, who always keep him company. Last of all he himself shall testify as having spoken falsehood.

On the basis of reliability, it is narrated that Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) said: A man does not feel the zest of faith unless he gives up falsehood, whether it is a matter of fact, or it is by way of fun.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) reported of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) as having said: The person who speaks falsehood loses the beauty and comeliness of his face.

On the basis of reliable authority, it has been said: Almighty Allah involves the liar in forgetfulness in order that he may be disgraced sooner.

FALSEHOOD AND CONDITIONS OF ITS PERMISSIBILITY

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: There are three kinds of speech; truth, falsehood and the words intended at the reformation of the people.

Someone asked him as to what was meant by the words of reformation, his reply was: Take the case of a person for instance, who speaks ill of another man. If the man, who is ill spoken of, complains to you of misdemeanour and he expresses chagrin threat, you just tell him that you actually heard him praising him. This would be against the actual fact, yet it would be permissible, from the point of view of bringing about reformation.

In another narration it has been said that: Almighty Allah likes the person who speaks falsehood, in

order to bring about reconciliation between two persons.

According to another tradition it has been related that: Almighty Allah shall call every liar to account for speaking falsehood except in regard to the falsehood concerning the following three matters:

- (i) First is the case of battle. One may speak falsehood, to overpower an enemy in the cause of religion.
- (ii) Second is the case of a person who thereby means to bring about reconciliation between two parties.
- (iii) Third is the case of a person who may have held out a promise to his wife, which he does not think expedient to fulfil: He may speak falsehood and put her off, or he may not fulfil the promise.

He added that: It would not be considered a falsehood if one says something to bring about reconciliation between two parties to a dispute.

There are three occasions, on which it is not desirable to speak the truth.

- (i) Conveying something from one person to another, which would sow the seed of discord between two persons.
- (ii) Conveying to a person something about his wife which may lead to grief and mischief between them.
- (iii) To contradict a person who spreads false news.

A number of traditions have been cited about the excellence of remaining quiet. As for the ban on the words intended to make people laugh, it may be on such occasions on which false words are spoken or where there is backbiting against a Muslim.

FALSE AND CONCOCTED STORIES

It should be borne in mind that among the condemnable utterances which are unlawful, are included the concocted stories. For instance, the legend of Ameer Hamza and others like that.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The worst of the reports are those which are false, The stories which are meaningless and absurd like, the *Shahnama* and about the pagan history are also condemned. The scholars have termed them as unlawful.

THE SIN OF HEARING THE CONCOCTED STORIES

Ibn Babwaih has, in his "*Book of Belief*" pointed out that: Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) was asked as to his views about the storytellers; whether it was permissible to hear their stories.

His reply was: It is not permissible. The person who applies his ears to the words of a person is like the one who worships him. As such, if his words refer to Almighty Allah namely, he truthfully utters those words, shall be like the one whose worship is for Almighty Allah. In case his words refer to Satan and what he utters is false and nonsensical, his worship shall be for Satan.

DO NOT ADJUDGE A PIECE OF INFORMATION WITHOUT DUE INVESTIGATION, NOR ACT IN ACCORDANCE THEREWITH

It is a great source of penitence and fearful error to begin an action or conjecture on hearing something without due investigation. Allah forbid that we become so credulous as to take such a step in haste, as may be the cause of ruin of ourselves or some other innocent fellows, because of some information without ascertaining as to who has given the information; and whether it is really worthy of credence. We may have to repent for our

unreasonable haste or anger when the same may be of no use. Common sense and precaution demand that the matter should be sifted before undertaking any action.

O you who believe, if a wicked man comes to you with a news, verify it carefully, lest you harm people in ignorance, and then regret what you have done. (49:6)

THE MEANING OF THE WORD 'SIDDIQUE'

'*Siddique*' is the person who confirms the message of the Prophets. He follows them in letter and spirit over and above others. There are a number of traditions on the subject. They can be explained in two ways:

- (i) By *Siddique* is meant a person comparable to the seventy-two '*Siddiques*' of other Ummats.
- (ii) A good action which raises a man title of '*Siddique*' is amplified several times by Almighty Allah by His Grace.

It therefore, transpires from this that the action to which this recompense accrues is equal to the recompense due to seventy two '*Siddiques*'.

There may be some other forms of explaining this. It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The Almighty Allah shall admit three persons to

Paradise without subjecting them to the final reckoning - the just ruler, the truthful merchant and the old man who spends his life in Divine worship.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: There shall be seven persons who shall be given shelter under the Divine Throne on the Day of Judgment when there shall be no shade elsewhere.

- (i) The just ruler.
- (ii) The youth who may have spent his days of youth in Divine worship.
- (iii) The person who leaves the mosque but his heart remains attached to the mosque till he goes back again to the mosque.
- (iv) Two friends who may have kept each others company in worship.
- (v) The person who remembers Almighty Allah in solitude and tears swell up in his eyes because of the fear of Almighty Allah.
- (vi) The person who is invited by a beautiful young woman for adultery but he withstands the temptation because of the fear of Almighty Allah.

- (vii) The person who gives in charity with his right hand so secretly that his left hand does not come to know of it.

FULFILMENT OF PROMISES AND AGREEMENTS

This is an exalted quality of human character and one that imparts lustre to the humaneness of man, making him trustworthy and dignified.

Every field of life demands this quality down from the people of a household up to those of the highest status. Undoubtedly the bearer of this quality is the ideal man. Womenfolk too are made responsible for acquiring this quality.

Just notice the authoritative tone of Allah in commanding it.

O you who believe! Fulfil the contracts made (by you). (5.1)

“And when you speak be just; though it be against a kinsman: and fulfil you Allah’s covenant. This He enjoins you with so that our may be mindful.

TENDER EVIDENCE AND TENDER IT ARIGHT

Supposing there is a dispute between two persons. One of them is dishonestly perpetrating injustice. The other man is subject to inequity and outrage. A third person is in the know of the true facts. If he keeps quiet under the impression that, it is not for him to meddle in other people's affairs to earn the ill-will of any party and to get into uncalled for trouble, it means besides an increase of occasion of inequity to the injured side, a veil thrown on the right and a nourishment of the selfish tendencies of man in the know of the factual position.

If a considerable number of people make up their mind to raise their voices against inequity, then if an occasion arises, they shall not eschew truth, the criminals would not have swelled in numbers at such a defiant rate.

O' you who believe! Stand firmly with justice, witnesses for the sake of Allah, and though it be against your own selves, or your parents, or your kindred, be he rich or poor, for Allah is closer to them (than you), therefore do not follow your inclination lest you deviate (from truth), and if you swerve (from truth) or turn aside, then, verily, Allah knows well what you do. (4:135)

One is prohibited from hiding evidence it is stated that one who, in spite of possessing evidence, hides it, will on the Day of Judgement be made to eat his own flesh, by Almighty Allah.

THE REDEMPTION OF TRUST

Everyone is aware of the trustworthiness of the Holy Prophet (s.a.). The narratives of the trustworthiness, the esteem, the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) are known the world over. The impression of his uprightness on other minds can be gauged only by those who had known him or had dealings with him. Never did he cast a covetous glance on any man's belongings, nor did ever an evil thought cross his mind. These are the fundamentals of his honesty and trustworthiness, and thus does the exemplar of humanity with his understanding of this world and belief in the Hereafter, preserve the decorum of conduct amongst his fellow creatures:

Verily Allah commands you to render back your trusts to their owners; and when you judge between men, judge with justice; verily how excellent is the warning which Allah gives you; verily, Allah is ever hearer, seer. (4:58)

And among the people of the book there is he who, if you trust him with a heap of gold, will restore it

to you; and among them there is he who, if you trust him with a dinar, he will not restore it to you unless you keep standing over him. This (is) because they say: "It is incumbent on us (to be faithful) to illiterates". And they speak a lie against Allah while they know. (3:75)

Mischief has spread over land and sea because of what the hands of men have wrought that He may make them taste a part of what they have done, in order that they may turn back (from evil). (30:41)

This world of ours is full of contradictions. Our actions contradict our words; our aims are belied by our ways and means; our language says we are Muslims, our deeds show us to be pagans. We spend countless months and years in disarmament conferences and spend countless millions and billions on the arms race. We invent more effective medicines to prolong the life of man; and then invent more effective bombs to end his life immediately. We couldn't make this earth a place worth living in, but we want to reach to the moon to make it inhabitable. We send goodwill missions to other countries for the purpose of spying on them.

Islam enjoins upon us to maintain complete harmony in words and deeds. It has forbidden the use of words which cannot be acted upon.

O you who believe, why do you say that which you (yourselves) do not do? It is most hateful in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do. (61:2-3)

PROMISE AND AGREEMENT

O you who believe! Fulfil the contracts made (by you). (5:1)

This verse is admirable for its comprehensiveness and clarity. The word used here is 'Uqud'.

Its literal meaning is 'Bondages'. This word is used in the Islamic language, for every kind of obligation and by using it God has reminded mankind that every promise, agreement and undertaking is a kind of bondage from which man cannot free himself except by its fulfilment. That is why we find in the Islamic tradition, that "Man is a slave of his promise' .

Obligations can be of various kinds. There are some involuntary obligations, obligations towards God, obligations towards our fellow human beings, towards our family, towards our neighbours, towards our friends and our enemies.

We have no option but to fulfil them. There are other obligations which we impose upon ourselves eg., between employer and employee, ruler and ruled. There are obligations between trading partners. A nation concludes a treaty with another nation. All such obligations are self imposed.

Islam has laid down, in clear words, all the obligations and responsibilities which a man has to face within his life. And it has put real emphasis on the spoken word. It knows that written documents are nothing but a symbol to convey the message of the spoken words. If man cannot be trusted about his spoken agreement, he cannot be trusted at all. It is a sign of decay in our society that the real thing (spoken word) has ceased to have any importance, everybody insists on writing. And once man reaches this stage, even the written document and agreements becomes worthless. In our present society, agreements are made to be broken; treaties are concluded with an eye on, the loopholes which may provide escape in future.

The first victim is not the party wronged; it is the morality of mankind which suffers the mortal blow.

TAKING OATHS UNNECESSARILY

One should refrain from taking oaths, for a man vows not but for the four reasons listed below:

- (i) It may be due to inferiority complex which impels him to take oaths to make the people believe in what he says.
- (ii) Or it may be due to his unawareness of the proper manner of speech and so to patch up what he says, he takes oaths during the talk.
- (iii) Or due to fear of being accused and knowing that people won't consider him to be true he thinks that without taking an oath people will not accept what he says.
- (iv) Or he simply lets his tongue loose and uncontrolled and goes on taking oaths (Imam Husain (a.s.)).

No doubt a genuine oath is essential, but there ought to be absolutely sound reasons for taking it. Unfortunately, it has been marked, that many people indulge in indiscriminate oath taking, and that also very conspicuously. Such people should carefully study the above saying of Imam Husain (a.s.) because it explains the circumstances which prompt a person to take an oath unnecessarily.

The first reason is that a man may be suffering from inferiority complex which certainly cripples a man's status in society. Such a person, to get himself cured of this nasty drawback, must give up the bad habit of taking unnecessary oaths.

The second reason is that a man may be lacking in the art of proper speech. Such a person to be relieved of the habit of taking oaths, must train himself in the art of speech. This will raise him in the eyes of the public.

Third reason is that a man may be afraid of being accused, he lacks self confidence. Such person should, without caring for the opinion of the public create confidence in himself, by sticking firmly to what he utters, of course he must refrain from lying or spreading rumours.

The fourth reason is that he may be the slave of habit, and mind you the habit becomes second nature. When the habit becomes deep rooted, it cannot be easily removed. However as the saying goes, 'where there is a will there is a way', the iron will and determination can go a long way in helping the man in rectifying himself and curing him of the bad habit of taking oaths haphazardly.

In the Holy Quran and in the traditions of Ahl Al Bayt (members of the Holy Prophet's family) swearing has not been considered a good thing

however truthful it may be. An oath, if taken before the just ruler for arriving at a decision and to help the proper person get his right is permissible. To the Holy Prophet (s.a.) the Almighty has explained the oaths of the Munafiqeen (Hypocrites) with great contempt that:

They have made their oaths a shield in order to obstruct (others) from the way of Allah. Verily evil is what they do. (63:2).

It appears that the Arabs were habitual swearers, therefore on another occasion Allah, in accordance with their habit has prophesied about their swearing. This refers to the inner condition of those who refused to accompany the Prophet (s.a.) on a journey, and Allah said:

They will swear by Allah to you, when you return to them, that you may turn away from them; so turn away from them; verily they are scum and their abode is hell; a recompense for what they used to earn. (9:95)

Of course in case of the fear of not being able to perform good deeds or fulfil good desires, as it generally happens that obstacles come in the way of doing good deeds. There is an occasion where if we say in this manner: 'By God, if such a work of mine is done I will offer two *rakaat* of prayers; or

if that is completed then 'I will keep a fast.' Only such an oath (swearing) is good, because this is connected with enhancing the rules of obedience to Allah; and refers to becoming engaged in His praise. This becomes a promise to Allah, therefore is no longer objectionable.

MISAPPROPRIATION

One is prohibited from misusing the things placed in one's trust by another person. Whosoever will fall short of the confidence placed on him, unless he were to return the thing to the rightful owner by the time of his death, will die as a person of another faith and on the Day of Judgement he will have to face the fury of Almighty Allah.

Whosoever misappropriates the property of a fellow believer and does not give him what he rightly owes, will have the blessings of earnings made non-permissible unto him unless he begs forgiveness for his act.

AVOID MALVERSATION

Malversation is of many kinds. Defalcation with regards to money matters or goods, in conversation, in regard to duty and work, in short everything and in every matter of duty entrusted to us, if we fail to keep it or do it not as is required, constitutes malversation.

What is the harm therein? One may ask this question. It will be sufficient to say in answer that it is something very reprehensible for a self respecting and honourable man. For the depraved persons however even something more disgraceful does not matter. The defalcator loses confidence and is deprived of esteem. Not only this, but also there is loss of a great many future successes. A man possessed of reason and foresight will give to it great importance. In any case a man is subject to reward and punishment. He will reap what he sows.

And among the people of the book there is he who, if you trust him with a heap of gold, will restore it to you; and among them there is he who, if you trust him with a dinar, he will not restore it to you unless you keep standing over him. This (is) because they say: "It is not incumbent on us (to be faithful) to the illiterates." And they speak a lie against Allah while they know. (3:75)

Verily Allah does command you to render back your trusts to their owners, and when you judge between men, judge with justice; verily, how excellent is the warning which Allah gives you; Verily Allah is ever Hearer Seer. (4:58)

Chapter Seven

Behaviour Towards Rulers

REGARD FOR THE WISE AND JUST KING

A reliable tradition from Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) states that he had asked the Shias to be obedient to their kings and not to degrade themselves by disobeying them. If the king is just then a Shia should pray Allah for the king's benefit. If the king happens to be cruel then a Shia should pray for a compromise with him as one's benefit lay in the benefit of one's king.

If the king is wise and just he is equal to a kind father therefore pray those things for him which you pray for yourself and do not pray for those things which you do not pray for yourself.

A reliable tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.) states that a person who assists in the kind deed of his king, God will be kind to him.

According to the Holy Prophet (s.a.), a person who for his benefit in this world praises a cruel king and gives him respect will be a companion of the cruel king in Hell, for God has said: "*Do not be inclined towards those commit cruelty*

intentionally otherwise you will be burnt in the fire of Hell!"

THE EVIL OF NEARNESS TO THE UNJUST RULERS

One should not repose reliance in the favour of royal nearness. One should avoid help to the aggressor. One should not get reconciled to their aggressions. One should avoid their feasts. One should avoid praising them. It should be borne in mind, that the nearness to the ruler and rich people is the cause of a lot of harm in this life and in the Hereafter. One is disgraced in this life. In the Hereafter he becomes the target of Divine Torment.

It suffices as a lesson for sensible men to examine the quick passage of time and of the conditions of different rich men and of dignitaries by way of proof thereof. The person who is in the know of such study knows it full well that they do not get a wink of comfort despite all the authority, prestige and wealth that they possess. They often envy the care-free life of the poor free people. A number of evils crop up as a result of nearness to them.

For one thing, one has to abet their misdoings. Secondly one has also to be steadfast in one's

affection for them, while the Almighty Allah's commands contradict it. He says:

Or do they say: "He has forged it." Say: "Bring then ten surahs, the like thereof, forged, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can beside Allah, if you are truthful."(11:13)

There are a number of traditions banning friendship with such persons.

Thirdly one has to be reconciled to all the evil deeds, they may commit, while it is a fact that a man who gets reconciled to one's act of injustice is a partner in that act.

Fourthly, one's conscience gets dulled by the experience of their constant wickedness. They even begin to look to them as approved. One gets inclined to commit similar deeds.

Fifthly, it is the usual custom in the assemblies of the dignitaries that one has to endorse what they say. One has to acquiesce in even their absurdities and their unlawful activities, whilst it is a fact that this attitude borders on hypocrisy.

It may even lead to forging lies in respect of Almighty Allah and his Holy Prophet (s.a.).

Sixthly, one is unable to prevent any act of aggression that may come to his notice in the

assemblies. As a matter of fact one has to support such acts in order to win nearness to the dignitaries. As such, one has to go against the Command of the *Shariat* (Islamic law) in regard to forbidding the evil. The *Shariat* expressly commands that one would be committing a major sin if he does not forbid an unlawful act.

Seventhly, he has to approve their acts of injustice for his selfish interest, to save his skin, or, to win their favour while it is not lawful under any circumstances.

Eighthly, a person who spends most of his time during the day and night in the company of the spoiled rich men comes to acquire houses and furniture like them. All these things go to make a man hard-hearted. It even borders on illegality, for too much companionship, and that is clearly, unlawful. One has to overlook such acts of illegality.

There are other evils inherent with such linkages. But it would take a great deal of space, to detail all the traditions in respect of this subject.

On the basis of reliable authority, Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) is narrated to have said:

A miser finds no comfort. The jealous person is deprived of real relish in life. Kings have little

faithfulness. A liar is devoid of magnanimity. A stupid fellow does not command respect.

On the basis of reliable authority, the Holy Prophet (s.a.) is narrated to have said: The kings among the mankind are the most insincere. They have very few real friends.

It is narrated of that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: If a friend of yours rises to an office of authority, you shall find that his friendship for you is reduced to one tenth of what it was before his assumption of the office. Even in that case you should not take him as a bad friend.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF THE SOCIETY OF THE RICH MEN AND THE OPPRESSIVE KINGS

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) said: There are four things which vitiate the heart, and which lead to hardening of the heart. They nurture the habit of hypocrisy as does water help the growth of a plant.

- (i) Assemblies of dancing and singing.
- (ii) Using obscene language.
- (iii) Society of the rulers.
- (iv) Moving about in search of game.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The person who moves in the Society of royalty tends to become a mischief-monger. The more the nearness he acquires to the Kings the farther he moves from the Almighty Allah.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The righteous man is the one who disdains things which are pronounced unlawful by Almighty Allah. He shuns doubtful things. Unless he shuns the same he may fall into an illegality because of his ignorance. The person who has the authority to forbid the unlawful shall be committing disobedience to that Almighty Allah, if he does not forbid the same. The person who approves the disobedience to Almighty Allah is an open enemy of His. The person who puts up with the injustice of an oppressor is like the one who likes that the people may disobey Almighty Allah, despite the fact that Almighty Allah has hallowed Himself for destroying the oppressors.

It is narrated of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) as having said to the following effect:

The oppressor and the abettor in his oppression and the person who acquiesces in the oppression are all three partners in the sin of the oppressor.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The Prophet Isa (a.s.) said to the people of Israel: "Do not abet the oppression of an oppressor. You will lose your merit in that case."

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The person who applauds a tyrannical ruler in his face, and tumbles himself to him in his greed for the worldly gains, shall be in Hell in his company. The person who shows the path of oppression to a tyrant shall be in the company of Hamman in Hell. The person who quarrels in favour of an oppressor or abets him shall have at the time of his death the message from the angel of death to the following effect: "You are to be felicitated with the curses of Almighty Allah, and the abode in Hell."

It is narrated of Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said: Do not attend an assembly where a tyrannical monarch is beating anyone by way of oppression or slaying anyone. You should not be able to render any help to the aggrieved while those who are present are duty bound to render help to him. If you are not present there, nor you may be in the know thereof the responsibilities on your part ends.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Mohammad bin Muslim said:

One day Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) was going somewhere. In the way he found me sitting in the

company of the Qazi of Medina. He asked me the next day as to what business I had in his company. I told him that I had good relations with the Qazi and I go to him off and on. He said to me as to why I had ignored the fact that he may be cursed by Almighty Allah and his companions may be bracketed with him.

At the time of departure from this world Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) made a will to Imam Hasan (a.s.) to the following effect: "O' My son! Keep friendly relations with a virtuous man because of his piety. With the transgressing rascal you may keep yourself on good terms. That will safeguard your religion from his mischief. But in the heart your hearts entertain hatred for him."

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The person who excuses an oppressor of his acts of oppression gets some other oppressor overpowering him. If he prays to the Almighty Allah for the removal of the oppression from ever him, his prayer is not accepted, nor shall he get any recompense for putting up with the oppression.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The abettors of the oppressors shall be made to stand under the fiery curtain on the Day of Judgment till the whole of the Creation is free from the reckoning affair.

According to another narration he is reported to have said: It constitutes inclination of abetment with the oppressor on the part of the person if one prays for the life of the tyrannical king during a span of time just enough to put his hand in his pocket and take out something to give him.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: On the Day of Judgment an angel shall proclaim from Almighty Allah to the following effect:

Where are the tyrants and the supporters of the tyrants, those people who put ink into their inkpots, sealed a bag of money for them or did give them any sort of help.

All of them shall be counted among tyrants. No one acquires nearness to a king but that he moves farther from Almighty Allah.

No one acquires wealth but his reckoning made all the more difficult. No one acquires a large number of followers but that the number of satans against him also increases. One should be very cautious in the matter royal courts and their society. The more one acquires nearness to them the farther he moves from Almighty Allah. The person who forsakes Almighty Allah in favour of the king is deprived of piety by Almighty Allah. He becomes worried.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Safeguard yourselves by means of piety and righteousness. Safeguard your faith with outward loyalty. Instead of taking your needs to the king you should turn to Almighty Allah. You should adopt contentment. You should know for certain that the believer who humiliates before the king or an enemy of the faith shall become a nonentity.

Almighty Allah takes him for an enemy and leaves him to Himself. If he acquires some worldly gains it does not avail him much. If he spends the same in performing major or minor pilgrimage or in emancipating a slave he earns no recompense therefore.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The person who abets an officer against an oppressed one, shall be subject to the Wrath of Almighty Allah unless he forsakes such abetment.

CONDITIONS FOR APPROACHING THE AUTHORITIES

It should be borne in mind that it becomes necessary to go to the kings and their nobles under certain conditions. Among those conditions are the following:

- (i) Because of outward expression of loyalty. In case there is a danger to one's life, property or

honour it would be necessary to go to them for safeguarding against the danger.

- (ii) One should approve them in case there is chance of succouring the oppressed people or benefiting a believer. Interview and meeting with them becomes obligatory under such circumstances. As a matter of fact if the person is in a position to ameliorate the hardship of an oppressed believer and he evades his help on account of a false sense of self-prestige he shall be considered a partner in that oppression.

He shall receive chastisement on the Day of Judgement, Almighty Allah shall disgrace him.

There are a number of traditions which go to imply that there is a *Zakat* in everything. *Zakat* of prestige is that one should employ his position in helping a brother believer. Just the payment of *Zakat* leads to an increase in one's assets so does one's prestige and honour increase by using one's position in the way Almighty Allah, Just as by avoiding the payment of *Zakat*, one is likely to lose his assets and so does the evasion of the employment of one's position of honour to help others leads to the deterioration of one's position. Almighty Allah subjects him to disgrace instead of honour.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated by Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: One who cannot take his request to me personally, then those who can, should convey the same to me. As a matter of fact, he who conveys the request of a needy person to the monarch when he himself is unable to do it, shall have his feet steadfast on *Pule Sirat* (The bridge over Hell) on the Day of Judgment by the Almighty Allah.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) as having said to the following effect: I would prefer to be reduced to small particles by falling from a mountain to being appointed as a Governor of a Tyrant; or to have to tread on his carpets to attend to him. Yet I would not hesitate to attend on him if thereby the distress of a believer is relieved or some captive gains his freedom or some believer gets his debts paid off. As a matter of fact, chastisement that is ordained for the abettors of tyrants, the least is that they shall have a curtain of fire thrown before them, till such time as the Almighty Allah finishes the reckoning of the creation.

He then turned to Ziyad bin Khelad and spoke to him to the following effect:

O' Ziyad if you happen to be appointed to a position of authority by such persons, then try to

do good to your believer brothers. It may serve to relieve you of your sins.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said:

There is not a tyrannical monarch or an officer to whom a believer is not attached, through whom Almighty Allah protects the Shias from the tyranny of the tyrant. The believer shall have the least of the recompense ordained for the believers on the Day of Judgement, inasmuch as he had been in the company of the tyrant.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) said: The friends Almighty Allah do attend to courts of the monarch and through them Almighty Allah protects his friends from their harm.

It is permissible to attend upon them with the aim of guiding them to the right path or with the intent to learn a lesson from their modes of life.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Luqman (a.s.) used to visit the monarch, the nobles and the persons in authority with the set aim of leading them to the right path with his guiding sermons. He used to have pity on them, when he found them suffering from all sorts of afflictions and trouble. He used to

feel sorry for them on seeing them allured by the fleeting undependable worldly items. He learnt lessons from their life stories. He would adopt those forms etiquette of theirs which would help him acquire greater control over his mind. He would wish to traverse the stages of his exertions by overcoming his egotistic urges.

There are other conditions as well in this behalf which need not detain us to indulge in lengthy discussions any further. The real purpose of approach sometimes is worldly gains.

The egotistic urges present to them in beautiful colours as being based on virtues intentions. A man is thereby is allowed to betake himself to approach the royal dignitary with the ambition of getting to a high position, and to win worldly gains. He is deluded by his ego to think that he is thereby catering to pleasure of Almighty Allah. When the reality in the background of these thoughts is scrutinised it is found that such moves were directed to win worldly gains.

In such matters, spurious aims get mixed with virtuous aims. As such, it behoves a person to be very circumspect. One should not give himself easily into the traps of Satan. One should be careful not to cast himself in a dangerous vortex. May Almighty Allah guide us and all the believers to the path of the righteous people.

Chapter Eight

Poverty

NEEDINESS

Abuzar required to know of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) thus: There are people who fear the displeasure of Almighty Allah. They adopt the way of humility. They remember Almighty Allah at all times. Will they be the first to enter Paradise?

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) replied thus: No. The poor and the needy shall be the first to enter Paradise. They shall jump over the rank and file of other people gathered on the Doomsday into Paradise. The watch angels at the gate shall ask them to stop for reckoning. They will say: What reckoning is there for us to answer. We possessed neither power nor pelf to be required to answer for any piece of injustice perpetrated by ourselves. We did worship Almighty Allah. When He summoned us, we came over.

EXPLANATION OF THE TERM (FAQR) NEEDINESS

There is in the traditions approval of the needy persons. There is also a condemnation of needy persons. Affluence is denounced some times. At other times it is praised.

The learned scholars have opined that form of neediness which refers to Almighty Allah is praiseworthy, while the neediness which makes a man look for satisfaction to the other men is to be condemned.

From certain traditions it transpires that condemnable form of neediness implies that is narrow-minded about religion. The form of affluence which is praiseworthy is liberality of mind shown by a man. The greediness for excess of wealth is the condemned form of affluence. In brief, what we must bear in mind is that whatever is there in this world for the benefit of man is in the form of a gift from the Almighty Allah. It is there for the amelioration of the lot of mankind. Men, however, turn those gifts into the means of evil doing. Different forms of possessions are intended to be a means of helping man to serve the Almighty Allah. But for such forms of wealth, there can be no question of charity, Zakat, pilgrimage and the heavenly rewards for the same. There are people who do not spend their funds for the purposes for which they are created. They spend to earn the recompense for evil doing and sinfulness. As such wealth has two facets - the one of virtue and the other of vice.

In the same way, neediness should give rise to the virtue of patience. He should look patiently to

Almighty Allah for succour in time of need. He should not have any inclination to fall into unlawful ways.

One gets to the nearness of Almighty Allah through an attitude of piety and righteousness.

Man, however, fails to cognise this fact. He falls into neediness for help from other men. He begs of them. Getting forgetful of the Almighty Allah, he falls into unlawful ways. He sinks to the abyss of unbelief by blaming Almighty Allah of injustice.

NEEDINESS BORDERS ON UNBELIEF

It follows therefore, that both neediness and opulence can be the means of goodness and salvation. It is through ignorance that a man turns the same into the means of error and torment of the Hereafter. The first form of wealth and neediness are commanded. The opposite use of the same is condemned.

As is generally the case opulence and excess of wealth spell vice. Neediness and poverty are therefore generally commanded, while wealthiness is generally condemned.

A point to be noted in this connection is that the Holy Quran does not speak of a man becoming self-sufficient. It says that when man looks upon himself as well-off, he becomes rebellious. For it is

never conceivable that a man may grow into a self-sufficient being. The more well-off he becomes the greater become his necessities. As a matter of fact he becomes ever-more needy.

Almighty Allah has made worship a means for the attainment of salvation. He, however changes its from and turns into a means of sin. Even a sin sometimes when committed in ignorance, may become a means of virtue, when the sinner on becoming conscious of its evil turns in penitence to the Almighty Allah. He seeks forgiveness in all humility to Almighty Allah with his head bent in repentance. Almighty Allah approves of his humility. Were it not for such remissness on the part of Prophet Adam (a.s.), Prophet Dawood (a.s.) and other Prophets, how could they have got an opportunity for such sincere repentance and weeping, which served to raise their ranks of excellence.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE NEEDY AND THE WELL TO DO

The cause of the needy and the well-to-do resembles persons who arrived in a harbour in two boats - one filled with merchandise, while the other is empty. The person in the empty boat disembarks and without do proceeds home. The person with the merchandise shall be stopped at

the control post to render full account to the authority. He shall not depart for home until he has given his full account.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) says to the following effect: Man feels averse to death and to a loss in wealth. The fact however, is that death relieves a man from worries of the world while diminution in wealth decreases the worries on account of the reckoning.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: Two things ruin man; the fear of neediness as also the longing for power and prestige.

It is narrated that Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) said: The poor among the Shias of Ali (a.s.) should not be looked down upon. Everyone of them shall intercede on the Day of Judgment of such large numbers of men as would equal the numbers of the two big tribes of the Arabs the Rabiah and the Muzar.

It is related that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The troubles of this world are gifts from Almighty Allah for the believers. The Almighty Allah has kept neediness in His treasures.

According to a tradition Neediness is a trust from Almighty Allah. The person who keeps it concealed shall get a heavenly reward equivalent

to the recompense of a person who spends his life in fasting and who worships all night.

He who discloses his neediness to another person, but his need is not fulfilled; it is as if the other fellow has killed him, not with the sword or spear but with the injury to his heart.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The higher in faith one goes, the more trying his circumstances become (i.e. sustenance). People beseech Almighty Allah for expansion in their sustenance piteously, but for such prayers, they would have been tried even harder, teaches a lesson that it is a place of trials and tests for him. This world to man is to put him to test.

ANECDOTES OF A NEEDY PERSON AND OF A RICH ONE

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said: Almighty Allah has not granted spurious affluence to our Shia. He has apportioned to them just enough for their needs whether in the east or in the west. Almighty Allah shall attend to the poorer among our Shia as if He is apologetic or as one brother offers an excuse to another brother. He would say that He did not put them to neediness to degrade them, but to show them special favours in return for the same. He would require them to lead

to Paradise everyone who rendered them any help in the world.

The needy men shall ask for the gifts which the men of the world enjoyed. Almighty Allah shall offer seventy times the luxuries to them and their friends.

It is narrated that a man came to the presence of Holy Prophet (s.a.) in fine clothes. There arrived another man in tattered untidy clothes and he took his seat by his side. The man tried to avoid contact with the untidy man and shifted aside.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to him: Do you fear that his poverty shall affect you too?

The man said: Sir, that is not the case.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.): Do you fear that your clothes shall be soiled by contact with him.

The man: No Sir.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.): Do you fear he would take away your riches?

The man: No Sir.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.): Then why did you behave as you did?

The man: I have a companion, egotism which allures me to evil doing. I offer half of my possessions to him in excuse of my fault.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) turning to man: Do you accept his offer?

The poor Man: No Sir.

The rich Man: And pray, why.

The poor man: I fear lest my head get turned like yours.

It is narrated that Prophet Moosa (a.s.) received in revelation thus: When you get poverty, welcome it. Beware when you get affluence as a sort of torment in life.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Lucky are the poor people who go patiently through life. They are the people who behold the panorama of the sky and the earth. O' the poor people! Be contented with your poverty. Almighty Allah shall grant you great recompense for your patience. You shall not earn full recompense if you do not do so.

It is narrated that Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) said: A proclaimer shall proclaim on the Day of Judgement!

Where are the poor people?

A group of people shall respond: Here are we our Lord.

The Divine Proclamation shall ring clear: You were not made poor because of any disgrace. It was to raise your rank this day. Go and lead to Paradise those who did you good in the world.

Mohammad bin Husain Kharaz said that he was asked by Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) as to whether he felt his helplessness when on going to the market he found himself short of pocket while wishing to make some purchases. He said that he certainly did so.

Imam (a.s.) said to him: "You get a point of goodness added to your record of deeds for every such thing you have desire for."

It is related that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: A group of people shall arise on the Day of Judgement. They shall ask permission for entry into Paradise. The gatekeeper thereof shall ask them as to who they are. They shall reply that they are a set of poor people. On being asked as to how they want to go in without going through reckoning, they shall reply that they had nothing in the world for which they may have to render any account. The Divine Voice shall announce that they should be let in, as they speak the truth.

Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) said that Almighty Allah says to the following effect:

I have not granted opulence to the rich people because they are honoured in my sight. Nor are the poor people placed in a state of poverty because they are despised. I have rather made the poor

people trial for the rich ones. Had there been no destitute, the rich would have been debarred from Paradise.

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) has said to the following effect: The rich persons among our Shias are trustees for the poorer among them on our account. They should look after them, so that Almighty Allah may look after them.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) said: Poverty and neediness is an adornment for the believers.

The narrator asked: Which kind of poverty?

“It is not the poverty pertaining to money that is implied, but the poverty that concerns faith.”

This very point has been expressed by Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) thus: “Poverty is horrible death.”

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) has said: The person, who despises a poor believer, looks down on the Divine right. Almighty Allah shall despise such a person on the Day of Judgement, unless he has expressed penitence for such sinning. He who honours him, shall find Almighty Allah pleased with him on the Day of Judgement.

It is narrated that Imam Raza (a.s.) said: The person who goes to see a poor believer, may give him a salutation. If such salutation is not of the

same respectful kind as he uses for the rich people, he shall deserve the wrath of the Almighty Allah on the Day of Judgement.

The Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! This world allures the souls as well as the bodies. Almighty Allah shall surely require an account of the lawful boons which we have availed of. Why shall He not call us to account for the unlawful things.

It transpires from this tradition that one shall have to render an account of even the lawful boons from Almighty Allah.

In another tradition the believers are shown as exempt from the reckoning on account of the lawful boons. It may be that the specially favoured believers may be referred to in that tradition. The reckoning to be made on account of lawful boons referred to here may have reference to the generality of Muslims. Maybe, the reckoning referred to here is a nominal one.

The people, who receive just enough sustenance for their needs, are praised a great deal in the traditions.

Imam Zaynul Abidin (a.s.) said that once the Holy Prophet (s.a.) met a camelcer in the way. He asked for some milk.

The cameleer said: The milk that is in the pot is just enough for the needs of my family for the evening, while the milk which is in the udders of the she camels, will be needed by them in the morning.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) prayed for his increased prosperity. A little further on, he met a goat-herd. He asked him for some milk. He milked all the goats. All this quantity together with what was in the store, he placed before him.

He presented one goat as well to him. He offered yet more to him if it would please him.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) prayed to Almighty Allah to grant to him the sustenance which would be sufficient for his needs.

The companions said: Sir! You prayed for the man who turned down your request for a state of prosperity which we all long for. You prayed for the man who fulfilled your request, more than your requirement for a state of sufficiency which we do not wish for ourselves. Pray, what is the reason for such distinction?

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) replied: The less of the worldly possessions one has the better for him. One should have just what would suffice him.

A super abundance is likely to make one forgetful of Almighty Allah.

He then added: O! Almighty Allah grant to Mohammad (s.a.) and the progeny of Mohammad (s.a.) the amount of sustenance which would be sufficient for their needs.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) related that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: O' the Almighty Allah grant your Grace to Mohammad (s.a.), his progeny and their friends to evade the unlawful forms of sustenance. Grant them such sustenance as would be sufficient for their needs. Bestow upon our enemies a super abundance of wealth and children.

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) says that the Almighty Allah says: The believer is grieved about his straitened circumstances and yet that is a way to Divine nearness and knowledge. He is pleased when he gets in plenty, which may become the cause of Divine remoteness and forgetfulness.

It is reported by Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) that Almighty Allah says: The most favoured and happy believer is he who earns a large share of righteousness. He worships well. He is not known among the people. He gets just enough for his needs. He is contented therewith. When departing

from this world he leaves behind very little patrimony. He has few people to mourn his death.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! Happy are the people who are not allured by this world. They have the Hereafter in their view. They look upon this earth as their bedding and the dust as their furniture. They look upon water as perfume. The Divine Word is their covering. Their prayers are their apparel. They offer the world in return for the hereafter.

O' Abuzar, the tilth of the hereafter is good doing. The tilth of this world consists in the abundance of riches and children.

This tradition refers to the Quranic verse:

Whosoever seeks the tilth of the hereafter, We give increase in his tilth; whosoever seeks the tilth of this world, We give to him to these, but he will have no share in the hereafter. (42:20)

DO NOT BERATE THE SUPPLICANT

The poor supplicant is distressed by his need. He begs from people considering them to be well to do and liberal. To berate him therefore is an aggression on one's part. His heart will be injured and one's moral sense will be fulfilled giving rise to the displeasure of the creature and creatures.

This same point has been expressed thus by Meer Anees: "O' rich man you may keep the money-bag well-tied but for God's sake do not knit your brows."

Allah (s.w.t.) says

And do not rebuke (drive away) the beggar.

وَلَا تَرْجُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ حِيلًا

Chapter Nine

Keeping Secrets and Counselling

DISCLOSURE OF SECRETS

Association should be based on natural trust (the things that have been talked about should be repeated if so required in consonance with the situation lost the same should lead to the loss or charging of the associates).

It is breach of trust to disclose the secret of a believing brother.

Avoid jealousy and disclosure of the secrets of your brethren. Avoid an assembly of the kinsfolk where they find faults with others or they take pride in their ancestors or where their attitude is hypocritical and when they backbite or find faults with others on coming out of the assembly.

It should be borne in mind that there is a code of etiquette covering the associations and assemblies. Among them the most praiseworthy injunction is not to disclose the secrets of one another. Many kinds of mischief and faults spring there from. A person opens his mind when in a society of his friends. He does not keep his secrets to himself because of his faith in friendship.

There may arise a danger to ones' life by the disclosure of a secret. All sorts of enmities may spring up as a result of finding faults with others.

This too is as kind of backbiting and is to be placed in the same class. If a friend discloses a secret to one as a sacred trust, it is a very reprehensible thing to betray the trust. Suppose one discloses it to another person who may disclose it to some other friend of his and this may continue to a lengthy extent. It is possible that there may be an enemy among the chain.

In case, however, a religious objective is involved there is no harm in making a mention thereof.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Anything said in an assembly is a sacred trust except in three cases; Where some body's life is endangered; Where unlawful sex relations are involved; Where unlawful possession of another's property is aimed at.

It is narrated that Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) said: There are three persons who shall be in the shade of the Exalted Throne when there shall be no shade anywhere else.

- (1) It is the person who arranges the marriage of a believer brother.

- (2) the person who arranges the services of a servant to serve a brother believer.
- (3) the person who guards his secrets.

It should be borne in mind, that just as it is incumbent to guard the secret of others, so it is necessary to guard ones own secrets as well.

One should not disclose to others the secrets which, if disclosed, may lead to one's own harm. Not everyone is worthy of trust as a friend.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: The person who guards his own secret shall exercise control thereon. When the same is disclosed it becomes an open secret.

According to some it means that a secret is no longer so when it leaves the lips of a person.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said to his companions: Do not disclose your secrets to anyone. In case, it is a secret that does not harm his interests if it were to fall into the possession of an enemy, there is no harm in disclosing it. It often so happens that a friend turns into an enemy some day.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: Be on your guard in the matter of friendship. The friend may turn to be your enemy some day.

Also be on your guard in regard to your enemy. Maybe, he may turn to be your friend some day.

AVOID SECRET COUNSELLING

Whispering looks unseemly even in a party of four men, what to say of taking counsel for evil aims which is all the more reprehensible.

In the first place the man before whom it is done gets the impression that the talk may be concerning him, which can lead to heart burning and hatred.

In the second place whispering in a party is such an ungainly act which only an uncultured man can attempt. It is not in consonance with the Islamic teachings. Allah forbids it as such and forbids it emphatically.

Secret counsels are only (stimulated) by Shaytan that he may cause the believers grief: but he shall not harm them at all except with the permission of Allah. In Allah let the believers put their trust. (58:10)

GOOD ADVICE TO FRIENDS

One should never hesitate to give advice to a friend in any thing where he may be going wrong or where he may otherwise either need it or ask for it. It is against the principle of honesty and regard for the friend's well-being not to check him from

going wrong or to refuse him the required piece of advice when he needs it. It is however necessary that the advice should be tendered in a way which does not give any offence to the friend. For instance, the matter may be opened to him by way of an anecdote whereby he may realise that he has to model his behaviour in the matter accordingly.

No slandering or accusations should be allowed to pass, as people with this sort of attitude are apt to make mountains out of mole-hills through their enmity. In brief one should use full care and discretion in one's demeanour towards friends, bearing in mind that love and proper regard are the real leaven of society and civilisation. As such all those factors which conduce to harmony among people need to be attended to very meticulously. Just as man needs to attend to factors which conduce to the orderliness of society, such as to equity in order to combat tyranny, to chastity as safeguard against animal passion, and to courage so as to oppose and face enemies, so does one need to look to the most fundamental of human requirements namely the sentiments of mutual love and accord.

It is related that once Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husain (a.s.) when both of them were still young saw an aged man performing ablution in an incorrect manner. They wanted to correct him and

approaching him said: O' respected old man, both of us would perform ablution before you to know who of us does it correctly. Please watch us carefully and tell us who is in the wrong and who does it correctly.

The old man watched them performing ablution and then realised that he himself was wrong and corrected himself accordingly. In this way the two Imams though yet tender in age corrected the old man without giving him the least offence.

DO NOT COUNSEL OTHERS WHILST NEGLECTING YOUR OWN SELF

Has it ever come about that our counsel may have proved efficacious in the absence of the corresponding action? Never! How can we then counsel others till we put our own selves right? The listeners will surely say on the back, if not on the face that we quickly probe the flaws of others but fail to see our own shortcomings. Lo! It was a matter of goodness but evil has over-taken the same. Aye! the world is a hard place. It does not spare anyone. As such it is better that we remain quiet until we get satisfied with our own selves, that we are not as we blame others to be. Allah speaks thus of such vain activity.

What! Do you enjoin righteousness on the people and forget your own selves, yet you read the scripture? What! Do you not understand? (2:44)

Chapter Ten

Mischief

REFRAIN FROM MISCHIEF MONGERING

The Almighty Allah has forbidden mischief mongering very emphatically and it has been dubbed as a crime more serious than even murder. It must be borne in mind that mischief, whether great or small, whether in a household or in a tribe or in a country is an evil in every case. The womenfolk should be particularly warned in as much as they need this tool for pampering their egotism. They excite the affectionate and simple men folk against their adversary in such a way that a household may get into turmoil or displeasure among a few considerate people may cause discord among them.

The Holy Quran testifies that people who deprive Allah's creatures from the love which Allah (s.w.t.) commands and which leads to the beautification of the world are the inmates of hell. There are oppressors and accursed. Undoubtedly Almighty Allah curses those people who feel chagrined when they see two hearts united and who plan to bring about discord between them.

Who does not know that men lose their peace of mind through discord and their zest of life is reduced a great deal? Through it ruin overtakes the men, the household, the nations and the countries. Misfortune, overwhelms and humaneness is lost. The offenders of this crime are not excusable. Their abode is Hell till eternity.

And slay them wherever you find them and drive them out; from where they drove you out; for persecution is more severe than slaughter. (2:191)

AVOID AGGRESSION TOWARDS OTHERS

Just think, it is not only sinful but also heinous to punish any one in excess of his offence or to deprive him of his lawful rights. If man is naturally disposed to be aggressive, it is also in his nature to stop aggression. If some one puts up with the aggression of some one else for the time being because of weakness or goodness and gentleness, it does not mean that he shall continue to put up with them all through life. Not at all. Such power of forbearance is rare in man. As a matter of fact he does not regard it as lawful to allow tyranny and aggression the upper hand. What is the result? A day comes when it becomes necessary to raise a voice against and do away with the aggressor.

It has never been found that tyranny and aggression might have benefited any one. Aggression is doomed to destruction some day or other, in as much as it is not pleasing to Allah.

And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not be aggressive; (for) verily Allah does not love aggressors. (2:190)

CRY OF THE OPPRESSED

Of all the difficulties that a human being has to face in his life the most injurious is the moment when an innocent person suffers cruelty at his hands, and in its agony the sufferer, the oppressed curses him. This painful wail is such that even Governments topple over as a result thereof, and life's beauties are ruined. No sword has such sharpness as the effect of the cry of an oppressed person.

PUBLIC SERVICE

This is a vast subject. Undoubtedly personal interest has to be sacrificed for national interest. It is essential that his urge will be found in one having public interest at heart.

One should first have full control over himself then he should persuade others to do good.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: "How can that man improve others who has not been able to improve his own self." Improvement of self is also compulsory for one, and to give benefited to others is also compulsory for man.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: "He is the best of all who is a source of benefit to other people."

BEHAVIOUR WITH AN INFIDEL

Islam is so sympathetic towards and well wisher of humanity that considering the Infidel to be a son of Adam (a.s.) and not an enemy. It has enjoined such behaviour towards him from which human sympathy is apparent. This is proved by the following:

- (1) Separate prayers are prescribed for the child, woman and the sick at the time of sneezing; and for an Infidel who sneezes, the Muslim who is present is required to say: "May God Guide you".
- (2) If, in some one's family there is a non Muslim whose food and maintenance depends on his money, and the Infidel is enlisted in his family, then it is compulsory to pay *Fitra* on his behalf, just as for a Muslim Member of the family.

- (3) From a narration it appears that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) ordered him to quench the infidel's thirst and save him from the peril of destruction by providing him water to his fill.
- (4) Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) advised that the new convert boy whose parents were Christians should do good to his parents; and when they were dead, not to leave their last rites (of burial etc.) to others, but he should himself perform that duty.

An infidel had thrown his daughter in the well, and when he became a Muslim he asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.) as to what penalty he should pay for his past sin? The Prophet (s.a.) asked if he had a mother. When the man said no, the Prophet asked: Have you got a maternal aunt? The man replied in the affirmative. So the Prophet (s.a.) Said: Do good to her, as she is like a mother, for this good will serve as a penalty for the sin you committed.

DO NOT HARASS BELIEVING MEN AND WOMEN

Imam Zaynul Abidin (a.s.) in one of his supplications says: Save me from doing harm to every man and woman who has adopted the faith; and every Muslim man and woman.

One should not eat if a neighbour is hungry. It is not necessary that the neighbour should be a Muslim; and if he is a Muslim then the reward is doubled; and if he is a relative then the reward is tripled. The rules have prescribed a limit of forty houses, in the neighbourhood, and if this is practised none can remain hungry.

In the biography of Prophet Yaqoob (a.s.) (Jacob) it is mentioned that he used to feel spiritually aggrieved if anyone of his neighbours was left hungry. And from time that once a neighbour had to remain hungry on the previous night, it became a daily practice of his that a man shouted in a loud voice, saying: "One who is not fasting may come and take the mid-day meal at Yaqoob's house."

And this very man used to announce at night: Whoever is fasting may come and have food with Yaqoob. In this invitation it was not necessary that only the faithful should join in the meals, rather whoever was hungry should come.

And in the practices of Prophet Ebrahim (a.s.), who was Prophet Jacob's ancestor, it is abundantly apparent that in the feeding, every hungry person had a right to come and partake of the food. Prophet Ebrahim (a.s.) entertained guests who had not accepted the faith (of the Oneness of God). Seventy families of Zorastrians (fire worshippers) were once his guests.

Chapter Eleven

Backbiting

AVOID SUSPICION, SPYING AND BACKBITING

It is unseemly to suspect any one without proper testimony, inasmuch as its evil effect falls on one's own self in the first place. A man vitiates the atmosphere of his own mind by accusing others. It will be far more beneficial to spend one's energies on one's own improvement instead. It is the most vicious habit to be spying on another. Allah condemns this vice. Why should we pry as to what sort of a person is the other fellow? Let him be wicked or devilish or a disgrace to his family. One may out of regard just tell another who may be following a wrong path that it was wrong. Yet he has his option.

It is not, however, proper to pry into the others' flaws so as to propagate it in an unwholesome manner. It has been forbidden, and it is sin to do whatever is forbidden.

The same applies to backbiting wherein is included, egotism, generally. By backbiting the mind gets loaded, while one's temperament gets degraded. If we just attend to the Quranic words, backbiting will appear an obnoxious act. It is,

however, necessary to make it clear that on certain occasions it is not only admissible but also binding to bring into general notice the transgressions of individuals, like protests against aggressors. The door of aggression gets wider if the aggrieved do not complain. Herein is aimed only the interest of the prevention of the aggression.

Allah does not love the utterance of evil in (public) speech, except by one who has been wronged; and Allah is ever hearer, knower. (4:148)

O' you who believe! avoid much suspicion, for verify suspicion in some cases is a sin. Do not spy and do not backbite. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it. Then fear (the wrath of) Allah. Verily, Allah is oft-returning (in mercy), and most merciful. (49: 12)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! Avoid backbiting. Backbiting is more punishable than adultery. If a man commits adultery and asks for forgiveness his penitence is accepted. The Sin of backbiting is not forgiven, unless the person in respect of whom backbiting has been done, forgives it.

O' Abuzar! It is in the nature of disobedience to Almighty Allah and to fight to death with Him and

that amounts to unbelief. To eat his flesh, in other words, to backbite against him is disobedience to Almighty Allah. His assets are as inviolable as is his blood.

Abuzar asked as to what was implied by backbiting? His reply was: It is to speak of your brother in a way that would be un-congenial to him.

Abuzar made the following submission: "Supposing it is a matter which actually happens to be a weakness."

His reply was: O' Abuzar! You should know if it is a weakness which is really present in him, it falls under backbiting. In case it is not present in him it would be called a false accusation.

O' Abuzar! The person who espouses the cause of a Muslim in his absence shall be freed from the Hellfire as a matter of right.

O' Abuzar! Supposing someone backbites a Muslim and another defends him by dint of his own power, he shall be helped in this life and in the life Hereafter, by Almighty Allah.

In case, the latter, instead of defending him, adds to his disgrace, notwithstanding possessing the

power to defend, he shall be put to disgrace by Almighty Allah in this life and in the life hereafter.

CONDEMNATION OF BACKBITING

It should be borne in mind, that there is no difference of opinion among the scholars, as to the unlawfulness of backbiting. A number of traditions and Quranic verses bear out fully on its unlawfulness. It transpires from certain traditions that it is a heinous sin. There is a body of scholars who are in agreement on this point. The Holy Prophet (s.a.), in the above noted tradition has pronounced backbiting as being more punishable than adultery. This shows that it is more punishable than a heinous sin.

Nevertheless this vice is more rampant than any others. The underlying mental defects which give rise to it are very common among people. They are envy, malice and enmity. There is no distinction in this matter, in the old and young, the learned and illiterate, the rich and the poor.

Everyone has someone as his enemy, or some envious one among his rivals. There is very little of a hindrance in regard to the commission of this vice, as is the case with other sins. There is no restraining factor in the commission thereof on the score of custom, taboo or any convention or a fear of notoriety.

In fact, there is an additional factor, in the case of a man who can speak a sweet, garrulous tongue to embellish his backbiting. The Satan takes to varied kinds of garbs for this vice. Even the learned people are duped by these garbs, and commit backbiting by naming it as advice, and as sermon, out of love of faith, and affectionate sympathy.

Helpless impotency and outward religiosity do not stand in the way of commission of this sin. Such vice does not require the incurrance of any expenditure or the use of any weapon. An utterance by tongue is the easiest action. For this reason this vice is very wide spread.

Almighty Allah has forbidden this vice emphatically, in unambiguous terms more than any other sin:

O' you who believe, avoid much suspicion, for verily suspicion in some cases is a sin. Do not spy and do not backbite. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it. Then fear (the wrath of) Allah. Verily, Allah is oft-returning (in mercy), and most merciful. (49:12)

THE TORMENT OF BACKBITING

It is narrated the Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The person who publicises about a believer, what he has seen with his eyes or heard with his ears, shall be included in the class of men of whom Almighty Allah speaks thus:

Verily, those who love to spread scandal about those who believe, shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and the hereafter; Allah knows and you do not know. (24:19)

According, to another narration, it is narrated, that Imam (a.s.), reported that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Backbiting is a quick-acting weapon for ruining ones own faith. It is like the bastinado, which injures the flesh under the skin.

It is a matter of merit to sit in the mosque, waiting for the prayers in congregation, provided there is no backbiting of a Muslim.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Suppose a person were to speak of a Muslim in terms which expose his shortcomings, which hurt his honour, which degrade him in the eyes of the people. Such a person is driven out by Almighty Allah from under His guardianship. He is given over to the guardianship of Satan. Satan gladly accepts him. Almighty Allah does not any longer

befriend him, nor does He help him in any way. He turns him to Satan.

It is narrated that someone asked for elucidation from Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) about the Prophetic tradition: The wife of a believer is unlawful for another believer.

His reply was: The word 'wife' here does not pertain to wife of another believer actually. It means that it is unlawful to expose the faults of another believer and disclose his secrets.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The person who believes in Almighty Allah and the Day of Judgment, should not sit in an assembly where the people backbite a Muslim.

According to a tradition, it is narrated: The person who backbites a Muslim gets his fast fouled and ablutions nullified. There shall emit a stinking smell from his body on the Day of Judgment, like the smell of a carcass. All the people shall feel the obscenity of the smell thereof.

In case, such a person dies without penitence, he shall be like the one who does not discriminate between the lawful and the unlawful, as ordained by the Almighty Allah.

The person in whose presence someone backbites a believer, and who repudiates the charge being levelled against him, shall have Almighty Allah removing from him a thousand kinds of troubles, in this life and in the life to come. In case, he shirks to repudiate the same, notwithstanding his capacity to do so shall have seventy-times the sinfulness which the backbiter merits.

The above-noted tradition speaks of the fasts and the ablutions being nullified as a result of backbiting. It implies that the merit of ablutions and fasting is nullified, and not that the same should be gone over again.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam (a.s.) said: The most sinful is that stupid fellow who backbites a Muslim. The most degraded person is the one who tries to degrade others.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Ali Ibn Husain (a.s.) was approached by a person who told him that a certain person spoke ill of him and he had referred to him as a person given to neologies (Allah forbid).

His reply was to the following effect: You have not discharged the obligation of association with him by conveying to us what he had said. Nor have you respected our rights by telling us what we do

not know about our brother. Everybody has to die as a matter of course. All shall then, be resuscitated and gathered there. The Day of Judgment is the time of reckoning. Almighty Allah shall give His decisions on that day.

Beware! Don't ever indulge in backbiting. It is the affair of the inmates of Hell. Know it fully well that the person who publicises the faults of others displays that he has maximum faults in him.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated by Alqamah, to the following effect: I went to Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s) to ask him as to the qualities of a person whose testimony is acceptable.

His reply was: O' Alqamah! The person whose conduct is based on the fundamentals of Islam is fit to have his testimony acceptable.

Alqamah made the submission as to whether his testimony would be acceptable even if he is a sinner?

He replied: Will it be the Prophets and their appointees only, the infallibles whose testimony is to be acceptable? Unless you were to see him sinning with your own eyes, or there come forth two witnesses testifying to his sinning the person is fit to have his testimony accepted, even though he may, in reality, be a sinner. The person who tries to expose him, is committing backbiting.

As such, he is outside the pale of Allah's Grace. He is under the patronage of Satan.

Verily, my revered father has narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The person who, by way of backbiting, imputes faults in a believer, which he does not possess, shall not have the honour to be in his company in Paradise. If it is a fault, which is actually present in him, the sacred ties of faith, between you shall be sundered. Backbiting shall merit ever-lasting Hell, and it is a dreadful ending.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to Nauf Bakali: O' Nauf! Avoid backbiting for it is a dressing of the denizens of Hell.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Do not backbite, in as much as, if you backbite others, the others shall backbite you, as a matter of course.

According to another tradition, Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) has said: It is a characteristic of the hypocrites to backbite you, if there arises a point of difference between them and yourself.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said:

The person who fasts is as the one who is in the worship of Almighty Allah, till the time he backbites a Muslim.

In another narration, he is reported to have said: Sanctity of faith gets broken between him and the person whom he backbites, even though he may flatter him in his face.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said:

Beware! Avoid backbiting a Muslim. Verily, no Muslim backbites a Muslim, inasmuch as the Holy Quran has forbidden it.

He further added: The person who tries to bring dishonour to a Muslim, shall be shut up by Almighty Allah, on the Day of Judgment, in a dungeon where is collected pus and filth of the private parts of the adulterers unless his guilt is condoned.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Almighty Allah turns hostile to a house, where there is plenty of flesh and the one which has on it fattened flesh.

Someone has made the submission that all of them are killed, and meat is generally kept in the houses. His comment on the point was: You have

not understood what I really meant. By houses with plenty of flesh are meant those houses wherein backbiting is indulged in. By houses with flattened meat are meant those houses wherein the proud and conceited fellows strut about haughtily.

According to a reliable tradition, it is narrated that the Holy prophet (s.a.) said: Avoid misgivings about others. It is a matter of great falsehood. Tread the path of Almighty Allah as brethren together as He has commanded you to do. Do not give each other bad names. Do not seek faults in others. Do not indulge in using obscene language. Do not backbite. Do not quarrel. Do not harbour jealousy or enmity towards anyone. Verily, jealousy eats up faith just as fire consumes falsehood.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Make mention of a believing brother, in his absence, in such a praiseworthy manner as you would like him to make mention of you, in your absence.

According to another tradition, he is reported to have said: There is no form of piety more meritorious than avoiding everything pronounced as unlawful by Almighty Allah. Avoid harming other Muslims. Do not indulge in backbiting.

According to another tradition, he is reported to have said that Prophet Musa (a.s.) received a revelation to the following effect: The backbiters will be the last of the persons entering Paradise, in case their repentance is accepted. In case their penitence is not accepted, they shall be the first to enter Hell.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: There shall be four persons who shall be the source of great trouble to the denizens of Hell. They shall get the boiling water of Hell to drink. They shall create a dreadful roar with their cries. The denizens of Hell shall speak to each other, about these persons, for adding troubles to their torment:

- (i) One of them shall be suspended in the arc of Hellfire.
- (ii) One shall have the entrails of his bowels drawn out of his belly.
- (iii) The third shall have blood and pus flowing from his mouth.
- (iv) The fourth shall be the person scathing his own flesh to eat.

So the denizens of Hell shall be told in reply to their enquiry in respect of the person suspended with the arc to the following effect:

The person owed a large amount at the time of his death and did not leave anything behind with which to discharge the obligations to the creditors. About their query as to the second man, whose entrails were being drawn was the person did not care about the place where he urinated.

As to the third person from whose mouth blood and pus were flowing out, the person conveyed every evil word on to the others which he heard from anyone with the mention of his name.

About the fourth person who scathed his own flesh to eat, the person was given to backbiting, thus eating the flesh of others.

We have taken up only those of the many traditions on the subject for which there was reliable authority and they should be sufficient for any sensible person to act upon them.

MEANING OF BACKBITING

Some scholars have given the same explanation of the term backbiting as has been given in the traditions. It is to the effect that one makes mention of a believer in his absence in words displeasing to him if he heard the same.

The term "backbiting" is implied to mean that a particular person is spoken about, in his absence in the manner which would displease him if he heard

the same, provided the shortcoming which is mentioned actually exists in him and the people in general regard it as a defect it may be by word or by gesture, openly or secretly or by writing.

The condition of a particular person is attached, for it shall not be backbiting if it is a general remark. For instance one may say that a resident of the town has such and such a defect in him, without naming the person in particular. It shall not fall within the ambit of 'backbiting', nor shall it be unlawful to say so, unless the person listening knows that particular person.

If the person is not defined and yet he has taken to mean some particular person, it shall constitute the sin of backbiting. For instance: it may be put down that either one of Zaid or Umar has such and such a defect. Certain scholars have taken it to mean backbiting of both in as much as there is a possibility of the defect being present in both of them with consequential dishonour to both. Both shall feel distressed on hearing it.

As to the condition that the defect should actually be present in the person because in its absence, it will be false allegation, in the nature of foisting defect on to another, on one's own account. It is even worse than backbiting.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said:

To speak of a brother believer about something which Almighty Allah has not exposed also constitutes a shortcoming. An accusation is implied when a fault is ascribed to a person in whom it does not exist.

In certain cases the term backbiting covers both cases, that of backbiting as well as of false accusations.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated by Dawood bin Sarhan that he asked Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) about the meaning of the term backbiting, and Imam (a.s.) replied: Backbiting implies the foisting of a fault on a brother believer, which does not exist in him, or exposing some fault of his which Almighty Allah has not disclosed and that which has not been proved in a court of law on the strength of regular evidence, which would merit legal chastisement for him.

Another condition to establish a case of backbiting is that it should be a defect in the eye of the general public. In case one speaks of a good point, as being the part of one's character, which the latter takes ill, it shall not be a case of backbiting.

For instance, if it is said of a person, that he is regular in his *Tahajjud*, which he takes ill, it shall

not be a case of backbiting. It will be a case of backbiting only, when a defect is pointed out which is a source of displeasure to him. The defect may be physical, moral, operational or in regard to the family origin and lineage. For instance, one may call someone as the son of a washer man or of a weaver in a derogatory manner.

There are defects which if referred to, do not constitute backbiting. The same shall be taken up later on. It has been pointed out what backbiting involves whether it be by word or insinuation.

For instance, one makes mention of the wealth of someone, adding that he himself, by the grace of Almighty Allah is not involved in the love of wealth. That would imply that such a defect is present in the other fellow or one may pray to Almighty Allah to be saved himself, as well as the other fellow from the love of the world. It may imply that the other person has the defect referred to, while he includes himself to escape in the eyes of the listeners, the blame of backbiting.

There are numerous instances of such self defence options. On the part of backbiters, even during the sermon and lectures while glorifying Almighty Allah and expressing one's own humility, the preachers expose the faults of others very openly.

Backbiting is not confined to the spoken word. It will constitute backbiting, if one writes about the faults of another person in a letter or one apes the movements of another by gesticulating or walking or some other kind of movements expressive of the defect.

CONDITIONS OF PERMISSIBILITY OF BACKBITING

There are certain conditions under which backbiting has been held to be permissible.

The Complaint of an aggrieved person, may speak of the aggression of an aggressor to someone else, who is in a position to restrain the aggressor. In such a case it would be permissible for the aggrieved to complain of the aggressor and for, the other man to listen thereto. This, however, is permissible only when the person to whom the complaint is made is in a positron to remove the aggression.

He too should have no other aim in listening except the redress. The complaint should also bear this in mind to do it for the purpose of redress. He should take the complaint only to the person who can be depended upon for help and to no one else. Backbiting is also permissible when the same is intended to restrain someone from committing an evil. It may be that by speaking of a defect in the

presence of some other the man may desist from doing the evil deed.

There are certain conditions attached to it.

- (i) One should be sure that the person spoken of is used to evil deeds.
- (ii) He should be sure of his words being effective.
- (iii) There may be no apprehension of trouble or loss, consequent upon saying anything. Suppose the attitude of the person is not really vicious, but it appears to him to be so. It may be for instance a difference of opinion, one party giving weight to the religious opinion of one *Mujtahid*, while he himself is in favour of the opinion of another *Mujtahid*; opposing the first one has no justification to condemn and backbite him. Similarly, if he knows that his words shall not carry effect in restraining him from his evil deed, he should not say any thing at all.

In case there is an apprehension of loss of property, life or honour in speaking it, it is not permissible for him to say anything.

Supposing he knows that he will give up his evil action, if approached in privacy, one should not try to disgrace him in an open assembly.

Keeping these commandments in view, one should try to restrain him from evil deed purely to win the pleasure of Almighty Allah. There should not be the least inkling of personal malice or ill will. One should not try to satisfy one's own rancour in the garb of a person, acting for the purpose of forbidding an evil, by speaking ill of him.

It should not be counted as backbiting, if some untoward reference has to be made when approaching a scholar on a legal point. For instance, he may complain about his father as having forcibly occupied some property of his for which he may seek legal advice to lodge a suit.

In this matter too, his reference to his father should not be clear-cut. For instance, he may say that, a certain father has behaved in such and such a manner towards his son, or he may ask advice on the legal point. In case, this may not be feasible for him to do so, he should take care that none else gets any knowledge of the fact except the scholar.

It relates to an opinion given to the person who has sought advice. For instance, one may approach him for guidance in the matter of advancing a loan to a certain person or in the matter of giving his daughter into the wedlock of a certain person. It is necessary that one should give his frank opinion in the matter.

If he knows that the person asking the advice shall be restrained by his words, he should forbid him, without speaking in detail. If the person insists on knowing the full details, he should say just enough for clarification of the matter. In case, he wants a person not to enter in any dealings with another person, he should there being apprehended a great deal of loss or harm, without being asked, offer his own views about the defects of the party concerned. He should not, of course give way to personal ill-will or malice in the matter.

It is necessary to expose the neologies of the innovators in religion. They are the source of leading people astray from the path of right religion. In particular, it is incumbent on a learned person to prevent the people from following them.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated by Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Express your abhorrence against the innovators, who may try to thrust neologies in the religion. They should be publicly repudiated. In no case should they be allowed to attempt to vitiate the right religion of Islam. The people should be saved from their beguilement. They should abhor their neologies. Almighty Allah's recompense therefore, is Paradise and raising their status on the Day of Judgment.

According to another tradition, it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Avoid the company of innovators lest the people should regard you as one of them.

It is narrated of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) as having said: A man is in the religion of his companions. There are a number of traditions on this point. Some of them have already been dealt with under the account of neologies.

There is nothing as destructive of the faith of the people of faith as are these innovators.

An open disbeliever has his disbelief quite manifest. The people should avoid them.

Innovators put on the garb of Islam. They, in the guise of righteous people of great piety, try to deceive the common people, who are easily misled by them. As such it is incumbent upon the learned scholars, as well as the laymen to repudiate them and to be zealous in uprooting them in order that the masses should be saved from falling in to error and remain active in preserving the purity of Islam.

It is not in the nature of backbiting that the errors of the Mujtahid should be made manifest. Suppose one Mujtahid has a certain view on a specific issue and another Mujtahid has a different view. It is incumbent upon them to point out the errors and to

bring forth the necessary arguments to support it. As such the scholars of the bygone days have been pointing out the errors of their contemporaries and of their predecessors. Neither party suffers any loss in this matter. Every one of them tried his best with honest intent to save the religion and to gain, the recompense thereof.

One should, however, confine himself to the point of error in the issue. In no case should his insolence and personal rancour be given way to respect of the error in reference. One should aim at serving Islam and winning Divine Pleasure thereby. There should not be the least idea of personal ill will, jealousy or malice. On such occasions one should be ever vigilant of such beguilement as lead men astray.

It is not the nature of backbiting to cross examine a narrator of traditions. Many of our scholars have, in their biographical works taken to task some of the narrators. The underlying object in this attitude is to preserve the religious commandments and traditions so as to keep in tact the criteria of distinction between the right and the wrong, reliable and unreliable. Such criticism is permissible as being in the nature of service to the faith.

It is not in the nature of backbiting, if the person is well known for the fault, without mentioning which, one cannot be identified. For instance, a man who is lame or blind, some scholars have definitely held it permissible to name him like that. According to others, it is permissible only if his identification depends on this only.

In any case, it is a matter of circumspection that he should not be referred to in a way which would displease him.

To call a blind man as blind blasphemously, which would lower him in the eyes of the public, should not be resorted to.

He should be referred to in a manner which would not bring him to humiliation. There are a number of traditions on the point of permissibility.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: By backbiting is implied, an expression of something about a brother, which has been kept secret by Almighty Allah. In case there is a character trait like quickness of temper, anger, hastiness the mention thereof does not constitute backbiting.

The mention of the sins of the person, who commits a sin openly, does not constitute backbiting. For instance to speak of the tyranny of

a tyrannical officer, who is involved in glaring oppression and immorality does not constitute backbiting. He does not care for being called a tyrant.

Suppose someone speaks of a tyrannical administrator as ruling over a certain locality, while he himself is not displeased on hearing it, shall not constitute backbiting. But in case he is pained to hear it, then it shall be a case of backbiting.

If a person commits sins openly, while he takes it ill to hear the same from others, this too, according to a well-established view, does not constitute backbiting.

For instance, he commits sins in the open, without trying to conceal the same, and yet he takes it ill, if he hears of it from others. There is a difference of opinion as to the condemnation and exposing such a man's open sins and open commission of major sins. May be that the expression of open sins maybe permissible even though the condition of forbidding the evil may not be applicable in that case. It is however, better not to disclose his hidden sins. There are a number of traditions on the point of such backbiting.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) said: It is not in the

nature of backbiting to speak of the fault of a person in his absence, which does exist in him and the people in general are in the know thereof. In case the people are not in the know thereof, it will constitute backbiting to make mention of the same.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The person who is given to glaring transgression and sins, merits no honour or respect, nor is speaking ill of him in his absence unlawful.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said: There are three persons who do not merit any honour or respect; The innovator who introduces neologies in religion of his own accord; The tyrannical administrator; The transgressor who is involved in glaring transgression and vices.

On the basis of reliable authority Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) is narrated to have said: A transgressor is the least deserving of respect.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) as having said to the following effect: Suppose there is a person who in his dealings with others is not unjust. He does not speak any falsehood. He does not back out of his promises.

Such a person is magnanimous par-excellence. He is of the right standard of justice. It is incumbent on man to have his friendship. Backbiting him is unlawful.

A number of traditions in the same strain are narrated from Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) on the basis of reliable authority.

The scholars have made an exception for a form of backbiting which is close to the kind of backbiting under reference.

It relates to two persons who may both be in the know of the fault of someone. It will not constitute backbiting. If they talk about that between themselves and no third person hears of it. Scores of learned scholars have held it not permissible. It is however, in the nature of circumspection that they do not talk of it between themselves.

Suppose a person has committed a sin meriting legal punishment. There may be some persons in the know of the fact. It is permissible for them to give evidence before a court of law, provided they are in such numbers as are required to prove the case. Such evidence shall not constitute backbiting. They cannot, however, lawfully speak of it before anyone except the legal authority.

LISTENING TO THE UTTERANCES OF BACKBITING

It is well known view among the scholars that one who listens to the utterances of backbiting or endorses them, or relishes the narration, is a sinner of the same category as the backbiter himself.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: The person who listens to the utterance of backbiting is one of the two backbiters.

It transpires from a number of traditions, and from the views of the scholars that one should discourage the backbiter and decline to hear him. He shall thereby be helping a believing brother. If he cannot follow to do so he should leave the place. In case he cannot even leave the place he should feel disdain in his heart at the narrator.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) said: The person to whom an utterance of backbiting of a brother believer is presented for hearing and he comes forward to help him, shall receive help from Almighty Allah in this life and the life to come. In case he does not come out for help to him notwithstanding being in a position to help, he shall meet with disgrace by Almighty Allah in this life and the life to come.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Suppose a person refutes the tale of backbiting in respect of a believing brother. Such an attitude shall stand as a curtain between him and Hell, on the Day of Judgment.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) has related that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The person who defends the honour of his believing brother shall, as a matter of course, be granted Paradise by Almighty Allah.

Some scholars have the view that it is not appropriate for a person to forbid a backbiter or to dub him as a transgressor in case he backbites person whom you do not know or about whose merit you are in the dark. One must give credence to the words of Muslim. It is possible, such backbiting may happen to be well-placed.

He must feel pained by being refuted. We may be sinning in paining, a Muslim. As such, it is not permissible to pain a person unless we are convinced that listening to his tale of backbiting is not permissible.

It may be further elucidated thus:

We should, as a matter of course, forbid him if we deduce from his apparent condition that his backbiting is improper. In case, the person has a religious outlook of a righteous law abiding

person, carrying out his dealing, honestly, we should adopt some suitable manner of keeping him back from backbiting, which would not pinch him. We may, for instance, explain in a suitable manner the conduct of the victim of backbiting or we may put him off in some other proper manner.

We may remain silent. We should not pronounce the person as sinful. As far as possible both the parties should be cautious in the matter.

REDEEMING THE SIN OF BACKBITING

For penitence in respect of backbiting, there are some conditions, over and above the penitence in respect of other sins. This matter belongs to the category of human rights. One should go to the person to whom the tale of backbiting has been ascribed with the object of humiliating him. One should then detail to him the good qualities of the person contrary to what has been said before. One should try to exonerate him.

There are a number of traditions relating to seeking pardon from the victim of backbiting.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Backbiting is a more abominable sin than adultery. Someone asked him as to how it was so. His reply was: The adulterer takes to penitence. The Almighty Allah accepts his penitence.

The penitence sought by a backbiter is not acceptable unless the victim pardons him.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Someone asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.) as to the redemption of backbiting. The reply he gave was that he should ask forgiveness for the victim whenever he happens to think of him.

According to another tradition the Holy Prophet (s.a.) is reported to have said: The redemption of backbiting is that one should pray for the forgiveness of the victim.

The scholars in this behalf have tried to reconcile the traditions in the following way: One should seek pardon from the victim if he has come to know of it. In case he is in the dark then seeking forgiveness for him is necessary. In case he has died or left without address, one should resort to seeking forgiveness for him.

It is in the nature of circumspection that one should seek pardon from the victim, provided it does not lead to his injury. One should, in such case, seek pardon of him in a way which would not disclose his backbiting.

CONDEMNATION OF THE DOUBLE-FACED PERSON

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! The person who is double-faced and double tongued in this life shall be so even in Hell. It should be borne in mind that among the character traits of the hypocrites is that they speak very sweetly and smilingly to other persons outwardly. They display towards them great love and affection. In their absence they talk of them like enemies. They condemn them. It is one of the meanest character traits.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) said: Unlucky is the man who is double-faced and double-tongued. He is all praise and all flattery when one is face to face with him. In one's absence he backbites him. If one is gifted with something, he is jealous. If one is in distress he flies away.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s) said:

The person who is double-faced and double tongued towards other Muslims shall have two fiery tongues in his mouth on the Day of Judgment.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a) said:

The double-tongued person shall be brought forth on the Day of Judgment in such a way that he shall have one tongue swinging behind him and the other one swinging in front of him. Both shall be emitting sparks of fire. This fire shall descend in his whole body.

An announcer shall announce about him to the following effect: This is the person who was double faced and double tongued in the world. This shall acquaint all the people gathered on that day with his evil trait.

According to another tradition, Almighty Allah is reported to have revealed to prophet Isa (a.s.): You should have one tongue in public and in seclusion. Your heart should also be of the same pattern. I make you fear the evil of your own self. I know the evils of the human ego quite well. There should not be two tongues in the mouth not two swords in the same scabbard, nor two thoughts in one and the same mind.

TALE BEARING (FAULT FINDING)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar : O Abuzar! A *Qatat* will never enter paradise.

Abuzar asked as to the meaning of the term *Qatat*. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to the following effect: Qatat is that person who finds faults with others. O Abuzar! The person given to finding faults with others shall not have any respite from Divine torment in the Hereafter.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) addressed his companions: Shall I tell you of the most reprehensible persons among you?

On being urged to do so he proceeded as follows: They are the tale bearers. They create enmity among friends. They ascribe such faults to others as do not exist in them.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said: Paradise is banned for tale bearers.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said:

There are four persons who shall not have access to paradise;

- (i) A soothsayer
- (ii) A hypocrite,

- (iii) A drunkard (the one who finds faults with others.)

According to another tradition it is narrated that he said: Prophet Musa (a.s.) during the course of his prayers to Almighty Allah saw a person under the exalted Divine Throne. He asked Almighty Allah as to the identity of the person who has being favoured with the shade of the Exalted Throne.

He got the reply: This bondman was well-behaved towards his parents. He never did tale-bearing.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) has forbidden us to indulge in tale-bearing and also listening to such utterances. He added that the person given to tale-bearing shall not enter Paradise.

He went on to say that Almighty Allah says to the following effect: I have banned the entry of three persons into Paradise;

- (i) A person who proclaims his deeds of goodness to others.
- (ii) A person who is miserly in his attitude.
- (iii) A person who is a tale-bearer.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said:

There are three persons who shall not have access to Paradise; a person who sheds Muslim blood, a

person who is given to drinking and a person who is a tale-bearer.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said:

On the night of the Heavenly Ascent, I saw a woman with a head like that of swine and body like that of a monkey. She was being tormented in thousands of ways.

The companions asked him as to the sin which had merited such torment. His reply was that she was a tale-bearer accustomed to telling lies.

Chapter Twelve

Arrogance

AVOID ARROGANCE, CONCEIT AND PRIDE

Conceit and pride have proved the downfall of many a great man here, what to say of the common people like ourselves who are made of dust and to dust will return having no power even over our time and our life. Does it behove us in the least to be conceited with this life?

How foolish are those who are stiff-necked towards others forgetting their real worth and becoming arrogant. Supposing they are well-to-do in comparison with the needy and they are more comely in comparison with the ugly, whose beneficence is this all? Surely it is a gift from Allah who can bring every thing to naught in the twinkling of an eye. How does it befit anyone then to show vanity or pride under such helplessness? It is but proper not to say anything that may rebound to our face. We should move like human beings in such humility as not to injure Allah's creatures and at the same time as may please Allah. May Allah grant every Muslim such wisdom and foresight that he may cognise the meaning of Allah's commands.

Do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor walk with hauteur on the earth. Verily Allah does not love any selfconceited boaster. Be moderate in your bearing, and keep your voice low. Verily the most repulsive of voices is the braying of the ass.(31:18-19)

Do not walk on the earth exultantly. Verily you cannot rend the earth, nor can you reach (the height of) the mountains in stature. The evil of all these is odious to your Lord. (17:37-38)

And when, We said to the angels: "Prostrate to Adam!" they all prostrated save Iblis. He refused and he was insolent with pride, and so he became one of the disbelievers. (2:34)

Pride, greed and envy are the three basic evils which are the foundation of all sins and crimes in this world. All three were clearly demonstrated in the very beginning of mankind when Satan refused to bow down before Adam and arrogantly declared that he was better than Adam. It was pride which led to disobedience of God, Eve, owing to her greed, was persuaded by Satan that eating from the 'forbidden tree' would be in her benefit. That also led to disobedience of God. Cain became envious of his brother Abel and killed him. Envy led to the capital sin and crime. It is for the sake of these

moral lessons that this story has been repeated several times in the Holy Quran.

Pride is one of the most condemned sin in Islam. Four verses of Quran clearly state that Hell is the abode of proud persons. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) has said: "Allah says, greatness is My prerogative, and whoever tries to share it with Me (i.e. becomes proud) I will put him in Hell."

Islam has framed its code of life in such a way that pride is crushed continuously. Take for example the rules of salutation. It has been stressed that you should be the first in saying *Salamu alaykum!* Do not wait for others to salute you. And it makes no difference whether the other party is older or younger than you or equal to you in age. Not only this code, but the reason given for it also is a sure remedy of pride. It has been explained in this way. If the other party is older than you, you must salute him, because owing to his longer stay in this world, he has got more chances of performing good deeds than you have; if he is younger than you, you must salute him because owing to his shorter stay in this world, he has got less chances of committing evil deeds and sins than you have; if he is your contemporary, remember that you know your own but not his, vices and sins; therefore you must be the first to begin Salaam to everyone without any distinction of age or rank.

Prayers in the mosques are another example crushing the pride. There are no reserved seats. Whoever comes first sits nearer to the priest. A pauper stands in the first line, a millionaire stands behind him and in prostration the feet of the pauper "touch the head" of the millionaire, reminding him that in the presence of God it is piety which counts, not the coins.

Pilgrimage to Mecca is another reminder of this lesson. Poor and rich, great and small, ruler and the ruled, all are dressed alike, with shaven heads and nearly bare feet, and perform all the functions of Hajj side by side.

Thus minds are cleansed constantly of 'pride', one of the fundamental evils.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! The person who desires that people should stand before him row after row should assure himself of a place in Hell.

O' Abuzar! The person who dies, with even the least inkling of conceit in his mind shall not even cognise the perfume of Paradise except that he expresses penitence before his death.

Someone made the submission to the Holy Prophet (s.a.) that he was enamoured of adornment to an extent that he wished that his shoe-laces and lash

should be nice. He wanted to know, whether that would make him to be counted among the 'proud' ones.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) asked him as to the condition of his heart.

He made the submission to the following effect: My mind is full of the Knowledge of Almighty Allah. I, enjoy perfect peace with Him. There is not the least idea of disobedience to Almighty Allah or of wavering from the path of Almighty Allah.

To this his reply was: This does not constitute arrogance. By arrogance is implied, that one forsakes the right in favour of the falsehood. In that case one looks upon himself as, superior in honour to the others and as having a higher birth. In other words he thinks of himself as being superior to others in all respects and looking upon others with disdain.

O' Abuzar! The greatest number destined for Hell will be of the arrogant people.

CONDEMNATION OF ARROGANCE

Someone made the submission as to whether anyone shall be saved from arrogance.

His reply was: Yes, it is the person who wears coarse woollen cloth, who rides a donkey, who milks his own goat with his own hands and who associates with the poor people.

O Abuzar! The person who carries his own load of shopping goods from Market to his house is free from arrogance.

O Abuzar! The person who allows his clothes to hang behind him with an air of arrogance shall not find Almighty Allah looking to him with grace on the Day of Judgement.

O Abuzar! It behoves a person who has two suits of apparel to keep one for himself and to gift the other to his poor believing brother.

O Abuzar! In the near future, there shall be persons among my Ummat, born and bred up with a silver spoon in their mouths, for whom the flatterers shall sing songs. They shall be among the undesirable persons of my Ummat.

O Abuzar! The person who gives up adornment by way of humility for the sake of Almighty Allah, despite his being in a position to enjoy, shall have Almighty Allah favouring him with his Grace.

O Abuzar! Lucky is the person who behaves kindly towards the people for the sake of Almighty Allah without there being any worldly defect for the humility or without there arising any fault in his religion or without there being any kind of disgrace in this humility, or without there being any office having been committed to force him into such humility and who deports himself like a poor person without there being any neediness on his part, who spends his wealth in lawful pursuits, who shows pity to the poor ones and who associates himself with the intelligentsia.

Also lucky is the person who has his inner mind based on righteousness as well as his appearance and the people remain immune from his mischief.

Also lucky is the person, who acts upon his knowledge, who spends his savings in the way of Almighty Allah, and who withholds himself from absurdities.

O Abuzar! Wear coarse clothing, so that arrogance may not find its way towards you.

CONDEMNATION OF ARROGANCE

It should be borne in mind that arrogance is the worst of all traits. This leads to disgrace in this world and in the life hereafter. The disbelief and the hostility of the misguided ones of every nation

have sprung up from this very trait. The first act of disobedience to the Almighty Allah sprang from arrogance when Satan refused to prostrate unto Prophet Adam (a.s.). Thus was he exposed to everlasting curses.

THE QAASIAAH ADDRESS

In the sermon known as the sermon of *Qaasiaah*, Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) has said : All Glory and Praise is to Almighty Allah, Who took for Himself the apparel of Honour and Majesty. He reserved these qualities for Himself. He made the same unlawful for anyone else. He announced curses on Satan. He made the same unlawful also for anyone who proceeds to compete with Him in His attributes.

To start with, He put the angels to test in this behalf, notwithstanding that He knows the innermost working of their minds Himself. He said to them thus:

Remember when your Lord said to the angels; "Verily I am going to create man from clay. And when I have made him and have breathed into him of My spirit, fall down before him prostrate." Then the angels prostrate themselves, all of them together; Except Iblis. He was filled with pride and became one of those who disbelieve. (Allah) said:

'O Iblis, what prevented you from falling prostrate before that which I created with both My hands? Are you proud? Or are you one of the exalted?' He said "I am better than he. You created me from fire, and you created him from clay." (38:71-76)

Satan became the leader of the arrogant ones and the prejudiced ones. He was the first to invent prejudice. He proceeded to compete with Almighty Allah in His attribute of Power Grandeur, the attribute which befits Him only.

Satan put on the dress of disobedience putting off his head the sheet of loyalty and obedience.

Do you not see as to what great extent the Almighty Allah disgraced him for his arrogance? He threw him from his high position to the abyss of degradation. He was accursed in this world and in the Hereafter he shall be doomed to Hellfire.

The Almighty Allah, if He had so willed would have created Prophet Adam (a.s.) from light that would have sizzled the eyes and human reasons would have been wonder struck at it. Its perfume would have enchanted the Creation. If he had done so, all would have bowed unto Him. The angels would have made submission to him willingly. Almighty Allah put His creation to trial in a number of ways. The reality and the reason underlying were kept hidden from them in order

that in such a trial the obedience and the disobedience may be distinguished from one another. Their arrogance was removed thereby.

O people! Learn a lesson there from because of his arrogance Almighty Allah treated Iblis in that manner. Because of his disobedience all the good deeds and worship were set at naught. He had worshipped Almighty Allah for six thousand years. Who can then vie with Satan in the matter of worship? Who can then be saved if he gives way to arrogance? Protect yourself against this enemy lest he may involve you in the same mishap like his own. Try to protect yourself against beguilement. Offer obedience to Almighty Allah. Betake yourself to the way of humility. Trample your arrogance and conceit under your feet. Throw off from your neck all ideas of superiority. Prepare yourself against your enemies. Satan and his hordes with the armament of humility verily, there are armies of Satan both mounted and on foot in every nation. Do not be like Cain (Kabeel) who was arrogant towards his brother although Almighty Allah had not given him any superiority to Habeel (Abel). He was jealous of his brother under a misconception of his own superiority.

He is self-exultation created an angry fire in his heart. Satan filled his mind with arrogance. He earned everlasting shame by slaughtering his

brother. He became a shareholder in the sin of all murderers.

O' People! Fear Almighty Allah. Do not be ungrateful for His bounties. Do not be jealous of the merit and greatness of other men. Learn a lesson from the chastisement that the arrogant fellows of the nations gone by had to undergo.

Just imagine how lowly they are lying in their graves. Seek refuge with Almighty Allah for the things which lead to arrogance, just as you seek Divine protection against the other worldly afflictions. Verily, if Almighty Allah had allowed pride to anyone He would have chosen His Prophets to start with. Almighty Allah has approved humility for them and not conceit.

These personages led their lives very humbly on this earth. They rubbed their foreheads on the earth unto Almighty Allah. They spread their arms of kindness and affection for their believer brethren.

The people in general looked upon them as weak persons. In reality, Almighty Allah put them to test. Almighty Allah tried them with poverty, hunger, exertion, and fear of enemies.

Thus He put them in the crucible of trial. They were purified like gold through their attitude of submission, obedience, love and sincerity. Do not be led into the idea that Almighty Allah is pleased

with the people whom He has given superabundance of wealth and progeny. Such superabundance of wealth is a Source of trial for them. So is poverty and neediness a form of Divine trial. Almighty Allah puts to trial the arrogant ones through His own friends. These people because of their arrogance pay no heed to them on the score of their broken down condition. They took upon them with disdain. Verily, when Prophet Musa (a.s.) and his brother Haroon (a.s.) went to Firawn (Pharaoh), they were dressed in coarse wool. He had the staff in his hand. He told him that his monarchy would stay if he became a Muslim.

Firawn (Pharaoh) turned to his courtiers to say: Behold! What presumption is this on the part of these two weak persons to condition the stay of my monarchy on my acceptance of Islam. I am the sole monarch of my domain. Here are the persons who are wretched beggars. They have no bangles to put on their wrists.

GOLD AND RICHES CARRIED GREAT WEIGHT WITH HIM

He looked down upon them in their poor condition with coarse woollen clothing. If Almighty Allah had so willed, He would have granted His Prophets limitless treasures of gold, mines of jewels, number of gardens, palaces and riches. The entire

creation including the animals, the birds, the genii and mankind of the Universe would have been made subservient to them.

This would have, however, stultified the whole scheme of trial. They could not have won their title to Heavenly recompense. Those who accepted their Prophethood would have also failed to win their credit for their success in the test. How could the believers have achieved their title for recompense for their obedience.

The non-believers would not have deserved any chastisement for belying them.

The All-wise Almighty Allah sent His Prophets to His creatures with strong determination. He kept them in a state which was apparently weak. Their hearts and their eyes however, were rich with contentment. Apparently they suffered from poverty and indigence. Their hearts however, were filled with Divine grace.

Suppose Almighty Allah had gifted them with power and pelf which no one could withstand.

Suppose they were monarchs in their lands, people of the world would have bowed down automatically in their greed for their power, pelf, rank and privileges. They would have willingly obeyed them. There would have been no chance for them of arrogance and rebelliousness.

They would have professed Faith in them not however with an attitude of sincerity and a sense of gratitude for Divine blessings, but under fear of their wrath and torture or for the craving for power and pelf. Their acts of goodness have been divided between gaining the pleasure of Almighty Allah on one hand and urgings of their own ego on the other. Almighty Allah however willed that His Prophets and His Commands Should be respected in an attitude of sincerity and subservience without the least taint of doubt therein, Thus were His commandments to be acted upon Thus were the men required to express their humility to His Majesty.

Under these circumstances the greater the intensity of the test the more recompense was to be earned. Don't you see that the Almighty Allah has tested all bondmen from Adam (a.s.) down to the Last of the Prophets.

Hajj is one of the means to inculcate humility and to shed away arrogance. A structure made of stones which can neither benefit nor harm anyone was sanctified to be His own house. The stones can neither see nor hear. The house is a place of peace and safety to mankind. This was inducted on a tract of stony land which is the most uneven place which has very narrow passes around it. There are impossible mountain ranges. In the vast desert

there was neither any water-spring nor any river, nor any well, nor any water channel. Far away from the towns and human habitats in a jungle where even the beast cannot live, how difficult for a human being is to get to such a spot.

Almighty Allah, however Commanded Prophet Adam (a.s) and his progeny to come to that place, although they used to reside far away from it. They crossed the rivers and the jungles to get to it. They should circumambulate around that house with their dust-laden faces and broken down conditions. They were to put off their usual dresses in favour of a sheet of cloth to cover their bodies. All this constituted grave testing.

Almighty Allah proclaimed it to be a source of attaining His Grace and Paradise. If He had willed, He would have chosen a land of fragrant green verdure. The region would have been flat with spring water courses and fruit trees of varied kinds. The place could have been surrounded by towns and habitats. The roads would have been safe and easily negotiable. Under such conditions however the testing would not have been consummated adequately. It would not have deserved such recompense.

Almighty Allah could have made the walls of the Holy Kaba from Turkish Jewels. He could have

illuminated it with His own Divine Light. The people would have been enchanted thereby. They would not have withstood Satan successfully.

Satan could not have beguiled mankind. Almighty Allah, however tests His creation by such varied kinds of hardship. He requires them to worship him under all conditions of hardships and afflictions in order that their hearts may be purged of all conceit and arrogance. They should be accustomed to obedience and loyalty to Him. Such hard rites of worship have been prescribed as the gates to His grace and Compassion. He has made them the source of His Mercy and Forgiveness.

The same is the case with the things which He has proclaimed as unlawful. The Almighty Allah has prescribed prayers, fasting and payment of the poor-rate in order that they may serve as a source of tranquillity to man's bodily organs and that they may be a symbol of surrender to Him. They should serve to bring tears to the eyes of man, to instil in him an attitude of humility. Their hearts should thereby be purged of all defects or arrogance and conceit. They put their foreheads before Almighty Allah on the earth as a token of their humbleness. They rub their organs on the earth by way of surrender to Him. Under the Commandments of Almighty Allah, fasting on the part of men draws their bellies to their backs. In obedience to him

they expend their money in helping the needy persons with their Zakaat. Just think over it, what steps has Almighty Allah taken to uproot all ideas of conceit and arrogance from the minds of the men.

The address of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) is very lengthy. Only a few excerpts have been given. One should study that address from one end to the other to become acquainted with the evils of arrogance.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) was asked about the lowest stage of disbelief. His reply was in one word; 'arrogance'.

According to another tradition, arrogance of every sort is hidden within the man's frame.

Pride, is, however, specified only for Almighty Allah. Anyone who takes to pride is disgraced severely by Almighty Allah.

It is narrated that Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) said: Honour and pride are specified only for Almighty Allah. The person who wants a share therein shall be cast into Hell headlong.

According to another tradition it is related to the following effect: The person with the least amount of pride shall never be admitted to Paradise.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: For persons given to pride there is a valley in Hell called 'Saqar'. It complained of intense heat to Almighty Allah and sought permission to ease its breath. With the intensity of its breathing the whole of Hell was lit up with fire.

According to another tradition, he is reported to have said: Almighty Allah shall resurrect the proud people in the form of tiny ants. They shall be trampled under the feet of creation till such time as Almighty Allah finishes the reckoning.

In another tradition, it is narrated: Every man has a bridle in his mouth which is held in the hand of an angel. When a person gives way to pride, the angel draws the reins and tells him to be lowly and that Almighty Allah may disgrace him.

Such a person continues in his feeling of superiority. He is however, looked upon as an inferior by the people in general. If he betakes himself to humility, the Almighty Allah raises him in honour and the angel encourages him to be raised in status as having been honoured by the Almighty Allah. Such a person regards himself ever more humble. In the eyes of the people in general, he enjoys supreme honour and respect.

KINDS OF PRIDE

It should be borne in mind that by 'Pride' (arrogance) is implied that one looks upon himself as superior. He tries to exhibit his superiority to the people. There are several kinds of this attitude.

The worst kind of pride is that which leads to disbelief. Many traditions refer to this kind of pride. In this, the man is arrogant to Almighty Allah. He declines to obey and to be loyal to Him. He declines to admit the excellence of the prophets, the Imams and the righteous scholars in an attitude of disobedience. The disbeliever shows this kind of pride against the Prophets and their rightful appointees. Their superiority complex stands in the way of the obedience to him.

Because of their perverted mental blindness, they look upon them as inferior to themselves.

The second kind of pride is that a person looks down upon other people in an attitude of superiority to himself.

Another kind of pride springs from the second kind. One builds palatial buildings. He puts on costly clothing. He keeps pedigree horses as his mounts. He enjoys a number of servants by way of pride against his poorer contemporaries.

Another kind of pride is that one expects an attitude of humility, on the part of others, while his own attitude is that of superiority and pride towards others. He wishes that others should humiliate themselves before him, as a token of his honour and prestige.

He likes to assume an especially high position in an assembly under the idea of his self-grandeur. Performance of virtuous deed which interferes with the idea of his self -superiority, is left undone by him. In all his movements he displays his sense of superiority.

These different kinds of pride are interlinked with each other closely. There are others as well. They stem from them.

There are a number of traditions on the subject.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The wont of arrogance is for a man to look down upon others and to regard adherence to righteousness as a folly. Someone asked him as to how the acts of righteousness are dubbed as a folly by anyone? His reply was: It means that the person tries to befool the righteous people, while he himself is ignorant of what is right. Thus he taunts them.

According to another tradition, someone asked him: I like palatable food. I like perfume. I like

riding a pedigree horse. I like to possess slaves. Does such an attitude imply pride and arrogance? His replied: The accursed tyrant is he who looks down upon other people and who dubs the right attitude as ignorance.

The person made the submission again: I do not dub an attitude of righteousness as ignorance, but what does it mean by looking own upon others. His reply was: It means that one holds other people insignificant and one tries to impress them with one's superiority and aggression. These are the people who are known to be transgressors.

According to another narration he said: The person having the minute particle of pride in his heart shall not enter Paradise at all.

The narrator says that on hearing this, I uttered the words:

Who, when misfortune befalls them, say: "Verily, we are Allah's, and verily to Him we shall return."
(2: 156)

He asked him as to the relevance of these words. He made the submission: If it is as so you have said is there a heart which is free from pride?

His reply was: You have not fully understood what I meant. I meant that by the term 'pride' is implied

that there are persons who deny and who are arrogant towards the attitude of righteousness.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is reported that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) passed by an assembly of people who had gathered at a place. He enquired as to the purpose of their gathering there. Someone told him that there was an insane person on the spot, who was playing strange pranks. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) remarked:

He is not mad, but he is suffering from mental derangement. But it is he who is the one who can be taken for a mad man. He, who struts about looking to the right and the left in an attitude of conceit. He, who shrugs his shoulders proudly and exhibits his superiority complex. Nevertheless, he looks forward to enter paradise.

It may be that he is disposed to disobey Almighty Allah. The people are not safe against his mischief mongering. They do not expect any good of him. This constitutes his derangement from which he is suffering malevolently.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The time will come when the people of this *Ummat* shall walk proudly. They shall shrug their shoulders with arrogance. Slaves from Iran and Rome shall be serving them.

There shall ensue among them strife and fighting against each other.

According to another tradition, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) related that Angel Jibraeel said to him: The perfumes of Paradise shall be sensed from a distance of a thousand years, but some people shall not sense it at all. It is the person who is disobedient to his parents. It is the one who is oblivious of his obligations of kinship. It is the aged adulterer. It is the person who allows his clothing to dangle in an attitude of pride. It is the person who misleads persons with his mischief. It is the person who displays his deeds of goodness to others. It is the person who is overwhelmed by worldly allurements.

On the basis of reliable authority the Holy Prophet (s.a.) is narrated to have said: The person who rears up a building with a view to gain fame and showiness shall have that building converted into a chain of fire for his neck of the length of the seventh zone of the earth. He shall then be cast into Hell.

The companions asked him as to what was meant by rearing a building with a view to showiness and fame.

He replied: It means that constructions are in excess of one's needs and one builds them out of pride.

He forbade everyone to walk about in a proud manner.

He added: The person who gives airs to himself by putting on fine clothing shall be thrown into the abyss of Hell in the company of Qaroon. He was the first person to take pride in his riches for which reason Almighty Allah caused the earth to swallow him up together with his palaces.

He added: The person who gives airs to himself is like the one who challenges the Majesty of Almighty Allah.

He added to the following effect: The person who looks down upon a beggar and assaults him, shall be resurrected in the tiny figure of a man as small as a tiny ant in size. He shall be cast into Hell.

THE TREATMENT OF PRIDE

It should be borne in mind, that there are certain forms of treatment of pride. The foremost among them is for the man to ponder over his own origin and ending. One should think of one's puny form and fragility of his body, which make this temporary life the target of danger every moment. Certainly, death shall annihilate him in a short while. One should have realisation of ones faults and weaknesses. One should look to one's ignorance and helplessness.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) said: I wonder that the person who gives airs to himself, has been created from a tiny sperm. He shall end up a stinking carcass. Between the two stages, he is unaware as to what is to happen to him the next moment.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: I wonder at Adam's son. He was to begin with a tiny drop. In his ending, he shall be a stinking carcass. Between these two states, he contains within his body urine and faeces. All the same he is arrogant.

A second stop in the treatment of pride is that one should adopt such deeds as engender humility. For instance, one may take to the society of the poor

and the needy persons. One should take a lower seat in an assembly. One should avoid the society of the elite. One should adopt such deeds as contravene the habit of pride.

It is narrated that the person who wants to shun pride should take his meals in the company of his own servants. One should milk his own milk cattle.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The person is free from the defect of conceit if he patches his own garments. He mends his own shoes. He carries home from the market his daily purchases.

The third method of treating this malady is to think that the consequence of pride goes against the proud ones. He thinks that pride will bring him prestige. Experience however goes against it. The words of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) convince us that its consequence is disgrace in this life and in the life to come. On the contrary, humility and modesty spell honour both in this world and the next world. He should also meditate on the attitude of religious leaders. They behave humbly and modestly. One should study these traditions which condemn pride. One should realise the excellence of humility.

REFORMATION OF MIND

One should not rest contented with outward acts of goodness. One should strive to reform one's inner mind.

It is reported that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) hinted: Goodness is the open and vileness in one's own mind and this is a kind of hypocrisy.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to Nauf Bakali: O Nauf! Never deport yourself in a manner that you display your acts of goodness to the people while in your mind you might be thinking of disobedience to Almighty Allah. If you do it, you will be disgraced by Almighty Allah.

The person, who strives to reform his inner mind, shall have Almighty Allah reforming his entire appearance. The person who arranges matters between himself and Almighty Allah shall find Almighty Allah arranging his affairs among the people.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) as having said to the following effect: The actions of the person in the Scales on the Day of Judgement, shall carry light weight if his appearance is better than his inner self.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The Almighty Allah shall make known to the people the person's acts, he who conceals his acts from the people. He shall, thereby, gain great happiness.

The Almighty Allah shall make known to the people the acts which one tries to conceal which contravene the pleasure of the Almighty Allah. Such acts shall be the cause of his disgrace.

According to another tradition, it is narrated to the following effect: Suppose, the person who adorns himself with the acts which are approved by Almighty Allah, just by way of showing the same to the people, while in his inner mind he does not pay heed to them but he commits such acts as we disliked by Almighty Allah; when he comes before Almighty Allah, He shall be wrathful towards him. There are a number of traditions on this point.

It should be borne in mind, that one should keep both his outside and inside on the righteous basis. One should try to be as good within as he is in appearance. It should not happen that one's exterior may become as vile as his inner mind. One should avoid the accusing finger so as not to lead others into suspicion thereby. The atheists say such things about the mystics.

Apparent sins are more heinous, than the secret sins. The secret sins are more readily pardoned

than the apparent sins. There are a number of traditions on this topic, some are those which have been referred to already and it stands to reason as well.

Suppose, a person disobeys his master without letting him know. The master shall not be offended at him by such an act of disobedience as he would be if he were disobeyed openly. By his open disobedience he is humiliating his master in the presence of the people around him. It has also been forbidden, for a person to expose himself to the allegations of disobedience by going to places of accusation.

BEHAVIOUR AT ONES OWN PRAISE

When a man hears his own praise he should not become proud but with humility he should offer his thanks and keep on trying to make that his principle of practice for which he had praised. On this question, there are the teachings of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) and his descendants.

In the prayer named after Kumail which is recited on every Thursday night, Ameerul Momineen, Ali (a.s.) says: How good were those things of which I was not worthy of, but you gave them renown (in my life time) and spread them.

Whenever anyone praised Ameerul Momineen (a.s.), he used to exclaim: O Lord, you know me even better than myself and I know myself better than those who praise me, so whatever is their opinion about me, make me better than that and forgive those things which they do not know.

Chapter Thirteen

Forbearance

FOGIVENESS AND FORBEARANCE

This quality too is one of the most exalted qualities of man. I wish Allah had exalted every Muslim, nay every human being, with its grandeur. The existing uncleanness and degradation of the world would have been somewhat lessened thereby and our lives in this world would have been relatively satisfying.

The retribution of evil is the equal of evil (done); but whosoever pardons and amends (makes reconciliation), his reward is (incumbent) on Allah. Verily He does not love the unjust. (42:40)

Adopt tolerance, enjoin good and turn away from the ignorant, (7:199)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar ! The person who does not possess the following three qualities shall be at a loss on the Day of Judgement.

- (i) Virtue by means of which one has been able to avoid the unlawful things ordained by Almighty Allah.
- (ii) Forbearance, by means of which he has been warding off the stupidity of the fools.
- (iii) Good manners with which he has behaved towards other people.

It should be borne in mind that forbearance is a quality of the friends of Almighty Allah, the prophets and the Imams. One possessing this quality forgives the mischief and evil of others and one exercises control over one's anger. Reason and the *Shariat* testify to the excellence thereof.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said in an address: Shall I tell you the good manners which carry great worth in this life and in the life hereafter? You should adopt an attitude of forgiveness towards the person who offends you. You should be compassionate and well-behaved towards the person who is cruel to you. You should do good to the person who does you evil. You should behave generously towards the person who deprives you of his generosity.

It is narrated that Imam Ali Ibn Husain (a.s.) said: Almighty Allah shall gather together the moral

equipments of all the creation on the Day of Judgement.

An announcer shall make an announcement on behalf of Almighty Allah:

Where are the people of generosity?

On hearing this there shall come forwards a body of men. The angels shall question them as to their excellence and goodness. They shall say that they endeavoured to preserve the link of friendship with those who sundered such link and that they used to share with those who deprived them of their shares, and that they forgave those who oppressed them. The angels shall then tell them to go Paradise for such acts.

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said: To take upon one's self the toils of repentance for forgiveness is easier than the repentance for torment and chastisement.

It is narrated that Imam Ali Ibn Husain (a.s.) said: There is no draught more palatable to me as the draught of curbing anger by pardoning the person who might have offended you.

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said about his father having told him: Your father has no superior type of comfort and enlightenment.

to the control over anger which has fortitude as its end.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The person who controls his anger is honoured by Almighty Allah in this life and in the hereafter. Almighty Allah Himself speaks of them thus to the following effect:

Vie one with another in hastening (to obtain) forgiveness from your Lord, and (toward) paradise, as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who safeguard themselves with full awareness of divine laws. (3:133)

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said: The person who controls his anger despite the fact that he has the competence for revenge shall have his heart filled with peace, faith and Divine Pleasure by Almighty Allah.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Exercise patience at the oppression of your enemies by reminding yourselves of the bounties of Almighty Allah. Verily the person who disobeys Almighty Allah by antagonising you shall not have a better recompense than yourselves; in as much as you have made submission to Almighty Allah, as far as he is concerned.

It is narrated that Imam Ali Ibn Husain (a.s.) said: I like the person who exercises forbearance at the time of anger.

THE RECOMPENSE OF FORBEARANCE

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said: Almighty Allah befriends the person of modesty and of forbearance.

It is narrated that the holy Prophet (a.s.) said: Almighty Allah has never honoured any person for his ignorance and ill temper. He has never disgraced anyone for his forbearance.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Man has a great supporter in forbearance.

If you happen not to be possessing forbearance you should force yourself to acquire it.

In another tradition he is reported to have said: In a quarrel between two persons two angels step in. To the person who has been unreasonable and foolish, they say, "You have had your say and you yourself deserve all that. You shall have to suffer soon the consequences of what you have said."

To the person who has put up forbearingly and patiently will all this, they say "You have behaved forbearingly. If you stick steadfastly to your

attitude you shall receive the recompense therefore from Almighty Allah. He shall soon forgive you”.

In the case of the second two has also behaved in the same unreasonable manner, both the Angels go back to the heavens. They leave their case to the scribe angels.

According to another tradition Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) is narrated to have said: We are of the People of the Household of the Holy Prophet (s.a). We have the magnanimity to forgive the one who works aggression against us.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Prophet Isa (a.s.) advised Prophet Yahya (a.s.): When the people condemn you for any evil, if the same evil happens to be in you, you should know that they only reminded you of your sin. Ask for forgiveness of your sin from Almighty Allah.

In the case they ascribe to you a fault which does not exist in you, know that you have earned recompense without having toiled for that.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: Three persons must see to it that they do not avenge themselves against three other persons.

- (i) The gentle person of good origin should not wreak vengeance against a mean fellow of low origin.
- (ii) Forbearing persons of humanity should not avenge themselves against a stupid fellows.
- (iii) The virtuous and righteous should not avenge themselves against vile scoundrels.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Almighty Allah shall grant *Hoor* on the day of Judgement to the person who possesses three qualities; "Control over his anger, putting up with sabre wounds received in the way of Almighty Allah and abandoning the unlawful things when one has access thereto from fear of Almighty Allah."

According to another tradition it is narrated that Imam (a.s.) said: The person who possesses the following three qualities has his faith perfect; "forbearance against aggression, control over anger and forgiveness of faults committed by offenders."

He shall receive bounties of paradise to an unlimited extent from Almighty Allah. Almighty Allah shall accept his intercession in favour of such a large number of people as there is the number of the people of the tribes of Mazar and

Rabeeah (these two tribes were known for their large numbers.”

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said: The person who controls himself on the occasions of want, fear and anger shall have Hell-fire made unlawful for him.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The person who does not possess the following qualities has nothing to do with me or Almighty Allah.

The Holy companions asked him as to what these three qualities were? His reply was:

“Forbearance whereby the ignorance of the stupid and the ignoramus can be warded off; Good manners which enable one to put up with other people righteousness which restrains a man from the disobedience to Almighty Allah.”

IN PRAISE OF FORGIVENESS AND FORBEARANCE

According to another narration the Holy Prophet (s.a.) is narrated to have said: The quality of forgiveness leads to enhanced honour. As such one should forgive the faults of others. The Almighty Allah shall enhance the honour of such a person.

According to another tradition, it is narrated that the Holy prophet (s.a.) said: The person who curbs his anger shall have his heart filled with the light of faith by Almighty Allah. Almighty Allah will enhance the honour of a person in this life and in the life of the Hereafter who pardons a man who has done him some injury.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was asked by someone as to who was the most powerful and energetic person.

The reply given by him was: He is the person who is very forbearing and very forgiving. It is the person who never yields to anger.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Forbearance fits most beautifully on a person who has the power to take revenge.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated in the exegesis of a Quranic verse that one should forgive the faults and sins of other without taking revenge and chastisement.

It is narrated that Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) as having said: Prophet Musa (a.s.) made the submission to Almighty Allah as to the recompense of a person who bears patiently the abuses and persecution on the part of other persons for His pleasure.

He received the reply from the Almighty Allah: His recompense is that I shall help him in the time of distress on the Day of Judgment.

On the basis of reliable authority, Imam Raza (a.s.) is narrated to have said: Almighty Allah, in a revelation to a certain prophet Commanded as follows: On going out in the morning, on the following day, you should eat the first thing that you find, conceal the second thing that you find there and accept the third which may come to you. Do not disappoint the fourth which you meet. Flee away from the fifth which you come across.

When the day dawned, the prophet came out to see before his eyes a mountain standing. He began to ponder as to the way, he could eat is up as required by the Divine Command. He was struck with wonder at all this. He, however, thought, that Almighty Allah would not have commanded if had had not given the power to do it. Under this idea he proceeded forward with the object to eat it up. The nearer he came to it, the smaller the mountain became. When he came very close upon it, he found it to be no bigger than a morsel of food, which he ate up. He found it to be so delicious that nothing had been so found by him before.

He advanced forward to find that there lay a plate of gold before him. He dug a hole in the earth to

conceal it there as he had been commanded. He bent forward and concealed it there but on looking back, he found that the golden plate had come out of the earth. He thought to himself that he had nothing to do with it, as he had complied with the Divine commandment. On going forward, he saw a bird flying and a hawk in hot chase of it. The bird sought for refuge with him. The prophet opened his sleeve to give shelter to the bird as required by the Divine Command. The hawk approached the prophet to say that it should be disappointed of his prey in whose case it had been busy for a very long time past. The prophet had the command not to disappoint the fourth thing, which he may find. He cut a piece of flesh from his thigh and gave it to the hawk. On going forward, he found a decaying carcase of an animal. Immediately, on its sight, he fled away from it as required by the Divine Command. He then came back.

At night Almighty Allah revealed to him that having complied with the Divine Commands, he should know about the reality of the objects, which he had come across. The mountain represented one's anger. One who is incited by anger, does not know himself or his wrathfulness. If, however, he controls his anger, cognises his own reality and curbs the anger, the result is like the palatable morsel which he relished. The golden plate

represents good actions to find their manifestations, however hard a man may try to conceal them. The Almighty Allah thereby grants honour to this man in the world and recompense in this life in the Hereafter.

The bird represents the man who gives good advice which should be accepted as it is tendered.

The hawk represents the person who comes to you with a need. He is in no case to be disappointed.

The stinking carcass represents backbiting. Backbiting and carping should be shunned as one shuns the decaying carcass.

If you want to cognise the excellence of forbearance and to the control over anger, you should study the lives of the prophets. They received severe injuries at the hands of the people. They underwent great distress because of the harsh words and vulgarity of the misled persons. Particularly, one should study the great hardships of ill mannered speech and insolence to which the non-believing Quraish subjected the Holy Prophet (s.a.) and the attitude of forbearance and patience which he showed to them.

Not even once, did he utter an imprecation against them. His words constituted a mine of the highest moral attributes, whilst the Arabs were of the lowest level of the society. He behaved towards

them with perfect mildness while on the part of those ill mannered persons there was hurled at him all sorts of vulgarity. Nonetheless he forgave them all.

THE FORBEARANCE OF THE HOLY PROPHET (s.a)

It is narrated of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) that one day when he was on his way somewhere, a rustic of the desert came from behind him and caught him by his wrapping cloth sheet, which he pulled with so much force that his neck became lacerated. He demanded that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) give him something. He looked at him, smiled and gave him a lot of money. The Almighty Allah praised him thus in this context:

Verily you (stand) on an exalted standard of sublime morality. (68:4)

On the wall of Mecca most of the aggressors from among the Quraishies fell into his hands as captives. They came to him in the Holy mosque in a disarmed condition. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) stood at the gate of the Holy Kaaba. The people gathered there expecting severe reprisals from him. They asked him as to how he would treat them. His reply was: In the manner of Prophet Yusuf (a.s.)'s treatment of his brothers. There is no blame

on you. Almighty Allah shall forgive you if you accept Islam.

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said: The Jewish woman who had mixed poison in the meat she presented to the Holy Prophet (s.a.) was brought before him. He asked her as to the why she had done it.

She said that she had done that to know whether he was an ordinary king or a true prophet. In the latter case, he would not receive any damage, while in the former case, he would be destroyed and thus leave the people in peace. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) pardoned her and let her go.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: Some money was due from the Holy Prophet (s.a.). He came one day and demanded the payment. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) told him that he did not possess the money at the time. He said that he would not go without getting the payment nor would he allow him to move from the place. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) told him that he would not move away and that he could have payment when it could be arranged.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) remained sitting with the Jew till it was the time for the afternoon prayers. He would allow him to move for the prayers even. He performed his prayers at the same very spot.

Then came the time for the two evening prayers, these too he also performed at the same spot. The night was also spent there on the spot. In the morning too, the Jew did not let him move. He had to perform even his morning prayers at the same spot. On seeing that the Jew was not prepared to depart, the companions began to threaten him. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) asked them as to why they behaved like that. They replied that the person was not allowing him to move about.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to them: Almighty Allah has not sent me to oppress people nor do I oppress the person who is under my coverage, nor do I allow any oppression to anyone who is not in my care.

The Jew gladly accepted Islam. He offered half of his property to the Holy Prophet (s.a.) to be spent in the way of Almighty Allah. He added: "I did this to test the truth of your Prophethood. I have studied the Torah, in respect of yourself as mentioned in the name of Mohammad Ibn Abdullah, birth place Mecca, migration to Medina, as being neither harsh of temperament, nor ill-mannered, nor using any obscene language and speaking to the people in subdued tones.

I now bear witness to the fact that Almighty Allah is one, and that you are His true prophet. Here is my property, make use of it as you choose.

It is stated that the Jew was a very wealthy man.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) added to the following effect: The Holy Prophet (s.a.) had as his bedding, his own cloak. His pillow was made of the skin of sheep filled with the peelings of a date-tree. The cloak, one day, was folded two-ply to make it soft bedding for him, so that he may be more comfortable thereby, at which he remarked to the following effect:

My prayers have been delayed tonight because of soft bedding. It is henceforth to be spread without folding it.

FORBEARANCE OF AMEERUL MOMINEEN (a.s.)

It is quite well known that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) himself received great trouble at the hands of his own companions as well as from the companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.). Notwithstanding his power of authority, he forgave all of them. All turned against him in the battle of Jamal. Many of his companions were martyred. A number of vulgarities were shown to him. The battle ended and he forgave them all, notwithstanding that he could put them to chastisement, as he, had chosen. He bade farewell with all honour to Ummul Momineen Ayesha, the

leader of the enemy force. For her company he sent seventy ladies with her.

Notwithstanding the numerous acts of insolence on the part of Marwan bin Hakam and the actual harm that he did to him, he was set free. Abdullah bin Zubair was taken captive, but he was set free, although he had been his inveterate enemy. So was his treatment at Nahrawan to the Kharijites. The accursed Ibn Muljim had inflicted a fatal wound on him.

He was brought before him. He did not pass orders of death against him. He even commanded Imam Hassan (a.s.) not to give him more than one stroke of sword nor to cut off his nose or ears. He was given the same food as he himself ate.

Thousands of Kharijites living in his time dubbed him openly as a unbeliever. They gesticulated in all sorts of insolent ways to make fun of him. He himself always forgave them and never did them any harm.

It is narrated that one day Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) went to the market to the traders in dates. There he saw a slave girl weeping there. He asked her as to the cause of her grief.

She said: I was given a dirham by my owner to buy dates for him. I bought the dates and took

them to my owner who did not approve of the purchase. He ordered me to take the same back and return to him. I have come to return the same but the shopkeeper does not take them back.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to him: Why do you not return the money and take back the dates from her. She is a helpless slave girl.

The person did not recognise him. He stood up and in his anger hurled a fist blow on his chest.

The people took him to task for having behaved towards Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) like that. The shopkeeper began to tremble. His face turned pale. He at once took back the dates and gave back the coin to the slave girl. He then made the submission to Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) to ask if he was then pleased with him.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) replied: You have discharged your obligation to one who had right to it, and I am pleased with you.

It is narrated of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) that he had a slave. He called him several times without getting any response from him. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) came out and found that the man was standing behind the door. He asked him as to why he had not responded to his call.

He made the frank admission that it was due to laziness on his part and partly due to the fear that he might be chastised.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) expressed his gratitude to Almighty Allah for having given him a character which makes other men not to apprehend any harshness on his part. He set the slave free at the spot.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was engaged in fighting against Amr Ibn Abde Wudd. He sprawled him on the ground but did not slay him. Some of the companions blamed him for losing the opportunity.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) told them that there must be a reason for it, which Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) himself would reveal. Ameerul momineen (a.s.) once again threw him on the ground and slew him. He came back to the companions. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) asked him as to the reason for not having slain his adversary on the first occasion.

He explained: Amr, in the first place had used obscene language. He threw sputum on my face. I feared, lest my slaying him might fall under my egoistic impulse. It may amount to a sort of revenge for having offended me. The anger was subdued and the impression removed that it might be due to the impulse of the ego. When the anger

was subdued, I did slay him for the pleasure of Almighty Allah.

It is narrated that once Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) while on his way, saw a woman carrying a water skin on her shoulder. He took the water skin and told her that he would carry it to the home. In the way, he asked her of her domestic affairs.

She said, that her husband had been sent by Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) on a military campaign where he had lost his life. I now live with my two orphan minor children. I have no source of income. I get some wages by doing menial work in some houses. Thus, do I bring up my children.

Ameerul momineen (a.s.) left the water skin at her place and returned home. All through the night he was worried. In the morning he took a big bag of flour, dates, meat and some other eatables and carried it to the woman's house. His companions offered to carry the same for him but he posed the question as to who would carry the burden for him on the Day of Judgement?

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) came to the door of the woman with the load of eatables. He knocked at the door and on being asked as to his identity by the woman she was told that he was the same person who had carried her water skin to her home and that he had brought some eatables for her

children. The woman opened the door and prayed that the Almighty Allah may be pleased with him. She added: The Almighty Allah shall, on the Day of Judgment settle the between me and Ali (a.s.). He said to her: I want to earn some recompense. Let me add ferment to the flour and then I shall bake some loaves of bread for your children. Meanwhile you may look after your children or I may look after your children and you may add ferment and bake loaves of bread. The woman told him that she could do the job of bread better than he can. She asked him to look after the children. Meanwhile the woman busied herself in fermenting the flour. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) busied himself with cooking the meat. He was feeding the children with dates and small pieces of meat by way of small morsels in their mouths. He spoke to the children to forgive him for his remissness on the part of Ali (a.s.). The fermented flour was ready. The woman asked him to light the fire in the oven. When Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was lighting the fire a woman of the neighbourhood who recognised him came upon the scene. She chided the woman for having employed Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) in such a job. On hearing this, the woman fell at the feet of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). She said to him as to how she would show her face to Almighty Allah for this affair whereupon Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to

her: Do not be put to shame. It is for me to be put to shame for an explanation to the Almighty Allah.

It is narrated that Zarar bin Zamorah once went to Muawiya who asked him to speak about the attributes of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). He wished to be excused. On being pressed further he spoke to the following effect:

By Allah! Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) possessed great foresight. He was a hero of heroes in the battle field of Holy wars. Whatever he said was always based on truth. His orders were just. Numerous springs of Divine knowledge flowed from him. There was an ocean of wisdom and gnosis sparkling from his mind. He had a disdain for the embellishment of the world. He busied himself during dark nights in the worship of Almighty Allah. His thoughts and ideas comprehended a distant future. He was always seen in contemplation. He addressed his ego by pointing to it with his finger and always recited hymns of Almighty Allah. He preferred coarse and cheap clothing for himself. He preferred in his food those articles which possessed little zest. By Allah! He looked on among our own selves. He never gave airs to himself. He would have me sit by himself, whenever I visited him. He gave fitting reply to whatever I enquired of him. He behaved towards us in equal terms, yet due to the awe which he

inspired in ourselves we could ill afford to speak of him. We could hardly look up to his face; such was his spiritual grandeur. When he smiled his teeth sparked like gems. He had a soft corner in his heart for the people of piety and virtue. He as a friend of the down trodden. The people of wealth and high position could not expect any favour from him. The weak and the depressed people never apprehended any perversion of justice on his part. By Almighty Allah! I found him standing in the worship of Almighty Allah speaking in such anguish and restlessness to Almighty Allah, as if he had been stung by a snake or a scorpion. He wept bitterly as if he had been afflicted with a severe calamity. I feel as if I hear his voice still in my ears, even now.

“O' worldly allurements! You have tried to beguile me and you have tried that I should be allured by you. Fie, Fie! Get away from me. Offer your beguilement to someone else. I have nothing to do with you. I have divorced you thrice and I never mean to revoke it. Yours is the small span of life. You are a mere insignificant object. All longings for you are meaningless. Alas! There is a little of provisions for the long and solitary journey ahead. There have to be overcome a number of dangerous stages.”

On hearing this tears welled up in Muawiya's eyes and there was uproar in the whole of the assembly. They all cried out to the following effect: "By Almighty Allah! Abul Hasan (a.s.) was exactly as you have portrayed him. How do you feel separation from him"?

Zarar made a reply to the following effect: I feel like a person whose only son has been slaughtered on his chest.

He wept great deal and left the assembly weeping bitterly.

It is narrated of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) as having said: One day the Holy Prophet (s.a.) found Lady Fatema (a.s.) as having a coarse sheet of cloth just as is used as a covering for the camel. She was working at the grinding stones with one hand. With the other she was giving suck to her son. He was moved to tears at her condition and advised her to put up with the hardships of this world, in return for which she would receive everlasting comforts in the Hereafter.

She replied that she did recite hymns of the Almighty Allah and that she was grateful to Him for His great bounties.

A revelation was conveyed from Almighty Allah:

Verily the end (hereafter) is better for you than the beginning (present life). (93:4)

FORBEARANCE OF IMAM HASAN (A.S.)

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated by a person from Syria who saw Imam Hasan (a.s.) riding through a street of Medina. He began to chide the Imam (a.s.). When he had had his say, the Imam (a.s.) turned to him salute with smile and said to him.

O Shaykh! You appear to be a stranger to this place. You are perhaps working under a misconception. If you want riches I shall provide you so that you may become rich. I shall provide you what you ask for. I shall guide if you had a mind to it. If you want a mount, I shall supply you one.

If you are hungry I shall feed you. If you want clothing, I shall offer you the best of apparel. If you are in straitened circumstances, I shall give you enough money to make you well to do. If you are in fear of pursuit by someone, I shall offer you refuge. In short, I shall fulfil any need you may have. If you come along with me I shall take you as a guest and provide you all comforts that you may require because I have a spacious house with all sorts of comforts.

On sensing such kindness on the part of Imam (a.s.) he wept at his own condition and cried out: I bear witness that you are the rightful Caliph on earth. I realise now that Almighty Allah knows best as to whom to select for His Prophethood and Imamat. I had entertain been inveterate hostility more than anyone else towards your father and yourself. I however have now been converted to be your best friend.

The man accompanied Imam (a.s.) to his house and for as long as he remained in medina he was his guest. He joined the friends of the Ahl ul Bayt.

FORBEARANCE OF IMAM HUSAIN (A. S.)

It is reported that there occurred a little friction between Mohammad bin Hanafiya and Imam Husain (a.s.). Mohammad bin Hanafiya wrote a letter to Imam (a.s.) to the following effect: My dear brother, you and myself have Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) as our revered father. Your revered mother is Lady Fatema (a.s.) the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.).

Supposing this whole world is transformed into gold and comes to the possession of my mother even then she shall not be able to become as an equal to her.

On reading this letter you should at once come to pacify me in as much as you are on a higher plain of excellence and beneficence.

When this letter reached Imam Husain (a.s.) he went to meet him without any delay. Thereafter there never occurred any occasion of disagreement with them.

It is narrated that Imam Ali Ibn Husain (a.s.) said: I was going to Karbala from Medina in the company of my revered father Imam Husain (a.s.). I found that wherever he stayed en route and wherefrom he advanced on the march he made mention of Prophet Yahya (a.s.) very frequently.

He said one day to the following effect: This world is so disgraceful and contemptible that the decapitated head of a person of piety of the status of Yahya (a.s.) was made a present to a wicked indecent woman of Bani Israel.

The forbearance of Imam (a.s.) was very remarkable. His sons, his kinfolk and his friends were martyred at the hands of the accursed enemies. He had the angels of the heavens and the earth, the Genii, the animals, the birds and all the species of nature under his command by the Will of Almighty Allah. He did not wreak vengeance on the slayers. He did not even utter an imprecation against them.

According to a narration he had three hundred and sixty wounds on his holy body. According to another narration, one hundred and eighty wounds of spears and four thousand wounds of arrows were on his body. Even then he had pity for those hard hearted enemies. He tried to lead them to the right path of guidance with his Divine Power.

FORBEARANCE OF IMAM ALI IBN HUSAYN (A.S.)

It is narrated that one day a slave woman was pouring water on the hands of the Imam (a.s.). The water pot tilted from her hand and wounded the

forehead of Imam (a.s.). He raised his head. The slave woman recited the verse:

Those who control anger... (3:134)

He remarked: I restrain my anger.

The she recited the verse: . . . and those who forgive the faults of men.

He remarked: I forgive you. May Almighty Allah also forgive you.

She then recited the verse: Allah loves those who do good (3:134)

He remarked: "I forgive you. May Allah also forgive you."

He remarked: "I free you."

According to another narration it has been reported that a cup containing some food fell down from the hand of a slave woman of Imam (a.s.) and it broke. She turned pale for fear of Imam (a.s.) and she began to tremble. He told her not to be apprehensive. He freed her there and then.

It is narrated that someone spoke ill of Imam (a.s.). He paid no heed to him. He again addressed him in the same strain. He said to him thus: I hereby overlook and forgive your fault.

It is narrated according to a tradition that: Imam Ali Ibn Husain (a.s.) had a freed slave. He was appointed to look after his farming. One day he went to see how he was doing the job. He found

that he had spoiled the whole farm because of his negligence. He hit him lightly by way of reprimanding him. He was, however, very much worried at this. He summoned the slave to his house. The slave found him stripped of his shirt, with that same lash before him. He was afraid lest he should receive more lashes. The Imam (a.s.) gave the same lash in the slave's hand and asked him to give him a similar lash on his body just as he had received, and also expressed regrets for having been remiss that day. The slave said to him. I thought that I will receive more beating for my fault; for I deserved it;

Imam (a.s.) insisted that he should use the lash. The slave however, excused himself and gave up the right of retribution. Finding that he was not prepared to use the lash he gifted to him the farm in which he was working to his possession.

It is narrated that one day some guests came to his house for meals. The servant who was serving brought a hot dish. It fell from his hand. A minor child of Imam (a.s.) was so seriously wounded that he died as a result of the burns. The slave was very much worried. Imam (a.s.) consoled him by saying, that it was no volitional act on his part. Why should he fear. He freed him there and then and got himself busy in serving the guests.

After this he attended the funeral ceremonies of the child and buried him.

It is narrated that Imam (a.s.) passed by a group of people. Someone told him that the people were speaking ill of him. He stood there to say to them: If it is true what you say of me, then may Almighty Allah forgive me. If it is false, then may Almighty Allah forgive you.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) sent a slave of his on some errand. He took a great deal of time in coming back. Imam (a.s.) came out to find that he was sleeping soundly. He took his seat near his head and began to fan him. He woke up on receiving a draught of cool air.

The only remarks made by the Imam (a.s.) said were: It does not become of a man to sleep all through the day and night. You have your night for yourselves and your day should be for us.

It is narrated that Sufian Thauri related that: I was present once with Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.). I found his complexion changing.

I asked him the reason of his worry Imam (a.s.) said in reply: I have forbidden my servants and my children to go up to the roof of the house. I went home today to find that a servant with a child in

her lap. was ascending the stairs. She was perplexed on seeing me. The child fell from her lap and died. I do not grieve for that child. I feel grieved as to why the slave servant had such fear of me. I have twice before advised her to have no fear on my account. I have freed her.

It is narrated that a pilgrim came to the mosque of Medina. He was dead tired. He was overcome by sleep. On awaking he thought that someone had taken away his money bag. He found Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) in prayers. The man did not know him. He asked if he had taken his money bag. Imam (a.s.) asked him as to what was in the money bag. He said it had one thousand Dinars. Imam (a.s.) took him to his house and gave him one thousand Dinars. The man came back to his house and found that his money bag was there. He felt ashamed and by way of apology came to Imam (a.s.) to return the Dinars.

He then said: Once we have given something we do not take it back.

The man was surprised at this. He enquired about Imam (a.s.) and learnt that he was Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.). He thought to himself that such magnanimity was the trait of such personages only.

FORBEARANCE OF IMAM MUSA AL KAZIM (A.S.)

Forbearance and the control over his anger on the part of Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) is universally acknowledged. Stories of his excellent virtues and praiseworthy manners are well known in all the circles. Friends and foe alike acknowledge his greatness. They cannot be detailed even if the oceans of the earth become converted into ink and whole of the creation gets busy in describing the same. These few traditions have been given to show as to how highly placed our Imams (a.s.) were in the matter of forbearance and mildness. They behaved towards other creatures so well. We too should follow in their footsteps. We should tear out all ideas of pride. It behoves us not to be duped by the beguilement of Satan. We should not look upon ourselves as possessed of high prestige and great learning. We should not think that such and such acts sit well with us or that we would suffer in our prestige by helping a brother believer. May Allah protect us against all such Satanic beguilement.

GOOD MANNERISMS AND MORAL CULTURE

A study of morals comprises three aspects – firstly the aspect relating to the reformation of personal habits and traits of character.

Secondly that dealing with domestic matters and those connected therewith called family management and laws.

Thirdly that concerning the regulation of social life called civics and affairs of citizenship. As such whatever has been set forth in this book and whatever is to follow should be regarded as a whole within the purview of 'Morals', in all three aspects.

The Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! A man remains at a distance from Almighty Allah up to the time his moral status remains below par.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) said: Among the believers the one who has good manners is really perfect in faith.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: On the Day of Judgment, there shall be nothing more superior to the good deeds in The Scales than good manners.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: There is nothing superior in merit in the eyes of Almighty Allah, than a man who attracts other people to himself by his pleasing manners.

In another tradition he is reported to have said: Good manners raise a man to the status of that person who observes fast during the day and performs worship at night all through his life.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The most superior in merit for entry into paradise among my Ummat will be high morals and negation of the things made unlawful by Almighty Allah.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Good manner melt away the sins just as the Sun melts the snow. Doing good to the fellow beings and behaving to the people with good manners keeps the homes prosperous and lengthens the life span.

In another tradition he is reported to have said: Good manners are a gift from Almighty Allah, which He bestows on His creatures. There are character traits which are born and are natural to a person. There are others which a man acquires by dint of his own exertions and volition.

The narrator asked as to which of the two categories was superior.

To this the reply was to the following effect: The person who has been endowed by Almighty Allah with the virtuous trait as a part of his nature cannot move against it. The other man acquires good manners by his own effort and volition. He exercises control over himself. He works for the development of good manners to win the pleasure of Almighty Allah. As such, he is superior and his recompense is greater.

According to another narration it is laid down to the following effect: Almighty Allah grants a recompense of a warrior in the way of Almighty Allah to the person of good manners.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated by A'ala bin Kahil that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: When you meet people, you should deport yourself in such a manner that you excel the other person in behaviours and the debt of gratitude for the goodness done by you to him should be greater than that of the other person.

As a matter of fact, it sometimes happens that a person is remiss in the matter of performance of worship. His good manners, however, raise him to the status of the persons who have kept fast during

the day and stood in worship at nights all through their lives.

CONDEMNATION OF ILL MANNERS

On the basis of reliable authority Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) is narrated to have said: ill manners eat up the faith and good deeds just as honey is spoilt by vinegar. An ill mannered person always keeps himself in a state of distress.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Penitence on the part of an ill mannered person is not accepted. He expresses penitence for one sin while he involves himself in another worse than the first. A believer is always possessed of good manners, clement temperament and forbearing nature. The unbeliever is ill mannered, ill behaved and hardened in nature.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: O the Shias! Almighty Allah has chosen the religion of Islam for you. As such, try to live with it with good-manners and generosity.

It is reported that someone asked that Imam (a.s.) as to the test of mannerisms on the part of a person.

The reply given by him was: Keep your mind in mild temperament. No one should receive any injury from you. Speak to others polite, and sweetly.

When you meet your Muslim brothers greet them with a cheerful and smiling face.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Angel Jibrail has conveyed to me from Almighty Allah to hold fast to good mannerisms. As a matter of course one gains the good of this life and the life in the Hereafter through good manners. On the Day of Judgement, the nearest to me shall be the person possessing good manners and the one who does good to the poor.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: You cannot please all the people by gifting your assets to them. Make yourself attractive to them by pleasing manners.

In another narration he is stated as having said to Nauf *Din bakali* to the following effect: O' Nauf! Acquire good manners in order that the Almighty Allah makes your reckoning easy.

CONDEMNATION OF IMPRUDENCE

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: When the Holy

Prophet (s.a.) was informed of the death of Saad bin Muaz, he came along with his companions to his bier. He stood by his body at the time of his funeral bath. When his bier was ready, he accompanied it with his shoes and his wrapping sheet off, like the persons in mourning. He supported his bier sometimes on his right shoulder and sometimes on his left shoulder. When they reached the grave, he himself laid him to rest, in the grave with his own hands. He then took part in filling up of the grave.

Then he said: I know, the body of Saad shall decay, Almighty Allah likes that whatever is done should be done well.

When the Holy Prophet (s.a.) was levelling up his grave, the mother of Saad said: "May you be felicitated with Paradise."

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to the following effect: "O' mother of Saad! Keep silent. Saad is now under the pressure of the grave."

When the Holy Prophet (s.a.) was returning home, the companions asked him as to how it was that he had given so much care to Saad, which he has not been bestowing on any other bier, accompanying it without shoes and wrapping sheet.

The reply given them was: I saw the angels accompanying the bier in the same way, in mourning. I followed them.

The companions asked him as to how it was that he was supporting the bier sometimes with his right shoulder and sometimes with his left shoulder.

The Prophet (s.a.) replied: My hand was with the hand of Jibrail. I moved to the side to which he moved.

The companions made the submission as to how it was that he himself had participated in his funeral bath, he himself had performed the funeral prayers, he himself laid him to rest in the grave, and yet there was the pressure of the grave on him.

His reply was: "Saad was rather rude towards his people and his friends."

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Miserliness and rudeness should not be of the character traits of a Muslim.

RESPECT AND REGARD FOR OTHERS

According to a tradition of Imam Ali Ibn Hussain (a.s.), one should consider all the children as one's children and all one's equals as one's brothers; then none would be cruel to each other, nor use bad language nor reveal each other's weakness. If Satan is tempting one to consider oneself better

than others, then to cure oneself of this obsession one should act as follows. If one sees a person elder in age then one should regard him better than oneself as the elder must be better in faith having been able to do more good acts. If one sees a person younger to oneself then one should think him to be better than one's self as having had less occasions to commit sin. If one comes across a person equal to oneself in age then one should think that one is definite of one's own sins but doubtful about his sins. Since doubt is not preferable to certainty, one should think that the other person is better than oneself.

If people pay respect to you, you should think it to be on account of their personal goodness and politeness and if they are reserved with you, you should think it as on account of your behavioural shortcomings. Following these precepts will make life easy and you will have more friends and few foes. You will be happy as a reaction to the kind acts of others and will be unaffected by the deplorable actions of others.

TOLERANCE AND SELF RESPECT

Looked at superficially, tolerance and self respect appear to be contradictory terms, but in reality there is no contradiction. A balance between the two is however hard to achieve. A slight

inclination towards one disturbs the balance. Overweening self respect is conceit, while tolerance is co-terminus with abject servility. It is expected that believers neither permit a loss of self respect nor is their behaviour prompted by wrathful disdain. They are not un-balanced like the uncivil or the ignorant. One blessed with these boons would have a guarantee of honourable life.

When they hear vain talk they turn aside and say: "To us our deeds, to you yours; peace be on you, we do not desire (the company of) the ignorant."(28.55)

"Adopt you moderation and enjoin virtue and turn you away from the ignorant ones." (7:119)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) is addressed in this verse and perhaps some may excuse themselves from its observance, regarding it as an obligation on the Holy Prophet (s.a.). Yes! The Holy Prophet (s.a.) is addressed no doubt, but the precept contained herein is meant for all Muslims to follow.

HONOUR THE EARSTWHILE ASSOCIATES

It is part of fine moral culture. Just think who cares for a poor person while all acknowledge the rich. We must be considerate specifically towards old associates. Poverty and riches are fleeting things.

In the words of the famous urdu poet Mir: He is a block-head who considers himself a sage.

Never deem the other person inferior. It is a sign of high morals and righteousness to admit superiority in the inferior.

Keep yourself content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His pleasure, and do not turn your eyes away from them. (18:28)

OBSERVE CLEANLINESS

Cleanliness has untold benefits. The foremost benefit is one's own sense of satisfaction. People coming from outside are gratified on sight of the household being clean. They do not feel any reluctance in the use of household utensils. Health of inmates of the house is benefited.

What is the difference between an animal and a person uninterested in cleanliness and non-aborrent to dirtiness? Is it too much to be reminded that even animals have a sense of cleanliness? How helpless is the man who degrades himself below the level of animals.

External cleanliness leads to internal cleanliness. To that effect is the emphasis laid on cleanliness before prayers which are void if the clothes, the body or the spot of prostration happen to be

unclean? Ablutions are obligatory over again, if there is the least defilement.

Mere external cleanliness is not enough.

Spiritual cleanliness is the main aim of Islamic teachings. Only when the heart is illuminated by the light of faith, the thoughts are purified and the temperament is free from the worldly deceits, forgeries, malice, ill-will, enmity, vendetta, etc. that a man is entitled to be called pure.

wherein are men who love to be purified. And Allah loves the purified. (9:108)

Purify your raiment, Keep away from (all) abominations. (74: 4,5)

DO NOT QUARREL AMONG YOURSELVES

Just as factionalism and sectarianism have been weakening Islamic Unity, mutual quarrelling and friction have been the cause of the ruin and decline of the solidarity of Islam. There is nothing more distasteful than quarrelling. May Allah protect us from this. As a result of this vice the world is turned into hell and life becomes unbearable. Quarrelling ruins all, whether a household, a family, a brotherhood or a nation. ill luck and dishonour supervene. May Allah save even the enemy from mutual friction; in as much as this same is the fore-runner of ruin.

Under the same principle which the Holy Quran has laid down for the unification of the human race come our social and private lives as well. If we cognise the Divine will, the sound principles which have been laid down are sufficient for guidance at every occasion of our life. In case we cannot act upon (the commandment). "Quarrel not among yourselves", in our domestic life and lose the honour of our family (thereby), how can we expect that the grand task of the unification of the human race will ever be accomplished by us?

Hearken to the magnificent point laid down:

And obey Allah and His messenger (Muhammad) and quarrel not lest you lose heart, and your power depart; and be patient. Verily Allah is with the patient. (8:46)

Chapter Fourteen

Self Correction

SINCERE REPENTANCE

O' you who believe, turn (in repentance) to Allah a sincere turning; may be your Lord will wipe off from you your sins and admit you to gardens. (66:8)

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) described sincere repentance as "Repenting and never committing that sin again."

According to the Islamic belief, repentance uttered by tongue, without a change of heart, is not repentance at all. Repentance must produce change in habit, honesty in dealing, fear and love of Allah in prayers, improvement in character, generosity in behaviour and humility in nature.

Ameeral Momineen Ali (a.s.) described the characteristics of repentance in the following words: Repentance has six elements.

- (i) A repentant must be really sorry for what he had done.

- (ii) He must have firm determination not to do it again.
- (iii) He must make amends for whatever wrongs he did to others.
- (iv) He must fulfil all the obligations of religion which he had neglected previously.
- (v) He should fast long enough to melt away the flesh grown from unclean and unlawful food.
- (vi) He should feel the taste of obedience' to Allah (s.w.t.), as he was previously enjoying the taste of sin.

When a man repents sincerely Allah makes him as clean as he was on the day he was born.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) has said: "One who repents from sin is like the one who never committed any sin."

SELF-REPROACHING SPIRIT

In Islamic terminology one aspect of human soul is called '*Lawwamah*' (self reproaching spirit). It is one of the surest means of perfecting one's character and behaviour. As Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: "Check your account (of deeds) before you are called to render it (after death) in the presence of Allah (s.w.t)." We must check our

account and make up the short comings before it is too late.

SELF-EVALUATION AND SELF-CRITICISM

Realistic self-evaluation and self-criticism are essential for the development of the soul. Only in this way we can save ourselves from being a prey of conceit and pride. Before we going to sleep we must relieve the whole day, seeing whether our behaviour was up to the required standard of spiritual perfection. If we detect any slip, any wrong or any impurity, we must repent sincerely and firmly resolve to amend it at once.

If we cultivate this habit of continuous self-criticism, we will progress, in no time at all, towards that stage of spiritual perfection which is called in Islam '*Mutmainnah*' when a soul feels rest and satisfaction by grace of Allah, but this self-criticism must begin before our vision has been blurred, before evil makes a slave of our souls. Otherwise we will fail to recognise the evil when we see it.

When a murderer justifies (nay, really feels justified in) his crime; when a robber thinks, that by his actions, he is rectifying the imbalance of the society, then only a special Grace of Allah based

on his own strong determination can save him from plunging into the lowest Hell of disgrace.

Unfortunately, modern society is heading blindly towards that same degradation. Social thinkers spend their whole energy in inventing new excuses for law-breakers. Stealing is whitewashed by the impressive name of Kleptomania; sex-perversion and dirty habits are explained away as just a protest against society. Criminals are afforded more protection in law than their helpless victims under the disguise of liberty of the individual. And the real tragedy is that all of this is done in the name of progress.

Is the conscience of modern nations merely stunned or dead?

Chapter Fifteen

Generosity

But seek, by means of what Allah has given you, the abode of the hereafter, and do not forget your share in this world. Do good to others as Allah has done good to you, and do not seek mischief in the earth. Verily Allah does not love the mischief-makers." (28: 77)

This is the foundation of Islamic generosity.

Allah gave us every thing, right from our very existence up to the highest place of honour in His presence in the life Hereafter. Our natural instinct demands that we should express our gratitude towards Him in words as well as in actions. Prayers prescribed by religion serve the purpose of saying 'Thank you' to Him. But how can we prove in action that we are really thankful to Him ? The verses of Holy Quran quoted above show us the way. It is by service of humanity that we can show our gratitude towards Allah.

Naturally, it follows that, when we help any person, we should not do it in expectation of any return or any thanks from the beneficiary. On the contrary, we must be thankful to him that, by accepting our help, he gave us a chance to demonstrate our gratitude to our Creator. Virtue is

its own reward, because it satisfies our natural urge to manifest our thankfulness towards Allah (s.w.t.).

This, according to Islam, must be our attitude when we are helping others. But what is our obligation when we are on the receiving end? Islam teaches us that we must be thankful in the first place to Allah (s.w.t.) because He is the actual source of help. And then we should be thankful to that man whom Allah made His agent in that help. Thus all persons who were instrumental in that help must be thanked sincerely.

The Holy Prophet (s.w.t.) has said: He who did not thank people did not thank Allah.

A recent incident has reminded me of how far the world is from real religious tenets. In the last few days, there was much hue and cry about National Service. Had our society been based upon above-mentioned mutual respect and co-operation, as taught by religion, such things would have been impossible. The nation would have helped the students without any expectation of payment in any form. But the students, on the other hand, would have insisted that they should be given a chance to prove their appreciation and gratitude towards the nation for the help given in time of need. How inspiring would it have been to see the nation, poor as it is, giving education to its youth,

without feeling the necessity of reminding them of their obligations; and then to see that the youth, not shouting against the representatives of nation, but insisting that they on their own accord, would serve the nation on a nominal pay and donate the balance to the nation, not for two years only but so long as the full expenses incurred during their education have not been reimbursed.

Let us pray that a time comes when this vision remains a vision no longer; When, not the conflict of interests as taught by materialism, but sincere co-operation, as taught by religion, becomes the basis of our society.

GREETING A MUSLIM

Side by side with instructions on self-improvement, Islam lays stress on considerateness for the welfare of others by felicitations and prayers for Divine Grace in their favour.

One is reminded of a certain habit of ants when studying the relevant verses of the Holy Book. While moving about, each ant stops to meet the ant coming from the opposite side. Heaven knows what they say, but, this much is certain that they convey to each other their feelings of sincere fellowship and in a way as if each ant has made it obligatory on itself.

Almighty Allah in that same way guides the Muslims to offer felicitations before anything else, on meeting a person or entering a house without distinction of poverty and rich. The person initiating the greeting is given a higher role, while the response to it has been made obligatory. At the same time it is emphasised to make the response cheerfully and sincerely, or at least in the same spirit as shown by the person offering the greeting.

Viewed superficially it may sound insignificant to us, but going a little deeper we notice the ocean of social etiquette condensed in a drop of water. A cheerful salutation with *As salaamo Alaykum*, My peace be on you, your person draws human beings close together. Both sides get possessed of a fellow feeling and human kinship.

The principles governing greetings may be laid down thus: The smaller number should greet the larger number of people, the rider should salute the pedestrian, the one on mule-back to the one on donkey-back, the one on horseback to the one on mule-back, the younger to the older, and the wayfarers to the seated. The salutation and its response should be audible. The idol worshipper, the drunkard at his table, chess players at play, the eunuchs, slanderers of married women, usurers, and the adulterer should not be accosted with greetings. One busy in prayers should also not be

accorded greetings, a hand shake for the resident and a caress for the traveller may be an addendum. The offer of greetings and making response to it is mentioned in the Holy Quran in three places:

When you are greeted with a greeting, then greet with a better than it, or return it; verily, Allah takes account of all things. (4:86)

And when those who believe in Our signs come to you, say you: "Salamun Alaykum (peace be on you)." Your Lord has prescribed mercy for Himself; (so that) if any one of you does evil out of ignorance, then turns repentant (to Allah) thereafter, and amends (his conduct), then verily He is oft-forgiving, merciful. (6:54)

But when you enter houses, salute one another with a greeting from Allah, blessed and goodly. Thus Allah makes clear His signs for you that you may understand. (24:61).

HELP TO NEEDY PERSONS

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but righteousness is this, that one should believe in Allah, and the last day, and the angels, and the book, and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for him to the kindred, and the orphans, and the poor, and

the wayfarer, and the needy and for the emancipation of the slaves, (2:177)

Just to observe some external rites is not Islam. True faith and good actions are the primary requisite of a Muslim. Faith is the seed which gives birth to good deeds and if the faith does not create an urge to perform noble deeds, then our faith is dormant and we must try to awaken it by conscious efforts.

If a Muslim does not help needy persons, or he does not bestow love and kindness upon the orphans, or if he turns out the people who are in need of assistance, then his claim of righteousness is just a claim and nothing more.

Often we have seen our kith and kin in distress; several times we have been approached by stranded travellers seeking shelter and food. Every day we hear the cries of starving persons in famine-stricken areas; so many times we have looked upon a child showed very countenance was a monument of affliction and hardship. What has been our usual reaction in these circumstances? Have we parted with some of the wealth to help the poor fellows? And have we done it with kindness and a sense of gratitude? And above all, have we done it for love of Allah?

Let us search our souls!

The above mentioned verse of the Holy Quran exhorts us to have faith and to support that faith by charity and good deeds based upon 'Love of Allah'; We should realise that the fellow human beings are in the eyes of Islam 'dependants upon Allah' and that our wealth is in fact a property of Allah, given to us in trust to be spend in the way of Allah. When we help our fellow brethren we should remember that we are giving the property of Allah (s.w.t.) to the dependents of Allah. It should be based upon love of Allah, without any shade of worldly motives. A secret desire to enhance our social prestige by charity destroys the fibre of that charity. A help given with a motive to gain political or other worldly advantage is a body without soul.

Also, how many good actions are ruined by unworthy motives! Have faith, bestow charity: and bestow is for 'Love of Allah'. That is the basic teaching of Islam.

JUSTICE AND GENEROSITY

Ismail Ibn Abdulkhaliq has narrated his *Kitab e Vasa'el* that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) Said: The Muslim in general and the rich Muslim in particular should spend money properly i.e. spend as ordered by Allah, as it will stabilise Muslims

and Islam or else fall and decline of Islam and Muslims is certain.

According to the same book Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) also said: On the Day of Judgement Almighty Allah shall ask the poor and needy in the world to take with them to Paradise the persons who had obliged them in the world by fulfilling their needs.

Verily Allah Commands (you) to do justice be generous. (16:90)

MAINTENANCE OF AN ORPHAN

It is recorded in Vasa'el that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said to Ali (a.s.): O Ali! Paradise becomes incumbent upon one who rears an orphan to make him independent and self sufficient. O Ali! Allah will create as many lights as the number of hair on the head of an orphan for a person who caresses an orphan.

AN OLD WOMAN EMBRACES ISLAM

At the time when the Holy Prophet (s.a.) was busy preaching Islam, rumours spread in Mecca, Medina and the surrounding localities that a sorcerer name Mohammed entraps people in his grip by sorcery. An old woman during one of those days, after purchasing certain articles from

Medina, was trying to hurry to her place lest the sorcerer might entrap her. She gathered all the purchased articles in a bundle but was unable to lift it on her head due to its heavy weight.

She sought help from many to assist her in lifting but with no response. In the mean time, a man with luminous face was seen. No Sooner did the old woman shout at him he reached her and lifting the bundle he said: "Mother! Lets go, I will carry the bundle to your home."

When they reached her home, she said: Brother! I am a poor woman and can not pay you any thing for the work you have done for me but for the kindness you have shown to me I will advise you to guard yourself against a sorcerer named Mohammad in this city (Medina).

He smiled and said, "Mother! I am Mohammad whom you call a sorcerer." The old woman was dumb founded and became speechless.

His luminous face and excellent behaviour made her kneel down at his feet and she embraced Islam. Islamic code of conduct is based on justice and love in every sphere of life. For example, it commands the trader to "give full measure and weight" with justice. Then it exhorts him to give more than the agreed quantity while, side by side,

the buyer is encouraged to try to take less than that. It is love. In this atmosphere, friction and litigation are things unimaginable.

Another example: Islam prohibits hoarding food grain when there is a shortage in the market.

It is justice and it rules out that possibility of artificial famine and black market which are the cause of our present day society. But our religious leaders have gone further, setting the example of Islamic love and sympathy.

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) used to purchase his one years requirement of food grains at the beginning of the year. Once there was a danger of famine in Medina. He asked his men how much grain was left in his store. They assured him that there was enough to suffice for a long time. Hearing it, he ordered them to take out all that grain and sell it at once at a much cheaper price. They protested that his family would have to suffer from the famine if the grain was sold out.

Imam (a.s.) replied: Let us alleviate the present calamity as much as we can. Afterwards we will be just one of the public sharing with them the hardship of the famine. We shall eat when they will eat; we will be hungry when they will be hungry. This was love.

And what is our behaviour these days? Famine conditions are created artificially to raise the prices. Such people literally feast on the dead bodies of the poor. The present day economies of the world, which are based on un-Islamic principles, encourage human greed instead of suppressing it.

Islamic love and sympathy have no room in the structure of today's commerce and industry even in countries referred to as Islamic.

People are taught from childhood the Godless theory of the struggle for self preservation and the survival of the fittest. Everybody is made to believe that his survival depends, not on co-operation with others, but on killing the weaklings. In this background, strife and conflicts are inevitable.

This way of life, which denies the authority of God in our daily life, offers no solution to the sufferings of our times. The only refuge is in the precincts of Islam which accepts the authority of God in every sphere of life be it material or spiritual.

JUSTICE IS THE BASIC REQUIREMENT OF HUMAN CHARACTER

Verily, Allah enjoins justice, doing good to others, and giving to kindred, and forbids lewdness, evil

and rebellion. He exhorts you in order that you may take heed. (16:90)

This verse of the Holy Quran has been truly acclaimed by the commentators as the "essence of ethics". The basic requirement of human character is justice. It is a comprehensive term which includes all virtues of human conduct. But to raise himself higher than this lowest rung of the ladder, a man needs something warmer and more humane good deed even where they are not demanded by justice, returning good for evil, being kind to those who (in worldly language) have no claim on him.

After exhorting to be generous to all, special mention has been made of those whose claims are recognised in social life; your kith and kin. This includes all moral and ethical as well as legal and obligatory duties of a man towards his family and relatives. It ensures a good society by ensuring a good family.

And the opposites, the evils, are to be avoided, because a cup of honey becomes poisonous if a few drops of poison are mixed with it. A man is to refrain from shameful deeds and injustice. In Islam end does not justify the means. A just and good end must be reached through just and good means. Therefore, it was necessary to warn mankind of all shameful acts, as well as unjust means.

And last, but not least, man is to guard himself against rebellion against God and against good conscience. Some people say: "It is a very high standard; a very distant goal". And then they decide that distance is a good excuse to abandon the path.

This attitude is the result of the weakness of their conviction of faith. Ironically, the spirit can be strengthened by pursuing the right path only. If you want to go from Dares salaam to London you have to make a start, otherwise you will never reach there. So, if you are to achieve perfection of character, you have to start the spiritual journey in right direction. Distance of goal is not an excuse to sit idle on the road side, rather it is a challenge.

CHARITY

And whatsoever you spend, verily Allah knows it.
(3:92)

Charity is not just the doling out some cash or material to a needy person. Rather it involves a far deeper feeling and a far more subtle psychological attitude. Sincerity of purpose is the soul of charity. Unfortunately charity has become one of the most misunderstood virtues in our time.

Industrial progress and commercial environment of modern society has degraded charity into a medium of business propaganda. How many times do we see an advertisement for a charitable cause which ends with the line "space kindly donated by M/s xyz."?

According to Islam, a charity must be only for the sake of Allah, without any shade of worldly motive. Islam condemns those who spend their wealth to show to the people. Such baseless charity has been described to be "like a hard barren rock on which is a little soil; on it falls heavy rain and leaves it just a bare stone".

The second condition to remember is that charity must be of such a thing which we have earned lawfully. The Holy Quran says; "Give of the good things which you have honourably earned".

Mass psychology may have awe for the tactics of Robin Hood; but religion cannot glorify or endorse such methods. It follows that only such charity is real charity which is done by one's own free will. A forced charity is meaningless in Islamic language. A handful of rice given with our own free will for Allah is more valuable in Islam than a shipload giving under compulsion or for worldly motives.

And what can be given in charity. The Holy Quran says: "Never shall you attain righteousness unless you give freely of that which you love".

So this is the test of real charity: Do you give something that you value greatly? If you give your life for a cause, then that is the greatest gift you can offer. Next in degree are your personal efforts, your talents, your skill, and your learning.

Then there are the charities involving your earnings, your property and your possessions. There are other aspects of charity in position and reputation.

Whatever the form of your charity, it is the unselfishness which Allah demands; and whatever you give verily Allah knows it well.

EVILS OF GREED AND MERITS OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AMONG THE POOR

And when it is said to them: "Spend of what Allah has given you," those who disbelieve say to those who believe: "Shall we feed him whom Allah, if He wills, could feed? You are not but in manifest error. (36:47)

Greed is the other fundamental evil. All these litigations, all these disputes, all these conflicts, are nothing but a manifestation of greed. Basically a

personal evil, greed has been gradually extended to national and international affairs. These wars, whether hot or cold; these races of armament; these international intrigues; these power blocks; what is their real reason? An uncontrollable greed to dominate the world!

Islam trains a man to subdue his greed for the greater benefit of mankind. It has forbidden 'interest' and thus abolished the system of earning money from money. Islamic society cannot tolerate an economic system based upon taking and giving interest. If you have money to spare, give it without any worldly motive, just for the sake of pleasing Allah (s.w.t.) by helping his creatures.

Do not follow those unbelievers who refused to help the poor on the pretext that God could have given them wealth, had He so willed. They have been condemned in the verse quoted above. Do not take a share in that condemnation by acting like them!

Alms and Zakat are other methods of subduing the undesirable greed. Ameerul Momineen Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.) has said: O' son of Adam, whatever you earn above your needs, you are just its treasurer for others. The world will become a paradise, if

mankind heeds to this ethical code and changes its attitude accordingly.

He (a.s.) has also been reported to have said: Whatever poverty and distress there is in this world, is due to the greed of rich men who do not comply with the rules laid down by Islam about their financial obligations.

Division of inheritance is another method by which Islam compels Muslims to distribute the wealth accumulated during a lifetime. The Holy Quran lays down the detailed rules of its distribution among heirs. But it does not remain silent after this. It says that if any poor person is present, give something to him also.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) has said: Allah says, 'The poor are My dependants, the rich are My agents ; if My agents will not give to My dependants their due I shall put them in Hell and I shall not care for them.'

Let us root out the 'greed' from our hearts. Only then this world will be a better place to live upon.

EXTRAVAGANCE

O children of Adam, attire yourselves at every time and place of prayer, eat and drink; and do not

waste by excess. Verily He does not love the prodigals. (7:31)

For instance there is a marriage in the neighbourhood, and the parties belong to the middle class. They cannot afford a big feast and the pomp and show that goes with it. But oh, the strange twists of inferiority complex! They want to appear more prosperous than they are.

Their trend of thought: "What will 'the people' say if we did not do that?"

The 'name' of the family should not be allowed to be tarnished by our poverty. And so, to 'save' the name of the family, the poor people spend more than they can afford to.

It is just one example. The evil is not limited to the special functions only. In fact, it has become the accepted norm of life in these days. Cars are purchased on hire purchase, of course - where a cycle would serve the same purpose. Nylon and silk is used when the cotton clothes may prove more comfortable. Watches are worn by people who have all the time in the world at their disposal. Typewriters are considered a necessity for a man who writes no more than two letters in a week. These examples are not imaginary.

And what is the result of this spending beyond limit? The first thing is that Allah (s.w.t.) is displeased. And his displeasure manifests itself in many ways. Usually there is no money when it is needed most: rent of the house becomes overdue, prompting the landlord to serve notice of eviction; family grocer grumbles that his bills are not paid in time, so he will not give any thing except by cash; the doctor gently reminds that his accounts must be settled without delay. And so on. But there is no money to meet these demands. It has already been over spent on 'face saving' items.

There is only one remedy: Think twice before spending money. There is a test to decide whether the thing you intend to purchase is actually a necessity. Is your work suffering without? Are you experiencing actual difficulty without it? If so, go ahead and take it. If not, forget it.

Chapter Sixteen

Humility

The servants of ARRAHMAN are those who walk with humility on the earth, and when the ignorant address them, they say: "Peace"; (25:63)

This verse of the Holy Book shows the best ways to deal with such stubborn fools who thrive on their ignorance. The true believers are to ignore them.

The same idea has been stressed upon in another verse:

When they hear vain talk they turn aside and say: "To us our deeds, to you yours; peace be on you, we do not desire (the company of) the ignorant. (28:55)

The men of low society do not forgive the slightest. But a really great man can afford to ignore his detractors. In fact, it is not weakness; it is the sign of great strength.

And as true faith is the greatest power, the believer can easily ignore the invectives of the unbelievers. The ignorant unbelievers want to involve the believers in their illogical arguments; the believers should refuse to be dragged in such vain talks,

saying that we do not want to have any connection with ignorant persons. After all, it is not possible to rectify each and every absurdity in this vast world.

The ideal discussion is that which is held with an intention to reach the truth without prejudice and without conceit. Such a dialogue is welcome in Islam. But if a stubborn ignorant tries to drag a believer in baseless arguments, not to seek the truth, but to show how wise he is Quran's advice is to ignore him completely.

AN ACCOUNT OF HUMILITY

Humility is a moral excellence superior to other excellences. Honour and dignity are for Almighty Allah alone. The more humble a man is, the more exalted he becomes in the eyes of Almighty Allah. The earth is a mine of precious jewels of all kinds. It brings forth flowers and fruits of all kinds. Man too notwithstanding his status as the highest creation and his multifarious excellences, owes his origin to the earth. Satan has his origin in fire which is rebellious in nature.

Man, as such should behave with humility and not seek domination and conceit. He should give no weight to his family and lineage. It would suffice for him as a piece of real lesson to think of his origin from a drop of semen and nourished by

blood which did not flow out as menstrual blood during the period of pregnancy. His body is filled with dirt, blood, phlegm, faeces, urine and so on. He looks with disdain on any amount of these, when the same come out of his own body. After death he is in the most offensive state. When left to itself, his body decays with stinking bacterial infection. He is then worse off than any animal.

How then can any ideas of grandeur comfort his nature? The more knowledge and understanding he acquires, the more humility he should show in his conduct.

All dignity and grandeur are for Almighty Allah. For man the best course is to express maximum humility. The more he adopts the way of humility, the higher is he raised by Almighty Allah in honour. If he seeks grandeur for himself, he shall be doomed to disgrace all the more.

MERITS OF HUMILITY

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said: Almighty Allah has appointed two angels. One of them is charged with exalting the Person who behaves with humility for the sake of Almighty Allah. The second one is charged with degrading those who are proud in their bearing. Almighty Allah through revelation, announced to Prophet

Dawood (a.s.): "I disgrace the proud people even as I exalt those who behave with humility."

A tradition is narrated of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) as saying that Almighty Allah questioned Prophet Musa (a.s.) as to whether he knew why he was given so much honour as to deserve the title of one with whom He holds conversation (Kaleem). Prophet Musa (a.s.) could give no reason for such high a favour.

'I find you possessed of more humility than any other man, especially when you put your face in the dust while praying', was the reply from Almighty Allah.

On the basis of reliable authority Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said: A commendable form of humility implies that one does not mind occupying a seat lower than that of his status in a assembly, that one would take the precedence in making a salutation that one gives up quarrelling even when on the right and that one does not feel elated when he is praised by the people for his piety.

Imam Raza (a.s.) is reported to have said: By humility is implied that one discharges one's obligations to other people properly, just as one wants others to discharge their obligations to him.

Some one asked him as to the standard of humility which one must possess to be regarded as humble.

To this he replied thus: "There are a number of stages of humility. One should not try to appear more than what he really is. One should avoid pride. He should do to others what he wishes others to do to him. One should return good for evil from others. One should subdue one's anger. One should be prepared to pardon the offenders. Such virtuous people are befriended by Almighty Allah."

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said he saw a man of Medina, carrying something himself, which he had purchased in the Market. He felt awkward on seeing Imam (a.s.) who spoke to him thus.

By Allah! If I had not an ear for the carping tongues of the people of this city I would have carried home myself the purchases from the Market.

It is narrated that one day Imam Ali Ibn Husain (a.s.) was passing through a street, mounted on a mule. He saw in the way a number of lepers busy feasting together. They invited him to take part in the feast He excused himself on the ground of being with fast, but for which he would have gladly joined them. On reaching home he ordered

that fine food should be prepared to which he invited them and sat with them to sup.

It is narrated that Amcerul Momineen (a.s.) bequeathed to Imam Hasan (a.s.) as follows: "O my son. Adopt humility. It surpasses every kind of worship."

A saying of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) is to the effect: "Almighty Allah grants honour to the person who adopts humility."

Imam Ali Ibn Husain (a.s.) is reported to have spoken thus: "There is no honour for an Arab and Quraishite higher than the excellence of humility."

On the basis of reliable authority It is narrated that Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) said: Prophet Nooh (a.s.) boarded the Ark with the necessary items of use. The Ark set sail and came to the Holy Kaba where it made seven circumambulations around it.

The mountains were appraised by Almighty Allah that the Ark would anchor on some one of the hills. All the hills raised themselves up and prayed for that honour. The Joodi hillock in all humility expressed its lowly stature as being inappropriate for that honour. Almighty Allah approved of its humility and made it the anchoring site for the Ark which came to a halt there in response to the prayers of Prophet Nooh (a.s.) for rest.

THE HUMILITY OF NAJJASHI - THE KING OF ABYSSINIA

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) spoke thus: Hazrat Jafar Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) was staying with Najjashi, the king of Habash. He relates that: One day the king summoned him seated on the ground. We were struck with awe for him. On seeing us he expressed thanks to Almighty Allah for having granted to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) the victory at Badr. The news had been conveyed to him by his special intelligence service. He named some of the men who had been taken captive. He gave other relevant details about the battle.

When asked as to why he was sitting on the ground he replied thus: Among the commands give to Prophet Isa (a.s.) by Almighty Allah is one which requires that one should express extraordinary humility on the occasion when a special favour is shown to a man by Almighty Allah. And what greater favour from Almighty Allah is there than that He has granted victory to Our Prophet (a.s.) against the infidels at Badr.

The news was conveyed to the Holy Prophet (s.a.) who spoke of humility as a means of winning honour. He advised them to adopt the way of humility and charity whereby one is granted Divine Mercy with exalted rank both in this life

and in the life to come. One should be prepared to pardon others as far as possible.

It is narrated that Imam Hasan al Askari (a.s.) as having said: Almighty Allah honours the person who discharges his obligations to the other believing brethren. The man who behaves with humility towards a believing brother is counted among the truthful (Siddiqeen) by Almighty Allah and one among the Shias of Ahl ul Bayt (a.s.).

One day two believers, a father and son, arrived in the house of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). He stood up as a mark of respect to welcome them. He got them seated in a place of honour. He ordered meals for them and took his meals with them in all kindness. After the meals Qambar brought water for the guests to wash their hands.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) stood to render this service himself. The guest remonstrated that he would not agree to have water for washing his hands from Ameerul Momineen (a.s.), who in turn insisted that he should not have any objection thereto. One believing brother, by rendering such service to another believing brother, shall earn heavenly reward. He required him to have his hands washed with perfect equanimity.

As he finished washing his hands, he gave the water pot to the young boy with the words to the

following effect: "Had not this young boy been accompanying his father, I myself would have served him with water to wash his hands. It is not appropriate in the eye of Almighty Allah that the son should receive equal honour with the father. The father has served a father. Let the son serve the son."

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.)'s son Mohammad bin Hanafiyya then helped the young boy with water for washing his hands.

Imam Hasan al Askari (a.s.) advises the Shias to follow the footsteps of their leader.

HUMILITY OF THE HOLY PROPHET (S.A.)

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: A person paid twelve dirhams to the Holy Prophet (s.a.). He gave the amount to Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) to purchase a shirt for him. He bought from the Market a shirt and brought it to him. He did not approve of it as being too costly. He asked him to return the same to the shopkeeper.

He took it back and brought back the money. He had searched for a cheap shirt but he could not find one.

He and the Holy Prophet (s.a.) went together to the Market. They found in the way a slave-girl

weeping. On being asked as to the cause of her weeping, she said that she had lost four dirhams, which her master had given her for certain purchases from the Market. She was afraid that her master would punish her. Holy Prophet gave her four dirhams and told her to go home.

They came to the Market and purchased a shirt for four dirhams, which he put on and expressed gratitude to Almighty Allah. On returning from the Market they came across a beggar who was asked and who wanted some one to provide him with clothing. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) gave away the shirt he had purchased just then. With the four dirhams left with him he purchased another shirt, which he put on with gratefulness to Almighty Allah.

On their way back they came across the same slave girl. He asked her as to why she had not gone home. She said that she was afraid lest her master should beat her.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) offered to go to her master to intercede for her. He went there and called at the house with the usual salutations.

There was no response. He called out again there was no response. He called out for the third time. This time the owner of the house appeared and reciprocated the salutation of the Holy Prophet.

On being asked as to why he had not responded in the first instance when he was called at; he replied that he wished to have the blessings of his salutation more than once.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) told him that he had come there to intercede on behalf of the slave-girl. She is late for home, but she should not be punished. The man in thankfulness for the arrival of the Holy Prophet (s.a.), freed the slave girl. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) expressed gratitude to, Almighty Allah for such favour. He spoke of the twelve dirhams as being of an especially propitious nature. Two believers were clothed out of the fund, while one slave was set free.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated by Mohammad bin Muslim that he presented himself to Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.). He was busy with his meals. He allowed him the honour of his company in the meal. When they had finished he spoke thus:

From the time my grandfather, the Holy Prophet (s.a.) was called to Prophethood he was never seen to recline in that way. He never ate wheat bread for three consecutive days although he could afford it. As a matter of fact he was know to give away a hundred camels in one sitting.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) could have enjoyed every kind of luxury if he had a mind thereto.

In fact the Angel Jibrail (s.a.) offered to him the keys of all the treasures of the earth thrice with the assurance that the acceptance of the same would not lessen in any way the high rank in store for him in Paradise. He humbly declined to accept the offer. There never arose an occasion when someone made him a request which he did not accede to if he could. When he did not have the necessary funds he would ask the supplicant to wait for another opportunity. He never held back to himself any favour which he received from Almighty Allah. He even would become a guarantor of Paradise to others, which Almighty Allah would honour.

THE HUMILITY OF AMEERUL MOMINEEN (A.S.)

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) used to sit as slaves did. He took his meals as the slaves did. He offered the beggars and the needy wheat bread and meat while he himself took barley bread and olive oil for his meals. He would purchase two pieces of cloth. The finer piece would go to the slave while the coarser one would be used by himself. He would cut off the sleeves if the same happened to be too long. Of two alternatives he would opt for the harder one.

He never even did build a house for himself nor did he possess one cubit of land. He left nothing by way of inheritance except a sum of seven hundred Dirhams which he wanted to spend in buying a slave for service to his family.

No one could attain to his standard of worship and humility. Imam Zaynul Abidin (a.s.) would study his book of prayers and he would lay it aside with the words: Who can carry out all these forms of worship that Ali used to do?

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) went to a cloth merchant one day and ordered two pieces of cloth to be shown to him. The merchant respectfully submitted that he was welcome and he could have anything he liked. He moved to another shop seeing that the cloth merchant had recognized his identity. There was a young man in the other shop, who did not know him.

He purchased two pieces of cloth from him. One piece was worth three dirhams and the other one cost him two dirhams.

He offered the superior one to his slave Qambar, who submitted that he should himself have the superior one since he had to mount the pulpit for his sermons to the people. He replied:

You are young and you should like to put on better clothes. How can I face Almighty Allah, if I were to wear better clothes than my slave?

It is known from the Holy Prophet (s.a.) that we should have the slaves wear what we ourselves wear and we should have the slaves eat the same food as we ourselves eat.

When the piece of cloth got sewn for his shirt he found that the sleeves were a little too long. He had them cut off and got them used for making caps for the poor people.

The merchant from whose son the cloth had been purchased learnt that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) had been to his shop. He came to him and said that his son had charged him more than the due cost of the cloth. He wanted to return two dirhams as the excess charged from him by his son's ignorance of his identity.

He said : I shall not get back what I paid of my own accord.

It is narrated that Umar bin Harees came to the presence of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). Lady Fizza, the slave maid of Lady Fatema (s.a.) who lived long after the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.), brought a bag with a seal of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) thereon. On opening it there appeared from it dried pieces of bread with bran on

the same. He asked Fizza as to why she had not put the flour through the sieve before baking it. She told him that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) had forbidden it as such. She added that she used to do so and she added some palatable pieces of food to the fare as well. He forbade it and he began to put his seal thereto.

He said that he took out some dried pieces of bread and soaked them in a cup of water. He added some salt thereto and ate the same.

He said, O' Umar, I am nearing my end. I do not want this bread of mine to be singed by Hell fire on account of eating. This suffices me.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Swaid bin Ghaflah came to the presence of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) on the Eid day. He remarked thus: "The Eid jublations are proper for the man who is sure of having his sins condoned."

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) used to carry home on his own shoulders fuel wood and water for domestic use. He used to sweep the floor. Lady Fatema (a.s.) used to grind the flour. She would then get it fermented and bake the same into bread. It is narrated that he once bought some dates in Kufa. He put them in a sheet of cloth and he was

carrying them home. He was met by certain of his companions who offered to carry the same for him. He remarked: "The custodian of the family is the proper person to carry the burden of his family. The man of merit does not suffer any diminution of his merit through carrying the burden of his family."

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) used to walk bare-footed on four occasions carrying his shoes in his hands.

- (i) When he went to Eid prayers.
- (ii) When he went to Friday prayers.
- (iii) When he went to visit a sick person.
- (iv) When he accompanied a bier.
- (v) It behoves one to go bare-footed when moving on some righteous errand, he would say.

It is narrated that he moved in the city without any escort. He would show the way to any one who might have lost the way. He would give support to any weakly person he come across. He would stop to correct any one who might be reciting the Holy Quran incorrectly. He used to repeat the verse:

As for that abode of the hereafter We assign it to those who do not want to impose their supremacy

over others in the land, nor spread corruption. The end is (best) for those who safeguard themselves against evil. (28:83)

Ibrahim bin Abbas says that he did not find any one who was more mannerly than Imam Raza (a.s.). He never behaved towards any one except in his perfect mannerisms. He never cut the speech of anyone. He never refused to accede to the request of anyone. He never sat reclining against a pillow in the company of others. He never stretched his legs when in company. He never used unseemly language in respect of a slave or servant. No one ever hear him laughing. He slept little. He remained in worship for the greater part of the night. He spent large sum in charity, in the darkness of night to prevent being identified. He would sit on the same table spread with his slaves and servants.

According to a narration of Mohammad bin Ebad, he slept on seek cloth during summer, while in winter it used to be a heavy coarse cloth. He was clothed in simple poor dress while at home. He, however, used costly good clothing when going out in society.

One day he happened to go to a bath. There was a stranger there who asked him to massage him, which he began to do. There arrived other men who took the stranger to task. The man fell at his

feet and began to apologise. He told him not to mind it.

There are innumerable narrations expressive of the humility of the infallible Imams (a.s.). It would take too long to give all of them here. What has been given should suffice for the purpose of this book.

Chapter Seventeen

Jealousy

CONDEMNATION OF JEALOUSY

It should be borne in mind, that this bad habit is generally the ground for backbiting. It is the worst of the human traits. The underlying cause of the first act of disobedience to Almighty Allah as perpetrated by Satan, was jealousy. The scholars are thus agreed that the expression of the same is a major sin. It is a sin against the principles of justice. It implies a malady of the heart and the mind. A man is chastised therefore both in this life and in the Hereafter.

There are some other evil traits as well for which a man is chastised both in this life and in the Hereafter.

Jealousy implies that the person wishes deprivation of a blessing vouchsafed to the other parties. In case a person wishes the same blessing or a superior one for himself without being desirous of seeing the other person deprived there from, it shall not be counted as jealousy, but it shall be a lawful ambition. If such a desire is for a good quality it is all the more praiseworthy. The jealous person who wishes for a blessing enjoyed by

another party, gets distressed whenever he sees anyone in possession anyone of a blessing. The blessings of Almighty Allah in favour of His creatures are limitless. How can all those blessings be snatched away? As such he is always in the grip of distress and chagrin on seeing Almighty Allah's creatures enjoying ease and comforts.

The greedy person too is ever desirous of getting for himself the wealth of the whole of the world, which is an impossibility. As such, he never enjoys any peace of mind. The person of evil temper quarrels with everyone else because of his evil temper. He cannot overcome every other person. As such, he is consumed in the fire of his own rage and he remains mentally deranged.

In short, every evil trait leads to such a result.

THE REMEDY OF JEALOUSY

The jealous person should ponder over the fact that the person favoured with a blessing has not done him any harm. He has not usurped any portion of his fortune, nor has anything that belongs to him been reduced in quality by him. Almighty Allah Who has favoured the party with such blessings, would have favoured him with a hundred fold superior blessing if He had so willed.

He has not thought it proper to give him according to his expediency. Had he been endowed with

superior blessings who knows what difficulties he might have had to encounter.

He should think that by a feeling of jealousy the other party does not suffer any loss. It is through this that is the cause of his own distress in this life and in the life Hereafter. Looking at these matters in this light, he should turn to the Almighty Allah. He should try to subdue his egoistic self and face it manfully. He would then be able to wash out from his mental make up such evil habits with the Grace of Almighty Allah. There is nothing more miserable than these habits in the eyes of reason and religion.

The infallible Imams (a.s.) have said: "Jealousy consumes the faith just as fire consumes dry wood."

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said that Almighty Allah revealed to Prophet Musa (a.s.):

Never be jealous of the blessings I have favoured the people with. Do not cast a glance at them. Hold your own ego. Verily, the person who is jealous of others is the enemy of those favours which I have bestowed on My creation. The person who behaves in this manner, I will have nothing to do with him nor has he any concern with Me.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said:

“A believer is not given to jealousy. His view is that of lawful ambition. The hypocrite is not desirous of anything for himself. He is only jealous.”

According to another tradition, it is narrated of him as having reported of Prophet Luqman (a.s.) advising his son: O' my son! The jealous person has three characteristics; “he backbites a person in his absence, he flatters him when he is face to face with him, and he rejoices when he sees you in distress.”

Do they envy the people for what Allah has given them of His grace? (4:54)

Envy is the third basic evil, and itself is a product of pride, greed and anger. It is the most foolish of all evils. Every evil has some attraction to catch the eyes of mankind, except envy. It has no immediate long-term benefit, no comfort, and no sweetness. On the contrary, an envious man burns his own heart, wastes his own time thinking why Allah has given such bounties to his neighbour, and keeps awake the whole night hoping that his neighbour is ruined. But all this wishful thinking

affects nobody but his own psychology and health. It is a fire which burns the fire-maker only.

The inner layers of envy are worth studying. Why does a man indulge in this most futile exercise? Does he think that Allah should consult him before bestowing His grace upon someone else?

Does he imagine that he is a partner of Allah, and that nothing, especially no good should happen on the earth without his consent? If not so, then why so much heart burning on the decisions of Allah? On the other hand, does he think that Allah grace is a limited quantity which must be taken away from one to be given to the other? If not so, then why envy your relatives or friends? Why not ask Allah to bestow His grace upon you also as He has done with them?

Envy ruined Satan when he began burning his heart on the status of Adam. It destroyed Cain (Kabeel) when he became envious of his own brother Abel.

Therefore, the Holy Prophet has said: "Envy eats away the good deeds as fire eats away the wood." Islam has prescribed a medicine for this spiritual sickness, love. It shows the way towards the love of Allah through the love of His creatures. The best person in the eyes of Allah is that who is best to the creatures of Allah.

It also emphasises that the real grace and bounty is not that of this world but that the bounty and grace in the life hereafter is the real one.

Therefore, you should not make the comforts of this world the ultimate goal of your life. Your aim must be the 'Eternal Grace of Allah'. Grace which cannot be obtained by envy; it may be obtained by love. Love of Allah, love of His Prophet, love of the family of the Prophet, love of your parents and your relatives, love of your neighbours, love of your brothers in religion, love of your fellow human beings - these are some aspects of love which are stressed by Islam, to make a man free from envy and spite. Let the 'love' conquer 'envy' and be a real Muslim.

Chapter Eighteen

Social Etiquettes

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

Almighty Allah says: "We increase Our blessings for those who are grateful." We know this to be a Divine statement and it is a pity if we go against it. Gratitude does not connote only that you utter the words "My lord! I offer a thousand thanks for the great bounties you have vouchsafed." Real gratitude, on the other hand is, to make use of the boons conferred by Him in accordance with what pleases Him, and not use them in a defiant way. Spend from what He has bestowed upon you to relieve the poor. Be kind and considerate towards the distressed and needy creatures in thankfulness for His Mercy.

Adore Him whole heartedly and sincerely express yourself. "My Lord you are the real Bestower of blessing, while I am ever needful for your Grace."

In our daily life when one obliges you it is not enough to say "thank you", but you must be on the look out to do him good as much as you can do. It must be noted that one cannot repay the obligation done by doing him good many times because the

one who has done good, howsoever small, has done it first.

And (remember) when your Lord announced: "If you be grateful (to Me) I will increase (My favours) for you, but if you be ungrateful, verily My chastisement is surely severe." (14:7)

VISITING THE SICK

A tradition coming from Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) states that if a person pays a visit to a sick Muslim then he will be attended by seventy thousand angels till the evening and if he had visited in morning, till dawn if he had visited him at dusk. These seventy thousand angels will recite salutations on him all that time.

A reliable tradition from Imam Musa al Kazim (a.s.) states that when a person is ill he should allow people to visit him as the prayers of these visitors will be heard.

A tradition from Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) states that when a person pays a visit to a sick man, he should ask the sick man to pray for him as the prayers of a sick man are equal to the prayers of the angels.

According to Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) that man is rewarded more who pays a short visit to the

sick and not a lengthy one unless the patient desires him to stay back and requests him to wait longer and the Doctor has permitted so.

AVOID EVIL COMPANY

None can deny the harm that springs from evil company. Knowledge, experience and observation all testify that evil company is a virulent poison for man. Its evil effects get soaked into the heart and the brain without a man's knowing about it, and soaked in a manner as if it is the best of all. Can evil action then ever be given up. Whatever the amount of admonition may be from you or from ourselves? The very association with evil company is a sign of Divine wrath. How else can a sensible man possessing reason and foresight become so foolish as not to realize his gain and loss?

And when they hear any vain talk, they turn aside and say: "To us our deeds, to you yours; peace be on you, we do not desire (the company of) the ignorant: (28:55)

The great heavenly boon of the tongue is meant for the expression of thought. But in expressing one's thoughts one should be governed by set principles of speech, whether one is a child, a young man or an old man, so that every word should be meaningful and it should be calculated to convey

correct ideas and rouse proper feelings. It should not give offence and create hatred.

One should not talk too much in an assembly nor should one cut short the speech of another.

Even though one may know the story or narration which another man may be relating, one should not interfere therein. If a question is asked of another person, one should not make the reply unless referred to. If a question is addressed to a whole group wherein he, too, is included, he should not take the precedence in giving the answer. He should have patience when he knows the better answer to a question, which another person is replying to. When the man has finished, he may add any thing only if necessary and that too without casting any aspersion on the previous speaker. One should not try to overhear when two persons are talking in secret, nor should he join in a consultation unless asked to do so.

One should not talk in symbols when speaking to the elders. One should not raise his voice in speech too high nor lower too low, but be moderate. In case there happens to be a knotty point during the talk, he should elucidate by appropriate illustrations and similes. It should never be lost sight of that there should be nothing superfluous in the speech. When someone is speaking, he should

not give a reply unless the other person has finished his words. Before giving a reply he should consider all the pros and cons of the matter before uttering a word, for as the saying goes, 'the arrow which is shot and the word that is uttered cannot be retrieved.

The poet says: Do not blow out words without deliberation. If you delay and say it nicely there is no harm. Think well before you utter anything. Stop before you are required to stop.

ADOPT SOFT TONES IN TALKING

The Holy Quran has itself taught Muslims the mode of talking.

And you shall speak kindly to people, (2:83)

In explaining this verse Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: Talk With a soft and sweet tone with every one, be he a faithful or an opponent; and with the faithful behave with patience so that they may be pleased; and with the opponents (of Islam) talk with due courtesy, so that they may be inclined towards the faith, and if there is no hope in this then at least there will be this much of gain that you will be able to save yourself and other faithful from their evil designs.

HILARIOUS TALKS

In social life, the kind of hilarious talks and (vulgar) jokes (which injure feelings and therefore) which are the cause of quarrels and friction, are strictly forbidden. According to the saying of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) there is permission for smiling.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) even has learned references to the sayings of outsiders (non Muslims) if these evoke laughter. He said: "In your discourse do not let things of laughter crop up though you take these as others' sayings and you are only copying them."

POLITE TALK

The verses revealed in this respect pertain to occasions when someone through ignorance behaved in an uncivilised manner towards the Holy Prophet (s.a.), or in his presence it was also, however, the Divine will to make it known that such behaviour is against etiquette on other similar occasions, as well as ill-advised for the Muslims.

It is wonderful sometimes, as to the lessons which appear new to us now, which were taught to the world by Muslims and which the far off sensible notions of the world took to heart. We neither know our own principles of life nor do we care to

seek them. One wonders with what fore was this message revealed by Allah (s.w.t.) and with what zeal was the same driven home to us by the Holy prophet (s.a.).

O you who believe! do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet and, do not speak loudly to him as you do with one another lest (all) your (good) deeds become vain while you do not perceive. (49:2)

Verily they who lower their voices in the presence of the messenger of Allah are those whose hearts Allah has tested through taqwa. For them is forgiveness and a great recompense. (49:3)

O you who believe, when it is said to you: "Make room in (your) assemblies then do make room." Allah will give you more room. When it is said to you: "Rise, then rise." Allah will exalt those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge, to high ranks. Allah is aware of what you do. (58:11)

ETIQUETTE OF DEBATE

Debate implies a scrutiny of other ideas. Man is so constituted by nature that he becomes haughty when he deems someone else intends to criticise him. He puts on at once a hostile attitude and every

effort in this behalf gets awry. 'Once fallen from the roof it is difficult to be re-seated'.

It is for this reason that Allah Almighty commands us to betake ourselves to ingenuity and nice counsel to bring people to the path of righteousness – to discuss matters intelligently and very politely, so much so that not a single word should escape our tongues likely to disagree with the addressed. He may be displaced otherwise and become adamant to all arguments. Here is the Quranic Commandment.

Dispute not with the people of the book save in the best manner, apart from those of them who act unjustly; and say: "We believe in that which has been sent down to us and to you, and our God and your God is one, and we submit to Him." (29:46)

Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in a manner which is the best. Verily your Lord knows best the person who has gone astray from His path and He knows best those who are guided aright. (16:125)

DO NOT ABUSE ANYONE NOR USE VILE WORDS FOR OTHERS

A man loses his worth by uttering vile words or abusing someone, and he is lowered in the eyes of the listener. The man who is abused or condemned suffers no harm at all. One's own tongue however, becomes an outlet for vain talk. Add to this an impression of vulgarity and indecency.

And had Allah willed they would not have been idolaters. We have not made you a keeper over them, nor are you their guardian. (6:108)

Those who turn from (everything) vain, (23:3)

According to the Holy Prophet (s.a.) Heaven is prohibited to the shameless man who abuses others and is abused by others, but does not take it seriously. If the knowledge is acquired about this person, it will be found that he had not the right father or that the devil shared his conception.

ISLAMIC MODE OF WALKING

While walking on the road it is prohibited to run, except in important matters; fast walking is not liked - rather there is in the tradition of Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) that: Fast walking destroys the good attributes of the faithful. To keep on talking on the road too is not correct. One should keep a

dignified appearance of being in deep thought, and take lessons from the wonders of God's creations. One should not eat anything while walking, it is loathsome.

These who are in a better condition than him, should take the initiative in wishing (salutation) and he should salute these first who is in an inferior position than him; and one who starts talking without first exchanging salutation should not be replied to, and this will make him conscious that the law of civilised behaviour has been ignored. On the way, whoever becomes a fellow traveller, on parting one should out of courtesy accompany him to some distance.

When Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) had announced his going to Kufa (from Medina), one companion of his journey, who was an infidel, wanted to part company. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) accompanied him to some distance, so he said : "This is not your way (to Kufa)".

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: It is the last stage of keeping company that a man should accompany his companion up to some distance, when they are about to part from each other. He said in surprise: Is it so?. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) replied: 'Yes, he replied: 'Then I make you witness that (now) I

am accepting your religion'. And he embraced Islam.

AVOID BRIBERY AND USURY

Usury and bribery are such heinous offences which estrange the offender from Allah. The consequences thereof are so far reaching that all kinds of moral lapses can spring there from. The ego gets on degrading day by day. Such people are the inveterate enemies of the public; they throw dust into the eyes of men for their own benefit. No one knows the number of innocent people whose blood they suck. It goes without saying that usury drags down a man into the abyss of disgrace. The illegal extortion is in the same class.

"And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by false means, nor seek to gain access by it to the authorities, so that you may knowingly swallow up a portion of the property of men wrongfully. (2:188)

Those who swallow usury will not (be able to) rise up (at resurrection) except as he whom Shaytan has confounded by his touch arises. This is because they say: "Trading is only like usury", whereas Allah has decreed trading lawful and has forbidden usury. Then whoever desists (after) the admonition has come to him from his Lord, shall

have what has gone before, and his affairs are in the hands of Allah; and whoever returns to it, they are the inmates of the fire, they shall abide therein. (2:275)

KEEP CORRECT MEASURES

Besides other matters, correct measures are insisted on by all as an important part of human morale. Not once, but eight times has the relevant Commandment been repeated in the Holy Quran. It implies that fraud, even in the insignificant details, is regarded as a great evil.

And to the Madyan people (We sent) their brothers shuayb. He said: "O my People! Worship Allah. You have no other god, but He. Indeed a clear proof has come to you from your Lord, so give full measure and full weight and do not keep back from people their things, and make no mischief in the earth after it has been reformed. This is best for you if you are believers. (7:85)

Give just measure and be not of those who give less than the due. (26:181)

And weigh with scales, true and upright. . (26:182)

Do not defraud people of their (due) goods, and do not spread corruption, making mischief, in the earth. (26:183)

Verily We sent our messengers with clear proofs, and sent with them the book and the scale, so that men may stand forth (establish themselves) in justice; (57:25)

Woe to those who give short measure (or short weight). (83:1)

Who, when they take by measure from the people demand full measure. (83:2)

(Who) when they measure or weigh for them, diminish (give less than due). (83:3)

Do they not think they shall be raised (to life) again. (83:4)

On a mighty day (83:5)

BUYING AND SELLING

Islam has laid great emphasis on commerce and the Muslims were well versed in the art. They, however, got deprived of this art side by side with other points of merits as a result of age-old indulgence in sensual pursuits with consequent penury and want. Would that the Muslims once again remembered their forgotten arts and they set out to impress the world with their flourishing commerce.

A note of caution, however, must be sounded to the effect that profiteering, fraudulent dealings, and dishonesty ruin the trader's mind side by side with his trade. Unless the Muslims give up such vices their trade cannot flourish:

“O you believers! devour not each others' property among yourselves unlawfully save that by trading by mutual consent; and kill not your (own) selves; Verily, Allah is Merciful to you.”

It is also prohibited to interfere when a believer is selling something and saying that one's thing is better than that being offered by the other believer. Also, if a believer is buying something, no other believer should become a customer by offering a better price.

One should not make the labourer start a work without fixing his wages with him.

It is stated that if a person keeps back the wages of a labourer cruelly and does not give the labourer his due wages, then Allah will deprive him of the rewards of his good deeds and will make the perfume of Paradise non-permissible to him.

Whosoever cheats a Muslim in buying and selling is not from the group of the Holy Prophet (s.a.)'s followers, and on the Day of Judgement, he will be judged with the Jews.

HOW TO RULE OVER THE PEOPLE

Verily the religion with Allah is Islam (submission to Allah's will); (3:19)

Islam has given mankind a perfect code of conduct. Men from every walk of life have been clearly instructed how to perform their duties, how to behave. Islamic law is based on Justice; Islamic ethics, on love and grace.

The most strict rules have been laid down for those who enter the public life, like Judges, governors etc. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) once sent a man as a Judge to Southern Arabia. When he came back, he brought many gifts given to him during his stay there. When the Holy Prophet (s.a.) came to know about it, he demanded that all the gifts be brought to him are to be distributed among the poor. The ex-judge protested that it was his personal property, as it was given as gifts.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Had you gone there in your private capacity without any official credential, these gifts would have been your private property. But as long as you were my appointed judge, the things presented to you were not gifts; it was bribery to please you so that they might get benefit from you. The man had to return all his "gifts".

This clear cut rule is worth following by all public leaders. Then they would not have to worry how much a Member of Parliament may accept from his "clients"; or how much "expenses" can be spent on pleasure trips.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was informed of a dinner attended by the Governor of Basra. He at once wrote him a long letter, some sentences of which are sufficient to show how Islam expects its officers to behave.

'I have been told that a young man of Basra invited you to a dinner and you hurried to it. Fine dishes were brought out for you; luxurious plates were served. I never thought that you would accept a dinner to which only rich were invited, and from which poor were excluded.

See that I, your Imam, am satisfied from this world with two old clothes and two loaves of bread daily. I know that you cannot do as I am doing, but at least you should try to help me with your efforts, your fear of God and your behaviour because, by Allah, I did not collect from this world of yours any gold, nor did I amass any riches.

"Should I remain content that people call me Ameerul Momineen (leader of the faithful) without sharing with them and without setting for them a model to be followed?"

Many of his letters to governors and officers show this trend when he exhorts them to live as ordinary men, without erecting barriers between them and the people; to behave in such a way that big people cannot use you to oppress poor ones, and poor are not discouraged from obtaining justice even against the richest and biggest man'.

EXHORTING TOWARDS VIRTUE AND FORBIDDING FROM VICE

And that there should be among you a group who call (mankind) to virtue and enjoin good and forbid evil; and these are they who shall be successful. (2:104)

Exhorting others to be virtuous is one of the most important duties of a Muslim. A society can progress in right direction only so long as there are people in it who know the right path and who are willing to show it to others.

Otherwise the whole caravan may perish in a beastly jungle of anarchy and infidelity.

But before enjoining others to do good deeds and resist from evil, one should himself to adhere to the tenets of religion faithfully. Otherwise, the Holy Quran will ask: "Why do you speak of a thing which you yourself do it not". So this duty of inviting others to righteousness compels a man to be righteous himself.

Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in a manner which is the best. (16:125)

This was the method used by the Holy Prophet (s.a.) and his true followers to spread the message of Islam and to teach people the real significance of religion.

An interesting story is told of an old man in Medina who was engaged in ablution for his prayer. Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husain (a.s.) (the grandsons of the Holy Prophet (s.a.), of tender age at that time,) realised that the man did not know the correct method of ablution. They wanted to correct him but at the same time did not like to offend his feelings. So they approached him and said. "We are two brothers and we want you to be the judge between us as whose ablution is correct". When the old man agreed, the children proceeded to perform their ablution in the most perfect way. The old man was watching them intently as he was to be the judge. Soon it dawned upon him that the children, in their kind and gentle manner, were teaching him. He exclaimed: "You both are correct. It was I who was wrong".

The old man learnt his lesson. But this episode will continue to show the preachers also how to preach.

THE RIGHTS OF NEIGHBOURS

And be good to the neighbour who is your relative and to the neighbour who is not a relative.

Islam has great respect for the mutual right and duties of the neighbours. The Holy Prophet (s.a.) has said: Angel Jibrail always used to advise me to be generous with the neighbours, till I thought that Allah (s.w.t.) was going to include the neighbours among the heirs of a Muslim.

The rights of neighbourhood are not meant for Muslim neighbours only. Of course, a Muslim neighbour has one more claim upon us - that of Islamic brotherhood; but so far as the rights of neighbours are concerned, all are equal.

In explanation of this The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Neighbours are of three kinds: That one who has one right upon you; That one who has got two rights upon you and that one who has got three rights upon you.

The neighbour having three rights upon you is the one who is also a Muslim and a relative.

The neighbour having two rights is the one who is neither a non-Muslim relative nor a non-relative Muslim.

The neighbour having one right is the one who is neither a Muslim nor a relative. Still he has got all the claims of neighbourhood rights upon you."

Here are some more traditions which show the Islamic love towards the neighbours :-

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: "That man is not from me who sleeps contentedly while his neighbour sleeps hungry".

Imam Zaynul Abidin (a.s.) has said: "These are your duties towards your neighbour.

Protect his interests when he is absent; show him respect when he is present; help him when he is inflicted with any injustice. Do not remain on the look-out to detect his faults; and if, by any chance you happen to know any undesirable thing about him, hide it from others; and at the same time try to desist him from improper habits if there is any chance that he will listen to you. Never leave him alone in any calamity.

Forgive him if he has done any wrong. In short, live with him a noble life, based on the highest Islamic ethical code."

Now let us ask ourselves a very significant question; Are we good neighbours?

A NEIGHBOUR'S SUFFERINGS

Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) has expressed displeasure on that person who eats to his fill while his brother neighbour remains hungry.

It was told to the Holy Prophet (s.a.) that a woman keeps fasts, and during the nights she stands up and prays to Allah (s.w.t.) but is of bad behaviour, and wounds the feelings of her neighbours with her tongue.

The Prophet (s.a.) said: She is going to get nothing good from her worship, she deserves to go to hell.

SEPARATION AND RECONCILIATION

The Prophet (s.a.) said to Abuzar: O' Abuzar! the deeds of the people of the world for a period between one Friday and the next are submitted on Sundays and Thursdays before the Almighty Allah. The Almighty Allah pardons the sins of everyone except in the case of the person who harbours enmity towards his brother. In their case the Command is that the deeds of both should be kept pending till such time as they get together in compromise and the enmity between them is washed off.

O' Abuzar! Avoid separation from your brothers, verily no deed is acceptable in the case of separation.

O' Abuzar! I forbid you to get separated.

In case separation is a forced one, let it not stay beyond three days. The person who continues separation from his believing brother for more than three days merits to be thrown into the Hell-fire if he dies during that period.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: Shall I tell you about the worst person?

The companions requested to be enlightened in the matter. The Prophet (s.a.) proceeded: The worst man is he who is hostile to other people and the people are hostile to him.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) advised his sons: Avoid enmity towards others. There are two kinds of men. There are the intelligent men who overpower their enemies by dint of their manoeuvring, and then there are others who are dullards. They get ready to quarrel with others on trifles, because of their stupidity.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The person who is much worried is generally sick and the person of

low moral calibre is always tormented. The person who is ever quarrelling with others has very little manliness. His honour and prestige go to the winds.

He added: Angel Jibrail (a.s.) has always been forbidding me from quarrelling, just as he has been doing against drinking and idol worship.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The person who sows the seeds of enmity in the hearts of other reaps what he sows.

According to another tradition he narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said that angel Jibrail (a.s.) related to him: Never quarrel with others. This leads to exposure of one's faults. One loses honour in the bargain.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated of the Holy prophet (s.a.): The enmity and suspicion between two friends should not exceed three days. On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Two persons do not separate from each other on the ground of mutual enmity but that one of them, as a matter of course, is entitled to curses and deprivation of the Divine Grace. Sometimes they both merit the same.

Someone made the submission as to how the aggrieved party gets entitled to Divine curses. To this his reply was:

It is because he does not conciliate his believing brother by his own magnanimity and goodwill towards him. He sticks to the unpleasant words of the other.

He added as having heard from his revered father to the following effect: When two persons quarrel together with an aggression on the part of them it behoves the aggrieved one to get softened and humble. He should ask the aggressor to forgive him for from any transgression on his part. He should ask him to give up anger. That will wash off the enmity between them. The Almighty Allah is Just. He shall avenge the aggression.

In another tradition, he is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: The two Muslims who do not get reconciled together for a period exceeding three days are expelled from the fold of Islam. The link between them is broken. One who takes the initiative in the reconciliation shall enter paradise before the other.

Satan rejoices as long as there is friction between two Muslims his knees get broken and his organs are dismembered when they get reconciled. He

cries out that the situation has created heavy distress for him.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar al Sadiq (a.s.) said: The virtue which is held dear by Almighty Allah very much is that one should bring about reconciliation between two friends who have got estranged and when one brings together two persons who have separated.

In another tradition, he is reported, to have said: In my eyes, it is far superior to bring about reconciliation between two persons than to give two gold coins as charity, for the sake of Almighty Allah.

FRIENDSHIP AND FRIENDS

One should regard the status of a friend as one's own, wishing for him the good that one wishes for one's own person and disallowing the evil for him which one shuns for himself. One should make his friends share the good one cherishes and prevent the incidence of the evil of to them. The friends should occupy a status in one's eyes higher to that of the acquaintances, who one should endeavour to enlist among one's friends so as to benefit them with the good one can do, and be befitted by the good they can do to him.

Some one asked Alexander as to how he got into the possession of such vast territories. He replied that the sole technique adopted by him was that he perfected his friendships with his friends, never allowing them to turn into his enemies while transforming the enemies into friends by acts of benevolence and grace.

How beautifully has the poet Hafiz of Shiraz explained: 'The blissfulness of the two worlds is expressed in the two fold maxim be good to your friends and be considerate towards your enemies.

It is a symbol of good breeding and of virtuous conduct to have many sincere friends. The one who can claim a number of friends is lucky and he is entitled to achieve all round perfection. The fewer the friends one may have the more probable is that he lacks magnanimity. It may be that he does not discriminate between good and evil being careless about the observance of the demands of love and friendship. Those who would be his friends may be grumbling about his carelessness towards the dictates and responsibilities of human brotherhood. He is oblivious to the conditions of lasting gain and loss. He is ignorant of the benefits of knowledge and discernment. He is likely to evade occasions which lead to excellence and perfection. He may be engrossed in his own self and the desires of flesh and bone to an extent that

he forgets the evil consequences of such actions. He declines to listen to the voice of reason which would awaken him to the responsibilities of life and love. If he has friends, they would be of a calibre which would strengthen him ever more in his ignorance and self-indulgence. A person of this nature falls into a number of psychological disorders, which he may not ever become aware of, for instance, worry, chagrin and fear. He is a prey to contrary emotions at the same time, for instance lustfulness and loftiness. Seeing that the latter cannot be attained without refraining from the former, he suffers chagrin on failing to attain loftiness.

To effect a change in habit implies a change of temperament, which he dreads to do. In short, such a person loses the sense of discriminating between his own propensities, in as much as he cannot give attention to his own conditions.

Due to his pre-occupation with the desires of the flesh and the company he keeps, he is ever eager to grind his own axe of self seeking advantage, by inciting him to go deeper into his errant ways and to earn the odium of loss of this world as well as of the Hereafter. Such a man, though, apparently indulging in his desires, is his own enemy. Had he been his own friend, he would have tried for the

betterment of the self. How can such a fellow be a friend of other men, seeing that he is not a friend even to himself? Under these circumstances, of his being no friend of any body, how can he expect others to be his friends?

In fact even his own ego is not his friend. The end of such person can be better imagined than described. In short an overflowing sentiment of love for humanity and the abundance of friends do make such excellent character traits that numerous books on this subject have been written. Such people derive advantages for themselves as also they do good to others. Even the strangers are desirous of cultivating their friendship and reciprocating to them in terms of their love and friendship, thereby contributing to the orderliness of the world. Such persons are always gracious and benevolent. By their intention as well as unintentionally, inasmuch as their sentiments of excellence and goodness give birth to activities which are cherished by the wise.

Such persons become endeared to all and sundry. The whole world is their well-wisher because of their praiseworthy qualities.

His graciousness extends far and wide; a graciousness that knows no ending. He may undergo death but his good deeds endure ever after him. Such graciousness is far above the acts of

goodness which comprise some aim at gain or pleasure, which are always fleeting.

It is enough for the purpose of a test that one's friend should be mindful of his obligation to him. A clean mind is ever conscious of any debt of gratitude he may owe to any one. He shall not bear to hear any thing ill spoken against his benefactor. The ungrateful man shall have no consideration for his benefactor. Such a fellow can never be expected to value the gift of a friend. There is no vice more reprehensible than ingratitude. In the same way there is no virtue more becoming than gratitude, so much so that, notwithstanding the fact that Almighty Allah is above any need for gratitude from his creatures, He approves this attitude in the Holy Quran to the effect: "If you are grateful I shall increase the favours surely, while if you are ungrateful My torment is severe."

It follows that this attitude is very essential as a basis for friendship. It should then be ascertained as to what attitude he brings to bear towards the pleasures and incitement of their world. If he is enamoured of sensual pleasures and lustfulness, he shall hardly be fit for fulfilling the conditions of friendship which may entail the burdens of hardships. He shall be unable to forsake his pleasures and comforts for the sake of friendship. His love for such pleasures shall attract him to the

love of wealth at all costs, for which purpose most of his time shall be spent. There shall be found among men, those who profess friendship in season and out of season, but who are found to be incapable of making any financial sacrifice for them with whom they profess the friendship.

SCISSORS WHICH SEVER FRIENDSHIP

'Loan' has been referred to as the scissors which sever the ties of friendship, because of the love of some people for money to an abnormal extent. People whose love for money to the exclusion of the finer sentiments of love and fellow feeling have to be compared to the dogs throttling each other over mere bones.

The Holy tradition from the Holy Prophet also is in the same context when it says to the effect that the world is a carcase, while the seekers thereof are like dogs (fighting among themselves against fine sentiments). We often come across scenes of disorderliness on the score of a few coins, even among real brothers. The case of a landlord illustrates the sad outcome of mutual enmity on the score of a little monetary loss involved in a dispute with a neighbour. He owned two hundred villages as his estate, with the other paraphernalia of the wealthy, like elephants and a retinue of attendants two hundred strong. The dispute led to a bloody

affair, which had to be faced in law Courts. The estate was sold off, leaving the rich man a pauper, to work for his family's living by selling grass cut from the jungle. He was unable to do any anything else except grass cutting and selling being quite illiterate and unskilled. He was tired of life but even death declined to have mercy on him. Hundreds of such illustrative cases can be quoted where a little monetary loss gave to the winds, all feelings of fellowship, friendship and neighbourly forbearance.

A person who has such inordinate love of money as to be oblivious to human feelings does not deserve to be taken into one's circle of friendship. The next point to be investigated as to the fitness of a person for one's friendship is to see if the man is not obsessed with grandiose ideas about himself. In case he is so, it shall be well-nigh impossible for him to treat his friends on a footing of equality. A person of such a disposition can not be expected to do justice to the demands of friendship, being under a mental stress to place himself and his own interest above those of any other person.

He is prone to insult and disgrace his friends a condition which contradicts all sentiments of sincerity and friendship. Next, should one find out whether the person under reference has a weakness for dancers, singers and buffoons.

One's habits in this respect have a great bearing on the affairs of friendship. Such a one can hardly be expected to meet the conditions of friendship which demand a great deal of self-restraint in all modes of habits.

On top of the conditions mentioned above we may add the following :-

- (i) Stupidity contradicts friendship.
- (ii) A short temper ill befits a friend.
- (iii) Fickle-minded persons are not dependable.
- (iv) Suspicious people need to be avoided.
- (v) The credulous fellows also tend to waver.
- (vi) A friend should have robust self-respect.
- (vii) He should also be free from indolence.
- (viii) Carelessness about religious obligations, whatever one's creed may be, is also to be dreaded.
- (ix) Absence of decorum and stolid temperament do not go hand in hand with sincerity.
- (x) Lowly and dishonourable professions do not fit in with fine sentiments.
- (xi) Habitual criminals and police suspects should not be befriended.

- (xii) Physical and mental disorders also make friendship untenable, because of the apprehension of contagion.

If a man were to possess any of the above qualities, he should be treated with the utmost consideration. He should never be negligent about his welfare, and no right of his, however trivial, should be ignored. One should be ever prepared to come to the friend's help in any emergency, were he to call for help.

One should always feel happy on meeting the friend and express his joy with good manners and civility openly.

One should not overdo the encomiums in favour of the friend, so as to give an appearance of flattery, nor should one be too chary, giving due praise only when deservedly won. Flattery implies falsehood, underserved praise is a form of hypocrisy while chariness in giving due credit is conceitedness.

One should always be mindful of the obligations of friendship, never giving way to any neglect. In case of good fellowship feelings, others are also lured to join the circle of friends. The situation is likened to the pigeons, which swarm about a house where they get good welcome and feeding. They bring along new visitors with them to the spot.

In case one is blessed with a piece of good luck from Almighty Allah, one should not forget to share the happiness with his friends.

In case any thing untoward has befallen a friend, one should want to be duly apprised of this fact, rather one should gauge the trouble from the general demeanour of the friend and sympathetically come to his help, which he may be able to render, for a friend in need is a friend indeed.

In case any misdemeanour is experienced from the side of a friend, one should not hesitate to probe the cause therefore and not to give way to any misunderstanding on that score. If the cause is not resolved, the misunderstanding may deepen and so vitiate the relationship. Frank admission of the misunderstanding and necessary amends will constitute the most reasonable course of action. A philosopher has said that there is no intercession as effective as frank admission or frank expression of a grievance. In case one does not have the heart for open talk, one should try to forget it in view of the sincerity of friendship that he has been witnessing all along the course of the relationship.

BEHAVIOUR WITH ENEMIES

As for the enemies, they may be open enemies or secret ones. Those of whom whose malice is known are to be regarded as open enemies. Those of whom whose enmity is not manifested, are to be counted among secret enemies. An enemy deserves to be avoided, whatever his type, open or secret, weak or strong. It needs a great deal of tact to turn a potential enemy into a friend or at least a neutral person, so that he casts off all malice and ill-will. It should be kept in mind that it is part of righteousness to return good for evil done by others. To return evil with evil constitutes yet another evil. Even though the enemy is not possessed of much intelligence, one should beware of his machinations, for even the insane have the moments and occasions of activities, which may be harmful to one's interests. Time does not wear off the edge of an enemy's malice. Smouldering fires are likely to get ablaze at any time, and the enmity of a foe may come into action at any time. It is therefore, in the interests of prudence not to allow the enemy to harbour his malice but one should endeavour to remove the cause thereof as early as possible.

As to the causes of the enmity, they may be grounded in:

- (i) The contention for the possession of some assets or estates, of high or low worth - a cause that is not easily negotiated.
- (ii) A conflict over some sort of preferment or promotions to a covetable position.
- (iii) A friction over the success of a plan for an identical objective, one person failing, the other being successful, thereby arousing feelings of enmity.
- (iv) It may be that the cause lies in some animal urge, the outcome of which is the dishonour and disgrace of one.
- (v) Differences of opinion may arise over certain problems, leading to mutual enmity.

The remedy for all such situations lies in a clear understanding of the causes and the appropriate efforts to remove the same. Upright conduct on one's own part is the best safeguard against the machinations of the enemies. Honesty is the best policy - is a maxim that has held its own ever since man came upon the scene of this earth.

It does not fail except where some planning is at fault. One should not allow anything to be manifested in action that would be construed as inimical by the other fellow. One's own conduct should be fair and above board, never allowing any suspicions to be entertained about one's noble

intentions. No injury to the life, honour and property of the enemy should be caused as it is likely to offend the enemy.

In regard to the enemies whose enmity is restricted to an attitude of envy, there is no better technique than to try to excel in the particular object of envy, so that the envious will be burnt to destruction with his own envy.

There is, however, no justification for anyone to adopt any underhanded means with regard to such enemies.

BEHAVIOUR WITH THE NEUTRAL, THE FOOLISH AND THE PROUD

As for one's behaviour towards persons of a neutral sort, one should keep in mind their status in life, for example, those of them who are engaged in instruction and giving sermons should receive due deference and attention, weighing their words on the touchstone of common sense and reason. A sound piece of advice should be followed, irrespective of the source, even if it be from some common man. One should look at the worth of the words and not at the person who speaks. It is a part of the mental make up of the men of discernment that they can discriminate between the good and evil aspects of what is said. It is on this account that the words of the Infallible ones (a.s.) are to be

accepted with out hindrance because their immaculateness is first established by reason. If any contradiction is felt in any of their statements, one should rather hold one's own intellect at fault. One should therefore pay due deference to the guidance given by them in the interests of the general humanity. No regard should be paid to any manner of aspersion when truth is at stake. The words of the foolish ones should not be taken seriously, nor should such words be retorted in a similar strain. Such people are rather to be shunned and pitied than considered worthy of any offence, particularly those who add conceitedness to folly. It is part of good breeding to behave with a hunter towards the proud persons. Humility towards such people is the cause of one's own disgrace, which should not be tolerated. They expect others to offer them undeserved humility. The most becoming attitude on the part of the persons of exalted status is that they should be have towards others with humility as reflected in the words of the Poet of Shiraz:-

Humility is becoming on the part of the exalted ones, while if a beggar practises humility, it is part of his very nature.

COMPANY OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE

One should endeavour to court the company of the righteous people, as a means to acquire their virtues and excellence. One would do well to follow in their foot steps. One should try to do good to one's neighbours, the person following the same profession as oneself, as well as those who work out their problems on the same pattern.

In case one comes across anything untoward in their character make up, one should not burst out in condemnation, but should rather use patience and forbearance. It is part of the characteristics of a liberal mind to be self controlled, while the lowly minded person is wedded to animal urges of the mind. So, one's behaviour to the rest of the creation should be oriented in a spirit of reformation and good breeding. With those who are in a subordinate capacity, ones behaviour should be prompted by the requirements of each case with students who are desirous of learning; one should be prepared to help them in their goal if they aim righteousness, and to work for their reformation in case their goal is inappropriate. In brief, one should undertake to furnish the material best suited to the individual case.

In regard to persons engaged in industry, one should aid them in the acquirement of the necessary facilities for their particular needs, trying to dissuade them from following unwholesome profession. Even in persons who beg, one should make discrimination between those who are given too much to begging and those who are not so inclined, being more sympathetic to the latter. In any case, the avaricious and the needy should receive their respective dues, while the able bodied among them should be encouraged to follow some useful line of craftsmanship.

CLOTHES AND DRESS

The matter is mainly outside the domain of ethics, and as such it can be touched upon only briefly in these discussions. People of different lands, cultures and creeds have varied types of dresses. The seeker of moral perfection should select a type of dress that suits the generality of the people of his own status and profession, and which should also answer the demands of enlightened common sense. Whoever the man, he has to adopt some type of dress and to maintain his prestige therewith.

As for the dress manners, one should wear clean and tidy clothes. Dirty and untidy clothes, give an

impression of carelessness. The clothes need not be costly, even ordinary clothes can be kept clean and free from all sorts of dirt and pollution. One should keep away from activities which soil or tear the clothes. If obliged by the demands of one's profession, the clothes for working hours may be kept separately, while the clothing for social activities may be kept apart. Those who can afford should keep different kinds of dress for different occasions, for example, the night dress of a loose get up, the official dress of a more formal type, travel clothes of a colour that does not fade easily, the dress in gatherings of mourning which bespeaks the wearer's sorrow on the occasion. The dress should not offend against one's own culture patterns. Each season also demands its own peculiar form of dress - warm woollen clothing in winter and light cotton clothing in summer. The dress for general wear should be coarse. Fine cloth is productive of ailment and ill manners. The colour of cloth should not be gaudy, but just the one approved by people of sedate temper. Perfume will impact additional merit to the dress. The clothes should fit the body and should not be a hindrance in any activity one has to perform, especially in sitting and moving about, without giving an appearance of formality. Men's clothing is inappropriate for women and so are women's clothes inappropriate for men. One should avoid

both extremes in the matter of dress, extravagance and stinginess. A man is often recognised for his worth by the dress he wears.

Chapter Nineteen

Axioms of Wisdoms

- ❖ The author of the book *Kitaab-ul-Fazaail* (The Book of excellence) deems it a fitting ending of the book to give some of the axioms of wisdom which Plato had given to his celebrated pupil Aristotle by way of his parting will.
- ❖ Try to cognise your Sovereign Lord and pay homage to Him.
- ❖ Devote your time to studying and teaching.
- ❖ Give preference to the acquirement of Knowledge and perfection above every other matter.
- ❖ Do not weigh the people of learning by the amount of their knowledge, but evaluate them by their capacity to avoid mischief and vice.
- ❖ Do not ask of Allah a boon which is transient.
- ❖ Have the conviction that whatever the blessings, they all emanate from Allah.

- ❖ The blessings of Allah are all enduring and they will not leave you.
- ❖ Beware of mischief always, for there are so many sources thereof.
- ❖ One must never desire the undesirable.
- ❖ The Divine vengeance is not by way of anger and chagrin, but by way of admonition and correction.
- ❖ Do not seek for life which is liable to termination by death.
- ❖ Give no weight to life and death, but only regard them as a means to attain righteousness.
- ❖ Do not move on to rest, unless you have called your own ego to account on three points:
 - (a) Have you done no wrong that day?
 - (b) Have you done any good deed?
 - (c) Have you shown any negligence, in any task assigned to you?
- ❖ Keep in mind what you have been in your origin and what you will be after death.

- ❖ Do not do damage to anyone, for every thing in this world is subject to change.
- ❖ Most unfortunate is he who becomes negligent of the Hereafter.
- ❖ He is unlucky who does not recover from a slip.
- ❖ Do not have your trading stock in things external to you.
- ❖ Do not wait for a supplication on the part of the needy in doing a good deed.
- ❖ Try to supply a needy one's want before he speaks.
- ❖ Do not look upon a person as wise man who is enamoured of the pleasures of this world.
- ❖ Do not regard anyone as wise, who gets worried on account of the troubles of this world.
- ❖ Keep in mind the hour of death and learn a lesson from the dead ones.
- ❖ One is disgraced by meaningless talk.
- ❖ You should know the worth of the man who speaks without being asked to do so.

- ❖ The person who contemplates the mischief of another has an evil mind himself.
- ❖ One should deliberate twice before one speaks.
- ❖ Old order changes giving place to ever new situations.
- ❖ Be friendly to everyone.
- ❖ Do not give way to anger in a hurry, lest the habit of getting angry be engendered.
- ❖ Do not put off to the morrow the good you can do today, for who knows what may happen on the morrow.
- ❖ Help the one who may be in a fix.
- ❖ Do not go near a man who is suffering the consequences of his actions.
- ❖ Do not give your decision in any matter, unless you have understood it first.
- ❖ Do not pose to be wise by mere talk; your actions and profession should both be in consonance with reason.

- ❖ The wisdom of the tongue tarries in this world, while the wisdom of action profits in the Hereafter.
- ❖ The inconvenience undertaken in respect of good deeds passes away, while the good deeds are lasting.
- ❖ The pleasure of sin does not last, while the retribution thereof is lasting.
- ❖ Bear in mind the day when you will hear the call but fail to respond.
- ❖ One goes from this world to a place where there no distinction between friend and foe.
- ❖ Do not harm any body, lest you be harmed.
- ❖ You have to go to a place where the master and the servant are equal, to each other. Wherefore this conceit then.
- ❖ Keep the provision for the journey ready; who knows when the hour of departure may arrive.
- ❖ There is no boon as valuable among the blessings of God as that of discerning reason.
- ❖ He alone is really wise who holds a balance between his thoughts and his talk.

- ❖ Do good and avoid evil.
- ❖ Listen and remember.
- ❖ Know what you have to do.
- ❖ Be mindful of your own state of mind.
- ❖ Do not be worried in any worldly affair.
- ❖ Never give way to indolence or to hurry in any affair.
- ❖ Do not overstep the golden mean of doing good.
- ❖ Never be inclined towards evil.
- ❖ Do not mix good with evil.
- ❖ Do not leave off an important affair for the sake of a little pleasure.
- ❖ Do not earn eternal trouble for the sake of a little pleasure.
- ❖ Be friendly towards discernment, and listen to the talk of the wise ones.
- ❖ Give up the sensual urges of the mind but do not forsake good manners.
- ❖ Do not do anything before its due time.

- ❖ Do every thing you may have to do after due deliberation.
- ❖ Do not be conceited with wealth.
- ❖ Do not get frustrated by troubles.
- ❖ Behave towards your friends in a way that you do not have to resort to official intervention.
- ❖ Behave towards your enemies in a way that makes you triumphant over them.
- ❖ Never behave foolishly towards any one.
- ❖ Meet everyone with humility.
- ❖ Do not regard anyone as lowly on account of his humility.
- ❖ Do not blame anyone for a thing you are yourself unable to do.
- ❖ Never be satisfied with untruths.
- ❖ Do not rely on fate.
- ❖ Do not be sorry for doing good.
- ❖ Do not be pleased for doing bad.

- ❖ Do not do any thing by way of making a display.
- ❖ Be bound by the dictates of justice.
- ❖ Get into the habit of doing good.
- ❖ Avoid the society of the evil doers.
- ❖ Your children are born for another age, which has its educational requirements, different from your own.
- ❖ Do not hurry in any affair, for what is gauged is the quality of the work done and not the haste in which it has been executed.
- ❖ Do not look down upon the one inferior to you. May be he is superior to you.
- ❖ The charity of the Scholar is tantamount to Divine Beneficence, for it is never wasted.
- ❖ A peculiar excellence of knowledge is that no one can render any real aid to its seeker.
- ❖ No one can rob knowledge. Every thing else may be robbed.
- ❖ Doing good to the righteous is to express a desire for righteousness. Doing good to the evildoer is to habituate him to begging.

- ❖ When a man has found a place higher than he deserves his mind may get deranged.
- ❖ The evil minded appreciate the evildoers, just as the flies settle on the decaying meat.
- ❖ The wise one should not lose sight of the bitterness of the medicinal pill, while enjoying the sweetness of the luxurious.
- ❖ The rulers should more properly keep aloof from the common run of people, lest they too acquire the same characteristics.
- ❖ The malicious minds desire each others disgrace. They never honour anyone.
- ❖ The generous ones should be honoured on being tested for generosity.
- ❖ A distinctive characteristic of the ignoble one is that he behaves inimically even towards the reasonable attitude.
- ❖ The rulers should not get intoxicated, lest they become dependent on others in such state of unawareness.
- ❖ The really free is one who is more tolerant to the lowly people than to those of a higher status.

- ❖ The noble one is he who helps the weak more than the strong ones.
- ❖ The mind is better subdued in four situations:
 - (a) when anger is controlled:
 - (b) when one is in poverty,
 - (c) when one admonishes the fools
 - (d) when one is ridiculed in discussion.
- ❖ He is worthy of friendship who holds one back from three things:
 - (a) luxurious living
 - (b) fraudulent and conceited behaviour
 - (c) frustration and meanness.
- ❖ What is the use of applause for a man who does not discriminate between the noble and the ignoble?
- ❖ The executive officers should be inclined sympathetically towards the offender. But for them they would not be occupying their chairs of authority.
- ❖ Your friend's opinion of you is superior in worth than your own personal interest.

- ❖ The wise one, who is under the official thumb of an ignoramus, is ill-fated indeed. So is the strong man's fate pitiable who is under the authority of a weak one, as also is that magnanimous man unfortunate indeed who is dependent upon an ignoble person.

ENTHUSIASM CAN DO WONDERS FOR YOU

When you cast out pessimism and gloominess and cultivate the attitude of optimism and enthusiasm, amazing results will be demonstrated in your life. Even if your ability, training, and experience are less than others, you can compensate for almost anything you lack by dynamic enthusiasm.

HOW TO CONQUER YOUR FRUSTRATIONS AND BE CREATIVE

There are levels of the mental life to which no exasperation or frustration can succeed. Peaceful thinking brings you to that mental level where nothing can bother you unduly.

KILL WORRY AND LIVE LONGER

The basic secret of overcoming worry is the substitution of faith for fear as your dominant mental attitude. Two great forces in this world are

more powerful than all others. One is fear and the other is faith; and faith is stronger than fear.

YOU CAN HAVE POWER OVER YOUR DIFFICULTIES

When you get into a storm, use the panorama philosophy, the big view. Then you will know it will not last for ever. With faith in your heart you can ride it out.

YOU CAN HAVE LIFE IF YOU WANT IT

When your interests and appreciation are widened to include the whole great world, life becomes even more fascinating. Interest, if projected outside your self has the power to force even hardship, suffering and pain into the background. The more vital your interest in others and in the world certainly you can live triumphantly over your own difficulties.

STOP BEING TIRED - LIVE ENERGETICALLY

A constant flow of energy develops when you hold such thoughts as hopefulness, confidence, being positives and goodwill. When your mind is dominated by thoughts of these types, a high level of vigour would result.

LEARN FROM MISTAKES - AND MAKE FEWER

It has been said that history turns on small things. So do people's lives. Over a period of time you make a series of decisions, each seemingly of little consequence. Yet, the total of these decisions finally determines the outcome of your life. A successful life depends upon developing a higher percentage of wisdom than error.

WHY BE TENSE? HOW TO ADJUST TO STRESS

If you are to maintain power to meet your responsibilities and to continue effectively over the long haul, you must give as much consideration to that delicate, yet powerful mechanism known as your personality as engineers give to their engines. You can purchase another engine, but the 'engine' known as your self cannot be reproduced if it fails, and stress is a major cause for that failure.

YOUR LIFE CAN BE FULL OF JOY

In exact proportion as you give joy, so you will receive it. It is a law of exact reciprocity. Joy increases as you give it, and diminishes as you try to keep it for yourself. Actually, unless you give it you will ultimately lose it.

In giving it, you will accumulate a deposit of joy greater than you ever believed possible.

LIFT YOUR DEPRESSION AND LIVE VITALLY

Any person can change from depression to power. If, first, he wants the change to take place with all of the concentrated desire of which he is capable of; second, if he will go out to get it; third, if he will practise belief with all of the mental ability that he possesses; and fourth, if he will put himself in the way of having a deep and profound spiritual experience.

HOW TO FEEL WELL AND HAVE VIBRANT HEALTH

Even as aeroplane engines must be turned up before taking off, so must a human being have a tuning up process. The body has many miles of blood vessels and nerves to stimulate if you want to travel in high gear.

And your mental and spiritual elements also require constant tuning to keep them functioning at full potential.

PEACE OF MIND - YOUR SOURCE OF POWER AND ENERGY

We do not fully comprehend what we can do with our emotions. When we control them we have power. When they control us the results are often disastrous!

SELF CONFIDENCE AND DYNAMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Many people, perhaps most people, never utilise the potential strength within their own responsibilities. There is resident in you an immense reservoir of force; the power of the subconscious mind. Faith releases this power.

Then, mental, emotional and spiritual strength emerges which is more than enough to override your defeats.

LIVING ABOVE PAIN AND SUFFERING

We live in a world full of wonders. Indeed, we have seen so many marvels that scarcely anything new excites our incredulity. Can we, therefore believe that wonders may not also occur in the area of spirit? Can they be as exactly governed by law as phenomena in the materialistic realm? The fact that we do not completely understand these laws does not indicate that such laws do not exist.

Spiritual healings do not always occur; but they do occur and one may always have the hope that he may be granted this great blessing of God.

LIVE FOREVER

Current scientific investigation seems to lend support to our intuitions and faith. Recently an eminent scientist expressed his personal opinion that the soul theory has been proved according to minimum standards of science. His studies indicate that the soul survives the barriers of time and space.

THE HOLY QURAN SAYS

But seek, by means of what Allah has given you, the abode of the hereafter, and do not forget your share in this world. Do good to others as Allah has done good to you, and do not seek mischief in the earth. Verily, Allah does not love the mischief makers. (28:77)

COMMENTARY

This is the fundamental principle on which everyone should base and modify his life. The aim of life should be the comfort of the hereafter, however, one should not give up his worldly enjoyment totally.

To this effect the Holy Prophet (s.a.) said: "The good among you is not those who give up the life here for the life hereafter nor the one who gives up the life hereafter for the life here, but of you the good one is he who tries through his moderation and harmonises both the lives. It was this basis that Islam condemned asceticism and celibacy."

This book presents Akhlaq (*Ethics*) in its applied form as taught by Islam.

The first requirement of all ethical behaviour is "*Taqwa*" sometimes translated as fear of God or as Piety.

THE HOLY QURAN SAYS:

And every one has a direction to which He turns. Hasten then to do good works (surpassing each other). Wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together; verily, Allah has power over all things. (2:148)

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

"The virtuous among you is not one who gives up the life here for the life Hereafter nor the one who gives up the life Hereafter for the life here, but of you the virtuous is he who exercises moderation and harmonizes both the lives".

Imam Ali (a.s.) said:

Moral integrity is the real value of a man.

Modesty is the key to all virtues.

Shamelessness is the sign of evil.

PEERMAHOMED EBRAHIM TRUST