

IMĀM  
RŪḤULLĀH AL-MŪSAWĪ  
AL-KHUMAYNĪ quddisa sirruh

# ***FORTY ḤADĪTH***

*An Exposition of Ethical  
and Mystical Traditions*

Part One

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# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful*

## Foreword

The great leader of the Islamic Revolution and the Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran was one of the few personalities of the history of Islam who, at a time when Islam was suffering from the assaults of colonial policies, stood up alone to save and revive Islam. The colonial propaganda of world-devouring superpowers, helped by their puppets and slavish rulers, apparently Muslim and yet in reality hypocrites, had so much isolated dear Islam that it had neither a role in the social and political life of Muslims, nor there remained any zeal for Islam. Imam Khomeini — may Allah bless him — by drawing a line between the pure Islam of Muhammad (S) and the U.S.-made Islam rendered the greatest service to the Islamic ummah, whose effects gradually emerged throughout the twenty-five years of his untiring struggle. In the future, its blessings and effects will become better known and evident for the present generation and the generations to come.

The Imam of the Ummah was not only blessed with the qualities of courage, *taqwā* (carefulness of one's duties to Allah), singular attention to Allah and to noneelse, indefatigability, continuity of struggle, vigilance, awareness and other qualities required for leadership in the field of action and struggle for the revival of the Islamic tradition, but was also a unique and distinguished personality in the field of Islamic learning and sciences. Throughout the history of Islam, few Islamic scholars can be found who possessed expertise in all the various Islamic sciences and that at its highest degree. Basically, since some of the Islamic sciences are not closely related, it is very difficult to learn all of them. That is why we find that among Islamic scholars ('ulamā') there is generally no Islamic jurisprudent (faqih) who is also a philosopher, or an exegete who is also an Islamic jurisprudent, or a historian who is also a mystic. Of course, it is possible that scholar should have expertise in two or three of these fields of specialization, but to possess expertise in all the fields of Islamic learning is a difficult task.

Imam Khomeini — may Allah bless him — was a jurispudent, exegete, mystic, philosopher, sociologist, and even a poet, of the highest order. Few persons knew about his mystical poetry before his demise. His poetry, following its posthumous publication, fares favourably when compared with the poems of the greatest of Iranian poets and mystics, such as Maulawi, Hafiz, Omar Khayyam, and the like, from the viewpoint of rhythm and depth of content.

The specialty of Imam Khomeini —may Allah bless him— in the sciences of "ḥadīth" and "rijāl", too, is evident from his writings. In the field of "ḥadīth" and its exegesis, one of his invaluable works, written in the period when he was occupied with studies as well as teaching, is "Chehel Ḥadīth", which has recently been published. This book contains ethical and mystical traditions collected and expounded by Imam Khomeini.

On account of its scholarly and mystical worth, *Al-Tawḥīd* (English), a quarterly journal published by the International Relations Department of Islamic Propagation Organization decided to translate and serialize it, and thank God, this task still continues.

At present, following the heart-rending demise of Imam Khomeini, the great leader, we decided to publish ten traditions from the book in the form of an independent book for the benefit of readers. We hope to publish the other traditions in three other volumes in the future. God willing, this collection will be of benefit both from the theoretical and practical points of view, to those interested in the ethical and mystic teachings of Islam.

**International Relations Department  
Islamic Propagation Organization**



الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ وَلَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى  
أَعْدَائِهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ.

**L**ord! Grant brightness of sincerity to the mirror of the heart. Cleanse the rust of hypocrisy from the tablet of the heart, and show the path of virtue and salvation to the helpless wanderers in the mazes of the bewilderment and error and confusion. Endow us with the nobleness and generosity of character. Reveal to us your glory and splendour, that you have reserved only for your chosen servants. Expel the legions of Satan and ignorance from the realms of our heart, implant the divine hosts of knowledge and wisdom in their stead. Enrich our hearts with the profusion of your love and that of your Chosen in this transitory world, this ephemeral lodging place. And shower Your choicest blessing upon us at the time of death and thereafter. Extend to us your mercy, and grant us proximity to the Highest Good.

#### The Purpose of Writing The Book:

I, a humble servant of God, was contemplating for some time, to select forty *hadith* from among the *ahādith* of the members of the Household of the Prophet (S) from the authentic books of the *Ṣaḥābah*, and scholars, and was trying to compile them with an appropriate explanation of each of them that can be applied to the general conditions of the people. I chose to write them in Persian, so that the Persian knowing people may also be benefited from them. God willing, this compilation would be an attempt to serve the command of the Prophet (S) who said:

مَنْ حَفِظَ عَلَى أُمَّتِي حَدِيثًا يَنْتَفِعُونَ بِهَا بَعَثَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ قَلْبًا  
عَالِمًا.

## FIRST HADITH ON *Jihad al-Nafs*

عَنِ الشَّيْخِ الْأَجَلِيِّ نَفَةِ الْإِسْلَامِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الْكَلْبِيِّ، صَاحِبِ الْكَافِي، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنِ التَّوْقَلِيِّ عَنِ الشُّكُونِيِّ عَنِ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) (إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بَعَثَ سَرِيَّةً فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا قَالَتْ: «مَرْغَبًا يَفُوزُ قَضَا الْجِهَادِ الْأَصْغَرَ وَيَقْبِي عَلَيْهِمُ الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ»، فَقِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ قَالَ: «جِهَادُ النَّفْسِ»).

Al-Sukūni relates on the authority of Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Sādiq (A): ‘Verily on seeing the returning armies from the battlefront, the Prophet (S) of God said: Blessed are those who have performed the minor *jihād*, and have yet to perform the major one. When asked, what is the major *jihād*? the Prophet replied, “the *jihād* of the self” (struggle against self).

### Exposition:

السَّرِيَّةُ قِطْعَةٌ مِنَ الْجَيْشِ يُقَالُ خَيْرُ السَّرَايَا أَرْبَعَمِائَةِ رَجُلٍ.

*Sariyyah* is the section (contingent) of a big army, and it has been said that four hundred is an optimum number for the best *sariyyah*. According to the wordings of the tradition this can be inferred that man is a marvel possessing two lives and two worlds within one existence. That is, apparent life or the outward world, which is this worldly existence, and is associated with his body, and the other is ‘inner life’, the inward world, associated with the hidden, invisible, higher other world, his soul in short, which belongs to the realms of invisible and celestial world, and consists of several levels and grades. These levels are generally divided sometimes into seven sections and sometimes into four. They are sometimes divided into three, and sometimes into just two sections. For each one of them is specified host of guardians. The host related with the divine and intellectual powers attracts him towards the sublime, heavenly spheres, and summons him to the acts of virtue and goodness. The other host of guardians is the ignoble and satanic which attracts man towards the baser realms of darkness and shame, and invites him to the acts of villainy and destruction. There is always a state of conflict and strive between these two forces, and human existence serves as the battleground of these two bands. When the divine forces of good become successful, man emerges as a virtuous and blessed being, and attains the high station of angels, and is congregated under the category of prophets, saints and the pious. When the satanic forces of darkness dominate, man becomes a rebellious and vicious being, and is flocked with the fiendish group of the infidels and cursed. Since this is not an occasion to discuss it here, I shall take up this issue of the crusade of the self whenever the self and causes of its deterioration and perfection would be discussed in the latter passages.

### First Grade:

This grade itself consists of different stages (*fuṣūl*). You have to know that the lowest of them is the worldly and outward human existence comprising the initial stages of the self and its apparent manifestations. The divine spark is blended with the physical to form man's earthly existence. It is here in this body that the armies of good and evil are stationed, and the visible potentialities of body function as warring forces. It has seven quarters. They are: ears, eyes, tongue, stomach, private parts, and arms and legs. All these diffused faculties under the control of the self are employed by the self in seven spheres of life. The seat of imagination also is an important faculty, as the thought and imagination are sovereign over all visible and invisible human faculties. If the faculty of thought resolves to employ all other faculties to move in the fiendish directions, all of them are converted into satanic forces and the whole territory (of existence) is turned into a satanic domain, and the forces of piety, rationality and good are weakened and subjugated by them. As a result they wind up their business and leave off the scene, vacating the empire for the possession of Satan. If the faith and reason take possession of the mind, and they command all human faculties to work in their own direction, man acts according to the dictates of reason and faith (*shar'*), thus making the empire (of his existence) a domain of divine and rational powers, and compel satanic forces to retreat with all its weaponry accepting defeat.

Thus the *jihād* of the self is the *jihād* of greater importance. This *jihād* is superior to being killed in the way of God, since this condition implies overpowering one's own powers and faculties, and placing them under the yoke of God's command, and purging the domain of our body of satanic elements and their forces.

### Contemplation—The First Step:

The first and foremost condition for one's strife with his own self, and hence his movement towards God essentially means introspection and self-reflection. Some of the moral philosophers have given it the fifth position in priorities, which is also correct. Here introspection is used in the sense of devoting some time, however insignificant it is, contemplating about our duties towards our Master and Creator, Who has brought us into this world, and Who has bestowed upon us all the means of pleasure and joys of life, Who has equipped us with a sound body and faultless faculties and senses, each of whom serves a specific purpose of its own, and whose functioning bewilders human intellect. In addition to all these endowments and graces, He has sent so many prophets and His Holy Book for our guidance and invited us to receive

His blessings. Whether all these things have been granted to us by the Master and Emperor of all kings merely to serve this animal existence and to satisfy our appetites and instincts, which we share with other animals, or whether there is some higher aim? Whether all the prophets of God, great sages, thinkers and scholars of every nation have invited the people to follow certain rational principles and Divine legislation, and asked the people to abstain from all animal tendencies and detach themselves from this mortal and perishable habitation were their enemies, or they had conceived an entirely different idea of salvation, which we ordinary human creatures, blindly obeying the dictates of lust, could not conceive?

If we reflect in a rational manner for a moment, we shall realize that the aim of imparting to us all these graces and endowments is something else, superior to and higher than what is visible. This world is a stage of action and its aim is a higher and more sublime sphere of existence. This lower and animal existence is not an end in itself. A rational man should think of his own self introspectively and should feel pity for his state of helplessness. With a sense of pity he should address his own self saying; "O callous self! Thou has wasted precious years of thy short life in pursuance of hedonistic and sensuous propensities! And nothing is gained except regret and sense of loss. Thou should be regretful before God for thy past deeds, and commence a new journey in the direction of His prescribed goal, the journey that leads to the life of eternity and perpetual bliss. Thou should not bargain short-lived transitory joys, which are hard to obtain for eternal bliss and felicity. Think for a while, O Callous self! Thou should think over the conditions of the people from the dawn of civilization up to the present time that is witnessed by thee. See and balance their hardships and torments with the comforts and pleasures they could attain, and thou shall see their pains and sufferings always overwhelmed and cancelled their joys and pleasures. Joys and pleasures are not for everyone in this life. One who invites and induces thee to pursue the worldly joys and material gains, is evidently one of the satanic hosts in the human form, who undoubtedly is an emissary of the Satan. He always induces other men to join him in his indulgence in sensualities, and declares his conviction in material life herewith. At this juncture, O self! thou should pause for a moment, and think whether he is satisfied with his own condition, or whether all this points to one who himself is inflicted, and wants to taint others' poor life with the same vice. O self! thou should entreatingly ask God's approval of thine acts, and seek His pleasure. Pray to Him that thine acts be approved by Him. Between Him and thee there is always a spark of hope. This hope is realized in thy thinking with firm resolution to fight against the Satan and thine own baser self. This strife with the self leads thee to a higher stage, and



try thy best to attain that through sincere struggle.”

#### Will and Resolution:

The next stage, after the stage of contemplation and ponderance through which an individual striving to progress on the spiritual path has to pass, is the stage of resolution. (This is a different thing from volition, which al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs Ibn Sinā, in '*al-'Ishārāt*', alludes to as the initial stage of '*irfān*'). Some of our revered scholars (may God grant them longevity) also state that resolution is the essence of humanity and criterion of human freedom. The differences in human gradation are actually indicative of the discrepancy of the stages of human resolution. The resolution which is required for this particular stage is synonymous with laying the foundation of a good life, a resolution to purge life from sin, and to perform all obligatory (*wājib*) acts, and a resolution to compensate for the days lost (in sinfulness), and finally resolve to behave as a rational and religious person ought to. That is, he should adopt a behaviour that is in accordance with the codes of religious law, which would acknowledge him as a real human being, a rational man. His gait and manner should be an imitation and copy of the Prophet's life. He must, in appearance, follow the Prophet (S) as a model in his manner and actions, in his abstinences and his choices. This is quite possible, since it is in the powers of ordinary servants of God seemingly to act in the way of that great leader of human beings.

You should know that no path for the realization of divine existence can be undertaken unless one familiarizes himself with the apparent or overt form of *Shari'ah*. Unless a person fully acquaints himself with the knowledge of the *Shari'ah* laws and follows them faithfully, the higher values of morality cannot be attained by him. Without adhering to the apparent teachings of Islam it is not possible that the light of the Divine Knowledge could descend upon his heart, and the wisdom of the invisible, and the mysteries of the holy law be revealed to him. After attaining this stage, the truth unveiled for him and enlightenment bestowed upon his heart, a person would act with greater observance of the manifest forms of religion. This falsifies the claims of pseudo spiritualists, who say that the inner perfection can only be acquired by relinquishing outer accomplishments, or, that after acquiring inner excellences, necessity of observing outward forms does not remain obligatory. This is a mistaken conception born of ignorance about the stages of worship and the different grades of human progress. We shall deal with this subject in the latter chapters, may God grant it so.

### Effort and Struggle (Spiritual):

Dear friend: try to be a man of strong will-power and resolution, so that you may not go from this world as a person without resolution, and hence rise on the day of resurrection as a brainless-being, not in the form of human being. For the other-world is the place where what is hidden is unveiled and secrets are exposed. One's audacity to commit sin, converts him little by little into a man devoid of will-power, and takes away the noble essence of humanity from him. Our respected teacher used to say that more than anything else, giving the ears to the sounds of music and songs, steal from men their will-power and the power of resolution. Hence, my brother, desist from transgression, resolve to return to God, and acquire a mien similar to that of true human being. Join the community of the men of religion and in seclusion pray to God, so that He may assist you in your mission, and pray that the Prophet (S) and the members of his Household (AS), intercede for you. May God bestow His graces and favours upon you. May He escort you in the coming dangers, since the path of life is full of great risks and hazards. On the way of life there are very deep crevices and it is possible that one may stumble and fall in them in such a manner that none of his efforts could save him from the coming catastrophe. It is also probable that in some cases the intercedings of an intercessor cannot save him either.

### Self-Examination and Stipulation (*Mushārāṭah*):

Self-conditioning, contemplation and self-examination are essential pre-requisites for a seeker (*mujāhid*) of truth who is battling with his self. Self-conditioning or stipulation means binding oneself with the resolve not to do anything against God's commands. This is called *mushārāṭah*, such as 'I will not violate the Law of God today.' It is very easy to stick to such condition for one day. Try to resolve, abide by your own resolve, and experiment, and you will see that how easy this task is. Satan, the cursed creature, and his legions may magnify the volume of the task in your eyes, but these are the guiles played by the cheat. Curse, and drive the Devil and evil thoughts from within the depths of the heart and the domain of your mind. Experiment for one day and you will verify how easy this task is.

### Guarding Against Evil (*murāqabah*):

After stipulating about his acts, man should enter this stage. It is essential that throughout the period of stipulation the *mujāhid* struggling against his own self should constantly concentrate upon his

actions. If any time any idea of violating Divine commands occurs to him, he should know that this idea has been instilled into his mind by the Satan and his allies, who want to deter him from his good resolutions. He ought to curse them, and seek God's compassionate protection, and banish those villainous ideas from the realm of his heart, and tell the Satan that this day also he has to abide by the condition imposed upon his own self that he would not go against God's commands, as He is the One Who has provided him with all the excellences and bounties. It is He, Who has given him the riches of health, security and peace year after year in this world. In recognition of all God's graces it is not sufficient even if he serves Him till eternity, let alone a trivial thing like this. I hope, that Satan will be driven away, and the Divine forces will prevail. I assure you that this practice of self-criticism and self-examination would not hinder your day-to-day activity. I advise you to remain in the same state of mind till night—the time for introspection and inner deliberation—and evaluate your deeds of the whole day. This is the time to see whether you have been honest to the Giver of all, to whom everybody is accountable. If you have been faithful to Him, you should be thankful to Him, that He has made you successful in your intentions. And realize that you have gone a step forward in His direction and became an object of His attention. God willing, God will help you in performing all worldly and religious duties, and will diminish your pains for the next day. If you repeat this many times, it is imminent that you will be accustomed to the acts of piety. You will see then that all this does not require you to make hard efforts. You will also notice that obedience to God gives ample pleasure. Though this world is not where one is immediately rewarded, yet faithfulness to God and abstaining from sins is fruitful in this world also. God never entrusts His creatures with cumbersome and heavy tasks which are beyond their powers, but it is the Satan and his allies who magnify them in your view. God forbid, if there are any lapses on your part, ask God's forgiveness, and beseechingly implore Him that you will be more careful in future, so that the Almighty may throw open the doors of His grace and compassion to you, and may guide you in the straight path.

#### Remembrance (*tadhakkur*):

The factors, that fully assist man in his *jihād* with his self and the Satan, and to which a treader *mujāhid* has to pay greater attention is constant remembrance of God. Though there are many other important stages, I will be content to discuss this stage here. Remembrance of God, remembering the graces bestowed by Him. You know that thankfulness is natural and man's nature commands man to be grateful

to his benefactor. If one tries to read the book of his own heart, he will see that this law is written there. The sense of veneration and gratitude for the benefactors increases with the amount of benefaction, particularly if the benefactor's generosity has no selfish motive. Greater the selfless generosity, greater is sense of gratitude. For example, compare the extent of veneration for one who presents you a horse with a selfish motive, with the respect you have for a person, who grants you a village of several hectares, without any inkling of selfish motives. If a doctor rescues you from the darkness of blindness, you naturally owe to him a lot of respect, and if someone saves you from the clutches of death, you owe him a lot more. You yourselves reflect and estimate the seen and unseen favours bestowed on us by the Almighty, even a small fraction of which all men and the *ginn* cannot even provide us with. Take for instance the air we breathe day and night, upon which our existence as well as that of other living beings is dependent, nothing can remain alive even if it is taken off merely for a quarter of an hour. What a marvellous gift it is! If all men and the *ginn* of the world labour hard to contrive such a thing, they cannot do that. In the same way, try to recall other gifts of God also, like external bodily senses viz. sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, etc., and inner faculties like thinking, imagination and reason, etc., each one of which carries unlimited benefits and which are granted to us by Our Lord. Besides these valuable gifts, there are several other gifts also. Moreover, He has sent His messengers and prophets and His Books as well to show us which path is right and which one is wrong, which path leads us to Heaven or Hell. He fulfils all our needs in this world and the Hereafter, without having any need of our adoration. Observance of His commands, or transgressing them does not make any difference to Him, it is for the sake of our own benefit that He has enjoined good and forbidden indecencies. While remembering all these and various other favours, whose reckoning is beyond the powers of human beings, do we not see that respecting and obeying such a Benefactor is essential for us, or does our reason approve of the acts of violating His commands?

This is an evident fact that we respect great people and those older in age. This is also true that people respect the wealthy and powerful persons, and rulers and kings, since they are recognized as great. Can their greatness be matched with the grandeur and magnificence of that King of kings, in Whose kingdom this world of us is merely a particle of dust. He is the Creator and King of this vast cosmos, whose infiniteness cannot be measured or even conceived by human intellect. Human being, a creature crawling on one of the smallest planets miserably fails to grasp the extent of his own small world, whose sun cannot be compared with far greater suns of innumerable galaxies. Our solar system is nothing as compared to lesser several other solar systems,

which still elude the keen eyes (and refined telescopes) of great explorers and investigators of the world. Is that Greatest of the great, who can know and cover not only minute details of these known worlds, but of many more unknown worlds, in a twinkling of an eye, is not venerable according to the dictates of reason, as well as in the light of the great book of nature? If any one fails to do this, he ought to be extra watchful and careful, since God Almighty is present everywhere, and no odd corner of the world can delude his Omnipresent sight. Every living being is within the range of His view and all knowledge is in His infinite attendance, so never forget Him. A speck of penitence in one's heart would not melt any person into water, and he would not fall to the ground. Therefore, my dear friend, remember God and remember all His favours and graces, and stop disobeying Him. Overpower and subdue the satanic band in this great war, and convert the spheres of your mind into divine realm by driving out the satanic legions and inviting the divine hosts, so that God may succour and protect you in the dangers threatening to befall you in this battle. The battlefield, which is more immense than this one, is the scene of the battle (*jihād*) against thine own self, the invisible world of within and the second stage of this *jihād*. We shall deal with this subject afterwards. By the time, I remind you not to have any expectations from anyone but God. Except Him, the Almighty, nobody can help you. With all humility and with all the tears your eyes can offer (to wash your sins), pray to God and seek His assistance to emerge victorious in this crucial battle. *wa innahu walī al-tawfīq*

#### The Second Stage:

The second stage also consists of several steps:

The human soul inhabits another realm and another territory also, which is the world of the hidden and the sphere of the sublime world. In that world, the role of the sensual forces assumes graver dimensions. This is the place, where the struggle and conflict between the divine forces and the fiendish ones is more severe and also more significant. Everything that exists in the external or visible world drifts to this hidden world, and is manifested there. Whichever of the forces—whether godly or devilish, is victorious here is essentially triumphant there also. So, the *jihād al-nafs* or the internal struggle is of great significance for all great religious thinkers, mystics and moralists. It can be rather considered as the origin and the source of all felicities or woes, and of promotion and sublimation or debasement and degradation of self. One should be extremely self-conscious while undertaking this *jihād*. Because, it is possible that, God forbid, due to the defeat of heavenly forces, the self is left vacant for the unholy

occupation of the vicious and unworthy satanic legions, and hence causing an eternal loss to the human being that cannot be retrieved. Even the intercession of an intercessor cannot save him from becoming an object of the wrath and indignation of the Most Merciful of the merciful. It is also possible that man's intercessor may become his adversary. It is a pity that such a thing should happen to anyone that one who pleads for him should become his opponent. God alone knows that what misfortunes, what perils and what hardships are to follow Divine wrath and antagonism of God's friends, compared to which all the infernal fires, plagues, evils, serpents and scorpions are insignificant and mild. God forbid, whatever sufferings of hell have been described by saints, ascetics and mystics, compared to them all the imaginable pains and sufferings of this world are very mild. All of the torments about which we have heard, are trifle and insignificant when compared to the miseries one has to undergo in the Hereafter. Heaven and hell whose account has been given in the Book and in the traditions of prophets of God are certainly the heaven and hell of wicked actions, and are prepared for rewarding or punishing good and bad human deeds. There is a subtle allusion also to the heaven and hell of morality, which is more significant than even the *Bihisht-e liqā*, the heaven of beatific vision, and the *Jahannam-e firāq*, the hell of separation from Him. This is considered to be of great significance but is hidden from our eyes and is opened to them alone who deserve it. You and me who do not deserve it should not doubt it. We should have faith in it, since God and His friends have told us that this non-detailed (*ijmālī*) faith also is beneficial for us. Sometimes, it is also possible that unbelief arising out of ignorance, and unreasonable rejection, without any knowledge and understanding of the truth may bring great harm to us, the extent of which is unthinkable. In this world we cannot understand those harms. If you hear something which has been reported from any thinker, mystic or ascetic, do not refute it or consider it invalid just because it is not in accordance with your taste, or does not fit in your mode of thinking. This idea may have its origin in a higher source, inaccessible to you like the Quran, *ḥadīth* or reason. How strange it will be that a *faqīh* issues a *fatwā* (a religious or legal opinion) regarding a certain *ḍiyāh* (a pecuniary compensation for any offence against a person) of which you are ignorant, and you reject it without checking the relevant evidences. Or, when a holy person or a mystic speaks something concerning religious learning, or he refers to the conditions of heaven or hell, it is easy for you to refute him or even dare to insult him. For it does not need much thinking or knowledge. But do not forget that it is possible that the person, who is an authority on that subject and a master in that field, might have traced it back to the Holy Book, or has access to some traditions transmitted from infallible Imams (A.S.), and

you may not have come across it. In that case, you would be guilty of rejecting God and His Prophet (S) without any plausible excuse. You have no justification to say later that your judgement was not correct, your knowledge was limited, or that you had heard a certain person speaking otherwise on the *minbar* (pulpit); such excuses are unfounded, and in any case let not your objective be blurred.

Whatever has been related about the paradise of good morals and deeds and about the inferno of bad morals and deeds refers to the states, which we cannot experience here. Thus, my friend! take great care, search for remedy, and try to discover the ways and means of deliverance for yourself. Seek refuge in God, the Most Merciful and Beneficent, and beseech His mercy with humble supplications and lamentation, so that He may help you in this holy war against your carnal self and you may be victorious and the domain of your heart may be liberated from evil influences. The fiendish legions may be turned out of the place so that it may be given in the possession of its rightful Owner, and the felicities, honours and joys may be granted to you by God. All the praises that you have heard of the Heaven, its houris and its mansions, are nothing compared to Divine Bliss, nothing can be estimated higher. That domain is absolutely a divine sphere, which has been described by the friends of God from this rightly guided luminous *ummah* (*millat-e baydā*). This is a world of pleasures which no ear has ever heard of, and no human heart has ever experienced.

#### Hidden or Inner Powers (*Quwwa-e bāṭinī*):

You should know that with His Wisdom and Authority, God Almighty has created certain powers and faculties in the invisible world of the inner self. They are of enormous benefits for us. Here we shall mention three of them: they are, *al-quwwah al-wahmiyyah*—the power of invention or imagination, *al-quwwah al-ghaḍabiyyah*—the power of passion or anger, and *al-quwwah al-shahwiyyah*—the power of lust or sensuality. Each of these powers is of great benefit to the mankind, like the preservation of the human individual and species, advancement of human interests in this world as well as in the Hereafter, of which religious scholars have given elaborate accounts and I need not repeat them. What is essential to state here is that these three powers are the source and origin of all virtuous and vicious deeds, and the source of all invisible and sublime forms. Briefly speaking, as man possesses a physical and a terrestrial form in this world, which is devised and contrived by the Almighty in such a wonderful manner that all great philosophers and scientists are puzzled, and the science of anatomy is not fully equipped to discover and understand its functioning rightly

even to this day. God has made man superior to other living beings by endowing him a superb constitution and a beautiful appearance. Yet there is another form and a different face of him, which is heavenly and invisible, which is determined by the qualities of his soul and his inner nature. In the Hereafter, whether it is in the *Barzakh* (an interval of time between the death of man and his resurrection) or whether on the Last Day, if one's inner nature, his deeds and his inner self are really human, his heavenly visage also will be man-like. But if his deeds are unhuman, he will not possess human form; it will be rather subject to the state of his inner self and his psyche. For instance, if his inner self is dominated by the power of lust or sensuality (*al-quwwah al-shahwiyyah*) and animality and brutality overwhelm and govern his inner self, his other-worldly visage will be of a brute and the reign of his inner world would be under the control of one of the beasts, corresponding to that quality of his soul. If the power of passion or anger conquers one's inner self and his psyche, his other-worldly appearance will resemble one of the bestial forms, corresponding to that attribute of his nature. And if the power of imagination and invention is governed by fiendish forces and his inner self is made vicious, governed by the vices like deceit, dishonesty, slandering, backbiting, which are the attributes of Satan, he may undergo a metamorphosis and assume one of the forms of Satan. Sometimes it is also possible that he would have an appearance that symbolizes two or several vices. In that case, a form which does not resemble any of the brutes, but an unusual and queer form, with which cannot be compared the most terrible and ugliest monster in the world, will be acquired by him.

It has been recorded from the Prophet (S) of God that some persons will be raised on the Last Day in such a mien that even monkeys and dogflies will appear better looking than that. It is also possible that several forms may be prescribed for one individual in that world. Because that world is not like this world, where one individual cannot acquire more than one form. This account itself is logical as well as self-evident. Because, the criterion of those different forms (of which human form is one) would be the state of soul at the time of death—the state in which the soul departs from the body. It is in this very state and form that man's soul enters the realm of *Barzakh*. At the time of entering the other world, that is, the domain of the Hereafter, the first stage of which is *Barzakh*, in whichever state one's soul departs from the body, it assumes a form suited to it in the next world also. It is the same form in which he is perceived by the inhabitants of *Barzakh* and by himself, when he first opens his eyes there, if he has not lost his sight to do so. Because, it is not necessary that man may enter the next world in the same physical state as he had in this world. God Himself says that on the Last Day some of the persons will ask God that why has He



raised them as blind while they possessed eyes in the world. God will answer them that as they disregarded His clear signs in the world, they are forgotten and disregarded by God today.

O poor fellow! You had only external sight and were blind inwardly. You are realizing your blindness now, while you were already blind from the very beginning. You did not possess the inner vision which could perceive His clear signs. You, the poor creature, who was endowed with a perfect earthly body and proportionate form, alas you did not know that the measures of the hidden and sublime world are different from this world. You should strive for inner uprightness, so that you may be upright on the Last Day. Your spirit should be a human spirit, so that your form in the *Barzakh* and the Hereafter may be a human form. You are mistaken to consider the world of the hidden realities, where the secrets of this world are to be unveiled and your deeds are to be disclosed, as similar to this world of appearances, where one can deceive others and can create chaos, confusion and misjudgement. Your eyes and ears, your hands and feet, and other parts of your body will bear witness against your deeds in this world with their supernatural tongues. Some of them may also appear in their celestial forms. So, my friend, it is necessary to keep open the ears of your heart. Be brave, and have mercy on your own self, so that you may leave this world in a human form, and may be counted as redeemed and virtuous. Mind you, these words repeatedly occur in the speeches and teachings of great thinkers, in the inspirations of mystics and in the transmissions of the truthful and infallible servants of God.

#### How to Regulate Human Instincts:

It is possible that *wahm*, the power of imagination and invention, *ghadab*—the power of passion and anger, and *shahwah*—the power of lust or sensuality, also possess divine aspect, and may bring about felicity and good luck to man, if these powers are subjected to the dictates of reason and good sense and the teachings of prophets of God. They may become satanic forces if they are unleashed and the power of invention and imagination is allowed to rule and lead other two powers. It is not a secret that none of the prophets of God ever tried to eradicate the powers of passion, sensuality or imagination completely. None of the messengers of God have ever demanded to completely kill sensuality and desire or to extinguish the fire of passion or anger and ignore the inventions of imagination. But they have rather advocated for controlling and bridling them and making them function under the command of reason and Divine Laws. For each one of these powers struggles to dominate others and win its goal, whatever mischief, chaos and confusion may be stirred up. For instance, the

obstinate bestial self is determined to reach its goal even if it is resolved on committing adultery with married women in the Holy *Ka'bah*. Intractable power of passion arouses the self to win its objective even if it is contemplating to kill prophets and the friends of God. And the power of imagination, while devising satanic instruments, wants to go its own way, to cause corruption of the whole climate on earth, and to create chaos and disorder in the world.

The great prophets of God were sent to this world with the light of Divine Laws. God revealed to them heavenly books, so that they may prevent people from indulging into extravagances and immoderations, and bring the human self under the control of reason and the law of *Shari'ah*. To bridle the human self is essential so that it may not exceed the measures of reason and *Shari'ah*. Hence, every individual who subordinates himself to the Divine Laws and principles of good sense is fortunate, and it is he who attains salvation. He finds refuge in God, the Most Exalted and the Most High, from the dangers and misfortunes which might befall him, and thus is saved from the disgrace of assuming those beastly and hideous forms that may accompany him in the *Barzakh*, in the grave and on the Last Day, as the result of his vicious deeds and corrupt practices.

#### How to Bridle Fancy and Imagination:

The first condition for a *mujāhid* in his struggle that he has to observe and abide by, at this juncture and at all other stages, is to control the flight of one's imagination, so that he can subjugate the Devil and his armies. Imagination is like a bird restless to fly, and sit on any tree it reaches. This flight may bring about many great misfortunes. Fancy is one of the tools of the Devil, with which he enslaves man and renders him helpless. With the help of fancy, he entices men to committing villainies and indecencies.

A *mujāhid* who is determined on self-rectification, and who has made up his mind to purify his inner self and banish satanic forces from there, should firmly hold the bridle of his imagination and let not it soar and wander about wherever it likes. He should try to prevent his mind from nursing corrupt and sinful thoughts, and always divert it to high and noble ideals. In the beginning, it appears to be a little difficult, since Satan and his forces may glorify bad things in your eyes. But with little concentration and attention everything becomes easy. It is possible that as an experiment you may just think for a while, and will not be able to concentrate upon an object. Whenever you see that your thoughts are stooping to lowly and mean things, turn your attention aside from them and think about the worthier and nobler things. If you have been successful in your attempts, thank God Almighty for His

help, and pursue these matters further. May God, out of His mercy, open the path of spiritual progress for you, and may you be invisibly guided in the straight path. May human deeds and right conduct be made easy for you. Be careful that vicious thoughts and vain fancies are induced by Satan, who wishes to fortify its forces in the domain of your inner self. You, who are at war with Satan and his legions, and want to make the realm of your inner self a heavenly domain, are expected to be on guard against the guiles of the cursed villain. You should drive away those thoughts that counter Divine command. God willing, you will be able to recapture this significant fortification from the unholy occupation of Satan and his allies, in this internal war. This fortification serves as a boundary (between good and evil). If you are victorious here you may hope for greater and nobler victories.

My dear friend, seek for God's help at every moment. Pray and beg humbly in the court of your Lord.

O God Almighty! Satan is a great enemy, who has enticed your great friends and prophets. O God! help this weak and entrapped servant of yours, and guard him against these vain ideas and these infirm thoughts that inflict me, so that he may succeed in his war against this strong enemy, who is threatening to destroy my felicity and humanity. O God! please accompany Thy servant and guide him so that he may drive the Satan's armies from Your seat, and may clip the hands of this usurper.

#### **Estimation and appraisal:**

The thing which is to be strictly followed during this process is the estimation and evaluation (of vices and virtues). An intelligent person should carefully examine the effects and demerits of each one of moral vices and bad deeds, which are the product of sensuality, passion and imagination, and are under the control of Satan. He has to compare them with the benefits and blessings of good deeds and moral and spiritual excellences, which are under the guidance of reason and religious law (*Shari'ah*) and then decide which way is better to act. For instance, the advantages of obeying the dictates of uninhibited sensuality that gets hold of the human soul and firmly takes its roots there, and gives rise to many vices to flourish, may be taken into consideration. In the course of time the sensual aptitudes develop, and a person does not hesitate to commit any of the vices, and tries all means and ways to obtain the sensual pleasure at any cost, and does not fail to perpetrate any crime which he desires to commit, even if it results in something extremely vicious. As a result of letting loose one's passions several other vices are born and become his second nature. And he is more than ready to maltreat and subdue everyone who comes

in his way. Those who react against oppressive activities and try to defend themselves, or show any signs of disagreement or hostility are crushed and oppressed by him. He tries to repel all oppositions by all means, although it may lead to an outbreak of corruption in the world. In the same way, the person, who has surrendered himself to the demoniac power of imagination and lets it to be firmly rooted in his soul, does not hesitate to indulge in a fit of excessive passion and sensuality with all his satanic designs and treacheries and rule over the creatures of God by all kinds of unjust means, even if it is to dispossess a family of their belongings or stripping a city or a country of its resources.

These are the achievements of these faculties, while they are active under the ignoble supervision of Satan. If we think about it, and examine the plight of such people, we shall notice that every one of them, despite the enormous strength they possess, and most of their wishes being fulfilled, they still nurture thousands of new desires that are yet to be fulfilled. It is not possible in this world that all the desires and ambitions that we cherish be fulfilled here, since this world is the abode of obstacles. The elements of this world dispirit our wishes. Our desires are also not limited. For instance, the power of sensuality and lust acts in man in such a way that if he is given one woman, he is attracted to other women. If he is given an empire, he will hanker after some other empire. Man always desires for what he does not possess. In spite of this vanity of imagination and futility of human desire, the kiln of sensuality is always hot, and its heat ever increasing, and our desires are never cooled down. Similarly, the forces of passion are implanted in human nature in such a way that even if he is made an absolute monarch of a state, he will be attracted towards another state, which he cannot get, and he will try to pounce on it with all the force he can muster. This power is also ever increasing. Anyone who has any doubt is advised to examine his own self and other human beings belonging to the classes of poor, rich and powerful; he will agree with me. It is obvious that man is always allured by something which he does not own. This is the human nature as conceived by various great Islamic thinkers and holy men, especially one should refer to a great master of divinity, Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī Shāhābādī.

Anyhow, even if man attains his goals, for how long can he be benefited from them? How long his youthful years are to continue? When the spring of youth fades out and the autumn of his life sets in, his heart has no more a zest for mirth and joy, his organs lose their vitality and those activities lose their relish. His eyes dim, his hearing is impaired, his sense of touch and other senses and faculties weaken. Ability to get pleasure declines or is completely lost. Then hosts of

ailments make him an easy prey. His digestive, assimilative and excretory system fails, and his respiratory system cannot perform its function properly. Nothing but deep sighs, displeasure, regret and remorse are left to accompany him. Thus, the duration of our exploitation of these bodily powers, from the days when one gains consciousness of good and bad till the process of decline sets in, is not more than thirty or forty years, even for a person of very strong constitution. That too, if one does not happen to come across all sorts of diseases and afflictions, which we witness every day and forget about. If, for the time being, we take it for granted (although it has no reality), that a man can attain the age of one hundred and fifty years, with all opportunities of involving oneself fully in all the three indulgences—sensuality, passion and imagination, excluding all the chances of coming across any adversities and misfortunes, even this period of time would prove short, and pass soon like the wind; and what would be in store for you for the next world? What benefit will you derive from all these treasures of amusements for your eternal life? What will save you from the horrors of the day of doom, helplessness, desolation and loneliness? What will you present on the Day of Judgement, and how would you face God, His angels, and His chosen servants and prophets? Of course, nothing will accompany you except your wicked and sinful deeds, which will metamorphose you in such a form that would not be known to anybody except God. Everything that you have heard and conceived about the infernal fire, torments of the grave and agonies of the Doomsday, etc., you measured them with the worldly fire and worldly pains. What a gross error you committed. Fire of this world is relatively an accident, and all the horrors are easy to bear. Your estimation of the other world on the basis of this one is imperfect and faulty. Even if the fire burning throughout the world is accumulated at one place, it will not be hot enough to burn the human soul. In the next world, besides burning and roasting the body it will burn the soul and incinerate the heart also. Whatever you have been listening about till now, is actually the hell of one's actions, which you will see in the Hereafter as a reality, for God Almighty has said:

... وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا....

... And they find all that they did confronting them,.... (18:49)

You will have to face whatever you did in this world. If you thrived on the property of orphans, God alone knows in what state you will appear in hell and what comforts you will have to enjoy there as your reward. If here your harsh words have injured the hearts of people, this pain and discomfort caused to the hearts of the creatures of

God, God alone knows, what punishment it will incur upon you in the Hereafter. You will know it only when you experience it what sort of pain and torture you have procured for yourselves. Because of your detractions, the other worldly and sublime form that was conceived for you is denied to you and you will have to undergo the pains of chastisement.

This will be the hell of one's actions, which is comparatively milder, cooler and tolerable, and is reserved for those who committed sins in this world. But for those who have acquired the viciousness of character and villainy of conduct like, greed, lust, hoarding, avarice, contentiousness, love of wealth, power and corporeal things, rapacity, ravenousness and other vices, the hell is their place, a place beyond human apprehension, a state and form which can never be anticipated by any stretch of the imagination, and emanates from within the soul itself. The inhabitants of that hell will be so distressed that they will try to escape from it, (but in vain). In some of the authentic narrations, it occurs that there is a valley in hell, which is reserved for the proud, and which is named as *saqar*. once it complained to God about the intensity of its heat, and asked Almighty for a relief, so that it might take a breath. After the relief was granted, when it breathed, its breath filled the hell with fire.

Sometimes one's vices may cause a human being to become a permanent dweller of hell. Because they take away from him his faith and belief. For instance, a vice like jealousy, according to authentic traditions, eats away faith as the fire consumes wood. Another example is that of the love of the world, worldly power and riches, which, according to authentic narrations, consume the faith of a believer more rapidly than two wolves let loose on a sheep herd without a shepherd, one attacking from the front and the other from the back.

Adoration for the worldly things and lust for power deprives a believer of his belief, and God forbid, this sinfulness results in dark and ugly deeds, which finally leads to the loss of faith and one's end as an infidel, and the hell of the false beliefs and erroneous faith is severer, hotter and darker than those two other hells, mentioned above.

My friend, the higher knowledge has proved that the grades of intensity are infinite. The punishment is severer than what you imagine or what others imagine. If you do not believe in the arguments advanced by philosophers, or the revelations made to mystics, thanks to God, being a true believer, you have faith in the teachings of the prophets of God, and you consider all the reports recorded in the authentic books of the traditions which are accepted by all the Imāmiyyah scholars as true and authentic. I hope that you believe in the prayers of infallible Imams, and have read the prayers and sermons uttered by Imam 'Alī (A), and the invocation by Imam Sayyid al-

Sajidīn (A) uttered in the prayer of Abū Ḥamzah al-Thumālī. My friend, reflect a little upon their subject matter and think for a while on their wordings. It is nowhere required to make a rapid reading of the lengthy prayer in a hurry without pondering over its meaning. You and I are not blessed with the spiritual state of al-Imām al-Sayyid al-Sajjād (A) to recite that lengthy prayer in a state of sustained ecstasy at one time. Try to read one third or one fourth of it every night with feeling, and meditate upon its words. You may feel ecstatic while reading it. Apart from this, pay a little more attention to the meaning of Quranic verses, and see what punishment has been prescribed for the inhabitants of hell, to escape which they will pray to the Lord for death, and alas death also will not help, as God Almighty says:

... يَا حَسْرَتِي عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَّقْتُ فِي جَنبِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّخِرِينَ \*

*...Alas, my grief that I was unmindful of Allah, and I was indeed among the scoffers! (39:56)*

What kind of regret it will be, of which Almighty is making an emphatic mention. Do not pass quickly, without pausing and meditating upon such verses of the Quran:

يَوْمَ تَرَوْهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَارَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ \*

*On the day when ye behold it, every nursing mother will forget her nursing and every pregnant will be delivered of her burden, and thou (Muḥammad) will see mankind as drunken, yet they will not be drunken, but the Doom of Allah will be strong (upon them). (22:2)*

Here God Almighty is depicting the Doomsday. My friend, think yourself that, God forbid (*na'ūdhu billāh*), the Quran is neither a story book, nor is it making jokes with you. What sort of condemnation it will be that will make people abandon their dear ones, and relieve pregnant women of their burden? What a great calamity it will be about which God Almighty, Whose greatness knows no extent, Whose supremacy and authority has no limits and bounds, is commenting upon in such solemn terms. What is going to happen God alone knows. Our intellect is insufficient to measure the extent of its magnanimity. If we study the transmissions and writings of the infallible Members of the Holy Household, and think over them, we shall see that the sight of misery and agony in that world will be quite different from this world, and cannot be equated with the misfortunes of this world.

Here I would like to quote a tradition from the great Shaykh of the Imāmiyyah, al-Ṣadūq, for you to demonstrate the meaning and extent of the misery, mentioned above. Nevertheless, this tradition narrated by him refers to the hell of the evil deeds and is comparatively a cooler place than other severer hells. I consider it essential to point out that al-Shaykh al-Sadūq is the person who is held in great esteem and respect by all great religious scholars of *rijāl*. He was born as the result of the prayer of the Imam (A), and was the object of great favour of Imam Mahdi (A.F.), and was among great writers of Shi'ite religious books. I quote this tradition with reference to a chain of great Imāmiyyah scholars, all of whom are considered as authentic narrators of *ḥadīth*. Hence, if you are a true believer, you should have faith in the following tradition. The gist of the *ḥadīth* is as follows:

رَوَى الصَّدُوقُ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مَوْلَانَا الصَّادِقِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، قَالَ: تَبَيَّنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ قَاعِدًا إِذْ أَتَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ. وَهُوَ كَثِيبٌ، خَزِينٌ، مُتَغَيَّرُ اللَّوْنِ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: يَا جِبْرِيلُ، مَا لِي أَرَاكَ كَثِيبًا خَزِينًا؟ فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ فَكَيْفَ لَا أَكُونُ كَذَلِكَ وَأَنَا وَضِعْتُ مَنَافِخُ جَهَنَّمَ الْيَوْمَ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: وَمَا مَنَافِخُ جَهَنَّمَ يَا جِبْرِيلُ؟ فَقَالَ: إِنَّ تَعَالَى أَمَرَ بِالنَّارِ فَأَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ عَامٍ، حَتَّى اخْتَمَرَتْ، ثُمَّ أَمَرَهَا فَأَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ عَامٍ حَتَّى ابْيَضَّتْ، ثُمَّ أَمَرَهَا فَأَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ عَامٍ حَتَّى اسْوَدَّتْ وَهِيَ سَوْدَاءُ مُظْلِمَةٌ، فَلَمَّا كَانَ حُلُقَةُ مِنَ السِّلْسِلَةِ الَّتِي طَوَّلَهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا وَضِعْتُ عَلَى الدُّنْيَا لَذَابَتْ الدُّنْيَا مِنْ خَرِّهَا، وَلَمَّا كَانَ قَطْرَةٌ مِنَ الرَّقُومِ وَالصَّرِيعِ فَطَرَتْ فِي شَرَابِ أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا لَمْ تَوَامِنْ نَتْنِهَا، قَالَ: فَبَكَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) وَبَكَى جِبْرِيلُ، فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهَا مَلَكًا فَقَالَ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ يَقْرَأُ كَلِمَةَ السَّلَامِ، وَيَقُولُ: إِنِّي قَدْ أَمْنْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَنْ تُذْنِبُوا ذُنُوبًا أَحْذَرُكُمْ عَلَيْهَا.

One day the Prophet (S) of God was seated when Gabriel came into his presence, with a sad face and changed complexion. The Prophet (S) asked as to why he was looking so sad and grieved. Gabriel answered, 'O Muḥammad (S), why should I be not grieved, while today I saw the bellows of hell being set in. The Prophet (S) asked him what the bellows of hell were. Gabriel told him that it referred to the hell-fire which according to the Commandments of God Almighty was ablaze for one thousand years. After it became red-hot He ordered it to burn for another one thousand years till it was white-hot. Then He commanded it to burn for one thousand years more till it turned black. Now that it was black and dark, if a slice of seventy cubits of it was to drop on this world, verily its heat would be sufficient to melt the whole world into fluid. If a single drop of its *Zaqqūm* (an infernal tree, mentioned in the Quran proverbial for its extreme bitterness) and *ḍarī'* (something in hell more bitter than aloe, more fetid than carrion, and hotter than fire, which will be the food of the condemned) trickles down in the water reservoirs of the earth, everybody therein would die due to its stench. Thereupon the Prophet (S)



wept and Gabriel also wept with him. On seeing this, God sent His angel, who came to them and said that God sent *salāms* to them along with the message that He exempted them both from the committing of sins and the consequent punishments.

My friend, there are a number of *ahādīth* in this regard. Existence of hell and its horrible chastisements are among the essentials of all the religions of the world, which bring forward many arguments in favour of their necessity. And the great mystics and saints have envisioned it even in this world. Try to imagine sincerely and contemplate the disheartening account of hell given in the tradition. If you consider it as probable only, even then should it not be sufficient to drive us to woods like the mad? What is the reason for our complacency and ignorance? Have the angels of God given us the tidings of being exempted from this punishment as they had given one to the Prophet (S) and Gabriel? Whereas the Prophet (S) and the friends of God could not be oblivious of the fear of God till the ends of their lives. They could not eat and sleep properly because of that fear. Look at the life of Imam 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn (A), whose weeping and moanings, lamentations and supplications melted human hearts. What is wrong with us that we do not feel ashamed? Even in our supplications to God, we so much violate and insult Divine principles, that a thousand pities on our thoughtlessness! Have pity on yourself and the extremity of the pangs of death. Again a thousand pities on our condition in Barzakh, the agonies of the Hereafter, and the Doomsday and its darkness! How pitiable are we who have to face the horrors of hell and its chastisement!

#### How to Cure Moral Maladies:

My friend! arise, awake from the slumber, be aware of your negligence and make an effort till there is time to repent. Consider this opportunity as valuable, until you are alive, your faculties and your powers are still under control, and you are young. Think about a cure before it is too late, and before moral maladies overpower your existence, and evils take deep roots in your existence and take you in the grips of their tentacles. Drive them away, find out a way of extinguishing the fire of your sensuality and passion. The best remedy prescribed by mystics and moralists is to concentrate upon each one of the evil habits that you detect in yourself, and offer an effective resistance against them. Fight bravely against your carnal self. Act unceasingly all the time against those vicious yearnings. Pray Almighty to assist you in this battle. Undoubtedly after sometime hideous habits would leave you, and Satan and his legions would vacate the fortress, and the battalions of heavenly armies would be installed in their stead.

One of the moral maladies, which may destroy one, cause torment of the grave, and plague man in this world, is the maltreatment of the people of his household, his neighbours, his colleagues and others around him. It is the product of passion and sensuality. If the *mujāhid* is determined on correcting himself, he can counter those impulses of indignation, resentment and vituperation with gentleness and kindness, remembering the Hereafter and the chastisements therein. He should curse the Devil in his heart and take refuge in God. I give you word that if you behave persistently like this, after some time you will realize that your nature is totally transformed and good habits have taken the place of the bad ones. But if you behave according to the propensities of your nature, it is possible that they consume you in this world itself. I seek refuge in God from the anger, which when present in an individual destroys him in both the worlds. At the same time it kills his spirit also, because possibly one may use some indecent words against Divine principles in a fit of anger, as so many times we hear people uttering words of heresy and being guilty of apostasy thus.

Philosophers say that the chances of being saved in a ship without a captain from the stormy waves of ocean are brighter than those of a man being saved in an outburst of wild passion. God forbid, that we should ever belong to that category of people who become aggressive during academic discussions, as some of our students suffer from this intemperance. You have to resist against this bad tendency. Act against it, especially on the occasions of formal functions, which are attended by a great number of scholars and common men. During the discussions, if you see that the other party is justified in its argument, you are expected to admit your fault and confirm what opponents say. God willing, these meannesses will be eliminated in a short time. God forbid, that the words of some scholars, who claimed to be divinely inspired and said that it was revealed that the quarrel among the inhabitants of hell, mentioned by God, is that of the scholars and transmitters of *ahādith*, should ever be true. Even if you do not believe in the authenticity of this tradition, even then you should carefully try to get rid of this habit. See the following account:

رَوَى عَنْ عِدَّةٍ مِنَ الْأَصْحَابِ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا: خَرَجَ عَلَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) يَوْمًا وَتَخَنُّنًا مَارِي فِي شَيْءٍ مِنْ أَمْرِ الدِّينِ فَغَضِبَ غَضَبًا شَدِيدًا وَقَالَ: إِنَّ الْمُمَارِي قَدْ تَمَّتْ خَسَارَتُهُ، ذَرُوا الْمِرَاءَ فَإِنَّ الْمُمَارِي لَا أَشْفَعُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، ذَرُوا الْمِرَاءَ فَإِنِّي زَعِيمٌ بِثَلَاثَةِ آيَاتٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَبِإِصْحَابِهَا وَأَوْسَطِهَا وَأَعْلَاهَا لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْمِرَاءَ وَهُوَ صَادِقٌ، ذَرُوا الْمِرَاءَ فَإِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا نَهَانِي عَنْهُ رَبِّي بِعَذَابِ الْإِثْمَانِ الْمِرَاءَ، وَعَنْهُ، لَا يَسْتَكْمِلُ عَبْدٌ حَقِيقَةَ الْإِيمَانِ حَتَّى يَدَعَ الْمِرَاءَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مُحِقًّا.

It is narrated from many companions of the Prophet (S) that once as the Prophet (S) came to them they were engaged in wrangling over a religious issue. The Prophet (S) of Islam was greatly displeased and was indignant to this extent that they had never seen him before in such an anger. The Prophet (S) told them it was because of this habit of wrangling that their precursors were destroyed, and he added that a true believer would never wrangle. The Prophet (S) asked them to stop wrangling and told them that he would not act as an intercessor to any wrangler. Wrangling occupies the second place after idolatry among the things forbidden by God Almighty. The Prophet (S) is reported to have also said that unless a believer refrains from wrangling and altercation he cannot know the truth, in spite of his position being correct.

There are various traditions in this regard. How abominable it will be if we deprive ourselves of the intercession of the Prophet (S) for the sake of merely a trivial thing which has no value, no merit whatsoever. Intellectual discussions, which would otherwise be the highest order of service and worship if undertaken with sincere motives, end in such a catastrophe and wipe out all his good deeds and acts of worship. In all circumstances, man should focus his attention on each of his vices individually, and eradicate them from the domain of his soul by restraining his carnal self. Once the trespasser is driven out, the rightful owner of the house can readily come to take possession.

#### Conclusion:

Since the struggle of the self concludes here and man succeeds in driving off the legions of satanic armies from the empire of his soul, this land becomes the abode of angels of God and a place of worship of truthful servants of God. Thus the task of pursuing the journey towards God becomes easier, and the road to humanism is illuminated. The doors of blessings from heaven and their ascending steps are opened to him, and the doors of hell and the descending steps thereof are closed on him. God Almighty views him with mercy and benevolence and unites him with His faithful and His blessed servants. The path to divine knowledge, which is the ultimate purpose of creation of mankind and *jinn*, is opened to him. God Almighty guards him through this hazardous path.

I wished to refer to the third stage of self (*nafs*), wherein another struggle against the deceptions and temptations of Satan takes place. But, on later thought, this description seems to be out of place here, so I left it undiscussed.

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## Second *Ḥadīth* on *Riyā'*

بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُنْصِلِ إِلَى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ أَبِي أَلَمْعَرَا عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ خَلِيفَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع): كُلُّ رِيَاءٍ شِرْكٌ إِنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ لِلنَّاسِ كَانَ ثَوَابُهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ، وَمَنْ عَمِلَ لِلَّهِ كَانَ ثَوَابُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ.

(On the authority of the above-mentioned narrators), Yazid ibn Khalifah reports from al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) that he said: “*Riyā'* in any of its forms amounts to *shirk* (polytheism); verily, one who works for the people, his reward lies with them, and one who works for God his reward lies with God.”

**R**iyā' means to falsely make oneself appear to be virtuous, good natured or a true believer in God before the people for the sake of earning their respect and admiration, or with the purpose of gaining good reputation among them. The hypocrite feigns integrity, uprightness, virtue, honesty and piety without an authentic intention of acquiring these traits for the sake of God. It has several grades and degrees.

The first stage is comprised of two steps:

1. At the first step an individual makes a display of his religious beliefs, and shows off his knowledge of the religious teachings in order to

project himself as an honest person in the eyes of people to gain their confidence and respect. Such a kind of person tries to make a display of his trust in God and His Power, saying that he does not believe in any being except Him. He also tries to present himself as a staunch believer through various means, especially by declaring that he depends on none but God. Or such a person, with his gestures and utterances, poses himself to be a staunch follower of the true faith, and this is a more common kind of *riyā'* than the first one. For instance, when the trust in God or submission to His Will is discussed, he wags his head in affirmation with a sigh, and thus deceives people giving an impression that he is one of the true believers.

2. The second step on the path of *riyā'* is represented by those who eradicate false belief from their hearts and, through such purification, want to attain power and respect among people; they sometimes articulate their belief overtly, sometimes make a covert display of their purity.

The second stage, too, is comprised of two steps:

1. At the first step an individual demonstrates his piety and virtuous deeds.

2. At the second step one pretends to have done away with the antitheses of piety and virtue, and behaves in such a manner as if he is free from all vices, and the aim of all this is to win the confidence of others.

The third stage of *riyā'*, which is considered to be overt by the *fuqahā'*, also consists of two steps:

1. The first step is marked by an individual's performance of the prescribed forms of piety, prayers and good deeds in front of other people with the intention of demonstrating his good qualities and praiseworthy habits, or by his posture as a person who strictly adheres to the religious commands on purely rational grounds, and thus wishing to win the hearts of people and attracting their attention towards himself. Such acts, whether performed in total or in part, with the motive of *riyā'*, to please the others, are discussed in the books of *fiqh*.

2. At the second step, one abstains from evil deeds for the purpose of *riyā'* only.

### **Riyā' in Faith or Creed:**

Remember that hypocrisy in religious faith is the worst kind of hypocrisy; its retribution also is the severest and its bad effects are far greater and more dangerous than those of other forms of hypocrisy. One who is guilty of this sin, if he does not believe genuinely in those ideas which he pretends to believe in, is counted among the *munāfiqūn* (hypocrites), whose place is in the Fire, and he is doomed to eternal

damnation and his punishment is the severest of punishments. But if he believes in them, and for the sake of winning peoples' hearts and for obtaining worldly honour and dignity he makes an ostentation of them, though he is not reckoned among *munāfiqūn*, this kind of hypocrisy will cause the light of faith to fade away from his heart and to make the darkness of infidelity and faithlessness to occupy the domain of his heart. Because in the first instance this person commits polytheism (*shirk*) of the covert type; while his religious beliefs and acts should purely be meant for God and His Holy Essence, he is guilty of committing the sin of doing them for others and thus makes them to share what should absolutely belong to Him only. In this way he makes others partners to God and has given permission to the Devil to occupy his heart as if it does not belong to God. It has been mentioned earlier that faith emerges from the depths of the heart, and in this matter mere abstract knowledge does not suffice. It has been stated in the tradition that any kind of *riyā'* is polytheism, but this vice, this disastrous atrocity, this hidden cruelty (to one's own self), and this vicious habit, results in nullifying the good deeds, and in surrender of the realm of the heart to other than God. The darkness of this vice causes man to leave this world as an unbeliever in God, and the feigned faith that he had assumed proves nothing more than a senseless and empty profession; it is a form without content, a body without soul and a skull without brain; and in no way is acceptable to God. This fact is confirmed by a tradition mentioned in *al-Kāfi*, narrated by 'Alī ibn Sālim:

قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) يَقُولُ: قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: أَنَا خَيْرُ شَرِيكَ مِنْ أَشْرَكَ قَعِي غَيْرِي فِي عَمَلِي عَمَلَهُ لَمْ أَقْبَلْهُ إِلَّا مَا كَانَ لِي خَالِصاً.

The narrator of the tradition says that he heard al-Imām al-Sādiq (A) saying that God Almighty said, "I am the best of friends; one who makes others My partners in any matter, his deeds are not acceptable to Me. I accept only those acts that are purely done for My sake."

Hence, it is clear that if the spiritual acts (of the heart) are not performed with sincerity of the heart, they will neither be the object of attention of the Almighty, nor will He acknowledge them, and they will be credited in the account of that partner—the person, for whose sake they were performed. Thus the spiritual acts performed for the sake of somebody else, not for God, will surpass the limits of polytheism, and will enter the domain of *kufr* (infidelity). It may even be said that the performer of such adulterated acts would be treated as one of the *munāfiqūn*.

As his polytheism is not visible, his hypocrisy also is hidden. He, the poor fellow, considers himself to be a believer, whereas in reality he

is an idolater, and he is condemned to taste the chastisement prescribed for the *munāfiqūn*. How pitiable is the plight of one whose good deeds are to terminate in *nifāq*.

#### **The Difference Between Knowledge and Belief:**

Know that faith or belief is something different from the knowledge of God, the Unity of His Being, and His other Attributes—like *ṣifāt-e kamāliyyah* (the Attributes of Perfection), the Positive Attributes, *ṣifāt-e jalāliyyah* (the Attributes of Glory), and the Negative Attributes, etc.—and the knowledge of angels, holy scriptures, and the Last Day. Anyone who possesses the knowledge of all these things is not necessarily a believer. The Devil possesses the knowledge of all these things more than I and you or any other individual, but still he is an unbeliever. The faith is a yearning of the heart—an inner experience, which if not genuine, does not become faith. Anyone who has gained knowledge of religion through rational demonstrations and arguments, ought to submit to them whole-heartedly with the totality of his being and obey the call of his heart dutifully—i.e. with complete surrender to God, with humility and fear—and accept all the responsibilities expected of him sincerely without any question. Only then he can become a perfect *mu'min*. Culmination of the faith is tranquillity and peace of mind. When the light of faith is stabilized, it brings with it tranquillity of the heart, and this is something which does not issue from knowledge.

It is possible that reason may accept something which is according to its dictates and logic, but the heart may not be ready to agree with it, thus making knowledge useless. For instance, you know through your reason that a dead person cannot do any harm and that all the dead in the world do not possess any power of action, even as much power as is possessed by a fly, and that all the physical and spiritual faculties depart as soon as one is dead; but since your heart has not accepted it and has not approved of the judgement of the mind, you cannot spend a dark night with a dead body. But if your heart yields to your mind and approves of its judgement, this job will no more be difficult for you. After some effort the heart resigns to the dictates of reason, then no dread of the dead remains in the heart.

Therefore, it is clear that the submission which is the gratification and comfort of the heart is quite a different thing from knowledge, which is the gratification of the mind. It is possible that one can logically prove the existence of the Great Intelligent Designer, the Unity of His Divine Being, the Day of Judgement and other true beliefs, but such a belief cannot be considered as faith (*īmān*), and the person



cannot be regarded as a *mu'min*, but he may be counted among the non-believers, hypocrites and polytheists.

Today my eyes and yours are closed, and we do not possess any divine vision. Our terrestrial eyes are unable to perceive, but when the hidden is revealed and the kingdom of heaven is manifested, the physical world vanishes and reality is disclosed; you will realize that you were not a believer in God, and your rational judgement was not congruous with your faith. Unless the words: 'لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ' (there is no god except God) are inscribed on the tablet of the heart with the pen of reason, man is not a true believer in the Unity of God. When this sacred and holy dictum is impressed on the heart, the domain of the heart turns by itself into the kingdom of God Almighty. Then only man does not see anyone else as efficient in the realm of truth; he does not expect any rank, any distinction or riches from anybody else; he does not seek for honour and fame with the help of others; and his heart does not become hypocritic and profane. Therefore, if you see that *riyā'* is stealing into your heart, you should realize that your heart has not really surrendered itself to reason, and faith has not illuminated your heart yet; for you consider others to be your God and see them as efficient agents in the world, and you do not trust Him, the only God; it means that you have joined the company of hypocrites, polytheists and idolaters.

#### Dangerous Effects of *Riyā'*:

O, you given to *riyā'*, who have entrusted your truthful beliefs and religious understanding to the custody of the enemy of God—the Devil, and have attributed to others what specifically belongs to God, you have exchanged those lights which would have illuminated your heart and spirit, and would have proved to be the source of your salvation and eternal bliss, which would have been responsible for being blessed with Beatific Vision and acquiring Divine nearness, with the dreadful darkness of eternal misfortunes; you have lost the other-worldly treasures, and have alienated yourself from the most sacred threshold of the Beloved, and have deprived yourself of the sight of the visage of the Most High. Be prepared for the darkness, which is not to be followed by any ray of light; the scorn and shame from which there is no release; the diseases which have no cure; the death after which there is no life; and the fire which is ignited from within the depths of the heart to engulf the whole region of your spirit, as well as the realm of the body. It is beyond your capacity and mine to conceive or perceive the intensity of that fire, as God Almighty has mentioned in His Holy Book:

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ \* الَّتِي تَقْلَعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ \*

(It is) the fire of Allah, kindled, which leapeth up over the hearts (of men).  
(104:6-7)

The effect of the fire which is kindled by God will be that it would consume the hearts as well. No fire can consume the heart except that which is kindled in the hell. If the belief in the Unity of God, which is inherently engrained in human nature, is abandoned and is replaced with idolatry and infidelity, no intercession of any intercessor will be available to him, and man will be destined to suffer eternal damnation. What kind of chastisement will it be? It will be the effect of the Divine wrath, issuing from His sense of Honour.

Thus, my friend, do not make yourself an object of the Divine wrath for the sake of an illusion, an insignificant and trivial popularity in the eyes of weak creatures of God, and for the sake of worthless attention of hopeless human beings. Do not make a bargain of those Divine blessings, those infinite favours and benevolences with popularity among people, which is not even effective and long-lasting, from which you cannot derive any benefit except inviting ultimate shame and regret. And while your relations are severed with this world of illusion and deception and you cease to act, no regret and sorrow will be of avail.

An Advice for Getting Rid of the Curse of Riyā':

What I am going to mention here to you is expected to work effectively for curing this disease of the heart, your as well as others'. It shall be also according to the rational dictates as well as is in conformity with the truths of revelation and tradition of the *Ma'sūmūn* (the infallibles). It is as well verifiable on the basis of the teachings of the Quran and your and my reason. God Almighty, by means of His all-embracing power and might, which governs the whole universe and is immanent in the realms of all possible beings, takes under His control the hearts of all His servants, as no one is outside the range of His power and the domain of His domination; and no one should occupy the hearts of human beings without His permission and His creative Will; not even the person himself has any control over his own heart without the permission of God Almighty. This fact has been revealed implicitly and explicitly in the Quran as well as the traditions of the members of the Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*) of the Prophet (S). Hence, God Almighty is the real owner of the hearts and has sovereignty over them, and you, a helpless and weak creature of Him, you cannot claim to be the master of your heart, without His leave. His Will is predominant over ours and other creatures' resolution. Therefore, your hypocrisy and deceit, if it

is meant for attracting the attention of His servants and for earning respect and popularity among them, know that it cannot bear any fruits, for this is totally beyond your powers, and it belongs to the jurisdiction of His power. He is the owner and the ruler of the hearts. He makes the hearts of the people a seat of love for whomsoever He likes. It is possible that your act produces a result just contrary to your wish. Pay attention to what we have seen and heard about the double-faced hypocrites, whose hearts were not pure; they were ultimately condemned to be disgraced; whatever they intended, they could not achieve, but something that they did not desire happened to them. The following tradition in *al-Kāfī* points to the same fact:

عَنْ جَرَّاحِ الْمَدَائِنِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ فِي قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: «فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا» قَالَ: الرَّجُلُ يَعْمَلُ شَيْئًا مِنَ الثَّوَابِ لَا يَطْلُبُ بِهِ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ إِنَّمَا يَطْلُبُ تَرْكِيبَةَ النَّاسِ يَشْتَهِي أَنْ يُسْمِعَ بِهِ النَّاسَ، فَهَذَا الَّذِي أَشْرَكَ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ أَسْرَ خَيْرًا قَدْ هَبَّتِ الْآبَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى يُظْهِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ خَيْرًا وَمَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يُسْرِ سَرًّا قَدْ هَبَّتِ الْآبَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى يُظْهِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ سَرًّا.

The narrator of the tradition, Jarrāḥ al-Madā'ini, reports from al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) that he asked the Imam about the words of the Almighty that 'whosoever is desirous of meeting his Creator, he should perform virtuous deeds and should not ascribe any partner to God in his worship,' seeking an explanation. Al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) said, 'A person who performs good deeds but not for the sake of being blessed with the vision of his God, his acts are aimed at being considered as pious by the people, and he wishes that people should know about his deeds; such a person is counted among polytheists, who have ascribed partners to God.' The Imam (A) continued: 'There is none in the world, who has concealed his good deeds and after passage of time God has not revealed them. And there is none in the world who could conceal his wicked deeds for ever, for they were exposed by God before he passed away from the world.'

Hence, my dear friend! try to be worthy in the eyes of God. Try to win the hearts of the creatures by first pleasing the real owner of the hearts, so that He comes to your rescue. Work for the sake of God. As a consequence God Almighty, besides showering His favours and excellences upon you in the Hereafter, will bestow His honours and favours on you in this world as well, and will befriend you. He will raise your status in the eyes of people and will exalt you in both the worlds. But the only thing that you have to do is to sincerely cultivate the love of God in your heart, untainted and unspoiled, with struggle

and effort. Purify your inner self so that your actions also will be pure and untainted by the love of the world or hatred of fellow beings; your spirit should be pure and untainted and all the infirmities and corruptions of the soul should be eliminated. Of what advantage is the love or hatred of the weak creatures of God, and gaining favour and name among them? Even if it has some benefit, it is insignificant and short-lived. It is possible that this love of the world may lead you to hypocrisy, and God forbid, it may convert you into a polytheist or a hypocrite or an unbeliever. If you are not disgraced in this world, you will be surely disgraced in the other world, in Almighty's court of justice, in front of His truthful and worthy servants, in front of His esteemed prophets and those angels who are nearest to God, and you will have to hang down your head in shame, and you will be left in a state of utter helplessness. Can you imagine the disgrace of that day? God alone knows what sort of darkness is to follow that disgrace. It will be the day, as God Almighty has said:

... وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا \*

... and the disbeliever will cry: 'Would that I were dust'. (78:40)

Then it will be of no good. You, poor fellow, for the sake of a trifling love, for the sake of a fame of no avail among the creatures of God, you did not care for the promised Divine favours and have failed to gain His good pleasure, and have incurred His indignation and wrath instead.

The deeds by means of which you could have gained Divine favours, could have secured a happy and blissful life in eternity, and could have attained the highest station in the highest heaven; you have replaced it with the darkness of polytheism and hypocrisy, and have procured for yourself regret, shame and the severest chastisement, and have converted yourself into a '*sijjīni*' (an inhabitant of the lowest or dungeon of hell) instead. It occurs in the tradition in *al-Kāfī* that it has been reported from al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) that the Prophet (S) said: 'Indeed when the angel of God joyously takes to the higher heaven the good deeds of a man, as he carries the good deeds heavenward, God Almighty orders him to place those deeds in '*Sijjīn*', since they were not performed for Him alone.<sup>4</sup> You and I cannot imagine what '*Sijjīn*' is, and which kind of demons are appointed there; and you cannot contemplate the horrors inflicted upon the sinners there. And once we have been made to face it, it will not be possible for us to get rid of it, as all the means of repentance shall be cut off. Wake up my friend! and cast away your negligence and carelessness, and weigh your actions in the balance of your reason, before they are weighed and

measured in the other world. And cleanse the mirror of your heart of the rust of polytheism, hypocrisy, and two-facedness. Do not allow the rust of impurity of polytheism and infidelity to gather in such a way that it cannot be cleansed with the fire of the other world. Do not allow the light of your nature to be turned into the gloom of apostasy. Do not be a traitor to yourself and do not destroy what God has entrusted to you, calling it:

فَظَرَّتَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْنَا فَنَظَرْنَا... عَلَيْهَا...

...the nature (framed) of Allah in which He hath created man.... (30 30)

Therefore, burnish the mirror of the heart, so that the light of Divine magnificence may be reflected in it, and may make you forget this world and everything in it, and your heart is kindled with the fire of His love, so that all other attachments and associations may be dissolved in such a manner that you do not spurn a single moment for the sake of the worldly things; and you derive such a pleasure from His remembrance that all the animal pleasures may appear to you a gimmick. If you cannot attain this station, even then do not give up the gifts of God that are promised to be given in the next world and are mentioned in the Quran and the traditions of the *Ma'sûmûn* (A), for the sake of gaining the short-lived favour of the weak creatures of God. Do not deprive yourself of all the Divine favours and do not make a bargain of the eternal felicity with the everlasting distress.

#### Sincerity in Action.

Know that the real King of kings, the true Giver of real bounties, has bestowed upon us all these favours. He created all these things for us and prepared them for us even before we came into this world. He made our food a balanced diet and acceptable to our weak stomach—a patron and servant who serves us with an instinctive and natural love. He created for us suitable climes and weathers and has bestowed upon us all other seen and unseen favours here and in the other world, and after piling up all these gifts for us, He asks us to keep our hearts pure for His occupation, so that we ourselves may be benefited from His presence. In spite of all these warnings and cautions we still do not obey Him and do not pay heed to His words and do not act according to His wish. What an act of gross transgression. With whom are we trying to wage a war, the consequences of which we will have to face? Any slightest harm cannot be caused to His Kingdom, and we cannot exclude ourselves from His reign of power either. If we are acting like the polytheists we are causing harm to ourselves, because:

... فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ \*

...Lo! Allah is independent of (all) creatures. (3:97)

He does not need our worship, our service or our obedience. Any disobedience, polytheism, and two-facedness on our part will not cause any harm to His Empire, but as He is *أَزْهَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ* (the Most Merciful of the merciful), His boundless mercy and compassion, and His perfect wisdom require of us the pursuance of the right path, and for this purpose He made clear the difference between good and evil, beautiful and ugly to us and warned us of the perils and hazards to be met on the road of human perfection and the path of true felicity. We are indebted to God Almighty for this great guidance and we have to show, with all humility, great respect towards Him in our worships, our devotion and our supplications, whose importance we cannot comprehend unless we gain an other-worldly vision. As long as we sojourn in this narrow physical world, confined to the limits of the sequence of time and shackles of space, we cannot comprehend the infiniteness of the realm of His power, and we cannot even thank Him in our prayers and supplications for His guidance. Never let the idea enter our mind, that by our service and devotion we are doing some favour to His prophets, His chosen servants, and the great '*ulamā*' of the Ummah. They are our benefactors, who have taken the charge of leading the Ummah towards felicity and deliverance, and who have accepted the responsibility of our emancipation from the darkness and shadows of ignorance and misfortunes, taking us towards the realms of light and joy and greatness. What a great responsibility they took upon themselves, and what horrible pains and troubles they underwent for the sake of our instruction, in order to deliver us from those obscurities and darkneses, that were the result of vain beliefs and compound ignorance, and the chastisements that were to befall us as a result of our bad habits and villainies. They wanted to save us from those hideous forms and dreadful figures in the other world that would be the outcome of our wicked deeds, and they helped us to reach the regions of light, joy and comfort and the spheres of serenity and composure, whose image our mind would fail to visualize. This physical world in spite of its vastness is so limited and narrow that we cannot imagine a heavenly houri with our this-worldly vision. Our vision does not possess enough power to behold the magnificence of that world, which has been described in the speeches of the holy prophets of God, especially in the all-embracing revelations of the *Khātim al-nabiyyīn* (Seal of the prophets), who perceived those truths through Divine revelations, saw them, heard them, and then asked us to acquire them. And we, like recalcitrant children, disobey the commands of the wise, and even

do not pay heed to the dictates of our own reason, always being more than ready to oppose the Divinely guided ones. And those sanctified pious souls, out of the love and kindness that they possessed for the creatures of God, did never fall short of their duty, did never appeal to our meaner and baser faculties by bribing them to attract us towards heaven and felicity; they never tried to make us yield through intimidation or force. They did not either demand any remuneration or reward for the services they rendered. The remuneration asked by the Prophet (S) *مَوَدَّةُ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَى* (kindness for his kinsfolk), which is not really a payment for his services, is also meant for our own benefit, being the brightest of our achievements in the next world. Our sense of indebtedness to them in fact serves ourselves and we are benefited more from it than they are. How are they benefited by the righteous acts of poor beings like us? In what way will our sincerity and obedience do them any good? In what way do you and I consider our humble selves benefactors of the guides of the Ummah, from an ordinary faqih to the great Prophet (S) and God Almighty? All of them have in their own right fulfilled their function of guiding us and showing the right path, for which we are indebted to them and even a fraction of it we cannot pay back in this world. Nothing of this world is worthy of the repayment of their debt: *فِيْلَهُ وَلِزُشُوْهِ وَلَا زِيَالِهِ الْمِئْتَةُ* (It is to God, His Prophet (S), and His saints to whom all owe gratitude), as God Almighty has said:

... فَن لَّا تَمْتُوْا عَلٰى اِسْلَامِكُمْ بَلِ اللّٰهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ اَنۡ هَدٰىكُمْ لِلْاِيْمَانِ اِنۡ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاللّٰهُ بَصِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ؕ

... Say: Deem not your surrender a favour unto me; nay, but Allah does confer a favour on you, inasmuch as He hath led you to the faith, if ye are earnest. Lo. Allah knows the Unseen of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Seer of what you do. (49:17-18)

Hence, if we are sincere in our faith in God, it is in itself a favour bestowed upon us by God. God Almighty is Omniscient, and has the knowledge of the hidden. He is Omniscient, knows the inner, hidden reality of all our actions, and He is fully aware of the nature of our faith and the extent and degree of our submission to His Will.

We, the helpless creatures, who do not know the reality, acquire our knowledge from the *faqih* and think that we have done favour to him. We offer congregational prayers behind an *'ālim*, and we assume that we have conferred a favour on him, whereas, in fact, we are indebted to him. We do not realize this, and, therefore, this faulty outlook turns the effects of our deeds upside down and drags us into *'Sijjīn'* making our actions worthless.

### The Second Stage of Riyā':

At this stage, though *riyā'* is of lesser intensity than it is at the first stage, but it is possible that if the hypocrite does not heed the warnings, and repeatedly behaves in the same way (the *riyā'* of action) it is likely to terminate in the *riyā'* of the former stage—the *riyā'* of faith. We have already mentioned in the exposition of the previous tradition that in the *Ālam al-malakūt* (the celestial world) man may have a different form other than the human form. Those forms will be in accordance with the state of one's soul and its traits. If you possess good human qualities, in the other world those qualities will retain you in the human form, provided they are not deviated from the path of moderation. Good faculties will be considered as true merits only when the sensual self does not interfere with them, and the self does not play any role in their formation. Our respected teacher and shaykh Āyatullāh Shāhābādī used to say that the measure of the false and invalid spiritual practice and true religious spiritual struggle is as to what extent selfishness is involved in such practices, i.e. whether all spiritual effort is for God or for selfish motives. If the wayfarer on the heavenly journey treads a selfish path and his spiritual exercises are meant for acquiring powers for worldly ends, his efforts are rendered invalid, and his *sulūk* (progress on mystic path) will lead him to the calamity of the other world. The false claims of spirituality are usually made by such people. And if the wayfarer treads the right path, and is genuinely in search of God, his devotion is within the bounds of the Shari'ah, and God will help him, as promised in the following verse of the Quran:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا...

*As for those who strive for Us, We surely guide them to Our paths.... (29:69)*

Hence, his actions will lead him to felicity; egoism will be eliminated and self-conceit and pride will recede. This is quite clear that anyone who demonstrates his good deeds before people, his aim is a selfish aim, and he will be branded as a selfish, self-conceited, egoistic and egocentric person, and his godliness will be considered as nothing but false and pretentious, which will invalidate his good deeds. As the domain of your existence is replete with the feelings of self-love, the lust for wealth, power and fame, and the wish for ruling over the creatures of God, your good deeds and your excellences cannot be adjudged as virtuous deeds, and your moral behaviour is far away from truly religious morality. The operating force in your realm is satanic and your inner state is not a human condition. When you will open



your eyes in the other world, you will perceive yourself in an unhuman form, similar to one of those of the devils. For such selves, which are dens of the Satan, it is impossible to gain religious knowledge and learn the spirit of *tawhīd*. Unless the realm of your inner self is converted into a human state and your heart is purged of impurities and unholiness, you cannot be benefited from spiritual exercises, as God Almighty states in a *ḥadīth-e qudsī*:

لَا يَتَّعْنِي أَرْضِي وَلَا سَمَائِي بَلْ يَتَّعْنِي قَلْبُ عَبْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِ.

There is no clearer sign in the earth and in the heavens of the elegance of the Beloved than the heart of a true believer (*mu'min*).

The believer's heart is in the occupation of God, not at the disposal of the self. The heart of the believer is not self-willed, nor is it vagrant. It is said of it:

قَلْبُ الْمُؤْمِنِ بَيْنَ إصْبَعَيْ الرَّحْمَنِ يُقَلِّبُهُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ.

The heart of the true believer (*mu'min*) lies between two fingers of God, that He may turn it whatever way He pleases.

O you, the poor creature, who worships the self and the Devil and ignorance are the agencies operating in the realm of your heart, you yourself have prevented the hands of God from handling your heart. What sort of faith you are required to possess that your heart be the object of Divine illumination, absolute rule of the Truth may prevail there? Make it a point that unless you change yourself, and as long as the bad habit of ostentatiousness and vanity dominates your deeds, you will be branded as an unbeliever and you will be grouped with the *munāfiqūn* (hypocrites), even though you imagine yourself to be a believer in God and as one who has resigned himself to the Will of God.

**The Value of Human Existence as a Trustee of Divine Honour:**

My friend! wake up from the slumber of forgetfulness and carelessness, be aware, do not let sleep overtake your senses, and know that God Almighty has created you for His own sake, as stated in one *ḥadīth-e qudsī*:

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خَلَقْتُكُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلِأَنْفُسِكُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ.

O progeny of Adam, We have made everything for you and you for Our

service.

He has made your heart His own habitation. You and your hearts are the abodes of Divine Honour. God Almighty is intolerant regarding His Dignity and Honour. Do not be careless in this regard, and do not justify any violation of the Divine principles; and be afraid of His retribution so that you may not be disgraced and made infamous in this world in such a way that despite all efforts you are not able to undo what may befall you. You are guilty of violation of Divine Honour in your heart that belongs to the celestial world, in front of the angels of God and His prophets. The moral excellences through which the saints of God (*awliyā' Allāh*) acquired resemblance to Him, are being surrendered by you to others than God, and you are surrendering your heart, the seat of God, to His enemy, thus committing *shirk* (polytheism) in the heart of your hearts. Be afraid of God Almighty, Who besides bringing down your other-worldly image and degrading you in front of His angels and His prophets, will also expose and dishonour you in this world itself and you will be condemned to unmeasured indignity which shall be also irreparable, and irremediable, an infamy that cannot be redressed. God Almighty is *Sattār*, He conceals the sins, but He is jealous also. He is *أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ* —the Most Merciful of the merciful, but at the same time He is *أَشَدُّ الْمُعَاقِبِينَ* —the severest of the punishers also. He Himself says that He covers up bad deeds as long as they do not cross certain limits. God forbid, lest the gravity of your deeds should arouse His anger and should it overcome His tolerance and willingness to conceal sins, as you have read in the *ḥadith*.

Hence, come to your senses, seek refuge in God and turn back to Him, for God Almighty is the Compassionate and always seeks for an excuse to shower His mercy. If you ask for His forgiveness, He will readily forgive you, and will cover up your blemishes and past deeds, so that no one will be able to know about them, and He will make you a man of great distinctions, a paragon of virtues and an image of His Attributes. He will make your will consummate in the next world as His own Will is executed throughout the cosmos. It is narrated in a *ḥadith* that when the people are placed in the Paradise, a message from the Almighty will be given to them and its purport will be as follows: 'From the One who is Eternal and Immortal to him who is also eternal and immortal: Whatever I desire to bring into existence I command it to be and it comes into being; from this hour it has been decreed that you also command whatever you desire to bring into existence and your wish would be obeyed.'

Therefore, do not be egocentric, and subordinate your will to the Will of God Almighty; He will then make you an instrument and manifestation of His Will. He will give you power in the realms under

His control, and bestow upon you the capacity to create in the Hereafter. (Of course, this is not the same as *tafwīd*, which is a false notion, as proved elsewhere.)

Now, my friend, do as you please; either accept it or reject it. But know, that God Almighty is not in need of you or me or any other creature, and He has no need of our service and sincerity.

### RIYĀ' IN WORSHIP:

The third stage also is divided into several sections.

#### Section I:

The *riyā'* of this kind is more common and manifest than those mentioned above. Because we ordinary human beings usually do not belong to the above-mentioned two states. For this reason, the Devil cannot get hold of us in the way he encroaches upon those who belong to the other states. But since the majority of the worshippers express their devotion to God through formal prayers, the Devil commonly intervenes at this stage more frequently. Sensual temptations are also commoner at this stage. In other words, since such type of people tend to seek the physical pleasures of heaven through their actions, and they aspire to attain higher station by performing good deeds and abstaining from performing wicked ones, the Devil finds an access through this way; and he nurtures the roots of *riyā'* and deceit with great care, so that it may bear the fruits that are desired by him. He transforms their virtues into vices, and makes them to enter hell through the path of ritual worship. The acts by means of which they aim to secure paradise for themselves are transformed by him into the means of their destruction and doom. The deeds which would have led one to *'Ilīyyīn*—the highest heaven, are so distorted that their performer is thrown into *Sijjīn* by angels at the command of God. Therefore, persons who lay greater emphasis on this aspect (i.e. formalistic) and ignore other aspects, have nothing except apparently good deeds to secure salvation in the next world; they are required to be more cautious, so that this provision also may not be snatched away from their hands and they may not be consigned to the flames of hell and deprived of felicity for ever. They should watch over their acts lest the doors of heaven be closed and the doors of hell be opened to them.

#### How to Combat Riyā'?

Most often the sanctimonious person himself does not know that this particular vice has penetrated his deeds and his deeds have now

assumed hypocritical proportions and hence become worthless. Because the temptations of the Devil and the self are so unobservably shadowy and subtle and the path of humanity is so delicate and tenuous that unless anyone is extremely discriminate, he cannot understand their inherent evil. He imagines that his actions are meant for pleasing God, whereas they are serving the interests of the Devil. Since man is naturally created self-centred, the veil of self-love and egoism covers his flaws and vices from his own eyes. God willing, we shall also discuss this subject while commenting upon certain other aḥādīth; I ask for God's help in this regard.

For instance, the acquisition of religious knowledge, is one of the important religious duties and a kind of worship; but a man busy attaining excellence in this field is liable to fall an easy prey to the vice of *riyā'*, which seizes his heart in such a way that he himself is not aware and the same thick curtain of self-love obstructs his vision. He desires to gain an important position in the eyes of great scholars and men of distinction and honour, by solving an important problem in such a way that no other person has solved it before; he tries to project himself as a person distinguished from others by presenting the subject in a unique way, to make himself the focus of everyone's attention; with an air of self-assurance, he assumes that if anyone among the scholars and dignitaries eulogizes him in flattering terms, he will be able to receive the applause and praise of the whole gathering. The poor fellow fails to realize that even if he earns worldly fame and honour among scholars or the elite, he will be disgraced in the eyes of the King of kings, and these actions of his will lead him to *Sijjīn*. This act of *riyā'* is also accompanied with some other vices, like the wish for humiliating and insulting others, or injuring the feelings of his brother in faith, or sometimes being rude to a believer; each one of these vices is enough for landing him in hell. If again your deceptive self falls in the snares of its own guiles and succeeds in convincing you that your aim has been to make known a tenet of Sharī'ah and pronouncing the word of truth, which is one of the most meritorious acts of religious devotion, and that you do not aim at demonstrating your spiritual superiority, you ought to interrogate your self by asking that if a friend of yours had solved the same religious issue in a better way and had defeated you in the gathering of those scholars and highly placed persons, even then would you have taken the same position? If it is so, you were true to your own self. But if your self again is bent upon deceiving others and does not refrain from committing another treachery and contends that the utterance of truth is a meritorious act, and possesses a spiritual reward also, and that it is in your interest to attain an elevated station in the Hereafter, you are advised to ask your self: Suppose if God Almighty accords you the real glory for your defeat in case you gracefully accept

it, would you still desire to prevail? If you see that your self loves to dominate others in academic discussion for gaining publicity among the scholars for your knowledge and scholarship, and the discussion that you undertake is aimed at winning others' respect and honour, then know that the intellectual discourse, which is the highest form of worship and prayer, is transformed into the sinful act of *riyā'*, which, according to the narration of *al-Kāfī*, will lead you to *Sijjīn*, you are classed as a polytheist, and this act was performed with the motive of gaining respect in the eyes of the people. This act of yours, according to a tradition, will cause more harm to your faith than the harm done by two wolves who attack a herd of sheep without a shepherd from both sides. Therefore, you who are a scholar and responsible for reforming the Ummah and paving the way to the Hereafter, and curing spiritual infirmities, it is necessary for you first to correct yourself and maintain a sound spiritual state, so that you do not fall under the category of the scholars who do not act upon what they profess.

Pray to God Almighty to purify our hearts of the stains of polytheism and hypocrisy, and cleanse the mirror of our hearts of the rust of the love of the world, which is the source of all vices. O God! kindly help us and protect us helpless beings, afflicted with the disease of vanity and the lust for power and honour, and guard us in this hazardous journey along the intricacies of the labyrinthine dark path, O the Mightiest and the Most Powerful.

#### **Riyā' in Congregational Prayers:**

Congregational prayer is an eminent form of Islamic worship, and the leader of this prayer holds a distinctive position of honour. For this reason, Satan also intrudes more in this worship. He is much more envious of the *imām* (leader) of the *jamā'ah* (congregation) than anybody else. He is always busy finding the ways of keeping away the believers from receiving this Divine honour, and deprives their action of the element of sincerity and truth and drives them to *Sijjīn*. He tries to convert them into polytheists, and for this purpose he invades the hearts of the *imāms* through various means, such as *'ujb* (self-admiration), which we shall discuss later on, and *riyā'*, which is a display of religiosity through this significant worship for impressing the people, gaining publicity, and earning their admiration and respect; for instance, when an *imām* sees that a certain pious person is attending the congregational prayer, he tries to make an ostentation of his humility and devotion in order to capture his attention and win his admiration; he tries to find various ways of mentioning him in the gatherings of people not present in the congregation; in order to show his importance, he drags the name of that pious man again and again and tries to inform

the people about his presence as a follower in the congregational prayer; thus, he tries to create a false impression of a close association with him, especially if he belongs to the business class, and expresses such a great love and friendship for him which he never expressed even for a single moment for God or His favoured servants. And if, God forbid, any of the aristocrats loses his way and comes to pray with the congregation, it is a bigger disaster. The Devil is not unmindful of the leader of a small congregation either. He approaches him and makes him aware that he is so unmindful of worldly gains that he is content to spend his time in a small local mosque of a poor neighbourhood. This feeling is also similar to the first, or even worse than that; as the vice of jealousy spreads its tentacles in the hearts of such people, who do not enjoy the bounties of this world; the Devil deprives them of the glories of the other world too, and they are condemned to suffer in both the worlds. At the same time, the Devil, does not lose his grip on the collars of people like you and me, who have no access to the leadership of a congregation, and who lament the absence of proper means; he makes us doubt the utility of congregations of Muslims, and makes us scorn and flout them. We may be led to look upon our failure to capture a congregation as otherworldly seclusion, and ourselves as free from love of station and honour. Then we become worse than both of the groups, we neither belong to the first category of people, who enjoy the good things of this life, nor do we belong to the second category, whose achievements are comparatively humbler; nor do we have any claim to the next world; nevertheless if we get an opportunity, we might prove to be more power-hungry, honour-thirsty, and greedy than either of the groups.

#### How Does Riyā' Infiltrate the Ranks of the Congregation?

The Satan is not content with dragging the leader of the congregation to the hell. His lust is not satiated with that. He infiltrates the ranks of the worshippers also. Since the first row is more esteemed than other rows, and its right wing superior to the left, he makes them his target more often than any other row. He attracts the pious towards the right part of the first row, and incites them to pose to be superior to others in the eyes of the people. The helpless fellow, unconscious of the Satan's whispering, tries to demonstrate his superiority through a sanctimonious glance or gesture, which displays his inner polytheism, which is enough for sending him to *Sijjīn*. From here, the Satan then steals into other rows to allure other people: on account of his awkward gestures and funny behaviour a devotee becomes the target of jeer and sneer of others, who consider themselves to be free from all sort of faults. Sometimes it has been observed that a respectable person,

especially a scholar of rare distinction and high intellectual calibre, is made to sit by the Devil in the last row, in order to make people realize that though his position is much higher, but since he does not care for worldly position and is free of self-esteem, he has come to sit in the last row. Some people of this kind will never be seen sitting in the first row.

The Satan is not satisfied with influencing the imam and his followers; he sometimes catches hold of one of the loners by the beard, persuading him to leave his house or shop, and by means of his allurements he launches him into a corner of the mosque over a prayer-mat. For such a man, no imam is *'ādil*, or qualified to lead prayers. The Satan makes him perform a prolonged prostration and *rukū'* and an extended prayer. In his heart of hearts, this individual wishes to make people believe that he is pious and conscientious to such a degree that he avoids the congregation, so that he may not be trapped into following an unjust imam. This person, besides being conceited and sanctimonious, is also ignorant of the laws of the Shari'ah. The *marji' taqlid* (legal authority) whom he follows may not have laid any condition for praying behind an imam except acceptability of his outward behaviour. But the loner is not concerned with that, for his real motive is *riyā'*. He merely wants to present himself as a man of piety in order to gain the favour and admiration of people.

In the same way, our other activities also are interfered with by the Satan. This damned creature, whenever he finds a murky heart, he makes it his resting place and tries to spoil our visible and invisible deeds, and transforms our good deeds into such as lead us directly to the hell.

#### An Invitation to Sincerity:

My friend, be judicious and careful in your actions. Demand from yourself an account of every deed. Cross-examine yourself for every detail; try to evaluate your deeds through introspection whether they were meant for the realization of virtue or motivated otherwise. What motivated you to ask questions about mid-night prayers? Was it purely for the sake of God with an intention to perform such prayers, or for projecting your image as a deeply religiously person? Why is it that you are eager to inform others about your pilgrimage by all possible means and about the number of times you undertook it? Why are you not content with confining your charitable deeds to yourself alone, and what do you want to gain by informing the others of your acts of charity, for as soon as you find an opportunity you announce them? If it is undertaken for the sake of God, and you intend that people should imitate you, and you think in terms of **الدال على الخير كفاعله** (the one who shows the path of virtue is as worthy as the doer of it) while

performing this deed, its display is justified; thank God, for He has enabled you to act with a clear conscience and pure heart. But beware of the guiles of Satan while interrogating your self, for he can project the acts adulterated with *riyā'* as selfless and sacred. If your action is not for the sake of God, then it is better to abstain from doing what you have been doing, for it amounts to *sum'ah*, i.e. advertisement of false virtues, which is a branch of the accursed tree of *riyā'*; for God Almighty does not approve of it and condemns its perpetrator to *Sijjīn*. We ought to seek refuge in God from the vice of deceit, whose guiles are very subtle. We have a general idea that our deeds are not pure and sincere, because had we been His true servants, why does the Devil, despite promising not to impede the actions of His true servants, disturb our sanctity and make us an instrument of his evil designs? In the words of my respected teacher, the Devil is the watchdog of the Almighty's court; he does not bark at the person who is near to God, and does not bother him. As the watchdog does not drive the friends of the master away from the house, in the same way, the Satan also recognizes God's friends, and does not allow any stranger to get access to Him. Therefore, whenever you realize that the Satan interferes in your affairs, you should immediately know that your actions are not performed with sincere intentions and are not meant for the Almighty. If you are a sincere believer in God, why doesn't your tongue pour forth words of wisdom, coming from the heart? For about forty years you imagine that you have been performing virtuous deeds in order to please God, whereas it occurs in a ḥadīth that whosoever remains faithful to God for forty days, springs of wisdom emanate from his heart. This is, therefore, a sign for us to comprehend that our deeds were not performed for the sake of God, though we ourselves are not conscious of it, and this is the main cause of our irremediable sickness.

Pitiable is the condition of the devotees, worshippers, leaders and followers of Friday congregations and men of high knowledge and learning! When they will open their eyes in the court of the Most High on the Day of Judgement, they will come to know that they are not only among the sinners, perpetrators of major sins, but even worse than infidels and idolaters, and their record of deeds even darker than theirs.

It is a matter of pity for a person that his prayers and other devotional acts should serve as fuel for the fires of hell. May God save us from the moment when, in spite of one's alms-giving and *zakāt* and piety, one's appearance will be distorted to such hideousness that it is not even imaginable. You, a helpless creature, are branded as a *mushrik*, an idolater, and a sinner despite your belief in the Unity of God. God willing, He will forgive the sinners by His mercy, but for the *mushrik* He has said that He will not forgive him if he dies without repentance.



It is stated in the *ahādith* that one used to *riyā'*—the one who makes a display of his religiosity, devotion, high religious status, his preaching and leading of prayers, his fasting, his *namāz* and even his pious deeds for the sake of gaining respect in the hearts of people—is a polytheist. His *shirk* (idolatry) is confirmed by the traditions of the Imams of the Holy Household (A) and the Quranic text, and hence his sin is unpardonable. It would have been better for you to be among the perpetrators of major sins, to be one notorious for his evil conduct and perpetration of obvious indignities, while being a monotheist, instead of becoming a polytheist.

Now, my friend, introspect seriously and find some remedy to cure your (spiritual) sickness, and realize the futility of acquiring honour in human hearts, a small piece of flesh which will not satisfy a bird's appetite. These weak creatures possess no power, and their estimation is insignificant. The real power is to be sought in Him; He is the Absolute Cause of all causes—the Ultimate Cause. Even if all creatures make a joint effort to create a single mosquito, they will not be successful in doing so, and if the mosquito causes them a slight harm they will not be able to avert it if God does not will so.

All power belongs to the Almighty. He is the Mover of the universe. Whenever you do something and make an effort to perform something, inscribe on your heart with the pen of reason: لا مُؤْتَرَفِي إِلَّا الْوَحِيدُ (no one is effective in the realm of existence except God).

By all possible means equip your heart with the principle of unity of Divine Action (*tawhīd-e af'ālī*), which is the first stage of the belief in the Unity of Being, and thus convert it into the heart of a true believer. Illuminate your heart with the holy dictum of: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (there is no god but Allah); and mould it accordingly. Lead your heart to the stage of tranquillity (*iṭmi'nān*), and make it realize that human beings can cause neither harm nor good, and that God alone is capable of doing any harm or good to anybody. Cure your vision, which suffers from blindness, so that you are not raised blind on the Day of Judgement and complain to the Almighty رَبِّ لِمَ عَذَّبْتَنِي أَغْمَى (My Lord! wherefore have You raised me (here) blind...? [20:125]). The Will of the Almighty prevails over the wills of other beings. If your heart surrenders to these holy words, and has faith in them, this can be hoped that your deeds will be rewarded and all the traces of polytheism, *riyā'*, infidelity and hypocrisy will be wiped out from the face of your heart. This profound faith is in accordance with reason and revelation, and there are no traces of determinism (*jabr*) present in it. It is possible that some people who do not know the meaning, the basic principles and ingredients of determinism may mistake it as such, whereas it is not *jabr* but *tawhīd*. Determinism is a kind of *shirk*; whereas *tawhīd* is right guidance, determinism is misguidance. This occasion is not proper for

discussing determinism and freedom. But those who fully understand his issue can appreciate the import of what I say. Moreover, the Prophet (S) has asked us not to indulge in such discourses. Anyway, ask God Almighty, through supplication and humble entreaties all the time, especially in loneliness, to guide you and to illuminate your heart with the light of *tawhīd*. Ask Him to endow you with the vision of the hidden, the perception of the unity (in diversity)—the Unity of Divine Being, so that you may not attach importance to anything else and consider every other thing as insignificant and trifle. Beseech His Holy Essence to make your actions pure and sincere, and lead you to the path of sincerity and love. And if you have reached such a spiritual station that your prayers are responded and you can do something for this helpless creature of God, who has squandered his life in meaningless pursuits, devoid of any real purpose, hankering after desires and lusts, whose sins have sickened the heart to a point where no exhortation, advice, Quranic verse, or tradition of the Prophet (S), or argument or wise saying can have any effect, do pray for him; may be your prayer shall secure his deliverance. God never turns away a believer from His court, and He grants his prayers. By ever remembering these things, which you already know and which are also not new to you, be heedful and sincere from within the heart, and, without ceasing, critically reevaluate your movements, pauses, and your behaviour. Always scrutinize your secret intentions, and strictly take account of everything in the same manner as one business partner is accountable to the other. Abstain from everything that resembles *riyā'* and simulation, however virtuous it may appear to be. Even in the matter of obligatory religious duties, if you believe that you cannot perform them sincerely in public, perform them secretly, though it is preferable to perform them openly. It is rare for *riyā'* to occur in obligatory duties themselves; more often it relates to their mode of performance and to acts which are *mustahabb* or supererogatory. In any case, purge your heart from the dirt of polytheism with perfect solemnness and severest self-criticism, lest, God forbid, you should pass away from this world in this state that your performance is deplorable, and there is no hope of salvation for you. Then you will invite the wrath of God, as mentioned in the tradition quoted in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah* from *Qurb al-'asnād*, and reported from Amir al-mu'minin 'Alī (A):

إِنَّهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص): مَنْ تَزَيَّنَ لِلنَّاسِ بِأُحْبَبِ اللَّهِ وَبَارَزَ لِلَّهِ فِي السِّرِّ بِأَكْرَهَةِ اللَّهِ لِقِيَا اللَّهِ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبٌ وَلَهُ مَا قُتِّ.

Amir al-mu'minin 'Alī (A) reports that the Prophet (S) said: "One who does some act liked by God in order to show off to people, and in secret manifests

such qualities as are abominations to God, he shall encounter God's anger and wrath [on the Day of Resurrection]."

There are two probable interpretations of this ḥadīth. Firstly, it is about such a person who presents himself as paragon of virtue before people, while his inner self is immersed in ugly vices. Secondly, it may be about a person who performs outwardly virtuous deeds with the intention of *riyā'*. In any case, it is obvious that the ḥadīth condemns *riyā'*, because the performance of the obligatory acts and duties if not motivated by *riyā'*, cannot be the object of Divine wrath. In all probability the second meaning is closer to the import of the ḥadīth, as the open performance of wicked deeds is a greater evil.

This is a warning for us to be cautious lest, God forbid, we do something to incur the wrath of the King of kings and the Most Merciful of the merciful: *اغْوِ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ غَضَبِ الْخَلِيمِ*

#### A Tradition of Imām 'Alī (A):

We conclude this section with a tradition reported from the commander of the pious, Amīr al-mu'minīn (A), recorded in *al-Kāfī*. Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq has also reported the same tradition from al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A), which forms a part of the last will and testament of the Prophet (S) to 'Alī (A):

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (ع): ثَلَاثُ عِلَامَاتٍ لِلْمُرَائِي: يَنْشَظُّ إِذَا رَأَى  
النَّاسَ، وَيَكْتَسِلُ إِذَا كَانَ وَخْدَهُ، وَيُحِبُّ أَنْ يُحَمَدَ فِي جَمِيعِ أُمُورِهِ.

Said al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) that Amīr al-mu'minīn (A) said: "There are three distinguishing features of one accustomed to *riyā'*: he expresses joy and cheerfulness when he is greeted by people; he becomes cheerless and sullen when alone; and he wishes to be praised for everything he does."

Since this vice is so hidden and subtle that it remains unnoticed by the person himself, he is unaware of the fact that inwardly he is a hypocrite, and he imagines his actions to be pure and untainted. Therefore, the signs of this characteristic have been described so that men should be able to identify their hidden motives by examining their inner self in their light and be able to prevent and treat them accordingly. An individual may introspect and know that he is not inclined to perform his religious duties when he is alone; even if with great compulsion he forces himself to perform them, or even if he performs them habitually, he does not perform with real sincerity and purity of heart, but rather as a physical exercise; but while performing his prayer in the mosque, in the congregation of the people and in the presence of

others, he becomes animated, performing his prayer with utmost joy and enthusiasm. He is inclined to perform long and protracted *rukū's* and prostrations; he performs the *mustahabb* actions properly, caring about their minutest particulars. If one pays a little attention to one's inner state, one may come to know the reason for this vigour. Why is it so that he spreads the net of his (pretended) piety for catching the attention of people? He may mislead himself by saying that he is more pleased with praying in the mosque, as it is more meritorious to do so, and that it brings more rewards also. He will convince himself by saying that it is preferable to say prayer in a better way in front of others, in order that they may follow his example and be attracted towards the religion. Man deceives himself by all means and never thinks of correcting himself. For a sick person who considers himself to be sound there is no hope of being cured. The ill-fated man's innermost being not only secretly aims to parade his good deeds before people, remaining unconscious of its inner urge, but is also bent upon presenting his sin as worship and his conceit as propagation of religion, despite the fact that the performance of the *mustahabbāt* prayers is *mustahabb* in seclusion. Why is it that your self always responds in public, and why do you relish weeping out of the fear of God in the gathering of people, though in loneliness in spite of squeezing your eyes you cannot bring out a single tear? Where is the fear of God? Does it grip you in the gatherings of people only? Does it overwhelm you only on the occasion of the Nights of Great Value ( *ليلة القدر* ) in front of several thousands of people? Such a man offers one hundred *rak'ah's* of *namāz* and recites the *Du'ā-i Jawshan-i Kabīr* and *Du'ā-i Jawshan-i Ṣaghīr* in addition to several *sūrah's* of the Quran and is not bored and does not feel the slightest weariness. If man performs something purely for the sake of God or for gaining His blessings, or out of fear of hell or in the hope of heaven, why should he desire that his deeds be praised by men and admired by them? His ears are all the time eager to listen something in his praise, and his heart is after those who observe his devotion and notice how venerable this gentleman is, for he is so punctual about the prayer and is so concerned about the supererogatory duties. If your deeds are meant for God, what does this exaggerated craving mean? If the fear of hell and the hope of heaven force you to perform these deeds, what does this love of publicity mean? You ought to realize that this desire issues from the accursed and abominable tree of *īyā'*. Therefore, try as much as you can to purify yourself of these absurd inclinations (to the extent possible), and try to reform yourself.

### Variation in Grades and Degrees of Qualities among Different Individuals:

At this stage it is essential to remind you that each one of the qualities of the soul, both the good ones and the bad, has numerous grades and degrees. Those who acquire virtues and give up vices are grouped with the '*urafā*', saints and friends of God (*awliyā*' *Allāh*). As for other individuals, the nature of vices and virtues is determined by the spiritual station to which they belong. It may be that the qualities which are considered to be vices for those belonging to higher spiritual station are not considered vices for those belonging to a lower stage. On the contrary, in a way, they may even be regarded as their accomplishments. And similarly the qualities that are regarded as virtues for the people of a lower category may be vices for men of a higher category. *Riyā*' is also one of such (relative) vices that we are discussing presently. Authenticity (*ikhlas*) is the highest stage of freedom from *riyā*' and is characteristic of the saints (*awliyā*' *Allāh*); others do not share this quality. The common people generally attain a lower stage of it, and this does not harm their *imān* or *ikhlas*, because, generally, they have a natural inclination that their virtues be known to others. Though they may not have intentionally performed them for the sake of demonstrating them, but their self is instinctively inclined to make them known. This tendency does not annul their action, nor does it make them infidels, hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*) or polytheists either. But the same trait is considered to be a shortcoming in the case of a *walī* or '*arīf bi-Allāh*', as for them it amounts to *nifāq* or *shirk*. Absolute purification from the impurity of polytheism and obtaining perfect authenticity (*ikhlas*) of devotion is essentially a primary condition for attaining the stage reserved for *awliyā*' *Allāh*, and there are even higher stages which they can attain, but, here, it would be out of place to go into these details. Our Imams, upon whom be peace, have declared that their worship was the worship of emancipated souls (*ahrār*), which was performed for the sake of love of God alone, neither due to the fear of hell nor in the hope of heaven; and they considered this stage to be the first step of their *wilāyah*. To them worship is a state of ecstasy and rapture which is beyond the reach of our imagination and understanding. Apart from the above-mentioned *aḥādīth* narrated from the Prophet (S) and Amir al-mu'minin (A), there is another *ḥadīth* also, reported by Zurārah from Imām Abū Ja'far (A), which is as follows:

عَنْ زُرَّارَةَ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ (ع) قَالَ: سَأَلْتُهُ عَنِ الرَّجُلِ يَفْعَلُ الشَّيْءَ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ قَبْرَاهُ إِنْسَانٌ  
فَيَسِرُّهُ ذَلِكَ؟ فَقَالَ: لَابَأْسَ، مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا وَهُوَ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَظْهَرَ لَهُ فِي النَّاسِ الْخَيْرُ، إِذَا لَمْ

يَكُنْ صَنَعَ ذَلِكَ لَذَلِكَ.

Zurārah reports that he questioned al-Imām al-Bāqir (A) about the status of a person who performed good deeds, which were seen by others and it made him happy. Said the Imam (A): "There is no harm in it; there is no one who does not like that his good deeds be made known to the people, in case he does not perform them [solely] for the sake of attracting their admiration.

In one of the two aḥādith, the tendency of performing good deeds for the sake of earning respect and admiration is considered as the sign of *riyā'*, while in another ḥadith it is stated that there is no harm in the joy resulting from the demonstration of a good deed. These two different positions are taken in view of the category to which an individual belongs. There are certain other reasons also for such a view, but we shall abstain from mentioning them.

What is Sum'ah?

At the end, it is to be noted that *sum'ah* means to orally transmit one's good qualities to the ears of people for the purpose of attracting them and publicizing oneself, and this tendency is a branch of the vicious tree of *riyā'*. For the same reason we have dealt with *sum'ah* as a part of *riyā'*, not as a distinct vice, and have not elaborated its meaning separately.

#### NOTES:

1. *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 402.
2. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 450.
3. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 453.
4. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, the chapter concerning *riyā'*.
5. *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*.
6. *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 295.
7. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 297.

### Third *Hadīth* on ‘*Ujb*

بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُنْتَصِلِ إِلَى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَشْبَاطٍ عَنْ  
أَحْمَدَ بْنِ غَمَرَ الْخَلَّالِ؛ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ سُؤَيْدٍ؛ عَنْ أَبِي الْحَسَنِ (ع)؛ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُهُ عَنِ الْعُجْبِ  
الَّذِي يُفْسِدُ الْعَمَلَ؛ فَقَالَ: الْعُجْبُ دَرَجَاتٌ مِنْهَا أَنْ يُزَيَّنَ لِلْعَبْدِ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَيَرَاهُ حَسَنًا فَيَعْجِبُهُ  
وَيَحْسَبُ أَنَّهُ يُحْسِنُ ضَمْعًا وَمِنْهَا أَنْ يُؤْمِنَ الْعَبْدُ بِرَبِّهِ فَيُؤْمِنُ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَلِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ فِيهِ  
الْأَمْنُ

Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb (al-Kulaynī) from ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, from his father, from ‘Alī ibn Asbāt, from Aḥmad ibn ‘Umar al-Hallāl, from ‘Alī ibn Suwayd from Abū al-Ḥasan (Al-Imām al-Riḍā [A]): Says ‘Alī ibn Suwayd that he asked Abū al-Ḥasan (A) about the ‘*Ujb* (self-conceit, vanity) that vitiates the quality of human deeds. Said the Imam (A), “There are several levels of ‘*ujb*, one of them is when one’s bad qualities appear to him as good; he reckons them as good ones and congratulates himself imagining that he is performing virtues. Another level of ‘*ujb* is represented by a person who believes in God and thinks that he has done a favour to God; whereas God Almighty has conferred a favour on him (by endowing him with faith). (*Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. II, p. 313)

What is ‘*Ujb*?

**I**n the opinion of the ‘ulamā’—may God be pleased with them—‘*ujb* is magnification of one’s virtues and good deeds, their overestimation, and satisfaction with them accompanied with a feeling of superiority on their account, while one exonerates and exculpates himself from all failings and faults. But to feel pleasure and delight on performing virtuous deeds accompanied with a sense of humility and modesty before God and gratitude to God for His favours, and to ask

Him to increase them, is not *'ujb*, but is a praiseworthy (*mamdūh*) trait.

The great compiler of ḥadīth, al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī—may his grave be filled with fragrance—quotes the great scholar and thinker al-Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn al-'Āmilī (R) as having said,

There is no doubt that when anyone performs good deeds, like fasting, night vigils, etc., he feels some kind of joy and pleasure within him. This pleasure and joy, if it is on account of the feeling that God Almighty has conferred on him favour and grace, which caused him to perform such acts of piety, while he is afraid of their loss and is anxious about their disappearance, and asks God Almighty for their continuity and abundance—this kind of exultation and gladness is not *'ujb*. But if the exultation and pride is felt on account of the belief that he is the doer of such deeds and that it is he who possesses all such good qualities, and if he glorifies his own deeds with confidence in his goodness, considering himself to be free from all faults and vices, it reaches such a point that one believes that he is conferring some favour upon God in performing these deeds. This feeling of exultation and pride is *'ujb*.

In my opinion, this definition of *'ujb* is correct, but the deeds and actions referred to should be considered to include the external as well as the internal acts, and at the same time to apply both to good and bad actions. Because, while affecting the bodily or external actions *'ujb* also affects one's inner (mental and spiritual) actions also and corrupts them. In the same way as a virtuous person may become conceited and vain about his good deeds, so also the doer of wicked deeds may think highly of his qualities, and feel proud of himself on their account. The tradition explicitly mentions both of them, as they are frequently ignored by a majority of men. We shall discuss them in the course of our discourse.

This should also be remembered that the delight which is considered to be different from *'ujb* and is reckoned among praiseworthy qualities, is according to its specific nature, as will be explained in the subsequent discussion.

*'Ujb* has various degrees, as is also indicated by the ḥadīth; the following are some of them:

*First Degree:* *'Ujb* with regard to faith and belief in true doctrines; its opposite is the *'ujb* in *kufr* (infidelity), *shirk* (polytheism), and fallacious creeds.

*Second Degree:* The *'ujb* in good traits and qualities, as opposed to the *'ujb* in moral vices and ugly qualities.

*Third Degree:* The *'ujb* in pious deeds and good actions, as opposed to the *'ujb* in abominable deeds and repulsive acts.



There are certain other degrees also, but they are not so significant as to be put in a separate class; we shall, by the help of the Almighty, discuss these three degrees of *'ujb*, their causes, the ways of their remedy and cure.

#### The *'Ujb* of the Faithful :

Among the above-mentioned states of *'ujb*, some of them can be clearly detected if one tries to discover them and pays a little attention and is vigilant; but some others, being very subtle and concealed, cannot be detected unless one is carefully critical of oneself and minutely analyzes one's deeds and actions. Certain stages are more dangerous and fatal than the other stages.

The first and foremost stage which is the extreme and most fatal kind of *'ujb* is a state in which the person believes to have conferred a favour on his Supreme Benefactor, the King of kings, by having faith in Him, or by performing the duties enjoined by Him. He imagines that through his belief he has caused the boundaries of the kingdom of Heaven to expand, or he has contributed to the splendour and magnificence of the Religion of Truth by having faith in Him. He thinks that by propagating and disseminating His message, preaching His Shari'ah, His laws or His doctrine, or by enjoining good behaviour and forbidding evil conduct or by implementing the *ḥudūd* prescribed by Him, or by his sermons from the pulpit or his prayers in the niche, he is imparting a certain splendour and glory to His religion. Or he also may think that by joining the congregation of Muslims, or by holding the mourning ceremonies to commemorate the tragedy of al-Imām al-Husayn's martyrdom, he is glorifying the religion and hence doing a favour to God, to the Martyred Imam (A), and to the Prophet (S). Though he would not reveal it openly, but in his heart of hearts he may think in this manner. In the same way, while serving the creatures of God in matters prescribed or recommended by the religion—like giving of obligatory and recommended alms, helping and protecting the weak and the destitute—he thinks that he is putting them under obligation. Sometimes this feeling of doing a favour to them is so concealed that it is not known to the person himself (the subject of doing of favour to God by men and doing of favour to men by God has been discussed in detail in the second ḥadīth).

At the second level is the state in which an individual is exultant in his heart taking a coquettish air before God. This attitude is different from the one of conferring a favour on God, though many people see no difference between these two states. In this state the individual considers himself as a favourite of God, and includes himself in the clan of the saintly and among those nearest to God. If he hears the names

of saintly persons, of those near to God or those captivated by Divine love, he associates himself with them in his heart, although, overtly he makes a simulation of humility and tries to project an opposite image of himself.

In order to make credible his assumed role, he may act against his real belief in such a way which appears to negate it, but in fact posits it by its very negation. If any misfortune comes to him, he blows trumpet of (البلاء للولاء) (lit. 'misfortune in exchange for friendship', which implies that the saintly are beset in hardships). Those people who claim being guides of others, 'urafā', mystics, and ascetics are susceptible to its dangers more than other people.

In the next state, the individual considers himself worthy of being rewarded by God Almighty in return for his faith, good behaviour, and good deeds, and considers it obligatory on God to befriend him in this world and grant him higher stations in the Hereafter. He counts himself among the true believers and considers himself to be a pure, innocent, and pious being. Whenever a pious person is praised in his absence, he believes that even if God were to adjudge him with justice, he also would deserve to be rewarded. And sometimes, with utter shamelessness and brazenness, he dares to speak in such terms emphatically. If a misfortune befalls him, or he faces any adversities, he complains about the ways of God in his heart and questions the justness of His actions that causes sufferings for the pious, the sincere, and the truthful, and showers His kindness and generosity upon the hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*). He nurses the sentiments of resentment against God inside his heart, while apparently expressing the sense of gratification and satisfaction. He shifts the responsibility of his misfortunes to the Supreme Benefactor, and pretends to be happy and contented with His will and judgement outwardly. And when he hears that God smites the believers in this world, he consoles his heart without knowing the fact that the *munāfiqūn* are also smitten, and that every individual who is smitten is not a believer.

In the other stage of *'ujb* the individual considers himself as superior to others, and regards himself as better than other human beings. He considers himself to be more pious than others and considers his own faith to be sounder than that of other believers and immaculate. He considers himself to be more perfect and unfailing than others in the observance of the *wājibāt* (compulsory duties) and the *'muḥrāmāt* (prohibited things). He thinks himself to be more regular than others in the observance of *mustaḥabbāt* (recommended religious precepts) and more regular in joining the Friday prayer congregation and other ceremonies and rites. He considers himself to be superior to others and treats others as imperfect and insignificant beings. He views them disdainfully in his heart, or treats them with contempt. He excludes

every individual from Divine grace and mercy, and considers them a right belonging to himself or to some people like him. The person who has reached this stage comes to a point when he denies whatever virtue he perceives in others and is disposed to regard its presence in others as disputable. Somehow he suspects the sincerity of their virtues in his heart and considers his own deeds as free from any kind of fault. He underrates others' good deeds, but if he himself performs those deeds he magnifies them. He is sensitive to others' errors, but overlooks his own faults.

These are some of the signs and symptoms of 'ujb though one may be unaware of their presence in oneself. There are certain other stages of 'ujb also which I did not mention, and there might be some others of which I am, unavoidably, unaware.

#### The 'Ujb of the Faithless:

The bad deeds of unbelievers, hypocrites, polytheists, atheists, villains, sinners, and transgressors occasionally reach such a point when they become proud of their evil deeds and think highly of themselves. They, on account of their vicious beliefs and deeds, consider themselves to be men of liberal thinking and open minds, free from all fetters and bonds and free from superstitions. They consider themselves as men of courage and valour, link the faith and belief in God with superstition, and consider the observance of religious precepts as a kind of narrow-mindedness. They consider good character and moral behaviour as signs of weakness of the personality. They look down on the performance of good deeds and observance of religious duties and rites as the signs of a weak mind and evidence of the lack of common sense. They regard themselves as free-men, who, for not believing in nonsensical superstitions and indifference to religious rules, are worthy of praise. Wicked and vicious qualities having sunk down their roots within the deep layers of their hearts, and their eyes and ears having become accustomed to those acts, and they having gained great charm and grace in their eyes, they consider them as accomplishments. As pointed out in the hadith, at one stage bad deeds appear to be good to the evil person and he perceives them as virtues. This is an allusion to the verse of the Quran which says:

أَقَمَّنْ زَيْنَ لَهُ سُوءَ عَمَلِهِ قَرَأَهُ حَسَنًا...

*And what of him, the evil of whose deeds has been decked out fair to him, so that he thinks them good?... (35:8)*

The words وَيَحْسَبُ أَنَّهُ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهُ (‘and he considers that he is doing

something good') refer to the following verse:

قُلْ هَلْ تَتَّبِعُونَ أَفْعَالَكُمْ \* الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ  
يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا \* أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ  
الْقِيَمَةِ وَزْنًا \*

*Say: Shall We inform you who will be the greatest losers in their works? Those whose striving goes astray in the life of the world, while they think that they are doing something good. Those are they who disbelieve in the signs of their Lord and in the encounter with Him. Therefore their works have failed, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall not assign to them any weight. (18:103-105)*

Such people, who are ignorant and negligent but consider themselves to be learned and aware, are the most wretched of human beings, or rather the most wretched of creatures. Spiritual doctors are incapable of curing them. No admonition or advice can have any influence on them, but can even produce opposite results. They do not listen to any argument. They do not pay any heed to the guidance of the prophets (A), the arguments of the philosophers, and the teachings of the great sages. We should seek refuge in God from the mischief of the self, whose wiles draw men from sinfulness into infidelity and from infidelity into 'ujb. The self and the Devil make people accustomed to a sin by diminishing the gravity of that sin. When that vice sends out its roots into the heart, it appears to be a very ordinary and trivial thing to the person, who commits another sin bigger than the one with which he has become familiar. After committing this second sin repeatedly, it also casts away its gravity in his view and appears to be an ordinary thing, and he does not hesitate to commit a still bigger sin. In this way, step by step, all major sins become diminutive in his eyes, and the Divine laws of the Shari'ah, belittled by him, recede into insignificance. His evil deeds culminate in infidelity, apostasy, and 'ujb. We shall take up this subject later on.

#### **Snares and Wiles of the Devil:**

In the same way as the victims of 'ujb (who think highly of themselves), by advancing step by step in transgression and sinfulness, ultimately reach the stage of apostasy, in the same way those affected by 'ujb in their devotional activities and worship also advance day by day from the lower stages of 'ujb to its higher levels. The snares and designs of Satan and the self are not haphazard, but according to a cal-

culated plan. It is not possible that the Devil would induce a God-fearing person of a clean character to commit a sin like murder or fornication, nor would he provoke a person possessing an honest nature and a pure soul to commit theft or a highway robbery. It is not the case that from the very first day he will ask you to consider your good deeds as a favour done to God or to include yourself in the category of the Divine saints, His favourite servants, and those nearest to Him. In the beginning he starts at the bottom and in a low key. He steals into your heart and persuades you to be extremely careful and dedicated regarding the recommended duties (*mustahabbāt*), prayers, and acts of piety. While you do this, he will turn your attention towards the sins of a certain sinner and will make you compare his deeds with your own. Then he will whisper into your ears that you have enough grounds, both on a rational as well as a religious basis, to consider yourself superior to that person. Indeed your deeds will be the source of your redemption and that by the grace of God you are pious and pure and free from all vices. He achieves two things through these kind of insinuations: first, it inculcates a feeling of general distrusts regarding the creatures of God; second, it makes the person imbued with a feeling of self-satisfied conceit. Both of these qualities are destructive and the sources of various vices and evils.

At this juncture, you should tell your self and the Devil that it is possible that this person who is guilty of committing that sin may possess other good qualities unknown to you or might have performed certain good deeds for which God may bless him with His grace and mercy, and the light of his good deeds and good qualities may guide him and ultimately lead him to deliverance. Perhaps God Almighty has afflicted him with this sin, so as to protect him from *'ujb*, which is worse than sin. It is said in a ḥadīth of *al-Kāfī*:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ أَنَّ الذَّنْبَ خَيْرٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ مِنَ الْعُجْبِ وَلَوْلَا ذَلِكَ مَا ابْتَلَى  
مُؤْمِنٌ بِذَنْبٍ أَبَدًا.

Al-Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (A) said: "Verily God Almighty knows that sin is better for a mu'min (a true believer) than *'ujb*. If it was not thus, He would not have afflicted any mu'min with sin." (*Al-Kāfī*, vol.II, p. 313)

May be on account of the same mistrust in others, my acts will lead me to a miserable life in the Hereafter. Our great master, the accomplished *'arif*, Shāhābādī— *rūhī fidāh*— used to say, 'Do not look down on even a *kāfir* (non-believer) in your heart. It is possible that the divine light of his inner nature may lead him to faith and your rebuke and disdain may lead you towards a wretched life in the Hereafter. Of course to practice *al-'amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*

(enjoining right conduct and forbidding bad behaviour) is something different from the inner feeling of contempt.' He would even say, 'Never curse the unbelievers regarding whom it is not known that they will leave the world in the state of unbelief. If they leave the world as rightly-guided servants of God, their spiritual rectitude may prove to be an obstruction in the way of your own spiritual advancement.' In any case, beware that the Devil and the carnal self make man enter the preliminary stages of '*ujb*'; and from this place, step by step, they slowly take him to higher stages of '*ujb*', and in this way, in degrees, they lead man to the wretched state in which he thinks that he is conferring a favour on God by having faith in Him and performing virtuous deeds. This is the final stage of '*ujb*'.

#### The Evil Effects of '*Ujb*:

Know that '*ujb*' in itself is a destructive and dangerous vice which spoils the faith and the deeds. In answer to the question by the narrator of the tradition about '*ujb*' which corrupts human deeds, the Imam (A) mentions the '*ujb*' in faith as one of its forms. We have read in the previous tradition that '*ujb*' is considered by God Almighty to be something worse than sin, so much so that He makes a believer commit sin so that he may be saved from '*ujb*'. The Holy Prophet (S) has reckoned '*ujb*' as one of the greatest of spiritual dangers. In *al-'Amālī* of Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Imam 'Alī (A) has been reported to have said:

مَنْ دَخَلَهُ الْعُجْبُ هَلَكَ

The one into whose heart '*ujb*' permeates is destined to be destroyed.

After death and in the purgatory (*barzakh*), the possessor of this evil experiences a dreadful loneliness which is incomparable and unimaginable; in an advice given by the Prophet (S) before his death to Imam 'Alī (A), he says:

وَلَا وَخْدَةَ أَوْعَشُ مِنَ الْعُجْبِ.

No loneliness can be compared in dreadfulness to the one which is the result of '*ujb*'.

Moses (A) asked Satan to tell him about the sin by means of which he infiltrates into the hearts of the progeny of Adam (A) and conquers them. Satan replied, it is the time when they feel '*ujb*' about themselves, overestimate their good deeds and the gravity of their sins becomes

diminutive in their eyes.

God Almighty commanded David (A) to convey 'glad tidings to the sinners and to terrify the pious.' David (A) asked God as to why he should convey glad tidings to sinners and frighten the pious. Replied God Almighty, 'Give glad tidings to the sinners that verily I accept their repentance and forgive their sins, and frighten and warn the pious that they should refrain from *'ujb*. Verily there is not a single man who does not stand condemned if I bring him to account.'

I seek refuge in God from the rigours of His reckoning, which if applied would completely ruin the sincere servants of God and even those belonging to a higher station.

In his *al-Khiṣāl*, al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq reports from al-Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) that he said, "The Devil says, 'If I subdue the son of Adam in three things I do not care for whatever he may do, as his good deeds will not be accepted: (1) when he overestimates his good deeds, (2) is forgetful about his sins, and (3) when *'ujb* permeates him.' "

Apart from the vices which belong to this vicious tree of *'ujb*, about which you have read, there are a number of major sins and evil traits that are its products. When its roots permeate the human heart, they lead men to apostasy and *shirk*, and things even worse than these. One of those vices is the vice of belittling of one's sins. A person afflicted with *'ujb* never cares to rectify himself; rather, he considers himself as a pious and virtuous person, and never thinks of purging himself from sins. The curtain of *'ujb* and the thick veil of conceit prevents him from seeing his shortcomings. It is a great misfortune which not only precludes him from achieving all kinds of perfections, but also afflicts him with all sorts of vices, leading him to eternal damnation. Even the doctors of the psyche are helpless in curing them. He has so much confidence in himself and in the deeds he performs that he thinks himself as independent of God Almighty, and does not care for His grace. In his limited mind, he considers God obliged to reward him. He imagines that he is worthy of being rewarded even if God were to reckon his deeds with justice. God willing, we shall take up this matter again later.

#### *Contempt of Others:*

Among other vices present in the person who is afflicted with *'ujb* is that of viewing others with contempt. He considers their deeds as insignificant, however superior they may be to his own. This is also one of the ways of human destruction, and a peril on the path of true humanness.

### *Temptation to Riyā'*

Another of the evil effects of 'ujb is that man becomes inclined towards riyā' (ostentation, hypocrisy). Because, when a person considers his deeds insignificant and regards himself as morally imperfect and his faith as of no consequence, then, he would not be proud of himself, or his qualities and deeds. Considering himself and everything that is done by him as deformed and unworthy, he will not make a display of them; soiled and ugly goods are not put up for show in a prestigious market. But, since, he perceives himself as a perfect human and his own deeds as good and worthy, he is encouraged to make a show of them, and hence behave so imprudently. The vices which have been mentioned in the second tradition about riyā' are applicable to 'ujb also.

### *The Factor of Pride:*

Another ill effect of this vice is that it manifests itself in the form of another fatal disease, that is, the sin of pride (of which we shall have to say more later) and other vices which are direct or indirect products of it. A full treatment of all of them would make our discussion lengthy. It is enough to mention it that a person afflicted with 'ujb should know that this vice sows the seeds of many other vices and serves as the source of such offences, each one of which is enough for earning everlasting damnation by itself. If one tries to properly understand these vices, and studies the traditions and teachings handed down by the Prophet (S), or the Imams of his household (A), he will realize the necessity of rectifying his self, and will seek to get rid of this vice before, God forbid, he carries it with him to the next world. If this happens, once his eyes are closed on this world and opened to world of *barzakh* and, thereafter, to the Day of Resurrection, he will see that the persons who committed major sins are better off than him. He will see that God Almighty has immersed them in the ocean of His grace and mercy for the remorse and penitence that they expressed, or for the sake of the trust and confidence that they had in the grace and compassion of the Almighty; whereas this poor fellow, since he had considered himself as not in need of His grace and had believed himself, in the depth of his being, to be above needing His compassion and mercy, God Almighty has dealt with him rigorously in regard to his account, and as he himself wished his account is being examined in the scales of justice. God Almighty will show him that he not only did not perform any worship for His sake, but also that his works of devotion and piety only took him away from God and have removed him away from his goal. Not only his faith and deeds have been invalid, but they have also served as



the cause of eternal damnation and painful chastisement in hell. God forbid, lest God Almighty judges anybody with the criteria of His justice, because, as mentioned previously, not a single individual, from the first to the last, will find any way of redemption. The prayers and supplications of His chosen servants and the infallible Imams (A) are replete with the confessions of their failure to do justice to the demands of the worship and the service of Lord. While the most perfect of all creatures and the man nearest to God (i.e. the Prophet [S]) utters:

مَا عَرَفْنَاكَ حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِكَ وَمَا عْبَدْنَاكَ حَقَّ عِبَادَتِكَ

We did not know You as You deserve to be known. We did not worship You as You deserve to be worshipped,

what will others do? Of course, they were aware of His greatness and they knew the relation between the contingent and the Necessary Being perfectly well. They knew that if they spent their lives in His worship, service, and praise, they would not be able to thank Him for His favours, let alone paying the proper tribute due to His Essence and Attributes.

They knew that no thing does possess anything of its own. Life, power, knowledge and other accomplishments are shadows of His attributes. Every contingent being is absolutely poor in every respect, a dependent shadow not an independent 'thing'. What merits does a contingent being possess that it could seek to market them? What power does it possess to make a display of it? They (the Prophet and the Imams) possess the knowledge of God; they have the cognition of His Attributes of beauty and grandeur. They are the people who have realized, with certainty, their own abjectness, imperfection, and weakness and the perfection of the Necessary Being, through immediate knowledge. It is we, wretched creatures, whose vision is blotted because of the thick veils of ignorance, folly, neglect, and conceit, and whose faculties of intellect, hearing, sight, and other senses are shrouded with veils of inward and outward sins, who behave with pretensions in front of the Almighty and consider ourselves as independent beings.

O you, ephemeral, contingent being! You, who are forgetful of your own self and are oblivious of the relation between you and your Creator. O you unfortunate dependent being! You have forgotten your duty towards the King of kings! This ignorance and foolishness on our part is responsible for all our misfortunes and has engulfed us in the midst of all these woes and disasters. There is a source of all these evils. The source of contamination is the fountain itself. We have lost our

sense of perception and our hearts have become lifeless. This is the root cause of all our afflictions, and yet we are not worried about the cure either.

God Almighty, grant us the capacity to realize our responsibilities. Grant us a share of the light of Your knowledge with which You filled the hearts of Your 'urafā' and awliyā'. Grant us the comprehension of the realm of Thy power and Thy kingdom, and guide us to discover our weaknesses and faults. Unfold the mystery of the meaning of الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds) to us, wretched beings, who ascribe all the praiseworthy attributes to the creatures. Make it known to us that none of the praiseworthy attributes belongs to any created being . Reveal to us the truth of:

مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ ...

*Whatever of good befallerh thee (O man), it is from Allah, and whatever of ill befallerh thee it is from thyself. (4: 79)*

Inscribe the principle of *tawhīd* (unity of the Divine Being) on the crude tablets of our hardened heart. We are the people of dark realms who languish behind several veils, wavering between apostasy and hypocrisy. We are conceited and egoistic. Purge away the evil of self-love and the love of mundane things from our hearts and convert us into Your lovers and worshippers: إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (Verily, Thou art able to do all things ).

#### Self-Love as the Source of 'Ujb:

The vice of 'ujb is the product of self-love; since the human being is plagued with the evil of self-love, it is the source of all human faults and moral vices. It is on account of this self-love that man overvalues his trivial deeds and hence includes himself in the category of the saintly and the nearest to God. Because of it, he not only considers himself applaudable and commendable on the basis of those paltry deeds, but sometimes even reckons his wicked deeds as good ones. If he perceives moral goodness and piety in others more than himself, he not only never gives any importance to them, but tries to project them in grim colours as far as possible. He is disposed to see a kind of goodness even in his own wicked deeds, and tends to paint them in glowing colours. He scorns other creatures of God in his heart and views them cynically, while he contemplated himself with optimism, having a very high opinion of himself. It is on account of this same self-love that he hopes a trivial act of his, and that too tainted

with one thousand defilements, to be worthy of being rewarded by God.

It is better if today we reflect upon our good deeds, and rationally evaluate our worships. We should try to judge them justly, and see whether we deserve to be rewarded and praised on their basis, or if we should be reproached, punished, and condemned because of them. And if God Almighty were to deliver us into the flames of His wrath on account of these deeds which are good and virtuous in our own view, is He justified or not in doing so?

Now I make you arbiter to judge with justice the following matter after deliberation and profound thinking. My question is that if the Holy Prophet (S), whose truthfulness is confirmed, were to say to you, 'It makes no difference in afterlife whether you worship God throughout your life, obey His commands, and resist lusts and carnal desires, or if you lead a life violating His commands and following your wishes and sensual desires. This behaviour of yours will not affect your station in the Hereafter. In both cases you will attain salvation and will be sent to Paradise and saved from His chastisement. It will not make any difference whether you offer prayers or whether you indulge in fornication and sin. However, the good pleasure of God Almighty lies in this that you should worship Him, praise Him and thank Him, and resist your sensual desires in this world, although you will not be rewarded for it.' Were you offered this option, would you choose to be His worshipper or a sinner? Would you resist your carnal desires and forbid yourself from indulging in lusts for the sake of His good pleasure, or not? And would you still adhere to the *mustahabbāt*, the Friday and the congregational prayer, or would you become immersed in luxuries, play, amusements, and lusts? I request you to answer justly, without any self-assumption and hypocrisy. As to myself and others like me, let me tell you, we would have been among the sinners, neglecting our duties towards Him and hankering after our sensual appetites.

From this, we come to the conclusion that all our deeds serve as the means for satisfying our desires and gratifying the carnal appetites. We are the worshippers of our flesh. We give up one pleasure for the sake of a bigger one. Our desired goal, our relentless hope is to widen the scope of sensual achievements. *Ṣalāt*, which is a means of acquiring nearness to Him, we perform in the hope of the company of the houris of Paradise. Our worship is not aimed at acquiring nearness to the Almighty. It has nothing to do with the obedience of His command either, and is thousands of miles away from the good pleasure of God.

You, poor fellow, ignorant of the Divine teachings, you who cannot comprehend anything except your own bestial motives, you who take pride in your resorting to His remembrance, chanting of His Name, observance of the obligatory and recommended religious duties,

avoidance of prohibited and abominable things, you who take recourse in refined morals and abstain from the unlawful and the abominable, put in the scales of justice all the acts that you have performed for obtaining sensual ends, and for the purpose of reclining on seats studded with rubies in the Paradise, in the midst of cheerful and charming rewards of Paradise, wearing silk and brocade, and occupying magnificent mansions therein and for realizing your hopes—is it just to think that all these actions, which are performed for the sake of satisfying our ego and the fulfilment of the self, are being performed for the sake of God and for His adulation alone? You, who are performing your deeds in the hope of receiving fair rewards, are you different in any respect from a labourer who toils for wages but says that he works solely for the master? Are you not a liar when you say that you perform prayers for the sake of God?

Is your *ṣalāt* meant for the sake of acquiring nearness to God, or for the sake of the company of the houris of Paradise and for sensual ends? Let me state openly without any reservations that all such prayers that we perform are considered by '*urafā*' and the friends of God as equivalent to major sins. You, wretched creature, you act against the good pleasure of God Almighty in the presence of the archangels, and the worships that are meant for making an ascension near to Him, you are misusing them for satisfying your carnal self; yet you do not feel any sense of shame for the lies uttered in front of the Almighty and His archangels during your prayers. And as if this were not enough, you made several accusations, thinking as if you were obliging God, exulting in your '*ujb*', and not feeling any sense of shame or regret while doing all this! What is the difference between this kind of worship performed by you and me, and the sinful acts of the sinners, the extreme form of which is '*riyā*'? '*Riyā*' is a kind of *shirk*, and its ugliness and gravity lies in worship being not for the sake of God, not meant for God. All our worships and devotional exercises are sheer *shirk*, which does not contain a speck of sincerity. The aim of earning the good pleasure of God does not play even a partial role in it, but the only motive is gratification of lust and service of the stomach.

My friend, beware that the prayer performed for the sake of a feminine mate, whether this-worldly or other-worldly, is not the prayer performed for God. The prayer which is performed for the attainment of worldly benefits or for acquiring the other-worldly rewards is not for God. If so, where is the room for self-pride and conceit? What right do you have for looking down upon the creatures of God and for counting yourself as someone of consequence in the court of the Almighty? Wretched man, you deserve punishment for this prayer and devotion of yours and for it you deserve to be chained by the seventy cubit chain. Why consider yourself as a person deserving a reward then?

Why procure another chastisement for yourself by continuing in this absurd expectation and by persisting in *'ujb*? Perform the duties assigned to you properly and keep in your mind that your worship is not purely for the sake of God; and if God Almighty sends you to heaven by His mercy and compassion, remember that He has given a waiver to His servants for a certain kind of *shirk* in view of their infirmity. By means of His forgiving compassion, He covers their sins with a concealing screen. Do not let this screen to be ripped off and the curtain of His remission to be raised from the face of those vices which we wrongfully call worship. God forbid, if that waiver were withdrawn and our deeds are adjudged according to the standards of justice, remember this that our false worships are not less fouler than the mortal sins of the sinners. Earlier we referred to a tradition narrated by Thiqat al-'Islām al-Kulaynī, in his book *al-Kāfī*, on the authority of al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A); here I am copying a part of it verbatim in order to draw upon its blessing (*barakah*):

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص): قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ لِدَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: يَا دَاوُدُ بَشِّرِ الْمُذْنِبِينَ وَأَنْذِرِ الصَّادِقِينَ قَالَ: كَيْفَ أَبَشِّرُ الْمُذْنِبِينَ وَأَنْذِرُ الصَّادِقِينَ؟ قَالَ: يَا دَاوُدُ بَشِّرِ الْمُذْنِبِينَ أَنِّي أَقْبِلُ التَّوْبَةَ وَأَعْفُو عَنِ الذَّنْبِ وَأَنْذِرِ الصَّادِقِينَ أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْجَبُوا بِأَعْمَالِهِمْ فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ عَبْدٌ أَنْصَبُ لِلْحِسَابِ إِلَّا هَلَكَ.

Al-Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (A) reports from the Prophet (S) that he said: 'God Almighty said to David (A), "O David give good news unto the sinners and warn the righteous." Said David (A), "How should I give good news unto the sinners and warn the righteous?" Said the Almighty, "O David, give good news to the sinners that I accept their repentance, and warn the righteous that they should not have *'ujb* (self-admiration) for their acts, for there is no servant who does not stand doomed when I take an account of his deeds (and deserve chastisement, since, according to the requirements of justice, a man with all his worship cannot thank God properly even for one of His favours).

While the righteous, who are free from sins, deserve to be condemned after a fair trial, what will be the fate of people like you and me? And that too if our deeds be pure and free from worldly *riyā'*, a verboten quality, of which there is very little chance. Now be proud if there is an occasion for being proud and feeling *'ujb*; but if you realize that it is an occasion for being ashamed and hanging the head in shame and making confession of our sin after every worship, then repent before the Almighty for uttering those solemn lies, and for falsely assigning those virtues to ourselves. Does it not call for repentance when you make this declaration in front of God. While standing for prayer:

وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ خَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ. إِنَّ صَلَاتِي  
وَنُكْبِيَ وَمَخْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

I have turned my face, in sincerity and submission, towards Him who created the heavens and earth, and I am not of the *mushrikūn* (those who include others while worshipping God, i.e. polytheists). Verily, my prayer and my worship, my living and my dying, are for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

Is your face really turned towards the Creator of the heaven and earth? Are you really a 'muslim' and free from the dirt of *shirk*? Is your prayer and worship, your living and dying really for God? Shouldn't we feel some shame while uttering this sentence in our prayer الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ('All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds'). Do you sincerely consider all laudable qualities to be derived from God, while you pay tribute not only to His creatures but also to His enemies? Is it not a lie to apparently admit that God is رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ('The Lord of the Worlds'), while practically you subscribe to the authority and lordship of the other-than-God? Is there any inkling of shame and repentance in your heart, while you utter: إِيَّاكَ تَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ('Thee alone we worship; Thee alone we ask for help')? Do you truly worship God, or worship your own flesh? Do you actually seek God, or aspire for the houris? Do you seek help from God alone? In your deeds, do you consider God alone? When you go to perform Hajj of the *Bayt Allāh* (the Holy Ka'bah) is God the only goal and end? And is the Master of the House your only pursuit, as the poet says:

وَمَا حُبُّ الدِّيارِ شَغَفَنَ قَلْبِي  
وَلَكِنْ حُبُّ مَنْ سَكَنَ الدِّيارَ

*It is not the dwelling that attracts my heart,  
But he who dwells in it draws my heart.*

Are you in search of God, and desire for His beatific vision? Do you hold the *majālis* (mourning ceremonies for al-Imām al-Husayn [A]) and beat your head and breast for his sake, or for the sake of the fulfilment of your wishes and desires? Is it not your selfish desires which motivate you to hold *majālis*, to join congregational prayers, and to perform devotional rituals?

My brother, be cautious regarding the guiles of the self and Satan, who do not want your pieties to be taintless, and if they might be accepted by God by His grace, despite their taint, the Devil and the carnal self do not desire them to reach their final destination. Through misplaced 'ujb and improper pride they bring all your deeds to nothing,

and the little benefit that you aimed at is also not obtained. Having lost His good pleasure, even the hopes of houris will come to nothing. Now having lost everything eternal damnation in the flames of hell does not seem distant. By means of your faulty, rotten actions tainted with *riyā'*, *sum'ah*, and a thousand other vices, each one of which is enough for preventing our deeds from being accepted, you imagined to have done God a favour, having become His beloved servant. Poor fellow, you, who cannot comprehend the state of His beloved servants and the fire that is kindled in their hearts, you unlucky wretch, with your little knowledge of their heartfelt sincerity and the bright radiance emanating from their glorious deeds, do you think that their deeds are similar to yours and mine? Do you think that the *ṣalāt* of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (A) differed from ours only in the manner of uttering *وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ* in the correct pronunciation of some words, or in the prolongation of prostrations and profusion of *raka'āt*, prayers, and supplication? Do you imagine that my prayer differs from his only in the number of *rak'ah*'s—a few hundred every night? Are the prayers and the supplications of al-Imām Sayyid al-Sājidin (A) (the Fourth Imam) are similar to the mutterings of yours and mine? Do you think he moaned and sobbed for the sake of houris or pomegranates or pears of Paradise like us? I swear by him—and indeed it is a great oath—that even if all of us come together and try to say one *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ* ('There is no god except God') in the manner of Amir al-Mu'minin (A), we will not be able to do so. Dust be upon my head, I and my little knowledge of the high station of Imām 'Ali (A)! I swear by the station of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (A) that even if all the archangels and all the prophets of God, except the Seal of the Prophets (S), who is the lord of 'Ali (A) and all others, if they try to utter a single *takbīr* (i.e. *Allāhu Akbar*, 'God is very great') of 'Ali's, they will not be able to do it. The inner state of their hearts is known only to themselves and is unknown to others.

My friend, do not babble so much about God. Do not exaggerate your love for God. O 'ārif! O ṣūfī! O philosopher! O *mujāhid*! O ascetic! O *faqīh*! O believer! O sage! you poor ensnared wretches! You unfortunate creatures entangled in the snares of the self and its desires! You helpless creatures bewildered in the perplexities of false hopes, aspirations and self-love! You, who are all wretched, being thousands of miles removed from true godliness and love of God. Do not have such a good opinion of yourselves. Do not be so boastful and proud of yourselves. Ask your heart whether it is in search of God or whether it is in love with itself. Is it a monotheist (*muwahhid*) and devotee of the One, or a *mushrik* (polytheist) or a dualist? What for this 'ujb, then? What does this exultation mean? Even if, supposedly, these acts of yours fulfil all the conditions and requirements, and are free from *riyā'*, *shirk*, 'ujb and other vices, isn't their goal acquirement of sensual ends? What

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merit do they possess that you consider them to be worthy of being presented before the angels? These acts are to be concealed from the sights of people. These acts, which are exercises in impudence and vulgarity, shouldn't we be ashamed of them and think of doing something to cover up these abominable performances?

God! We seek refuge in Thee from the mischief of Satan and the guiles of *al-nafs al-'ammārah* (the carnal self). You Yourself protect us from their wiles for the sake of Muḥammad (S) and his Progeny (A).



#### Fourth *Hadīth* on *Kibr*

بِالسَّيِّدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلَى مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ يَغْفُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِيسَى، عَنْ  
يُونُسَ، عَنْ أَبَانَ، عَنْ حَكِيمٍ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) عَنْ أَدْنَى الْأَلْحَادِ،  
فَقَالَ: إِنَّ الْكِبْرَ أَدْنَاهُ.

.. Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb (al-Kulaynī) from 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, from Muhammad ibn 'Isā, from Yūnus, from Abān, from Hakim; who says: "I asked Abū 'Abd Allāh (al-Imām al-Ṣādiq) (A) as to the lowest degree of *ilhād* (apostasy). He answered, 'Verily *kibr* (pride) is its lowest degree.' "

#### What is *Kibr*?

**K***ibr* is the name of a psychic state in which a person feels a sense of superiority and behaves high-handedly with others. Its signs are discernable in his actions and its symptoms are clearly noticed by others by which they know that he is proud. *Kibr* is something different from '*ujb*', and, as mentioned earlier, this vice is the offspring and fruit of the tree of '*ujb*'. '*Ujb*' consists of self-love and conceit, and the meaning of *kibr* is to consider oneself superior to others. When someone perceives a merit in himself and is overcome by a sense of pleasure, exultation, and vanity, that state is called '*ujb*'. And when he considers others to be lacking in the imagined merit within himself, he perceives himself to be superior. This perception of superiority and supremacy over others causes in him a state of vanity which is pride. *Kibr*, in this sense, is an inner state, and when its effects are reflected in his behaviour and his speech, it is called *takabbur*. In short, the self-indulgent person becomes self-seeking, and his self-seeking tendency grows into self-love, and when this self-love is filled

to the brim it manifests itself as haughtiness and high-handed treatment of others.

Here, it is necessary to mention that the psychic traits, whether vices and infirmities or virtues and accomplishments, are extremely complicated and complex matters. It becomes extremely difficult to discern one from the other. On account of this, there is often a great difference of opinion even among great scholars in precisely defining them and it may be impossible to give a faultless definition of inner states. Therefore, it is better for us to leave this matter to the inner conscience of individuals and not to entangle ourselves in the maze of finding precise definitions, and turn attention to our main purpose.

#### The Kinds and Degrees of *Kibr*:

It should be noted that there are different degrees of *kibr*, similar to the stages and degrees that were mentioned during the discussion about '*ujb*'. However, there were some stages that could be mentioned with regard to '*ujb*', but since they were not so important in that context we abstained from mentioning them. Yet it is important to mention those stages in the context of *kibr*. But at first let us note that the stages of *kibr*, similar to those of '*ujb*', are six in number:

1. *Kibr* on account of possessing true faith and belief.
2. As opposed to it is the pride in invalid faith and false belief .
3. Pride on account of good qualities and praiseworthy attributes.
4. Pride in moral vices and undesirable qualities.
5. Pride in one's righteous deeds and devotional exercises.
6. Pride in sinful and wicked deeds.

It is possible that each one of these stages may be caused by the equivalent degree of '*ujb*' present in one's soul, or it may have some other reason, which we shall discuss afterwards. For the time being, of our main concern here are the external factors as sources of pride—like the pride in one's family, descent, wealth, status, position, and the like. Following that, God willing, we shall discuss the evils of this vice and their remedies, according to my ability. And I implore God's help and assistance in making it effective upon others as well as my own self.

There are certain other aspects and levels of *kibr* when considered in another perspective. They are: (1) *kibr* towards God; (2) *kibr* towards His prophets, messengers, and *awliyā'*; (3) *kibr* in regard to the Divine Commandments, which also amounts to *kibr* towards God; (4) *kibr* towards the creatures of God, which, too, according to the '*urafā'*', amounts to *kibr* towards God.

As to the *kibr* towards God, it is the most abominable, the most destructive, and the highest degree of pride, and is present in infidels,

those who contest God's authority, and those who make claims to divinity. Sometimes its traces are seen among some men of faith as well (whose description is not appropriate here). This kind of *kibr* signifies the extreme of ignorance and the absence of knowledge about one's limits and the majesty of the Necessary Being.

As to the *kibr* towards the prophets and *awliyā'* of God, it was an attitude which was more prevalent during their own days, and the Quran reports about it in this verse:

... أَتُؤْمِنُ بِتَشْرَفِي وَمِثْلَنَا ...

... Shall we put faith in two mortals like ourselves? ... (23:47)

And someone from his people is reported to have said (about the Prophet [S]):

... لَوْلَا نَزَلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ \*

... If only this Quran had been revealed to some great man of the two towns.  
[i.e. Makkah and al-Tā'if] (43:31)

During the early days of Islam, the instances of such pride towards the *awliyā'* of God were very frequent, examples of which are still manifested in the behaviour of some professors of Islam.

As to the *kibr* towards the commands of God, it is seen among some sinners, such as those who abstain from performing Hajj as they do not consider the dress of *iḥrām* appropriate for themselves; abstain from *ṣalāt* because they consider the state of prostration as not in accordance with their position and status. Such kind of pride is sometimes seen among persons of faith, devotees, and scholars who abstain from *adhān* on account of it. Similarly there are those who would not accept a word of truth if it comes from anybody belonging to the same status as themselves, or lower. Sometimes it happens that one hears something from his colleagues or friends, and vehemently rejects it and derides the speaker, but he readily agrees with it when it is uttered by someone superior to him in religious or worldly status. It is even possible that he would accept it with the same seriousness with which he had rejected it earlier. This person is not a seeker of truth, but his pride has drawn a curtain over the truth, to which his obsequiousness has blinded and deafened him. It is the same kind of pride which prevents a scholar from teaching a certain subject or a certain text because he considers it below his dignity, or dissuades him from giving lessons to persons devoid of any outwardly significant position. Or one may stand away from a small mosque attended by a

small number of persons for the same reasons despite knowing that the pleasure of God lies in his doing so. Sometimes the traces of pride are so subtle that the person who is afflicted by this evil, unless he is careful and serious about correcting himself, cannot know that his actions testify to the presence of *kibr* in his character.

As to the *kibr* towards the creatures of God, *kibr* towards men of divine knowledge and scholars is the worst form of it, and its evil effects are graver and its harms more serious than of any other type of *kibr*. Of this category of *kibr* is the pride which avoids the company of poor people and seeks out prominence in gatherings and meetings, and displays itself on the road and in one's carriage. Yet this evil is prevalent and inflicts all the classes of society; from the elite to the class of 'ulamā' and scholars of ḥadīth; from the rich to the poor and deprived classes; no one can elude it, except for those whom God Almighty saves. Sometimes it is so difficult to discern between humbleness and humility aimed at popularizing oneself, and between pride and self-containedness, that one should seek refuge in God Almighty, that He may guide us on the right path. If one is eager to reform oneself and tries to reach one's goal, the Holy God guides him with His infinite mercy on the right path and eases one's journey on this path.

#### The Causes of Kibr:

There are various causes of *kibr*, but all of them derive from the delusion which occurs when men imagine themselves to possess some kind of excellence. This illusion leads to 'ujb, which, blending with self-love, conceals others' merits and virtues from their eyes. When that happens, the afflicted individual believes others to be inferior to himself and begins to cherish a feeling of self-esteem in his heart, as well as manifesting a similar demeanour. For instance, one may find an individual among the 'ulamā' and 'urafā' who considers himself to be a visionary and a man of mystic knowledge and insight, classing himself in the category of saintly persons with a high record of good deeds. Such persons make an absurdly ostentatious show of their superiority over others, dismissing the ḥukamā' and philosophers as nuts, the fuqahā' and muḥaddithūn as superficial bums, and all ordinary people as subhuman creatures and beasts. They scorn and look down on all the creatures of God; while claiming to follow the dictum of قَاءَ فِي اللَّهِ and بَاءَ تَاللهِ, they beat the drum of their truth-seeking, whereas the Divine teachings require of them to contemplate the creatures of God with goodwill and optimism, when the least knowledge of God demands that he should not scorn these manifestations of His Glory and Beauty. He himself would affirm this while speaking about Divine teachings, pronouncing something which contradicts his own inner state. Yet this

happens because those teachings have not penetrated his heart. The poor fellow has not attained even the station of a true believer, yet he often speaks of 'irfān. Although 'irfān has not touched him, he claims to have realized the ultimate Truth.

Among philosophers, too, there are such persons who consider themselves to be in possession of the proofs and knowledge of certain truth. They class themselves among men of certain knowledge of God who possess confirmed belief in angels and scriptures; yet they look down on others in disdain. They dismiss all other sciences as fiction and all human beings as defective in faith and knowledge, viewing them with haughty contempt in their hearts as well as their arrogant demeanour, whereas the knowledge of the majesty of the Lord and the utter destitution of the ephemeral creature (that he is), necessitates an opposite behaviour. The truly wise (*ḥukamā'*) are those whose knowledge of the secrets of human origin and end makes them modest and humble. God Almighty had bestowed upon Luqmān the gift of wisdom; yet the Quran reports of him as saying to his son:

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ \*

*Turn not thy cheek in scorn toward people, nor walk with pertness on the earth. Verily, God loveth not any braggart boaster. (31:18)*

Sometimes such people are found among those who claim to be mystic masters and guides of consummate inner purity, yet, they treat the common people with pride and look down on fuqahā', 'ulamā' and their followers, and speak disparagingly of philosophers and ḥukamā'. They consider everyone except themselves and their associates as doomed creatures. Since they themselves lack in knowledge and learning, they consider knowledge a thorn in the path of spiritual journey, and those who possess it are considered by them as devils who mislead the wayfarers in their inward journey, although their own claims to high spiritual station would tend to contradict such a viewpoint. A spiritual guide of people must himself be free from all kinds of mortal and destructive sins and qualities; one who claims the capacity to guide the astray should have transcended the narrowness of mundane existence and its attachments, being absorbed in the beatific vision of His Glory. He should not be haughty and disdainful towards the creatures of God.

Also among the class of fuqahā', scholars of fiqh and ḥadīth and the students of these sciences sometimes such people are seen who view other people with scorn and treat them high-handedly, considering themselves to be worthy of every praise and appreciation. They think that everybody should obey their commands without any hesitation, and apply the following criterion to themselves:

لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ \*

*He (i.e. God) will not be questioned as to that which He does, but they will be questioned. (21:23)*

Except for themselves and a handful of persons like themselves, they do not consider anybody to be fit to enter Paradise. Whenever something is spoken about other field of learning, they dismiss it with scorn. They unhesitatingly reject every other discipline except their own field— of which they possess very little knowledge—considering it not only unworthy of study but destructive. They denounce the scholars of other sciences due to their own ignorance. They present their own views as if their religiosity necessitates such a contempt, whereas knowledge and religion are free from such prejudices. The Shari'ah forbids men from speaking about anything without having its proper knowledge, and considers it obligatory to respect every Muslim. This wretched fellow without possessing enough knowledge of religion or sciences is sinful of doing something which is against the scripture of God and the teachings of His Prophet (S). Yet he moulds his ideas into the form of religion; though the conduct and behaviour of all the great scholars of every generation was unlike this. Each one of the branches of religious sciences demands the scholars who are associated with it to be humble, and requires them to obliterate all signs of pride from their hearts. None of the sciences gives rise to pride and none of them is against humility. Later I will explain the causes behind this sharp contrast between their knowledge and behaviour.

Also among the experts of other sciences, like medicine, mathematics, physics, engineering, industrial crafts, etc., the instances of pride and arrogance are seen. They underestimate all other sciences however important they may be, and scorn the scientists belonging to them. Each one of them believes that whatever he knows is the real knowledge. They scorn people in their hearts, as well as manifest it in their demeanour; whereas their knowledge does not require this.

Some others who do not belong to any of the branches of science, like the people devoted to prayers and other devotional rites, also tend to behave high-handedly with others. They disdain people and treat them with contempt, and do not consider even great scholars as worthy of redemption. Whenever there is a discussion about knowledge, they point out that knowledge without action is useless. They give great importance to the little knowledge that they themselves possess and view all others with 'ujb and haughty contempt, forgetting that if their worship were true and sincere it would have reformed them. The prayer forbids one from performing indecent deeds and sins and is considered as the culmination of a Muslim's attainment (*mi'rāj al-mu'min*). But

such a person, even after performing the *ṣalāt* for fifty years and meticulously performing all obligatory (*wājibāt*) and recommended (*mustahabbāt*) religious duties, is immersed in the vice of pride—which is a kind of apostasy—from head to toe, and is afflicted with *‘ujb*—which is uglier than any other indecency—and comes to resemble Satan and acquires his attributes. The *ṣalāt* that does not forbid one from indecencies and indignities, the prayer which does not protect the heart, rather whose excessive performance vitiates the heart, is not worthy of being named as *ṣalāt*. The *ṣalāt* about which you were so particular, but on account of which you come to resemble Satan, acquiring pride, his characteristic trait, is not *ṣalāt*; for the *ṣalāt* does not result in pride either.

All these are dangers of knowledge and deeds, but pride can also arise from other causes, all of which relate to a sense of one's worth and excellence which others are imagined to lack. For instance, someone who comes of a noble descent looks down on those who are not like him. Other reasons relate to personal beauty and charm, one's tribe, the number of one's supporters, followers, or pupils, which cause arrogance and pride with respect to others who do not possess these advantages. In all cases, therefore, pride is caused by an illusion of some kind of perfection in oneself, elation on its account and *‘ujb*, while others are seen to lack such an imagined merit or advantage.

Even the bad characters and persons of vicious morals, also, sometimes look down on others with haughty contempt, because they consider whatever they possess as a kind of merit and asset. Though the person afflicted with the vice of pride tries to conceal it due to some reason or other and tries to show no sign of it, but since this evil tree of pride has run its roots in his heart, its effects nevertheless manifest themselves. As soon as any change occurs in the natural condition of the possessor of this vice, as when he loses control over himself due to anger, he starts boasting of his superiority and enumerating his merits, whether they belong to the category of knowledge or deeds or whatever. At other times, a proud person exhibits his pride, not paying any attention to its outward revelation. The intensity of his pride makes him lose control over himself. Then, his pride finds expression in his movements and pauses. In social gatherings he shows his self-importance by taking a lead over other people while entering and leaving. He neither allows the poor to join his company, nor does he himself attend their gatherings. He creates an artificial halo of sacredness around himself and every action of his, the gait, the manner of looking at other people, the manner of speaking to them, everything is indicative of his pride and haughtiness. One of the researchers, from whom I have borrowed the fundamentals of this discourse and have translated them, says that the lowest degree of pride in a scholar is that

he should turn his back on other people as if he wants to avoid them. The lowest degree of pride in a devotee (*'ābid*) is manifested in his stern attitude towards people and his frown, as if he wants to avoid them, or as if he is angry with them. The poor fellow does not know that piety and continence (*wara'*) does not lie in the frowns on one's brow or forehead, not in a disdainful look and a wry face, not in avoiding the people, not in bending the head or turning the neck, but it lies inside one's heart. The Prophet (S) once, pointing at his chest, said, 'Piety lies here.'<sup>1</sup> On some occasions the devotee boasts about himself in his speech; while expressing the purity of his soul, he makes a display of his devotional exercises, brags about himself by mentioning his pious deeds, and denounces others for their shortcomings, thus highlighting the superiority of his piety. Sometimes he does not say anything explicitly but makes some jesture which implicitly exhibits his piety. A scholar afflicted with *kibr* may brag about his own intellectual achievements, saying, "What do you know!" Then he would mention the books read and written by him, the universities visited by him, the professors and authorities whom he has met, and his own scholarly endeavours. Therefore, at all times, it is necessary to seek refuge in God from the mischiefs of the self and its wiles.

#### **Spiritual and Social Harms of Pride:**

Whereas there are many vices inherent in pride itself, it generates many other vices as well. It prevents men from acquiring inward and outward merits and from enjoying the blessings of this world and the Hereafter. It causes hatred and rancour in human hearts, disgraces man in the eyes of his fellow human beings, and brings about humiliation for him. It forces other people to retaliate against him and despise him and insult him. In *al-Kāfi*, al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) is reported to have said: "There is no person who does not have a harness on his head, and an angel who attends to it. Whenever he is proud, the angel says, 'Be humble, lest God should disgrace you'. Thus, he is the greatest of human beings in his own eyes, whereas in other people's eyes he is the smallest of creatures. When he is humble and modest, God removes the harness from his head and the angel says to him, 'Elevate yourself, as God Almighty is elevating you'. Thus, he is the smallest of persons in his own eyes, while the most elevated and exalted in the eyes of others."<sup>2</sup>

My friend, others also possess a mind similar to yours. If you behave humbly, other people will be forced to respect you and you will rise in their estimation. But, if you show arrogance, there is no good for you in it; they may even disgrace you if they find an opportunity, and treat you with indifference. And if they cannot find an



opportunity of insulting you, they will despise you in their hearts and you will not find any respect in their eyes. It is, therefore, better for you to conquer their hearts with modesty and humility. Everyone with whom you associate will somehow show the signs of his attitude towards you, and if their hearts turn against you it will be something which is against your desire. Therefore, even if, presumably, you are interested in obtaining greatness and respect, you will have to adopt a proper course for it, which is to cultivate cordial relations with others and to adopt a humble demeanour towards them. The result of pride will be against your aim and purpose. It does not even fulfil your worldly aspirations, which are easier to be fulfilled, and instead of this what you receive is its opposite. Besides all these, this habit will bring you disgrace and shame in the next world. In the same way as you scorned people and considered yourself to be superior to the creatures of God, and expressed an inordinate sense of pride and arrogance here, in the other world this same arrogance and pride will bring you disgrace and humiliation, as mentioned in a tradition reported in *al-Kāfi*:

بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ دَاوُدَ بْنِ فَرْقَدٍ، عَنْ أَخِيهِ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَقُولُ: إِنَّ الْمُسْكِبِينَ يُجْعَلُونَ فِي صُورِ الدَّزَّةِ يَتَوَقَّأُهُمُ النَّاسُ حَتَّى يَفْرَغَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْحِسَابِ.

... From Dāwūd ibn Farqad, from his brother, who said, "I heard al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) saying, ... 'Verily, the proud [on the Judgement Day] will be created in the form of ants and people will trample them down under their feet until God is finished with the reckoning.'"<sup>3</sup>

In his last will, al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) told his companions:

قَالَ وَإِنَّا كُنَّا وَالْعَظَمَةَ وَالْكِبْرَ فَإِنَّ الْكِبْرَ رِذَاءُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَمَنْ نَازَعَ اللَّهَ رِذَاءَهُ قَضَاهُ اللَّهُ وَأَذَلَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

... Refrain from pride and self-glorification, since pride is God Almighty's mantle, and one who contests with God regarding His cloak, God will shatter him and disgrace him on the Day of Resurrection.<sup>4</sup>

What will be the plight of the person whom God Almighty disgraces? For the things will be different in the Hereafter. Disgrace in the Hereafter will be an affair different from the disgrace and humiliation in this world. In the same way as the comforts and torments of that world bear no similarity with those in this world, and its comforts and bounties are beyond one's imaginative power, the torments and tortures in that world are also far above the reach of our imaginative faculty. Its honours are beyond the possibilities of what we

can think, and its humiliations also cannot be compared with our ideas of humiliation and disgrace. And the ultimate abode of the proud person is eternal damnation and hell. The tradition states: **الْكِبْرُ مَقْطَبُ النَّارِ** i.e. 'one who rides the mount of pride is taken by it into the hell-fire.' He will not get any glimpse of Paradise as long as the traces of this vice are present in his heart. The Prophet (S) has been reported to have said:

لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ.

Never can the person who possesses a speck of pride inside his heart enter Paradise.<sup>6</sup>

Al-Imām al-Bāqir (A) and al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) have also said something almost similar to this statement. In *al-Kāfī*, al-Imām al-Bāqir (A) is reported to have said:

الْعِزُّ رِذَاءُ اللَّهِ، وَالْكِبْرُ إِزَارَةٌ فَمَنْ تَوَلَّى شَيْئاً مِنْهُ أَكْبَهُ اللَّهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ.

Honour is God's robe and pride His mantle; one who wants to acquire it will be thrown into hell by God Almighty.<sup>6</sup>

And that too, what kind of hell! The hell which is prepared for the proud is different from the hell into which other sinners will go. Here, I shall again quote the same tradition the translation of which was given earlier:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ عَنْ ابْنِ بُكَيْرٍ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، قَالَ: إِنَّ فِي جَهَنَّمَ لَوَادِيًا لِلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ يُقَالُ لَهُ سَقَرٌ، شَكَأَ إِلَى اللَّهِ غَرْوَجَلٌ شِدَّةَ حَرِّهِ وَسَأَلَهُ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ لَهُ أَنْ يَنْتَفِسَ فَنَتَفَسَ فَأُخْرِقَ جَهَنَّمَ.

This is a highly trustworthy tradition, and can even be compared to *ṣaḥīḥ*. Ibn Bukayr reports from al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) that he said: "Verily there is a valley in hell for the proud called 'Saḡar'. Once it complained to the Almighty about the intensity of its heat, and requested Him to relieve it for some time so that it may take a breath. As soon as it breathed, its breath filled the entire hell with fire."<sup>7</sup>

I take refuge in God from a place which in spite of its being a place of torment complains about its hotness, and the hell starts burning because of its breath. We cannot comprehend in this world the extent of the intensity and strength of the fire of the Hereafter, as the difference between the intensity and weakness of torment is

dependent upon several factors. One is the strength and weakness of perception, and the second is the dissimilarity of different kinds of material and their different capacities for tolerating heat. For example, gold and iron can be exposed to more heat than lead and tin, which can endure more heat than wood and coal, which are less sensitive than flesh and skin. Another factor is the sensitivity of perception; for example the human brain, which despite being less tolerant to heat is more sensitive to it than the bones, for its power of perception is stronger. And the feebleness and intensity of the heat itself is another factor. It is more painful at a hundred degrees than at fifty. One more factor is the relative distance between the source of heat and the material exposed to it; for instance, when fire is very near to the hand it will inflict a different kind of burn than when it affects the hand from a distance.

All these five above-mentioned factors exist at their weakest degree in this world, and at their utmost strength and force in the Hereafter. All our perceptive faculties are imperfect and weak in this world and at the same time covered with several veils. Today our vision is incapable of perceiving angels and the hell; our ears cannot hear the queer sounds of *Barzakh* (the Purgatory) and the cries of its inhabitants, and the clamour of the Day of Resurrection and the people thereof. Our senses cannot even perceive the heat of that place. This is on account of their own infirmity. The Quranic verses and the traditions of the Imams (A) are full of explicit and implicit references to this issue, and it is also in accordance with discursive reason. The human body of this world is incapable of enduring heat. The cold fire of this world is strong enough to turn it into ashes in moments. But God Almighty is capable of recreating it in a form on the Day of Resurrection so that it would not be consumed by the fire of the Hereafter; a fire of so great intensity that, according to the testimony of Gabriel (A), if a link of the seventy-cubit chain of fire prepared for the inhabitants of hell is thrown into this world it would melt all the mountains due to its excessive heat. Therefore, the resistance of the human body will also be incomparably great in that world. Also the relationship between the body and soul is very fragile in this world. This world does not allow the soul to manifest its real faculties and powers. But that world is the world of the soul's manifestation and domination. There, the relationship of the soul with respect to the body is loaded with action and creativity—as has been established in its proper place—and this relationship is the most complete and thorough of all relationships.

This worldly fire is a faint and coldish glow and an ephemeral phenomenon combined with impurities of all kinds; whereas the fire of hell is a fire free from all impurities, and its substance is self-subsisting

and self-perpetuating. It is a living substance which burns its inhabitants with a will and consciousness, and uses all its strength to overwhelm them. You have heard about its properties from Gabriel (A), the truthful witness. The Quran and the traditions of the Imams (A) are full of the descriptions of hell and the fire therein. However, its similitude cannot be found in this world. If all the fires of this world were to surround a human being from all sides, they will envelop only the outer surface of his body; but the hell-fire will encompass the human being from within and without and envelop the senses and the perceptive faculties. It is a fire which consumes the heart, the soul, and all the human faculties, pervading them and uniting with them in a fashion which is unexemplified in this world.

Hence it is obvious that the requirements of Divine chastisement are not at all to be found in this world. Neither the material is capable of enduring its heat, nor is the agent of heat a complete one, nor are the perceptive faculties at their complete acuteness. The fire the heat of whose breath fills the hell with flames, we and our perceptive senses fail to comprehend it, unless, God forbid, we, belonging to the clan of the proud, leave the world without purifying ourselves from this abominable vice, and see it face to face; *فَيْسَ مَثْوًى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ* 'What an evil abode is that of the arrogant!'

#### Other Causes of Pride:

Besides the above-mentioned factors that cause pride, there are some others also, such as narrow-mindedness, lack of capacity, petty-mindedness, baseness, and lack of fortitude. Being a person with a narrow mentality, as soon as he beholds any merit in himself he imagines himself to enjoy a kind of superiority. He thinks he has acquired a high station, whereas, if he justly evaluates it and judges his accomplishments and merits, he would see that what he imagined to be perfection and is so proud of is not at all an accomplishment or merit, and even if it were a merit how insignificant it was when compared to other persons' accomplishments. Poor fellow, he has made his cheeks ruddy with a slap to give an impression of healthiness. The 'arif who disdains others on account of his pride in his mystic knowledge, and considers others superciliously to be superficial and shallow, what knowledge does he possess about God, except for a handful of concepts and terms that are in reality veils of realities and hinderances in his religious path? What is this knowledge except for a number of glamorous and gaudy terms which do not have any relevance whatsoever to the knowledge of God? How far are they from the knowledge of God and the knowledge of His Names and Attributes. Knowledge is a quality of the heart, and in the view of this writer all

these are practical sciences, and consist not of mere acquaintance with certain abstract concepts or artful juggling of terms. With this short life and limited knowledge, I have seen certain people among these so-called mystics and other scholars who, I swear by 'irfān and knowledge that these terms have not made any mark on their hearts; nay, they have rather left on them an opposite effect! My friend! the knowledge of God, in your own words, makes the heart a place where His Names, Attributes, and Essence are manifested, a stage for the appearance of the Real Monarch, who obliterates all signs and purges it of all stains and removes from it all limitations:

... إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا أَعِزَّةَ أَهْلِهَا أَذِلَّةً...

*... Indeed, kings, when they enter a township, ruin it and degrade its men of honour.... (27:34)*

It converts your heart into a unitarian and the one filled with the praise of the Lord. But why did it make your heart a place of your own glorification? Why has it added unnecessary colours to it, and accumulated trappings and accretions that deter you from obtaining nearness to God Almighty and from beholding the effulgent glory of His Names.? Why, it has made your heart an abode of Satan and so you look down on the servants of God and His chosen, the signs and reflections of His Glory and Splendour! Woe unto you for your wretchedness, O 'ārif, whose condition is worse than of anybody else, and all the doors of defence and pretext are sealed upon him! You are proud towards God and have assumed a Pharaonic arrogance towards His Names, Attributes, and all the manifestations of His Essence. O amateurish student of concepts who has gone astray of the realities! Deliberate over the matter for a while, and think as to what knowledge you possess of God. What impact has the knowledge of God and His Attributes made on your self? Perhaps the study of music and musical rhythms may be more exact and precise than your knowledge. Astronomy, mechanics, other physical sciences, and mathematics can match your learning as to the precision of their terminology. Yet in the same way as they are not concerned with the knowledge of God, your knowledge also is a thick curtain consisting of the veils of words, terms, and concepts. They can neither make one ecstatic nor send anyone into a trance. Rather, in the eyes of the Shari'ah, the physical sciences and mathematics are better than your knowledge, since they produce some result, whereas your knowledge not only gives no good results, but gives opposite ones. An engineer draws results from his calculations, and a goldsmith is benefited from his craftsmanship; but your knowledge, apart from not gaining any material benefits, has failed to fulfil any

transcendental ends as well. Rather, the veil before your eyes is so thick that when you try to picture the Unity of the Divine Being a world of utter darkness fills your imagination, and when His Names and Attributes are mentioned an infinite plurality is pictured by your mind. Therefore, these terms did not lead you to the path of Truth, but on the contrary they have become a source of pride and arrogance towards the righteous scholars. A knowledge which darkens the heart and increases it in its blindness is not knowledge. A learning which ultimately makes its possessor an heir of the Devil, woe unto such learning! *Kibr* is the property of Satan's nature. He was arrogant to your father, Adam, and was expelled from the Almighty's court. You who are arrogant towards all human beings and all the sons of Adam are also worthy of banishment. From this you can infer the plight of the scholars of other sciences also.

A *hakim*, a man of wisdom, if he is a real sage, having comprehended the relationship between God Almighty and His creatures and himself, the sense of superiority remains no more in his heart. But the unfortunate seeker of terminology and terms has mistaken them for *hikmah* (wisdom) and *ilm* (knowledge) and imagines himself to be an *alim* and *hakim*. He even associates himself with the Attributes of the Necessary Being and says that *hikmah* is one of the Attributes of God Almighty: 'الْحِكْمَةُ هِيَ التَّشْبُهُ بِاللَّهِ.' (Wisdom is what makes [man] similar to God). At other times he groups himself with the prophets and messengers of God, and recites the Quranic phrase, 'وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ' ('He teaches them the Book and Wisdom') and sometimes reiterates the Prophet's *ḥadith*:

الْحِكْمَةُ ضَالَّةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَمَنْ يُوْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا.

*Hikmah* is the lost property of a *mu'min*; one who is endowed with *hikmah* has been given an immense measure of good.

while his heart is unaware of *hikmah* and several thousand stages away from all good and he is himself a stranger to *hikmah*. The great Muslim thinker and philosopher Muḥaqqiq Dāmād—may God be pleased with him—states that a *hakim* is a person who can discard his body like a dress whenever he wants to. What does he say and what are we saying! What meaning did they understand from *hikmah* and how do we conceive it? And you with your pride in your knowledge of a handful of concepts and a few terms, who treat the creatures of God with haughty contempt—it becomes quite clear that you are a petty-minded and shallow person.

Those who style themselves as *murshids* (leaders of mystic orders) and guides of God's creatures, offering spiritual assistance and

pretending Şafī insight, their state is worse than that of the two former groups, and their conceit is greater than theirs. They appropriate the terminology of those two groups, and set out their goods for sale in the marketplace. They have distracted the attention of the creatures of God from Him, attracting them towards themselves, having made those simple-hearted creatures to view the 'ulamā' and other people with suspicion. For the sake of some mean profit, they have coined some attractive terms to deceive credulous people, thinking that titles like 'Majdhūb 'Alī Shāh' and 'Maḥbūb 'Alī Shāh' will produce love for God or create some kind of ecstasy or bliss. O seeker of the world! You thief of concepts and ideas, this activity of yours does not call for pride and exultation. Poor fellow, he is befooled by his own petty-mindedness and narrowness of capacity, considering himself to be a person of high spiritual station. His own tricks have fooled him. His infatuation with himself, his love of the world, and his obsession with some stolen ideas and conceptual trappings and auxiliaries have coalesced to form strangely vicious and perverse admixture. Yet with all these flaws, the poor fellow imagines himself to be a *murshid*, a guide and liberator of mankind, and knower of the secrets of the Shari'ah! No, sometimes this impudence surpasses all limits and he imagines himself to be at the pinnacle of *wilāyah*! This situation arises due to the lack of capacity, the poverty of merits, the narrowness of the mind and the heart, and the suffocating contraction of the breast.

You too, O student of fiqh, ḥadīth and other religious sciences, you also have no share of knowledge except for some terms which have gained currency in *uṣūl* and ḥadīth. If this learning, which is altogether related to practice and action, has not brought any improvement in you and has not rectified you, but instead of this given rise to moral and practical vices in you, your performance is inferior to that of the experts of other sciences and incomparable in its worthlessness with the baser activities of all other people. All those concepts, verbiage, rivalries, and disputations—most of which have no relevance to the religion of God and cannot be considered to be belonging to any sciences either, nor could be regarded as the fruit of knowledge—that does not call for so much of pride and exultation. I make God my witness—and suffices He for testimony—if the result of your knowledge is that it cannot guide you on the right path, nor can it guard you against vices of morals and deeds, the meanest and basest of vocations is better than this learning, because it shows some immediate results and has fewer this-worldly and other-worldly harms.

You, poor fellow, who acquire nothing but a painful burden, hard to carry, your burden does not bring you anything but corrupt morals and perverse deeds. Therefore, your knowledge does not call for any pride and exultation either. Nevertheless, the horizon of your mind is

so narrow that as soon as you prepared a hotchpotch of some terms you started thinking yourself to be a great scholar, fit to walk over the plumes of archangels under your feet, and other people as ignorant creatures. Your arrogant gait restricts the passage for the servants of God in alleys and your conceit encroaches on the roominess of social gatherings.

Yet the meanest among the arrogant is the person who is proud of outward matters like wealth, position, family and descent. This poor fellow is far from all human excellences and moral sense; his hands are empty of all learning and knowledge; but since his clothes are made of sheep's wool, or since his father is somebody, he is arrogant with the people. What a petty mind and a dark and narrow heart it is that leaves all accomplishments and perfections to be content with the niceties of a robe and hat! For his beautiful cloak and cap, he has given up all other beauties of character and soul. Poor fellow, he is satisfied to survive on the plane of beasts and is happy with bestial pleasures, having forgone the dignity of human station for what he considers to be some sort of status, choosing a meaningless and hollow existence, and a blank form devoid of reality and truth. He is so base and hollow that if he meets someone who is superior to him in respect of worldly advantages, he behaves with him like a slave with his master. Of course, one whose goal is nothing but the world, is a slave of the worldly and the world....

In any case, narrowness of vision, pettiness of mind, and lack of capaciousness of personality, together, are a strong factor responsible for pride, which makes its victim to have *'ujb* and *kibr* and makes him highly sensitive to qualities which are neither a kind of perfection nor any merit of note. And the more one is infatuated with one's self and with the world, the more he is likely to be affected by these things.

### **How to Cure Pride?**

Now that you have known the viciousness of pride, it is now your duty to resolve to cure yourself of this disease and to make up your mind to purge your heart from its taints and remove its traces and its heavy dust from the mirror of your heart. If you are among the people of strong will power and an open heart, and the worldly desires have not driven their tentacles deep into it, and if the worldly allurements and ornaments have not blinded it by their light, and if you are still capable of judging and criticizing yourself with justice, the suggestions given in the previous chapter can be most useful for you in this regard. But if you have not reached this level, it is better for you to meditate upon your state; it is possible that your heart may wake up. O man, who were initially nothing; who were hidden in the folds of nothingness for



ages and epochs, more insignificant than nothingness itself and absent from the realms of existence, when God Almighty resolved to create you, you were the most deficient of the recipients, mean, and insignificant. You were incapable of receiving the Divine effusion (*fayḍ*). He created you from the matter (*hayūlā*) of the universe, which is absolute potentiality and pure weakness, and moulded you into an elemental bodily form which was the lowest and the meanest of the existents of the universe. After that you were given the form of sperm, which you will loathe to touch it and will take great pains for cleansing your hands if by chance they are made dirty by it. Then you were kept in a very narrow and unclean place, the twin reproductive glands of the father. And after that through the urinary tract in a terribly ugly state you were brought into the mother's womb and you were given such a place to live in, that description will be disgusting to you. After being placed there, you were given the form of a foetus and a lump of clotted blood. There you were nourished with such a food that you will go mad if you are told about it, and will feel ashamed. But since everyone has to pass through this tribulation, it abates our shame of it. 'وَالْبَيْتُ إِذَا عَمَّتْ طَابَتْ' (A distress which is common becomes tolerable). During all these stages of evolution and change you were the lowest and meanest of creatures. You lacked in all external and internal perceptive faculties and devoid of every kind of merit. After that, with His great kindness and mercy, He made you capable of receiving the gift of life, the life that was manifested in you was so imperfect and fragile that it was, even inferior to that of a worm in its biological functions. In order to improve your deficient capacity, He gradually improved your functions with His mercy and compassion, until you became fit for entering this world and facing its climes. Through the meanest of corridors and in the worst possible condition you were made to enter this realm. Yet you were still weaker than and inferior to the young ones of all the animals. After that, despite acquiring the maximum of your internal and external powers and abilities, you are still so weak and vulnerable that none of your own powers is under your full control. You can neither safeguard your health, nor can you guard your own life and energies, nor can you preserve your beauty and youth. If any calamity or an illness befalls you, you do not possess enough power to repel it. In short, you don't have any control over any aspect of your own being and existence. If you face starvation for one day, you will not resist from eating any kind of rotten cadaver. If your thirst were to overwhelm you, you will be ready to drink from dirty and fetid water. Similarly, in all matters you are a helpless and abject slave who has no power over anything. If you compare yourself with the existence and perfection of the existence and other living beings, you will realize that you and your entire planet, or even the whole solar system, have no

significance whatsoever in front of the whole physical world, which is the meanest and the smallest of all other worlds.

My dear, you have not seen anything except yourself, and whatever you have seen you did not compare it with the world around you. Compare whatever you possess, from your life to the worldly treasures in your possession, with your city, your city with your country, and your country with all the hundreds of the countries of the world, whose names you might not have even heard of, and all those countries with the whole solar system and its vast spheres which are not more than tiny fragments of the sun, and the whole solar system with the Milky Way, of which our sun along with its planets is one of millions of other stars and a part of the huge galaxy, and there are several million of such galaxies like the Milky Way. All these are a part of the physical world, whose vastness is not known to anyone except its Creator and the discoveries of the discoverers have succeeded in revealing only a small fraction of it. Yet this physical world has no significance whatsoever as compared to the supra-physical world, whose realms lie beyond the powers of imagination of the human intellect. In the light of this, let us reexamine the extent and scope of our lives and the share of our fortune in the realm of existence.

Thereafter, when God Almighty resolves to take you away from this world, He commands all your powers to deteriorate and your perceptive faculties to halt their activities. The mechanism of your life is broken down; your auditory and visual senses, and your energies are taken back from you and you become an inanimate inorganic substance. After the passage of a few hours, people will not be able to tolerate the stench emanating from your body and they will be averse to the view of your body and face. All your bodily members and organs will decompose and disintegrate after a few days. Such is the state of your body, and what will happen to your wealth and glory is also quite obvious. But as for your life in *Barzakh* (the Purgatory), if you depart, God forbid, without reforming yourself, God alone knows what conditions and states will be prescribed for you therein. Perceptions of the inhabitants of this world are incapable of seeing, hearing, and smelling the affairs of that world. Whatever you hear of the darkness, the dreads, and the pressures of the grave, you compare them with this-worldly dreads and pressures, but you are mistaken. O God, help us, and rescue us from the calamity of what we ourselves have prepared with our own hands. The punishment of the grave, which is a model of the punishment in the Hereafter—and according to some traditions we will not be able to avail in the *Barzakh* any intercession of the intercessors—God alone knows what kind of punishment it will be! The state of affairs on the Day of Resurrection will be worse and more dreadful than all the past phases. It will be the day of the revelation of

secrets, the manifestation of truths, and the day of the embodiment of morals and actions. It will be the day of reckoning and the day of disgrace. Such is the Day of Resurrection!

*The Punishment in the Hereafter:*

As to the conditions of the hell after the Day of Resurrection, they are also known to you. Would you like to know more about the hell? The punishment of hell will not be confined to the torments of fire alone; a dreadful door will be opened to your eyes, which if opened to this world its dread will destroy all of its inhabitants. A similar door will open to your flesh, another to your nose, each of which will be sufficient to kill the inhabitants of this world. One of the experts in the knowledge of the Hereafter says that in the same way as the heat of hell will reach the climax of its extremity, its coldness will also be at the highest point of coldness. God Almighty is capable of bringing together these two extreme opposites. Such are the dreads of the Hereafter. In the light of all this, one whose beginning lies in infinite nothingness; one who from the point he steps into the world of existence, all whose stages of development are ugly and indecent; all whose states are shameful; whose conditions in the world, the Purgatory and the Hereafter, each one is more horrible and disgraceful than the other—what reason has he for pride? What merit or glory makes him so boastful? Therefore, those whose ignorance is more and whose rational faculties are more defective, are more proud of themselves; and those whose knowledge is greater, whose souls are more capacious, and whose breasts are spacious—they are humbler and more modest.

*Humility and Modesty of the Prophet (S):*

The Prophet (S), whose knowledge was derived from the Divine Revelation, and whose soul was so great that it could preponderate over the spirits of millions upon millions of human beings, who rejected all the practices and customs of the pagan Arabs, who shattered under his feet all the false creeds, abrogated all the scriptures, and the circle of prophethood achieved its completion in his noble existence; who was the ruler of the world and the Hereafter, and who was the master of all the worlds, with the permission of God Almighty; yet his humility towards the creatures of God was more than of any other human being. He hated to see his Companions stand up in his respect. Whenever he entered a gathering, he used to sit in the lowest place. He used to dine on the floor and used to sit on the floor and used to say: "I am a slave of God; I dine like a slave and sit in the manner proper for a slave." It has been reported from al-'Imâm al-Şâdiq (A) that the Prophet (S)

preferred to ride a donkey without a saddle, preferred to dine in a lowly place with the slaves, and offered alms to beggars with his two hands. That holy personage used to ride a donkey and used to sit on the mount with a slave or some other man. It is written about him (S) that he used to share with the members of his household the duties of housework, himself used to milk the sheep, stitch his own clothes and shoes, grind the flour and knead the dough, and carry his belongings himself. He liked the company of the poor and the destitutes and used to dine with them. Such, and better than what we have described, was the character and the modesty of this great personage, although besides holding his high spiritual station he held to perfection the authority of a temporal sovereign. Similar was the life and character of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (A), who also followed the Prophet's way, and his character was identical to that of the Prophet (S).

*To Cure Pride, One Should Act Against Its Dictates:*

Therefore, my friend, if you are proud of your spiritual attainments, they (i.e. the Prophet and Imam 'Alī) were over and above all of us in this respect; and if you have pride in your office and authority, they possessed true sovereignty. Yet, in spite of it, their humility and modesty was more than of anybody else. This shows that humility is the product of knowledge and wisdom, and pride is the outcome of ignorance. Therefore, free yourself from the ignominy of ignorance and the disgrace of petty-mindedness; acquire the attributes of the prophets and shed the qualities of Satan. Do not contend with your God regarding His mantle of Pride and Glory, as His wrath will subdue the contender and he will fall on his face into hell-fire. If you make up your mind for rectifying your self, the way to do so is also easy if you are somewhat persevering. You will not encounter any peril on this way if you move with manly resolve, freedom of thought, and high-mindedness. The only way of overpowering your carnal self and repelling the insinuations of Satan is to act against their incitements. No other way is better for crushing the desires of the self as adopting the traits and qualities of the modest and following their behaviour and character. In whatever stage of pride you may be, and to whatever scientific or professional field you belong, you are advised to act against the inclinations and desires of the self. By discovering and meditating about this-worldly and other-worldly consequences of pride, it is hoped, your journey will become easier and you will reach the desired goal. If your self wishes that you should take the seat of chairmanship of the gathering or to take precedence over your colleagues and equals, you should act against its desire. If your self incites you to refrain from joining the company of the poor and indigent, admonish it severely and

resolutely go and sit in their company, dine with them and travel with them. It is possible that your inner self would try to prevent you by arguing that you are a person of a higher position and that it is essential to keep up your esteem and dignity for the sake of the propagation of the Shari'ah, that sitting with the poor will undermine your respect in society, that humour with the subordinates will be injurious to your authority, that occupying a lowly place in gatherings will affect your status and then you will not be able to perform your religious duties properly... and so on. Be certain that all these are guiles of the Devil and wiles of the self. You have read and heard about the behaviour and character of the Holy Prophet (S), whose worldly position was incomparably superior to you.

*A Reminiscence of a Teacher:*

Among the scholars of our own times, I have seen a person who enjoyed great eminence throughout the Shi'ah world and followed the footsteps of the Holy Prophet (S). The respected teacher and the revered faqih Hajj Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim Ha'iri Yazdi enjoyed the sole *marji'iyah* (Shi'ite jurisprudential authority) of the Shi'ite world from 1340/1921 to 1355 1936. We have all seen his simplicity. He used to travel and dine with his servants. He used to sit on the floor and make all kind of strange jokes with the most junior of students. During his last days, when he had taken ill, with slippers on, he used to walk in the alley after the sunset, without a cloak and turban and with a piece of cloth wrapped around his head. Regard and respect for him grew in the hearts of the people, and these acts of him did not affect his high station either.

There were other great scholars in Qum besides him, for whom these barriers that are created for you by the Devil did not exist. They used to buy their foodstuffs and goods by themselves, used to fetch water from the water tanks and attend to the duties of housework also. They meted out equal treatment to the senior and the junior and did not differentiate between the first rankers and others of a subordinate rank. Their humanity and modesty made people wonder and their respect was also not lowered; rather it was enhanced in the hearts of the people. Anyhow, the attributes of the Prophet (S) and Imams (A) do not derogate people. But one should be cautious of the guiles of the self while opposing it, as it may lure you into its snares and use other tactics for defeating your purpose. For example, you will observe some person occupy an inconspicuous place in a gathering, but in a fashion which is meant to make others understand that his position is superior to all the others present and that it was but a gesture of humility and modesty on his part that he has occupied that place. Or,

for instance, if he had declined in favour of a person of uncertain superiority over himself, he will give priority over himself to someone who it is certain is of a lower rank, thus immediately making it clear that he had declined in favour of the first one because of his own humility. These, and hundreds other like this, are the wiles of self, which add *riyā'* and hypocrisy to pride, and unless one does not resolve to combat them with a sincere determination one will not succeed in rectifying one's self. All the vices of the soul are rectifiable, but a little diligence is needed in the beginning. After one has entered the process of self-correction, everything becomes easier for him. The main thing is to realize the need for the rectification of the self and to wake up from the spell of self-negligence,

*Yaqzah (Awakening) is the First Step:*

The first stage of humanness is *yaqzah*. It signifies the awakening from the slumber of obliviousness and the intoxication of physical nature, and the realization of the fact that man is a traveller and like any other traveller he also needs some provisions for this journey. His morality and character are his provisions for this journey. The only means of undertaking this hazardous and perilous journey on this dark and narrow path, which is sharper than the sword's blade and thinner than a hair, is manly courage. The light of this path is one's faith and one's good qualities. If he is lazy and negligent and gives in to weakness, he will not be able to cross it with safety and will fall headlong into the hell of disgrace and into the gorge of perdition. And one who cannot pass safely over this path will, also, not be able to pass over the *Širāt* in the Hereafter.

My dear, be brave and tear apart the curtain of ignorance and folly and deliver yourself from this terrible abyss. 'Alī (A), the Lord of the Pious, the unique wayfarer of the paths of heavens and the real guide, used to cry out in the mosque so loudly that he could be heard in the neighbourhood:

تَجَهَّزُوا رَحِمَكُمُ اللَّهُ فَقَدْ نُودِيَ فِيكُمْ بِالرَّحِيلِ.

Equip yourselves and be ready, your departure has already been announced.

No preparations will be more beneficial to you than your good moral characteristics and merits, the heart's piety, the righteous deeds, and the purity and spotlessness of your conscience. If, supposedly, you are a person of incomplete and apparent faith, you should cleanse yourself of these impurities so that Divine mercy will put you amongst the righteous and pious servants of God. Only the fire of

repentance (*tawbah*) will clean these impurities, when the self is melted in the furnace of self-reproach with the fuel of remorse and return towards God. Today perform this smelting yourself, in this world; otherwise only God knows how many centuries of the Hereafter it will take for your soul to be refined in the furnace of Divine chastisement, and with a fire of which it has been said:

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ \* الَّتِي تَقْلِعُ عَلَى الْآفَةِ \*

*It is the fire of Allah, kindled, which leapeth up over the hearts (104:6-7)*

It is much easier to purify oneself in this world, as changes occur rapidly in this world; but in the next world, the process of change will be a prolonged process, and the effacement of one evil attribute of the soul will take several centuries.

Therefore, my dear, try to reform your self as long as you possess life, youth, energy, and freedom. Do not pay any attention to this-worldly fame and glory. Trample such phantoms under your feet. You are the son of Adam (A), so free your self from the trait of Satan. Perhaps the Devil gives more importance to see that this vice, which is characteristic of his own nature and for which he was driven out of the court of the Almighty God, is shared by everyone, the sage or the commoner, the scholar or the unlettered, and that they join his fold. Then if you meet him in the next world, having carried this vice with you, he will rebuke you for having adopted this vice. He will say to you, 'O son of Adam! Didn't the prophets inform you that my haughtiness towards your father drove me out of the court of the Almighty? I was cursed due to my scorning of Adam and my self-glorifying. Why did you allow yourself to be afflicted by this vice?' At that time, you, wretched creature that you would be, besides confronting all kind of humiliations and tortures, besides all the regret and remorse, will also have to face the rebukes of the most wretched of beings and the basest of creatures. Satan was not guilty of pride towards God, but of pride towards the creature of God and had said to Him:

... خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ \*

*... Thou createdst me of fire, and him Thou didst create of clay. (7:12)*

In this manner he glorified himself and looked down on Adam (A). You, also, who look down on the progeny of Adam and glorify yourself, have disobeyed God's Commands; for God has commanded His creatures to be modest and humble towards other human beings.

You who treat people with haughty contempt, why do you curse the Devil alone? Why don't you include your vicious self also in this curse, as it also shares this vice with him? The proud man is a personification of all Satans; perhaps in the purgatory and on the Day of Resurrection, his appearance will be that of Satan. The criterion of man's form in the Hereafter are his spiritual qualities. It's possible that you will acquire the form of Satan as well as the size of an ant. The standards in the Hereafter will be different from those in this world.

*The Vicious Subtleties of the Self:*

Sometimes it happens that a person who lacks a certain merit is proud towards the possessor of that merit, such as when a poor person is proud towards a rich one or when an ignorant one is proud towards a learned person. It should be remembered that in the same way as *'ujb* is sometimes the source of pride, jealousy (*hasad*) may also be the source of pride. One may perceive himself as lacking in a certain merit which is present in another; then he becomes jealous of him and this serves as the cause of pride towards the other person, whom he tries to insult in all possible ways.

In *al-Kāfi* it has been reported from al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) that he said: "Pride is found in the most vicious of human beings, to whatever kind they may belong." Then he added: "Once the Prophet (S) was passing through one of the lanes of al-Madinah where a negress was gathering dung. She was told to move aside and allow the Prophet (S) to pass. She answered that the passage was wide enough. One of the persons who accompanied the Prophet (S) tried to threaten her, but the Prophet (S) prevented him from doing so, saying: 'Leave her alone, she is a proud woman.' "

Sometimes this vicious habit is seen among some scholars, who make an excuse that to act with humility with the wealthy is not a virtue. Their vicious self makes them believe that modesty with the rich weakens faith. The poor fellow cannot differentiate between the humility before wealth and humility towards the rich and others. It is true that sometimes the vice of love of the world and the ambition for worldly honour and glory makes men to adopt modest and humble behaviour. This cannot be counted as modesty; it is flattery, and is reckoned as a moral vice. The possessor of this trait does not show humbleness to the poor, except when his self-interest requires it or when he uses it as a bait. But it is also true that the virtue of humility of men invites man to act with modesty and humility towards the others, irrespective of whether they are rich or poor, whether of enviable conditions or not. That is, their modesty is sincere and pure. Their souls are clean and unstained by the love for popularity in society and



honour, which have no charm for them. This kind of humility and modesty is good with the poor, and it is good with the rich as well. Everyone should be treated with the respect that is due to him. But this pride and contempt of yours towards the rich and wealthy is not on account of the fact that you are not a sycophant, but it is because you are a jealous person, and you do not understand this. If the same rich man were unexpectedly to show you respect, you will be humble and modest with him. In any case, the snares and the skilful guiles of the self are so subtle that one cannot do anything except taking refuge in God. وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ أَوَّلًا وَآخِرًا. 'And Praise is God's, in the beginning and the end.'

NOTES:

1. Al-Kulayni. *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* (Tehran), Vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by Ḥājī Sayyid Jawād Muṣṭafawī), pp. 421-422.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 426.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 424.
4. Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Shu'bah al-Ḥarrānī, *Tuḥaf al-'uqūl* (Kitāb furūshī Islāmiyyah, Tehran, 1402 H.), Arabic text with Persian translation by Aḥmad Jannatī 'Aṭā'i, p. 327.
5. *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, Vol. III, p. 423.
6. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 423.
7. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 424.

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### Fifth *Hadīth* on *Hasad*

بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُنْتَصِلِ إِلَى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِيسَى عَنْ يُونُسَ عَنْ  
دَاوُدَ الرَّقِيقِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص): قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ  
لِمُوسَى بْنِ عِمْرَانَ: يَا أَبْنَى عِمْرَانَ لَا تَحْسَدَنَّ النَّاسَ عَلَى مَا آتَيْتُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِي وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ  
عَيْنَكَ إِلَى ذَلِكَ وَلَا تُنِيعْهُ نَفْسَكَ، فَإِنَّ الْحَاسِدَ سَاخِطٌ لِعِيسَى، صَادٌّ لِقَسَمِي الَّذِي قَسَمْتُ  
بَيْنَ عِبَادِي وَمَنْ يَكْ كَذَلِكَ فَلَسْتُ مِنْهُ وَلَيْسَ مِنِّي.

... Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb (al-Kulaynī), from 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, from Muḥammad ibn 'Isā, from Yūnus, from Dāwūd al-Raqqī, who reports from Abū 'Abd Allāh (al-'Imām al-Sādiq) (A) that the Apostle of God (S) said that God Almighty addressed Mūsā ibn 'Imrān (A) thus: "O son of 'Imrān, never be envious of people concerning the favours I have conferred on them by My grace, do not glower at them, and do not succumb to your (envious) self. Indeed the envious man is indignant at the bestowal of My favour, and contests My apportioning of gifts among My creatures. Whoso is such, he neither belongs to Me nor do I belong to him."

#### Definition of *Hasad*:

**H**asad or envy is a psychic state in which a person wishes for the deprivation of a blessing, talent or merit, real or imagined, possessed by another person. It does not make any difference to the envious man whether he possesses it or not, whether he can acquire it or not.

The term 'imagined' is used here for the reason that it is not necessary that there should be any real merits or advantage in the true sense of the word. For it has been established by observation that even

same way as a person contemplating his own merits considers others to lack them, with a sense of elation, exultation, and rebelliousness overcoming him; in the same manner when someone perceives others to be more perfect, a feeling of inferiority and dejection seizes him, which, with the help of external factors and inner propensities, generate the feeling of envy in his heart. Sometimes it may happen that he feels dejected on account of someone sharing his merit, such as when a person endowed with a merit feels jealous of those on an equal or lower footing than himself. Therefore, it may be said that envy is a state of abjectness and dejection which finds an expression in the desire for the destruction or deprival of others' merits and advantages. Accordingly, some scholars, like al-'Allamah al-Majlisi, have confined the causes of envy to the following seven:

1. Enmity.

2. The sense of one's supremacy: It may happen that the envious man anticipates the pride of the envied on account of a merit and advantage that he enjoys. Not having the patience to put up with the pride, he earnestly desires the loss of those merits and advantages.

3. *Kibr* (pride): The envious person desires to treat high-handedly the person who is conferred some merit or favour, which is not possible unless those favours and merits are lost.

4. Wonder: The envious person is puzzled to see the great blessing enjoyed by the object of his envy. God Almighty reports the nations of the past as saying to the prophets: ...إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَشْرِكُنَا... "Ye are but mortals like us" (14:10), and: ...فَقَالُوا أَتُؤْمِنُ لَشَرِّهِمْ... "And they said: 'Shall we put faith in two mortals like ourselves'...." (23:47).

They wondered as to how a mortal like them could reach the high station of prophethood and be inspired by God; so they felt envious on account of it.

5. Fear: The envious man is apprehensive of some hindrance on the part of the person enjoying an advantage or merit that may, he fears, frustrate his cherished aims and objectives.

6. Love of authority: This becomes a cause of envy when one's acquiring or preserving authority over others requires that nobody should share his advantages or merits.

7. Viciousness of nature: The man of vicious nature does not like to see others enjoying any kind of good whatsoever.

In the view of this writer, most, or rather all, of these causes are derived from the feeling of inferiority and dejection.

#### Some Evil Effects of Envy:

Envy itself is one of the deadliest diseases of the heart. The mortal diseases of the heart, like pride and other vices, though each is a mortal

things which are vices and defects, on account of their being considered by the envious as excellences and merits, he desires their destruction. Sometimes it is also true that certain attributes which are a defect in a human being but are bestial accomplishments are envied by the envious man on account of the significance that he attaches to such qualities. He sees them as merits on account of his animal state, and desires that the other man should be deprived of them. For instance, there are certain persons who consider ruthlessness and brutality as virtues, and when they see a person possessing these qualities they envy him. There are some who consider the capacity for idle talk and vulgar jokes as virtues, and they feel jealous of those skilled at them. Therefore, the criterion for identifying this psychic disease is the imagined existence of merits and the suspected presence of accomplishments in the mind of the afflicted person, not the real presence of merit and accomplishment itself. In short, whenever a person notices any merit (real or imaginary) in others and wishes for their loss and destruction, such a person is described as *ḥasūd* or envious.

#### The Kinds of Ḥasad:

There are various kinds and degrees of *ḥasad* according to the state and condition of the *maḥsūd* (the one envied), the *ḥasūd* (the one who envies), and the nature of *ḥasad* itself.

*According to the condition of the maḥsūd:* Qualities like certain intellectual, spiritual, and moral merits, or good and pious deeds, or outward factors like wealth, honour, and prestige can cause envy. Also their antithetical qualities, when they are imagined to be merits, can also cause envy and jealousy.

*According to the condition of the envious person:* The feeling of envy in the heart of the person who harbours it is sometimes caused by enmity, sometimes by pride, and at other times by fear and the like—causes which will be discussed later on.

*According to the condition of envy itself:* As for envy itself, the classification performed on its basis is an essential one, not those performed on the previous bases. There are several stages and grades of intensity and weakness according to their various causes and effects. God willing, we will deal with their harmful effects and the methods of curing them in several sections according to our capabilities, and hope to receive His assistance in this regard.

#### The Causes and Motives of Ḥasad:

There are numerous causes of *ḥasad*, and the main among them, as opposed to *kibr*, are products of a feeling of one's inferiority. In the

sin in itself, produces additional vices each of which is fatal independently. We shall discuss here a few of them which are apparent and known to this author. There may be others which are hidden and unknown. In two *ṣaḥīḥ* traditions al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) and al-'Imām al-Bāqir (A) inform us about the evil effects of *ḥasad*:

عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ وَهَبٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ آفَةُ الدِّينِ الْحَسَدُ وَالْمُعْجَبُ وَالْفَخْرُ.

Mu'āwiyah ibn Wahab reports that al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) said: "Ḥasad, 'ujb, and vainglory are a bane of faith."<sup>2</sup>

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَأْتِي بِأَذْنَى بَادِرَةٍ فَيَكْفُرُ وَإِنَّ الْحَسَدَ لَيَأْكُلُ الْإِيمَانَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ النَّارُ الْخَطْبَ

Muhammad ibn Muslim reports that al-'Imām al-Bāqir (A) said: "A man may be forgiven for something done in a fit of anger; but envy devours faith as fire consumes wood."<sup>3</sup>

It is a known fact that faith is a Divine light that illumines the human heart with the radiance of His glory, as has been related by the *ḥadith qudsī* quoted before:

لَا تَسْمُنِي أَرْضِي وَلَا سَمَائِي بَلْ يَسْمُنِي قَلْبُ الْمُؤْمِنِ

Neither [the vastness of] My earth, nor [that of] My heaven can contain Me. Indeed it is the heart of the man of faith which can contain Me.

The spiritual light and the divine spark which makes the human heart greater than anything else in the world does not go along with the darkness and narrowness caused in it by this grievous vice. This hideous quality makes the human heart so narrow and dejected that its effects become apparent throughout the realm of one's inner and outer-being. The heart becomes grieved and depressed, the chest narrow and suffocated, and the face grim and frowning. This state extinguishes the light of faith and deadens the human heart. The more it gains in strength, the more it diminishes the brightness of faith. All the inward and outward attributes of faith are negated by the effects of envy which are manifested within and without one's personality. The man of faith is optimistic and has a hopeful attitude towards God, and is satisfied with the way He has divided and apportioned His bounties among His creatures. The envious person is displeased with God and is resentful of the fate apportioned by Him. As mentioned in tradition, a believer is not malicious towards other believers; he loves them, whereas the envious man acts in an opposite manner.

A true believer is not possessed by the love of mundane things, whereas the envious man is afflicted with this vice due to his love of the world. A believer has no fear or grief whatsoever in his heart, except for that which is associated with the Ultimate Source and End of all being. But the fears and griefs of the envious man revolve around the person of whom he is jealous. The believer has a beaming countenance, which depicts his cheerful nature. The envious man has a frowning face and a grim countenance. The believer is humble, and is (most of the time) not proud or envious.

Envy destroys faith in the same way as fire burns up wood. Therefore, there does not exist any doubt about the danger of this vice which wrests from man his faith, the source of his salvation in the Hereafter and the life and vigour of his heart, and reduces him into a helpless wretch.

A great evil that is an inseparable ingredient of envy is indignation with the Creator and the Beneficent Nourisher and annoyance with His ordainments. Deprived of vision by the dark veils of carnal nature, our immersion in the world of senses has blinded the eyes and deafened the ears. We do not understand that we are angry with the King of kings, nor know as to what form our anger and resentment will acquire as the result of this vice in the next world, our permanent abode. We hear the words of al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A): وَمَنْ يَكْ كَذَلِكَ فَلَسْتُ مِنْهُ وَلَيْسَ مِنِّي. "Whoso is such, he neither belongs to Me nor do I belong to him," yet we do not understand the magnitude of the misfortune of God Almighty's disowning us, and what His disgust with us will bring for us. One who is driven out from the sphere of His *wilāyah* (guardianship) and is not accepted under the standard of the Mercy of the Most Merciful, there is no hope of his salvation. He will not be able to receive any intercession of the intercessors either: ... مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ... "Who is he that intercedeth with Him save by His leave?" (2:255) Who will act as an intercessor for one who is wrathful and resentful towards God, outside the pale of His *wilāyah*, and whose bonds of love between him and his Lord have been severed? Woe to us for the calamity we have invited for ourselves! Despite all the warnings and alarms sounded by the apostles of God to awaken us from the slumber, our neglect and our wretchedness only grew day by day.

#### *The Punishment of the Grave:*

According to the 'ulamā', the punishment of the grave and the darkness therein is one of the evil consequences of this vice. They maintain that the bearer of this vice, with its associated spiritual tension and gloom, is oppressed by pressure and darkness in the grave and in *Barzakh*. One's condition in the grave depends upon the spaciousness of

the hearts and the narrowness thereof.

Al-Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) is narrated to have said that the Prophet (S) went to attend the funeral of Sa'd. While seventy thousand angels accompanied the ceremonies, the Prophet (S) of God raised his head towards the heavens and said: "Does anyone face the squeeze [of the grave] as Sa'd faced?" The narrator of the tradition said to the Imam: "May I die for your sake, we have been told that Sa'd was not very particular of *tahārah* while passing urine." The Imam said: "God forbid, his only fault was that he was harsh in his treatment of the people of his household...."

The state of darkness, narrowness, tension and constriction that appears in one's heart due to this vice is not likely to occur in other moral vices. In any case, the person possessing this vicious trait suffers torments in this life, then the oppressive darkness and constriction in the grave, and will ultimately be helpless and wretched in the Hereafter. All these are the evil effects of envy alone, on condition that it does not breed any other vice or induce any other evil deed. But it rarely happens that it does not generate some other affliction. Rather, it often begets many other moral vices and misdeeds, such as pride, as mentioned earlier, and other sins like backbiting, slandering, abusing, and torturing, etc., each one of which is a deadly and mortal sin.

Therefore, it is necessary for a wise person to make up his mind immediately and strive to get rid of this shame and indignity, saving his faith from the blaze of this fire and its disaster. He should rid himself of this mental torture and narrow-mindedness, which is a perpetual life-long punishment in this world, followed by distress and darkness in the grave and the Purgatory, and incurs Divine wrath. One should consider that a malady which has so many harms needs to be treated urgently. His envy does not harm the person of whom he is envious. It does not make him lose any of the favours and merits either. It may even give him some satisfaction, in this world as well as in the other, to see the distress of one who is jealous of him and is his enemy. While he continues to enjoy all those advantages which cause you distress and anguish, it is yet another gift for him. And if you are again jealous of him for the second one, it will multiply your torment and anguish, which will again be a blessing for him, and so on. Hence you shall ever remain in grief, pain, and anguish and he in a state of bliss, joy, and exuberance. In the Hereafter, also, your envy will benefit him, especially if it culminates in backbiting, slandering, and other such acts of malice; as your good deeds will be assigned to him. You will be reduced to utter destitution and he will enjoy bounties and eminence. If you deliberate upon the matter for a while, you shall of course purge yourself from this vice and save your soul from its destructive effects. Don't think that psychic, moral, and spiritual vices are not curable; this is an



erroneous notion that has been inspired in you by Satan and your carnal self, who want to keep you from treading the path of the Hereafter and to frustrate your efforts at rectifying your self. As long as man exists in this realm of transition and change, it is possible for him to transform all his attributes and moral characteristics. However strong his habits may be, as long as he is living in this world he can quit them. The only thing is that the effort required to throw them off varies with the degree of their strength and intensity. A bad habit in the early phase of its formation, of course, requires only a little self-discipline and effort to eradicate it. It is like uprooting a young plant that has not run its roots deeply into the ground. But when a quality becomes firmly rooted in one's nature, becoming a part of one's spiritual make-up, it is not easily uprooted, but requires much effort, like the tree that becomes old in age, having sent down its roots deep into the earth; it cannot be easily extirpated. The more you delay the decision to eradicate the iniquities of the heart, the more time and effort it will require.

My dear, in the first place do not allow any moral vice, bad habit or evil deed to enter the realm of your inner and outer being. This task is much easier than that of expelling them after they enter, establish themselves, and start flourishing. And if they enter, the more you delay the action required to expel them, the more time and effort will it require, and they will corrupt your inner faculties in the mean time. Our great shaykh, the accomplished 'arif Shāhābādī—my soul be sacrificed for him—used to say that it is better to take an action against moral vices when one's youth and its powers and vivacity are still there. At that stage one can fulfil one's responsibilities as a human being in a better way. One should not allow oneself to delay until one's powers have departed; as it becomes more difficult to achieve success in this regard when old age sets in. Even if, presumably, one succeeds, the effort required for the reform is, in comparison, much greater.

Therefore, if a wise person considers the evil effects of anything and realizes that he is not afflicted by it, he does not involve himself in it and does not allow it to contaminate him; and if, God forbid, he is afflicted he tries to get rid of it and correct himself as soon as possible, not allowing it to strengthen its roots. If, God forbid, it has taken roots, he makes every effort to root it out so as to avoid its evil consequences in the Purgatory and the Hereafter. If he is transferred in the state of affliction from this world of material change, he will no longer be able to do anything about it. Woe to the man who is such, for it will take ages of the *Barzakh* and the Hereafter to transform a single moral characteristic.

In a tradition, the Holy Prophet (S) has been reported to have said that every inhabitant of Paradise or Hell is consigned to it eternally on

account of his or her intentions and aims. Bad intentions, which result from evil morals, cannot be shed unless their source and origin is destroyed. In that world human qualities will manifest themselves with such an intensity and power that either it is not possible for them to perish at all--in which case one is lodged eternally in the Hell or it is possible to purge them only through torment, distress, and flames--in which case it will take a time of several centuries of the Hereafter. Therefore, O wise man, do not allow a vice which can be removed by little effort of a month or a year or two, and whose removal is fully within your capacity and means, to linger on and cause the distresses of this world and the Hereafter and ultimately destroy you.

### The Source of Moral Corruption:

It was mentioned earlier that faith, which is the joy and fortune of the soul, is different from knowledge, which is the pleasure and satisfaction of the intellect. All moral and behavioural corruptions ensue from the absence of faith in one's heart; i.e. whatever the intellect and reason have comprehended through rational proofs or the reports of the prophets fails to enter the heart, and the heart is unaware of their truth. One of the doctrines which every 'arif, hakim, mutakallim, as well as the laity and the legists, affirm and regard as indubitable is that whatever has come into existence as the result of the stroke of the Pen of the absolutely Wise Creator, from the viewpoint of being and perfection to the apportioning of the means of sustenance among creatures and the ordination of their terms of life--everything demonstrates the utmost beauty of design and the utmost perfection of a system which is in complete accordance with the *sumum bonum* of the creatures and the most complete and perfect system imaginable.

However, each one of them describes this graciousness of God and His absolute wisdom in his own specific language and in accordance with the terminology of his discipline. The 'arif says: "It is the shadow of the Absolute Beauty." The hakim says. "The system of the real world is in accordance with a scientific scheme free from any defect and evil; that which is presumed to be evil in particular instances is nothing but a means for the creatures to acquire their deserved degree of perfection." The mutakallim and the legist believe that God's Acts are based upon wisdom and the general good, and man's limited intellect is incapable of comprehending the higher good intrinsic in Divine ordainments. All subscribe to this idea and everyone sets forth an argument to prove it according to his own knowledge and intelligence. But since they do not go beyond words and have not entered the heart, voices of protest and objection can still be heard, and

yet the same man, not enjoying the bounty of faith, counters his own words and confutes his own arguments. Moral vices, too, are rooted in this weakness of faith. The one who feels jealous of others and desires for the loss of a good enjoyed by another and harbours spite against those who possess it in his heart, should know that he does not believe that it is in his own interest that God Almighty has not bestowed upon him that favour. Our limited understanding fails to comprehend the wisdom of His determinations. He should realize that he does not have faith in Divine Justice and the justness of His apportioning. Verbally he may declare his belief in the doctrine of Divine Justice. But his declaration is mere words; for the belief in the justness of God is contrary to envy. If you deem Him just, then consider His ordainment to be just too, for the ḥadīth says expressly that the envious man is resentful at God's apportioning of gifts among His creatures and indignant at the favours conferred by Him. In accordance with the Divine instincts inherent in him, man by nature is a lover of justice. Modesty and reverence before justice and hatred and rebellion before injustice are rooted in his nature. However, if an opposite attitude is observed, it is because of a defect in his premises. If he is indignant at the advantages enjoyed by others and is contentious about the Divine apportioning of bounties, it is on account of the fact that he does not consider it as just, but, God forbid, regards it as unjust and cruel. It is not because he considers the Divine apportioning as just and is yet resentful of it. It is not that he considers the Divine plan to be a perfect system and absolutely good and yet is displeased with it. Alas, our faith is not complete and the intellectual proofs have not crossed the limits of reason and intellect to enter the realm of the heart. Faith is not [solely] a matter of utterance. It is not mere reading, discussing, or quoting others; it requires sincerity of intention. One who seeks God succeeds in finding Him. Those who are interested in Divine knowledge, seek it:

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا \*

*Whoso is blind here will be blind in the Hereafter, and yet further from the road. (17:72)*

.... وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ نُورٍ \*

*And he for whom Allah hath not appointed light, for him there is no light. (24:40)*

#### **The Practical Remedy for Envy:**

Besides the theoretical cure that has been mentioned above, there

is a practical remedy also for this hideous vice. It consists of this: Try, forcibly, to be affectionate with the person of whom you are jealous. By making a display of your affection, your purpose should be to cure yourself of this internal malady. Your inner self will ask you to hurt him and malign him. It will demand that you treat him like an enemy and recount to you his vices and mistakes. But you act against the inclinations of your self and be friendly with him. Honour him and respect him and force yourself to speak in his praise. Try to see his virtues yourself and make them known to others too, concentrating upon his good qualities. Though your behaviour will be affected and unnatural in the beginning, being artificial and feigned, but since your aim is self-rectification and curing of this vice, your behaviour will gradually become less artificial. Day by day this affectation will be lessened and your self will become accustomed to it and that which was affectation will become reality. You convince your self and make it understand that he is a creature of God; perhaps it is God's grace which has selected him for the advantage that he enjoys. If the object of your envy is a scholar endowed with knowledge and piety, and you are jealous of him due to these merits, your envy is all the more abominable and this enmity will bring you greater harm in the Hereafter. It is for you to make your self understand that they are chosen servants of God, who, through Divine grace, have been distinguished by that great merit and favour. Such a gift ought to make one feel affectionate and kindly towards its possessors, inclining one to respect them and to be humble towards them. Hence, if one perceives that anything that should stir up love and respect in his heart is causing something that is contrary to it, he should know that the baser emotions have overpowered him and their darkness has conquered his inner self. Now it is time for him to positively resolve to get rid of it by all theoretical and practical means. If he tries to stimulate the feelings of love and friendship in his heart, he will succeed soon, since the light of love conquers the darkness of hatred. God Almighty has promised that He will guide those who struggle and help them through His invisible grace and increase their capacities: *إِنَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْتَوَّابِينَ وَالْهَادِيَةِ* 'Indeed He possesses the authority to grant ability and to guide.'

#### *The Tradition Regarding Remission of Envy:*

In some of the holy traditions it has been reported from the Prophet (S) that he enumerated nine things from which his Ummah have been granted remission; *hasad*, in case it is not expressed in one's words or deeds, is one of them. This tradition, and others similar to it, should not, of course, prevent one from seriously uprooting the vicious tree of envy from the self and freeing the soul from this faith-

consuming fire. Because, it rarely happens that this vicious thing enters the soul without breeding diverse abominations there, without its signs becoming visible, and without harming one's faith. It is mentioned in *ṣaḥīḥ* aḥādīth that envy devours faith and is baleful to it, and that God Almighty disowns the envious person and would have nothing to do with him. Therefore, a thing which is a major source of corruption and endangers all that matters to a human being should not be taken lightly due to misunderstanding the Prophetic ḥadīth about remission of the sin of *ḥasad*.

Therefore, it is for you to take the matter seriously and snip off its branches and try to rectify yourself. Do not allow its venom to spill over in your outward behaviour, as it will weaken its roots and stop its growth. And if you die during this period of spiritual reform and struggle, you will be blessed with Divine Mercy. With His infinite mercy and the boon provided by the spiritual station of the interceding Holy Prophet (S), you will be granted forgiveness. The spark of Divine beneficence will burn up any remaining traces of it, and the soul will be purged and purified.

As to the following tradition narrated by Ḥamzah ibn Ḥumrān:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: ثَلَاثَةٌ لَمْ يَنْجُ مِنْهَا نَبِيٌّ قَمَنْ ذُوْنَهُ التَّفَكُّرُ فِي الْوَسْوَسَةِ فِي الْخَلْقِ وَالظُّبُرَةِ وَالْحَسَدُ إِلَّا أَنْ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَا يَسْتَعْمِلُ هَذَا.

Abū 'Abd Allāh (al-'Imam al-Ṣādiq) (A) said: "There are three things from which neither any prophet nor others below his rank are immune: doubts about the creation, anticipation of misfortune for others, and envy, although a believer does never make use of them,"<sup>4</sup>

either the statement is hyperbolic, the intention being that these form the most frequent basis of their tribulations, without their being actually subject to these vices; or *ḥasad* is used here to connote *ghibṭah* (envy which is free of ill will); or what is meant is the inclination to wish for the loss of some of the advantages enjoyed by infidels who propagate false beliefs. Otherwise, the prophets of God and the saints are free from any taint of *ḥasad* in the real sense of the word. A heart which is defiled with moral evils and inner impurities cannot receive Divine inspiration and revelation. Such a heart does not become a mirror of the light of Divine Attributes and the radiance of the Essence. Therefore, this tradition ought to be interpreted in the manner indicated above or in some other fashion, or it should be referred back to its speaker, upon whom be God's peace and benedictions: وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ أَوَّلًا وَآخِرًا. 'And Praise is God's, at the beginning and at the end.'

NOTES:

1. *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* (Pub. by Intishārāt-e 'ilmiyyah Islāmiyyah, Arabic text with Persian translation by Ḥājj Sayyid Jawād Muṣṭafawī), vol. III, p. 418.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 418
3. *Ibid.*, p. 416.
4. *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, "Bāb al-'amr bi al-ma'rūf."

### Sixth *Ḥadīth* on Love of the World

بِالسَّيِّدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلَى مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ يَحْيَى، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنْ  
 ابْنِ مُخْبُوبٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ وَعَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَبْدِيِّ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي يَعْقُوبَ، عَنْ أَبِي  
 عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: مَنْ أَصْبَحَ وَأَمْسَى وَالْدُّنْيَا أَكْبَرُ هَمِّهِ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى الْفَقْرَيْنِ عَيْنَيْهِ وَشَتَّ  
 أَمْرَهُ وَلَمْ يَنْتَلِ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَا قَسَمَ اللَّهُ لَهُ، وَمَنْ أَصْبَحَ وَأَمْسَى وَالْآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ هَمِّهِ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ  
 الْغِنَى فِي قَلْبِهِ وَجَمَعَ لَهُ أَمْرَهُ.

... Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb (al-Kulaynī) from Muḥammad ibn Yahyā, from  
 Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from Ibn Maḥbūb, from 'Abd Allāh ibn Sinān, and  
 'Abd al-'Azīz al-'Abdī from 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Ya'fūr, who report Abū 'Abd  
 Allāh (al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq) (A) to have said: "One who passes his evenings and  
 mornings in such a way that the world be his biggest concern, God ordains  
 poverty between his two eyes and causes his affairs to become disjointed and  
 dissipated, while he does not attain anything except what has been appor-  
 tioned for him. And as for one who passes his evenings and mornings  
 while his biggest concern and goal be the Hereafter, God puts contentment  
 in his heart and gives a wholeness and unity to his affairs."<sup>1</sup>

#### Exposition of the Tradition:

**T**here are various interpretations of the terms 'the world' and 'the  
 Hereafter' according to different views offered by mystics and  
 scholars. Here, our objective is not to plunge into any involved  
 discussion about hair-splitting definitions, an absorption which keeps  
 the wayfarer from proceeding towards his goal. What is essential here is  
 to understand the meaning of 'the disapproved world' (i.e. 'the world' in  
 the sense in which it is necessary for the person seeking the Hereafter to  
 shun it) and the factors that assist man and guide him on the path of

salvation. These we shall discuss, God willing, in a few sections, and implore His help and guidance in this regard.

#### **Mawlānā Majlisī on the Reality of the World:**

The great researcher and peerless traditionist Mawlānā Majlisī, upon whom be God's mercy, states: "Let it be known to you that that which can be deduced from all the verses of the Quran and the traditions in this regard, according to our understanding of them, is that 'the accursed world' is the sum total of all those things that prevent man from obeying God and keep him from His love and from seeking the Hereafter. Therefore 'the world' and 'the Hereafter' are antithetical to each other: whatever causes His good pleasure and one's nearness to Him belongs to 'the Hereafter,' even though apparently it should seem to be a matter of the world—such as the trade, the agriculture, the industry and the crafts whose purpose is to provide subsistence for one's family for the sake of obedience to God's command, for spending one's income for charitable purposes and the welfare of the poor and needy, and to avoid dependence on others and beseeching their help. All these activities are meant for the Hereafter, though people should consider them to be for the sake of the world. On the other hand, heretical exercises in spiritual self-discipline, sanctimonious deeds and the like, though they might be performed with great devotion and care, are meant for the world, as they cause alienation from God and do not bring man near to Him. Such are the deeds and the practices of the infidels and those who oppose the right path".<sup>2</sup>

Another researcher remarks: "Your 'world' and 'Hereafter' are two inner states of your heart: that which is nearer and is concerned with the life before death is 'the world', and whatever that follows it and is concerned with the life after death is 'the Hereafter'. Therefore, everything that earns you pleasure and joy and provokes your lust before death, it is 'the world' for you."

#### **The Author's View:**

This pauper says: 'the world' may sometimes be regarded as meaning the lowest level of existence and the abode of change, transition, and annihilation. 'The Hereafter' signifies return from this lower mode of existence to the higher, celestial plane, one's inner world, which is the abode of permanence, stability, and eternity. These two worlds exist for every individual. The first one is the terrestrial realm of development and emergence, which is the lower plane of observable worldly existence. The other is the hidden, inward, and celestial level of existence, which is the higher plane of being of the



Hereafter. Although worldly existence is a lower and defective realm of being, but since it is a nursery for the training of lofty souls and a school for acquiring higher spiritual stations, it is a field for cultivating the Hereafter. In this sense it is the most sublime of the realms of being and the most profitable of worlds for the lovers of God and the wayfarers of the path of the Hereafter. And were it not for this terrestrial realm of matter, the domain of physical and spiritual substantial transformation and change, and if God Almighty had not made it a realm of transition and annihilation, not a single imperfect soul would have attained its promised state of perfection nor would it have been able to reach the realm of permanence and stability, nor the embodiments of imperfection would have been able to enter the Kingdom of God.

Accordingly, that which is mentioned in the Quran and tradition regarding the disapproval of 'the world' does not actually apply to the world itself, but is meant to refer to absorption in it and love and attachment for it. This shows that man has two 'worlds': one of them is condemned, while the other is extolled and praised.

The world which is approved is that which one acquires in this earthly abode, this school, and this marketplace, where higher stations and lasting spiritual merits are exchanged for transitory goods and where arrangements are made for the abiding abode. These cannot be possibly acquired without entering this world, as has been stated by the Mawlā of the Muwahhidūn, Amīr al-Mu'minīn al-'Imām 'Alī (A), in one of his sermons delivered on hearing a person abuse 'the world':

إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا دَارُ صِدْقٍ لِمَنْ صَدَّقَهَا وَدَارُ عَاقِبَةٍ لِمَنْ فَهَمَ عَنْهَا وَدَارُ غِنَى لِمَنْ تَزَوَّدَ مِنْهَا وَدَارُ مَوْعِظَةٍ لِمَنْ اتَّعَظَ بِهَا، مَسْجِدُ أَحِبَّاءِ اللَّهِ وَمُصَلَّى مَلَائِكَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَهْبِطُ وَحْيِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْجَرُ أَوْلِيَاءِ اللَّهِ يَكْتَسِبُوا فِيهَا الرَّحْمَةَ وَرَبِحُوا فِيهَا الْجَنَّةَ.

Indeed this world is the abode of truth for him who appreciates its truthfulness, a place of safety for him who understands it, a mine of treasures for him who collects provisions from it [for the next world], and a house of instructions for him who draws lessons from it. It is the shrine of worship for those who love Allah, the house of prayer for His angels, the place where the revelations of Allah descend, and the marketplace for those devoted to Him. Herein they earn His mercy and herein they acquire Paradise by way of profit.<sup>3</sup>

God Almighty's words, تَنْعَمُ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِينَ (What a good abode is the house of the pious) relate to the world, according to the interpretation of al-'Imām al-Bāqir (A) reported in a tradition by al-'Ayyāshī. Therefore, this world, being as it is the manifestation of and witness to His Beauty and Majesty, is not at all condemnable in this sense. That which is condemnable is the world of man himself in the sense of his

absorption in the world of carnal nature and his attachment and love for it. That world is the source of all vices and all inward and outward sins, as reported in *al-Kāfī* from al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq (A):

قَالَ الْأَمَامُ الصَّادِقُ (ع): رَأْسُ كُلِّ خَطِيئَةٍ حُبُّ الدُّنْيَا.

Al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) said: "The love of the world is the source of all transgressions."<sup>4</sup>

And it has been reported from al-'Imām al-Bāqir (A) that he said:

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ (ع) قَالَ: مَا ذُئِبَانٍ ضَارِبَانِ فِي غَنَمٍ لَيْسَ لَهَا رَاعٍ، هَذَا فِي أَوَّلِهَا وَهَذَا فِي آخِرِهَا بِأَسْرَعَ فِيهَا مِنْ حُبِّ الْمَالِ وَالشَّرَفِ فِي دِينِ الْمُؤْمِنِ.

"The harm done by two ferocious wolves, one attacking from the front and the other from the rear, to a herd without a shepherd, is less rapid than the one done by the love of the world to the faith of the faithful."<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, the attachment of the heart and the love of the world is synonymous with the accursed world, and the greater the attachment, the thicker the veils between man and the realms of sublimity, and denser the curtain between the heart of the human being and its Creator. It occurs in some aḥādīth that there are seventy thousand veils of light and darkness between God and His creatures. The veils of darkness may be no other than the attachments of the heart to this world, and the deeper they are, the greater the number of the veils and greater the difficulty of their removal.

#### The Factors that Promote Worldliness:

Man is the child of this physical world, nature being his mother, and he the offspring of water and dust. The love for this world is implanted in his heart since the early time of his development and growth. As he grows, this love also increases. On account of the faculties of desire and the organs of deriving pleasure that have been granted to him by God Almighty for the sake of the preservation of individual and species, this love grows day by day. Since he considers the world as a place of pleasure and luxury, and death as the end of the activities, even if he is led to believe in the Hereafter, its states, conditions, and rewards by the arguments of the ḥukamā' or the traditions of the prophets (A), yet his heart remains unfamiliar with them and does not accept them, let alone obtaining certainty of their reality. Due to these reasons, his love for this world and his attachment to it increase considerably. Since man naturally loves immortality,

detests and evades decline and annihilation, and mistakes death for annihilation, even if his reason were to confirm this world as the house of transition and annihilation and that world as eternal and everlasting, his heart does not accept the findings of his reason if they have not entered the heart itself. The main thing is that the belief should have entered the heart and the best state is that of complete certainty. It is for this reason that Ibrāhīm Khalīl Allāh (A) asked God to bestow upon him certainty, and that was granted to him. Therefore, as the hearts do not have faith in the Hereafter—like those of ours—though rationally we may posit its existence, they desire to remain in this world and are averse to the thought of dying and quitting this lower mode of existence. But if our hearts become aware of the fact that this world is the lowest of the worlds and the house of decline and change and the realm of imperfection and destruction, and that there are other realms beyond death each of which is eternal and stable, perfect and permanent, where life is bliss and beatitude, our hearts would naturally acquire the love of that world and would abhor this world. And if one were to rise above this world and awake to the realities of that world, and observe the real inward form of this world and the attachment to it, this world will become unbearable for him. He will detest it, desire to leave this abode of darkness and to get rid of the shackles of time and transition, an attitude which is apparent in the words of the *awliyā*'.

Imam 'Ali (A), the *Mawlā* of the *awliyā*', said:

وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَكُنُّ اَبِي طَالِبٍ اَنْسَ بِالْمَوْتِ مِنَ الْفُلِّ بِتَدْيِ اُمِّهِ.

By God, the son of Abū Ṭālib is more intimate with death than an infant with its mother's bosom.<sup>6</sup>

That great soul had considered the reality of this world from the viewpoint of *Wilāyah*, and had chosen the blessed vicinity of the Most High. And were it not for the sake of the higher goals, those pure and chaste souls would not have tarried in this murky and gloomy gathering even for a single moment. To inhabit this phenomenal world of plurality, to meditate upon the worldly affairs, even with the spiritual favours, is a matter of great pain and sorrow for those absorbed in the love of God, a sorrow which we cannot even imagine. Their lamentations, as reflected in their prayers and supplications, were on account of the pain of separation from the Beloved and His magnanimous vicinity, although there were no mundane or spiritual veils for them, and they had left behind them the subdued hell of nature and its attachments, their hearts being free of the defilements of physical nature. Nevertheless, the very presence in the confines of physical nature and the

inevitable pleasures associated with it, even if they be very few, acts like a veil. It is on this account that the Holy Prophet (S) is quoted to have said:

لَيَغَاثُ عَلَى قَلْبِي وَلَآتِي لَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً.

Lest my heart should be covered by [the veils of] lust, I ask God's forgiveness seventy times a day.

Perhaps the fault of Adam (A), the father of mankind, was the result of this innate attraction towards physical nature, symbolized by the wheat, and his attention to the mundane aspect of life — something which is considered wrong by the *awliyā'* and the lovers of God. If Adam (A) had remained faithful to the divine passion and had not set foot into the domain of the mundane, this entire toilsome tale, winding through the world to the Hereafter, would not have assumed such proportions.

Let it be known to you that each and every pleasure that man derives from this world leaves its trace on his heart that is indicative of its susceptibility to the physical world and a cause of its further attachment to the world. The more the enjoyments and the pleasures, the greater their impression upon the heart and the more intense its attachment to the world and love for it. This process continues until the heart completely yields to the world and its allurements. Such a condition is the source of a great many evils. All the human transgressions, sins, and moral vices are on account of this love and attachment, as mentioned in the ḥadīth quoted from *al-Kāfī*. One of the greatest evils of this love, according to our Shaykh — my soul be sacrificed for him — is that if the love of the world captures the human heart and the attachments become strong, at the time of death man finds that God Almighty is separating him from his beloved and causing separation between him and the darling of his desire. As a result, he leaves the world in a state of indignation and rancour against Him. This greatly shocking warning is enough to awaken man, that he should be extremely cautious in guarding his heart. God forbid, lest one should be indignant with the real King of kings, the Bestower of favours and the Nourisher, for none except God knows the ugly form of such a rancour and resentment.

Our honoured Shaykh also related of his father that he was extremely disturbed during the last years of his life regarding his love for one of his sons. But after doing exercises in spiritual self-discipline for some time he was relieved of this attachment. He was greatly satisfied on this account before he retired to the abode of eternal bliss. May God be pleased with him.

There is a tradition in *al-Kāfi*, reported on the authority of Ṭalḥah ibn Zayd, from Abū 'Abd Allāh al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) that he said:

مَثَلُ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ مَاءِ الْبَحْرِ كُلَّمَا شَرِبَ مِنْهُ الْعَطْشَانُ أَزْدَادَ عَطْشًا حَتَّى يَقْتُلَهُ.

The example of the world is that of seawater; the more a thirsty person drinks from it, the thirstier he becomes until it kills him.<sup>7</sup>

The love of the world destroys man eternally, and it is the source of his affliction with inward and outward villainies. The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said, "The Dirham and the Dinār have destroyed many a people before you and they will destroy you too". Even if a person is not, supposedly, afflicted by other vices, which is improbable or rather impossible, the sole attachment to the world is sufficient to cause many an affliction. The criterion of the length of the period of detention in the world beyond the grave and the *Barzakh* is the amount of intensity of these associations and attachments. The lesser they are, the more spacious and brighter his place in the grave and the *Barzakh*, and consequently the lesser the period of one's detention therein. Hence the *awliyā'*, according to some traditions, do not have to experience the conditions of the grave for more than three days, and that too for the sake of the inherent and natural attachment that they had in the life of this world.

Among the evil effects of the love of the world and attachment to it is that it makes man afraid of death. The fear of death, being the product of the love of the world and attachment to it, is highly objectionable; it is different from the fear of the Day of Resurrection, which is one of the attributes of true believers. The greater part of the sufferings and pangs experienced by a dying man are on account of the severance of the worldly ties, not the fear of death itself.

A brilliant researcher and a judicious analyser of the world of Islam, Mir Dāmād—*karrama Allāh wajhah*—in his *al-Qabasāt*, a book of rare excellence, writes:

لَا تَخَافَنَّكَ الْمَوْتُ فَإِنَّ مَرَاتِنَهُ فِي خَوْفِهِ.

Death itself will never frighten you; its bitterness lies in being afraid of it.<sup>8</sup>

Another great evil caused by the love of the world is that it keeps man from religious exercises, devotional rites, and prayers, and strengthens his physical nature. It inculcates disobedience within his physical nature to the commands of his spirit. As a result it weakens his power of resolution and debilitates the will, whereas one of the main secrets and aims of worship and religious exercises is to make the body,

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the physical faculties, and the natural instincts subordinate to the spirit, so that the will may control them and force the body to act according to its wishes and prevent it from whatever the spirit wants it to abstain from. If the spirit dominates the body, the domain of the body and the physical faculties is brought under the control of the spirit in a way that everything it wishes the body to perform would be performed without the slightest hardship and hindrance. One of the virtues and secrets of austere worships and laborious devotional exercises is that they are more conducive to the attainment of this goal. Through them man can acquire a strong will and resolution, and overcome his physical nature. If the will becomes complete and perfect and the resolution strong and powerful, the domain of the human body and its external and internal faculties acquires angelic characteristics, and he becomes similar to the angels of God who never transgress Divine commands, obey readily, without any resistance or compulsion, whatever He orders them to do, and refrain from doing whatever they are forbidden from. If the physical faculties of man come under the domination of his spirit, all hardships and hindrances disappear and a state of ease and tranquillity prevails. When that happens, the 'seven realms' of physical nature will become subservient to the heavenly forces, and all the faculties will act as their functionaries.

Therefore, my dear, the strength of will power and resolution is very important and effective in that world. In fact, the strength of will is the criterion of entry into one of the levels of Paradise which is one of the highest heavens. Unless one possesses a strong will and powerful resolution he cannot gain that heaven and that high station. It is reported in a tradition that when the virtuous are stationed in Paradise, a message will be sent to them from the Holy God, saying, "This is the message sent by the Eternal and the Immortal to the one who is also eternal and immortal: Whatever I command to be, it comes into existence; today I bestow on you authority to command whatever you desire to bring into existence and it would come into existence." You can see what a great authority and distinction that would be. What sort of power they have whose resolution and will shall be the manifestation of the Divine Will so that they will be able to grant the apparel of existence to non-existents. It shows that the power of will and resolution is superior to all the physical faculties. And it is also obvious that this message will not be sent out of extravagance and without proper judgement. Those whose will is subordinated to their bestial desires and whose resolution has become dead and inert, they cannot attain this station. The Almighty's Acts are free from extravagance and vain indulgence. In this world everything is based on a system in which all means and ends are arranged according to an order. In that world, too, all matters will be arranged in a similar manner, or rather that world

represents the highest harmony between causes and effects, means and ends. The power and authority of the will is to be cultivated in this world. This world is the sowing ground of the Hereafter; it is the substance out of which the rewards of heaven as well as the misfortunes of hell are carved out.

Therefore, each one of the worships and the rites prescribed by the Shari'ah, besides themselves possessing heavenly and angelic forms, are elements for building the physical paradise and procuring all the paraphernalia of heavenly life. This is confirmed by tradition and affirmed by reason. In the same way as every worship produces its own specific effects on the soul, it also, little by little, strengthens the will and perfects its strength. Therefore, the greater the effort required for a worship, the more productive it is:

وَأَفْضَلُ الْأَعْمَالِ أَحْمَرُهَا.

The best of deeds are those which are the most difficult.<sup>9</sup>

For instance, waking up for the sake of praying to God Almighty in the biting cold of a wintery night and sacrificing the delights of sound sleep makes the soul triumphant over the body and strengthens the will. Though it is a bit difficult and unpleasant in the beginning, but after a little practice its hardship and inconvenience becomes lesser and lesser and the subservience of the body to the soul grows. We see the people who perform it doing all this without any trouble, and if we are lazy and find it difficult, it is because we do not take action. But if we force ourselves to act, gradually the difficulty turns into ease. The people who offer the nightly prayer derive great enjoyment out of it, even more than the pleasure we derive from carnal enjoyments. The self becomes habituated through action, and goodness becomes enduring by becoming habitual.

These worships have several advantages, one of them is that the form that they acquire in that world is so beautiful that its parallel cannot be found in this world, and we are unable to visualize it. Another is that the soul acquires will power and resolution, which by itself has numerous advantages, and we have mentioned one of them. Yet another is that it familiarizes man with the worship and remembrance of God, bringing the unreal to the Real, and turning the heart towards the King of kings, stirring in it the love for the Beauty of the Real Beloved, and diminishing the attachment to and concern for the world and the Hereafter. Perhaps, if this divine passion is produced and a state is achieved in which he knows the real objective of worship and the real secret of meditation and remembrance, both the worlds would lose their significance for him; the vision of the Beloved wipes out the

dust of duality from the mirror of the heart, and God alone knows how magnanimously He will treat such a devotee. Therefore, the practice of the exercises prescribed by the Shari'ah, the worships and the rites, and abstention from carnal desires and lusts, strengthen the human will power and resolution. On the other hand, immersion in sinful physical nature weakens human resolution and will, as mentioned earlier.

It is known to every man of conscience that man is drawn towards Absolute Perfection in accordance with his nature and inherent disposition. The better part of his heart is attracted towards Absolute Beauty and the Most Perfect in all aspects. This characteristic of man is innate in his nature and ingrained in it by God Almighty. Accordingly, the will is a means for the fulfilment of the search of the lovers of Absolute Beauty. However, everyone, in accordance with his own state and condition, has his own idea of perfection, and he sees perfection in something towards which he is attracted. Those who work for the sake of the Hereafter perceive perfection in otherworldly stages and grades and their hearts are turned towards them. And the men of God, who, beholding perfection in His beauty and beauty in His perfection, say:

إِنِّى وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهَى لِذِى فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...

*... I have turned my face towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth.... (6:79)*

And they say وَلِىَّ مَعَ اللَّهِ حَانَ 'My ecstasy lies in God'. They long for union with Him, and are in love with His Beauty. The worldlings, since they perceive perfection in worldly comforts and luxuries, those things having acquired beauty in their sight and charmed them, are naturally attracted towards them. Nevertheless, since man's natural inclination is towards absolute perfection, all the worldly attachments are basically errors of judgement. Therefore, the greater his mastery over worldly or otherworldly benefits, whether they are spiritual accomplishments, authority, power, or material treasures, his longing for them increases and the flame of love grows brighter and more ferocious. For example, the sensual appetites of a lusty man will increase if he is given more chances of fulfilling his sensual desires; he will desire some other fulfilment that is not available to him, and the furnace of his lust will become hotter and wilder. In the same way, if the man ambitious for power and authority is allowed to establish his authority over one region, he will turn towards yet another. If the whole earth comes under his domination, he will think of invading other spheres in order to bring them under his dominion. He is not aware that his natural instincts crave for something else. The instinctive love and the natural



quest of man is directed towards the Absolute Beloved. All substantial, physical, and intentional motions, all attentions of the heart and the inclinations of the self are directed towards the beauty of Absolute Beauty, yet human beings do not realize it. They abuse this love, this desire, and this longing, which is meant to be the *Burāq* (the mount upon which the Prophet (S) is said to have performed the nocturnal journey through the universe called *Mi'rāj*) meant for ascension to heaven, the wings to fly to union with the Absolute, by wasting it on unworthy ends and by confining it within absurd barriers and limits, thus missing their goal.

In short, since man's inclination towards absolute perfection is innate, the greater his greed for worldly allurements the more he accumulates them and the more is his heart attracted towards them. Since he mistakenly believes the world and worldly fascinations to be the desired ultimate goal, his greed grows day by day and his desire for them multiplies. His need for the world increases and poverty and deprivation becomes his fate. On the contrary, those who work for the Hereafter, their attention towards the world diminishes, their attention towards the Hereafter increases with their interest therein, and the love for this world and the interest therein diminishes in their hearts till they care no more about the world and its allurements. A sense of richness and plentitude is lodged within their hearts and the treasures of this world lose their value in their sight. Therefore, the men of God are oblivious of both the worlds and free of care for both of them. Their only need is related to Absolute Plentitude. Absence of need and presence of plentitude are infused in their hearts by the light of the Needless-in-Itself.

In the light of the above exposition, the tradition means to say that whosoever makes the world his biggest concern from morning till night, God Almighty puts poverty into his eyes. And whosoever spends his morning and evening making the Hereafter his biggest concern, God Almighty puts plentitude into his heart. It is obvious that the one whose heart attends to the Hereafter, for him all the worldly matters become insignificant, trivial, and easy. He views the world as temporary, transitory, and short-lived, a place where he is for the sole purpose of educating and training himself. He is indifferent to its sufferings and joys. His needs become few, and his dependence on the matters of the world and its inhabitants becomes lesser, and reaches a point where he has no need of them at all. His affairs become integrated and organized, and an inalienable sense of contentment enters his heart. Therefore, the more you look at this world with wonder and love, the more your heart will be attached to it, and your need for it will also increase proportionally to your love. A sense of poverty and privation will appear on the surface of your personality, your affairs will become

disjointed and dissipated. Your heart will become anxious, melancholic, and fearful, and your affairs will not be carried out according to your wishes. Your hope and greed will increase day by day. Grief and regret will seize you; bewilderment and despair will invade your heart. Some of these points have been alluded to in the following traditions from *al-Kāfi*:

عَنْ حَفْصِ بْنِ قُرْطٍ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: مَنْ كَثُرَ اشْتِبَاكُهُ بِالدُّنْيَا كَانَ أَشَدَّ لِحَسْرَتِهِ عِنْدَ فِرَاقِهَا.

On the authority of Ḥaṣṣ ibn Qurṭ, Abū ‘Abd Allāh (A) is reported to have said: “The greater one’s involvement with the world, the greater shall be his regret at the time of parting from it.”<sup>9</sup>

عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي يَغْفُورٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ يَقُولُ: مَنْ تَعَلَّقَ قَلْبُهُ بِالدُّنْيَا تَعَلَّقَ قَلْبُهُ بِثَلَاثِ خِصَالٍ: هُمْ لَا يَنْصِي، وَأَمَلٌ لَا يُدْرِكُ، وَرَجَاءٌ لَا يَنْتَهِ.

...Ibn Abī Ya‘fūr says, “I heard Abū ‘Abd Allāh as saying, ‘Whoever has a heart attached to the world, has three things attached to his heart: unremitting sadness, unfulfilled desire, and unachievable hope.’”<sup>10</sup>

But the otherworldly, the nearer they come to the Court of the Beneficent, the more joyful and tranquil their hearts become; they become oblivious, nay disgusted, of this world and whatever is in it. If the Almighty had not decreed their terms of life, they would not have tarried for a single moment in this world. The Mawlā of the Muwaḥḥidūn, Imam ‘Alī (A), says about them: “They are not sad and dejected here like the people of this world, and in the Hereafter they will be immersed in the oceans of His Mercy.” May God include you and us with them, God willing.

So, my dear, now you know about the evils of this love and attachment, and have learnt how this love can destroy a human being. It deprives the human being of his faith, and makes a mess of his life in the Hereafter as well as in this world. Make up your mind, and try to curtail your love and loosen the bondage to this world as far as possible. Eradicate its roots, and consider this short life in this world as insignificant. Do not attach any value to its pleasures, mixed as they are with punishment, sorrow, and pain. Seek help from God, so that He may succour you in relieving your self from its scourge and suffering, and familiarize your heart with the noble abode that lies with Him. And whatever lies with God is better and lasting.

## NOTES:

1. Al-Kulayni, *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* (Tehran), Vol. IV (Arabic text with Persian translation by Sayyid Hāshim Rasūlī), p. 8.
2. Al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-anwār*.
3. *Nahj al-balāghah* (e.d. Subhī al-Ṣāliḥ), *Hikam*, No. 131.
4. *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, Vol. IV, p. 2.
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 3.
6. *Nahj al-balāghah*, *Khuṭab*, No. 5.
7. *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, Vol. III, p. 205.
8. Mir Dāmād, *al-Qabasāt*, p. 72.
9. *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, Vol. IV, p. 9.
10. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 9.

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## Seventh *Hadīth* on Anger (*Ghaḍab*)

بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلَى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ  
عِيسَى، عَنْ يُوسُفَ، عَنْ دَاوُدَ بْنِ قَرْقِدٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: الْغَضَبُ  
يُفْتَحُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ.

...Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb (al-Kulaynī), from 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, from Muḥammad ibn 'Isā, from Yūnus, from Dāwūd ibn Farqad, who reports al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) to have said: "Anger is the key (that opens the door) to all kinds of vices."<sup>1</sup>

### Exposition:

**T**he great researcher Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, popularly known as Ibn Maskawayh, in his book *Ṭahārat al-'a'rāq*, which is a fine book of rare excellence in beauty of style and orderliness of contents, writes something which can be summarized as follows: Anger, in fact, is an inner psychic movement due to which a state of agitation is produced in the heart's blood, arousing a desire for vengeance. And when this agitation becomes more violent, it intensifies the fire of anger. A violent commotion in the blood seizes the heart, filling the arteries and the brain with a flurry of dark smoke, on account of which the mind and the intellect lose control and become powerless. At that time, as the *ḥukamā'* maintain, the inner state of the person resembles a cave where fire has broken out, filling it with flames and suffocating clouds of smoke that leap out of its mouth with intense heat and a fiery howl. When that happens, it becomes extremely difficult to pacify such a person and to extinguish the fire of his wrath; whatever is thrown in it to cool it down becomes a part of it, adding to its

intensity. It is for this reason that such a man becomes blinded to propriety and deaf to guidance. In such a condition, there is no hope for him. Then Ibn Maskawayh adds: "Hippocrates says that he is more hopeful about a ship encircled by a fierce storm and violent winds which has been knocked away from its course by the sea waves into rocky waters, than about an enraged person. Because, in such conditions, the sailors may somehow manage to save the ship by means of clever manoeuvres, but there is no hope of deliverance for the soul engulfed in rage; for all such efforts as counsel, advice, and exhortation fail to appease him. The more one tries to pacify it through humble entreaties and tearful supplications, the more violent it becomes."

#### Advantages of al-Quwwah al-Ghadabiyyah (The Power of Anger):

It should be known that the Power of Anger is one of the biggest favours of God conferred upon His creatures, by means of which they are enabled to pursue activities constructive to their world and Hereafter, are assured the continuity of the species as well as the safety and survival of the individual and the family. It also plays a great role in the establishment and maintenance of social order and civic life. If this noble faculty were not ingrained in the animal's nature, it would not have been able to defend itself against natural adversities, and would have been defenceless against the dangers of destruction and extinction. And if it were absent in the human nature, man would have failed to achieve most of his accomplishments and attainments. Moreover, even its deficiency and insufficient presence below the moderate level is itself considered a moral weakness and flaw which gives rise to innumerable vices and defects like: fear; timidity; weakness; laxity; laziness; greed; lack of restraint, patience and tolerance; lack of constancy and perseverance when needed; love of comfort; torpor; lethargy; submissiveness to oppression and tyranny; submitting to insults and disgraces to which an individual or his family may be subjected; dastardliness; spiritlessness, etc. Describing the qualities of the believers God Almighty says:

... أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ ...

... (The believers) are hard against the unbelievers and merciful among themselves... (48:29)

The fulfilment of the duty of *al-'Amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (to enjoin good conduct and forbid indecency), the implementation of *hudūd* (punishment prescribed by the Islamic penal law), *ta'zīrāt* (punishments adjudged by a judge), and the carrying out

of other policies set forth by religion or guided by reason, would not have been possible without the existence of this noble Power of Anger. On this basis, those who believe in eradicating the Power of Anger and consider its destruction as an accomplishment and mark of perfection are highly mistaken and in great error, ignorant as they are about the signs of perfection and the bounds of moderation. Poor fellows, they do not know that God Almighty has not created this noble faculty in vain in all the species belonging to the animal kingdom. To the children of Adam (A) He bestowed this power as the source of securing a good life in this world and the Hereafter, and a vehicle for procuring various blessings and felicities. The holy *jihād* with the enemies of the *Dīn*; the struggle for the preservation of mankind's social order; the defence and protection of one's own life, property and honour, as well as the Divine values and laws; and above all the combat with one's inner self, which is the biggest enemy of man, —none of these could be possible without the existence of this noble faculty. It is under the banner of this noble faculty that aggressions and encroachments upon rights are repelled, borders and frontiers are protected, and other social and individual offences, noxious practices, and harmful deeds are checked. It is for this very reason that the *hukamā'* have recommended various remedies for treating any deficiency in this Power, and prescribed numerous practical and theoretical remedies for the purpose of its regeneration, like participation in acts of heroism and going to battlefronts on the occasion of war with the enemies of God. It is even narrated of some sages that they used to visit risky places, stayed there and exposed themselves to great perils and dangers. They would board a ship at a time while the sea was turbulent and stormy, so that they might get rid of fear and overcome their timidity and sluggishness. In any case, the Power of Anger is ingrained in the nature of human beings and animals, except that in some cases it is dormant and torpid, like a fire smouldering under the ashes. If someone perceives in himself any signs of torpor and lack of the sense of honour, he must try to overcome this condition by means of its antidote, courage, which is a commendable quality and a moral virtue, to return to a normal state. We shall have occasion to refer to it again in due course.

#### The Vice of Immoderation in Anger:

In the same way as the deficiency and lack of moderation is considered a moral vice and source of numerous moral corruptions, the excess and going beyond the upper limits of moderation is also regarded, morally, as a vice and source of countless deviations. The tradition quoted in *al-Kāfī* is sufficient to indicate the dangers of such a state:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص): الْغَضَبُ يُفْسِدُ الْإِيمَانَ كَمَا يُفْسِدُ الْخَلُّ الْعَسَل.

It is reported on the authority of al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) that the Apostle of God (S) said: "Anger spoils faith in the same way as vinegar destroys honey."<sup>2</sup>

It may happen that someone gets angry and, in a bout of extreme anger, turns away from the *Dīn* of God. The hot flames and the dark fumes of anger not only destroy his faith by consuming his righteous beliefs, they also lead him to apostatize by rejecting God, thus leading him to eternal damnation. And when he becomes aware of it, his remorse is of no avail, as the fire of anger, which was lit by a spark thrown in by Satan, continues to roar in his heart, as al-'Imām al-Bāqir (A) has said:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْغَضَبَ جَمْرَةٌ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تُوقَدُ فِي قَلْبِ ابْنِ آدَمَ.

Indeed, this anger is the spark lit by Satan<sup>3</sup> in the heart of the son of Adam.

In the next world this fire will acquire the form of the fire of Divine Wrath, as reported from al-Bāqir (A) in *al-Kāfī*:

مَكْتُوبٌ فِي التَّوْرَةِ فِيمَا نَاجَى إِلَهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ بِهِ مُوسَى: يَا مُوسَى أَمْسِكْ غَضَبَكَ عَمَّنْ مَلَكَكَ عَلَيْهِ أَكْفَ عَنْكَ غَضَبِي.

It is recorded in the *Torah* regarding that which God Almighty confided to Moses (A), saying: "O Moses, control your anger towards those over whom I have given you authority, so that I may spare you from My Wrath."<sup>4</sup>

It must be known that no fire is more painful than the fire of Divine Wrath. It is mentioned in a tradition that Jesus, the son of Mary, was asked by his disciples as to which of the things is the hardest to bear. "The Fury of the Most High God is the hardest thing to bear," he replied. They questioned him, "How can we save ourselves from it?" "By not getting angry," Jesus said.

Therefore, it must be obvious that God's Wrath is more painful and severer than any thing else, and the fire of His Fury is most destructive. The Hereafterly form of our anger in this world is the fire of Divine Wrath in the next world. In the same way as anger emanates from the heart, perhaps the fire of Divine Wrath, which is the abode of our anger and all other inner vices, will also emanate from the inner depths of the heart and spread over the external being, and its torment-



ing flames will emerge from the external sense organs like the eyes, the ears, and the tongue. Rather, the external senses are themselves the doors which shall be opened to the fire of Hell. The fire of the hell of deeds and the physical hell encompasses the without and travels towards the within. Hence man is tortured from both the sides by these two hells: one emanates from within the heart and its flames enter the body through pia mater of the brain, and the other, which is the result of the vicious deeds, advances towards the inner being from without, and man is subjected to torments and pressures. What sort of torment and torture it will be? God alone knows what pain and distress it will bring in addition to the burning and melting. You imagine that the topological mode of the Hell's encompassment is something that you know. Here things are surrounded only externally and outwardly; but in that world, encirclement will occur both externally and internally; it will cover the outer surface of the body as well as the inner depths of the human heart and being.

And if, God forbid, anger becomes permanent part of one's nature, it will be more catastrophic; for the form that such a one shall acquire in the *Barzakh* and on the Day of Resurrection will be a beastly form, that too one which has no match in this world; for the brutality of the person in this state cannot be compared with any of the ferocious beasts. In the same way as none of the creatures can touch this marvel of nature from the aspect of attainment of nobility and perfection, so also from the aspect of his capacity for degeneration and meanness and his leaning towards perverseness, man cannot be compared with any creature. It is about his perverseness that the Holy Quran says:

أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ...

... *These are as the cattle—nay, they are worse in misguidance.... (7:179)*

It is about the hardness of the human heart that it says:

... فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ قَسْوَةً...

.. *(Then the hearts of the Jews) became hardened like stones, or even yet harder;... (2:74)*

All this that you have heard about the evil effects of this consuming fire of anger is merely a fraction of its danger. It holds true in cases where no other vice and offence spring from it, that is, if this inner fire lies dormant in the inner darkness, having been choked and suffocated, although having extinguished the light of faith by its dense smoke.

However, it is very rare, or rather impossible, that in a fit of its intense conflagration one should remain immune from committing other, even mortal, sins. It happens that in a brief outburst of anger, this cursed firebrand thrown by the Devil, man falls over the precipice of destruction and doom. He may even, God be our refuge, abuse the prophets of God and saints, assassinate an innocent person, or desecrate something holy, thus bringing about his own destruction in the world as well as in the Hereafter, as is mentioned in a ḥadith of *al-Kāfi*:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) فِي حَدِيثٍ: كَانَ أَبِي يَقُولُ: أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْغَضَبِ، إِنَّ  
الرَّجُلَ لَيَغْضَبُ فَيَقْتُلُ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَيَقْدِفُ الْمُحْصَنَةَ.

It is reported from al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) that he said that his father used to say: "Is there anything more violent than anger? Verily, a man gets angry and kills someone whose blood has been forbidden by God, or slanders a married woman."<sup>5</sup>

Many atrocious deeds have been committed under a spell of anger and its agitation. Therefore, one, while in a state of tranquillity of mind, should be apprehensive of his own anger if he is in a habit of often getting angry. He should contemplate upon its cure, when in a state of mental composure, and think about its causes, its bad consequences and repercussions, and he should strive to get rid of it. He should consider that a faculty which was granted by God Almighty for the sake of the preservation of the world's order, for the continuity and survival of human species and individual, for the discipline and order of the family system, for the advancement and progress of humankind, and for protecting human rights and safeguarding Divine laws, a faculty under whose shadow the visible as well as the invisible system of the visible world and the hidden world is to be reformed and maintained, if he acts contrary to this purpose and makes use of this power against the Divine design, it will be a breach of trust of a severe kind that deserves censure and punishment. What an act of ignorance and injustice it is not to fulfil the Divine trust, by employing what could be easily employed for the purposes of justice in incurring His Wrath. It is clear that such a person will not be sheltered from the Divine Wrath. Hence it is in order to think seriously about the moral vices and vicious deeds that are the outcome of anger, and to try to remove the effects of this crooked quality, each one of which is capable of afflicting a person till eternity, causing many a calamity in this world as well as chastisement and damnation in the Hereafter.

### Moral Hazards of Anger:

As to the moral hazards, it may cause malice towards creatures of God, leading sometimes even to the enmity not only of prophets and *awliyā'*, but also of the Holy Essence of the Necessary Being and the Nourisher. This shows how dangerous and disgraceful its consequences may be. I seek refuge in God from the evil of the rebellious self, which, if left reinless for a moment, throws one down rolling in the dust of ignominy or dashes with him towards eternal damnation. It may also give rise to other vices, like *hasad*, about whose evils you have read in the exposition of the fifth tradition, and many more besides it.

### Its Behavioural Hazards:

There is no limit to the behavioural hazards that are products of this vice. Perhaps, it may lead one, God save us, to use abusive language or revile the prophets of God and *awliyā'*. Or he may desecrate sanctities and utter slanders about venerable persons. He may murder a pious soul, wreck the lives of innocent creatures, wreck a family, or reveal the secrets of others tearing up the veils that cover them. There seems to be no limit to such monstrous acts that man may commit at the time of outbreak of this faith-consuming fire that also destroys many homes. As such, it can be said that this habit is the mother of all spiritual maladies and the key to each and every evil action. As opposed to this vice is the ability to restrain one's anger. This ability to extinguish the fire of anger has been considered the essence of wisdom and the focus of all virtues and noble qualities, as stated in this tradition of *al-Kāfī*:

عِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ خَالِدٍ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع)  
قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبِي (ع) يَقُولُ: أُنْبِئَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (ص) رَجُلٌ بَدَوِيٌّ فَقَالَ: إِنِّي أَشْكُنُ الْبَادِيَةَ  
فَعَلِمَنِي جَوَامِعَ الْكَلَامِ، فَقَالَ: أَمَرْتُكَ أَنْ لَا تَغْضَبَ، فَأَعَادَ عَلَيْهِ الْأَعْرَابِيُّ الْمَسْأَلَةَ  
ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ حَتَّى رَجَعَ الرَّجُلُ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ فَقَالَ: لَا أَسْأَلُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَ هَذَا، مَا أَمَرَنِي  
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) إِلَّا بِالْخَيْرِ، قَالَ: وَكَانَ أَبِي يَقُولُ: أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْغَضَبِ، إِنَّ  
الرَّجُلَ لَيَغْضَبُ فَيَقْتُلُ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَيَقْدِفُ الْمُخَصَّصَةَ.

(Al-Kulayni says:) From a number of our (i.e. al-Kulayni's) companions, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khālid (al-Barqī), who narrates on the authority of a chain of narrators from al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) that he heard his father (al-'Imām al-Bāqir [A]) as saying: "A Bedouin came to the Prophet (S) and said: 'I live in the desert. Teach me the essence of wisdom.' Thereupon the Prophet (S) said to him: 'I command you not to get angry'. After repeating his question thrice (and hearing the same reply from the Prophet every time) the Bedouin said to himself: 'After this I will not ask any

question, since the Apostle of God (S) does not command anything but good'." Al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) says: "My father used to say, 'Is there anything more violent than anger? Verily, a man gets angry and kills someone whose blood has been forbidden by God, or slanders a married woman'."<sup>6</sup>

After that a wise person coolly ponders upon its evil consequences and the benefits of restraint, he should make it incumbent upon himself to put out this fire in the region of his heart with every possible effort and to clear from his heart the black soot of its smoke. This is something which is not very difficult when one resolves to act against one's inner self and its desires, after having reflected upon their evil effects and by admonishing one's self. In fact, one may get rid of all moral evils and ugly spiritual traits and acquire all good qualities and excellences of character and soul whenever he resolves to improve his spiritual condition.

#### Controlling Anger:

There are also several practical and theoretical remedies for curing anger when it has flared up. The theoretical remedy involves reflecting upon the matters mentioned above, which is also a kind of practical remedy in this case. But among the practical remedies the important ones involve withholding of the self in the initial stages of anger. This is because it is ignited little by little, becoming more intense until its furnace is set burning fiercely and its flame becomes violent and furious. When that happens, it gets completely out of control and shuts off the lights of one's faith and intellect. Blowing off the lamp of guidance, it reduces man to an utterly wretched state. Therefore, one should be on one's guard so as to dissociate oneself by some means before its fierceness mounts and its fire becomes more violent. He should either leave the place where his anger may be provoked, or change his posture: that is, if seated, he should stand up, and if standing sit down, or engage his mind in the remembrance of God (some people consider it even obligatory), or he should make himself busy in some other activity to divert his attention. In any case, it is easier to put a curb on it in the beginning. It has two results. Firstly, he will be able to pacify his self at that early stage and the flames of anger will be put out. Secondly, the experience will always remain with one as a primary cure for treating one's self. If one always pays attention to one's condition and treats one's self in this way, one will undergo a complete transformation as one's inner state moves towards the point of moderation. An allusion to this matter is made in the following traditions from *al-Kāfi*:

عن أبي جعفر (ع) قال: إِنَّ هَذَا الْعَضَبَ جَمْرَةٌ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تُوقَدُ فِي قَلْبِ آدَمَ

وَأَنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ إِذَا غَضِبَ أَخْمَرَتْ عَيْنَاهُ وَانْتَفَخَتْ أَوْدَاجُهُ وَدَخَلَ الشَّيْطَانُ فِيهِ، فَإِذَا خَافَ أَحَدُكُمْ ذَلِكَ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ فَلْيَلْزِمِ الْأَرْضَ فَإِنَّ رَجَرَ الشَّيْطَانِ لَيَذْهَبُ عَنْهُ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ.

It is reported from al-'Imâm al-Bâqir (A) that he said. "Verily, anger is a spark ignited by the Devil in the human heart. Indeed, when anyone of you gets angry, his eyes become red, the veins of his neck become swollen and Satan enters them. Therefore, whosoever among you is concerned about himself on account of it, he should lie down for a while so that the filth of Satan may be removed from him at the time."<sup>7</sup>

And:

عَنْ مَيْسِرَ قَالَ: ذُكِرَ الْغَضَبُ عِنْدَ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ (ع) فَقَالَ: إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَغْضَبُ فَمَا يَرْضَى أَبَدًا حَتَّى يَدْخُلَ النَّارَ، فَإِنَّمَا رَجُلٍ غَضِبَ عَلَى قَوْمٍ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ فَلْيَنْجِسْ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ ذَلِكَ، فَإِنَّهُ سَيَذْهَبُ عَنْهُ رَجَرُ الشَّيْطَانِ، وَإِنَّمَا رَجُلٍ غَضِبَ عَلَى ذِي رَحِمٍ فَلْيَنْدُبْ مِنْهُ قَلْبُ مَسْمُومَةٍ، فَإِنَّ الرَّحِمَ إِذَا مَسَّتْ سَكَتَتْ.

Maysir reports that once anger was discussed in the presence of al-'Imâm al-Bâqir (A). He said: "Verily, it happens that an angry person would not be satisfied until he enters the Fire (i.e. his anger does not subside unless it drags him into the hellfire). Therefore, whoever is angry with someone let him sit down immediately if he is standing; for, indeed, it would repel from him the uncleanness of Satan. And whoever gets angry with his kinsman, let him approach him and pat him; for the feeling of consanguinity, when stimulated by touch, induces calmness."<sup>8</sup>

These two traditions suggest two practical remedies of anger in its initial stage. One is general and recommends sitting down and bringing about a change in posture (according to another tradition, if somebody be seated at the time of getting angry, he should stand up). It is reported by Sunni sources that the Apostle of God (S), if he ever got angry while standing, would sit down, and if seated, would recline, and his anger would subside. The other remedy which is particular is concerned with blood relations and suggests that if anybody gets angry with someone related to him by blood, if he touches him with his hand his anger will cool down.

These are the methods of curing oneself of one's anger; but if others want to treat an enraged person, if his anger is in the initial stage, any one of the methods from among the various practical and theoretical ones suggested may be useful. But if he is in extreme anger, advice and counsel give opposite results, and it becomes very difficult to treat him in this stage, except by being put in a state of alarm by someone

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whom he holds in high esteem; for anger vents itself on those whom one deems weaker and inferior to oneself or at least as equal in power and position. But in front of those persons with whom he is impressed, his anger is never provoked. Rather his outer excitement and agitation will be transformed into an internal fury confined to his inner self. Not finding any outlet, it will change into a grief within the heart. Hence, it is not at all an easy task to appease a person undergoing outbursts of extreme rage. We seek refuge in God from it.

#### **How to Eradicate the Roots of Anger.**

Among the fundamental remedies of anger, one is to exterminate the factors responsible for its provocation. They are many, and here we can mention only a few of them. One of them is self-love, which in turn begets the love of wealth, glory, and honour and the desire to impose one's will and expand one's domain of power. These factors are inherently responsible for exciting the fire of anger, as the individual infatuated with these things tends to hold them in high regard and they occupy a high place in his heart. He, improperly, gets angry and excited if any one of these aspired goals is not achieved or when his desire faces any obstacle and loses control over himself. Greed, avarice, and such other vices that take root in his heart as a result of self-love and the love of glory, snatch the reins of reason from his hands, leaving the self to commit deeds that deviate from the path of Divine Law and reason. But if his love and interest in these things is not intense and he gives lesser importance to these matters, his inner calm and contentment, obtained by giving up the love of wealth, honour and the like, will not allow his self to act against the demands of justice. Then, he will not find it difficult to maintain his patience in hardships, and will not lose grip of self-restraint. He would not get angry unnecessarily and abnormally. If the love of the world is eradicated from his heart and this vice is completely wiped out, then all other vices also take leave and vanish from it, vacating the realm of the soul to be taken over by moral virtues.

Another factor that arouses anger is that sometimes anger and its evil manifestations, which are in fact great moral defects and indecencies, are imagined to be merits and accomplishments on account of ignorance and lack of understanding. Some fools reckon those vices as marks of bravery and courage and brag about themselves on account of them. They confuse the virtue of valour, which is a superb attribute of the believer's character and a commendable quality, with this pernicious vice. However, it should be noted that courage or valour is a different thing, and its source, its causes, effects and characteristics differ totally from those of that injurious vice. Courage originates in the

strength of one's spirit, serenity of mind, moderateness, faith, and lack of concern for the vanities of life and indifference to its vicissitudes; whereas anger is the product of spiritual weakness and degeneration, insufficiency of faith, immoderation of character and soul, love of the world and concern for mundane things and the fear of losing the pleasures of life. Hence this vice is found more frequently in women than in men, more in sick individuals than in healthy people, more in children than in grown ups, more in the elderly than in young people. Valour and courage is its opposite. Those suffering from moral infirmities are more liable to get angry sooner than those who are morally sound. Thus, we often see such people get angry sooner and becoming fiercer if any encroachment is made upon their property than the others.

This was about the origins and motives of anger and courage. However, they are also different as to their effects. The irascible person, when under the spell of anger and its excitement, behaves unreasonably like a lunatic or like an animal which acts without rationally considering the consequences of its actions, and commits ugly and indecent acts. His tongue, limbs, and other parts of the body go out of his control. His eyes, lips and mouth are distorted in such an ugly manner that he will be ashamed of his ugly features if he is shown a mirror at the time. Some persons who are afflicted with this vice not only do not refrain from venting their anger on innocent animals, but do not spare even inanimate things. They curse air, water, earth, snow, rain and other elements of nature if anything happens against their wish. Sometimes they vent their fury on a book, pen, glass or jug, tearing it up or breaking it into pieces.

But the behaviour of a courageous person is different in all these matters. His acts are based on reason and tranquillity of soul. He gets angry on the proper occasion and is patient and restrained when required to be so. He is not provoked or incensed by each and every annoyance. He becomes angry on the proper occasion to the proper extent and takes his vengeance with reason and discretion. He knows well as to against whom to take his revenge, on what occasion, to what degree and in what manner, and as to whom he should forgive and what to overlook and ignore. In the state of anger, he does not lose control of his reason, and he never makes use of indecent language nor acts indiscreetly. All his acts are based on rational considerations and are in accordance with the norms of justice and Divine Law. He always acts in such a manner so as not to regret later on.

Thus an aware human being should not confuse this quality, which is one of the attributes of prophets, *awliyā'* and true believers and is considered a spiritual accomplishment and achievement, with the vice which is one of the attributes of Satan, a diabolical incitement, a

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spiritual abomination and a flaw of the heart. Yet, the veils of ignorance and folly and the curtains of self-love and attachment to the world cover man's hearing and blind his vision, rendering him helpless and bringing about his destruction.

Certain other causes of anger have also been pointed out, such as 'ujb, bragging (*iftikhār*), pride (*kibr*), disputatiousness (*mirā'*), obstinacy (*lajāj*), jesting and the like; but to go into their details will prolong this discussion and might be cumbersome. Possibly most or all of them, directly or indirectly, originate in the two sources already discussed. And praise be to God.

#### NOTES:

1 & 2. Al-Kulaynī, *Usūl al-Kāfī* (Tehran), Vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawād Muṣṭafawī, p. 412.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 415.

4, 5 & 6. *Ibid.*, pp. 412-413.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 415.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 412.



### Eighth *Hadīth* on 'Aṣabiyyah

بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلَى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنِ النَّوْفَلِيِّ، عَنِ السَّكُونِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص): مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ حَبَّةٌ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ مِنْ غَضَبِيَّةٍ بَعَثَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَعَ أَغْرَابِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ.

... Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb (al-Kulaynī), from 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, from his father, from al-Nawfalī, from al-Sakūnī, who reports on the authority of Abū 'Abd Allāh (al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq ) (A) that the Prophet (S) said: "Whosoever possesses in his heart 'aṣabiyyah (prejudice in any of its forms such as tribalism, racism, nationalism) even to the extent of a mustard seed, God will raise him on the Day of Resurrection with the (pagan) Beduins of the *Jāhiliyyah* (the pre-Islamic era).<sup>1</sup>

#### Exposition:

**A**lthough now *khardal* is current in modern Persian for the mustard seed, the word for it in old Persian was *espondān*. It is said that the mustard seed has many medicinal uses and is also used for making candles. As to the word 'aṣabiyyah it is the characteristic of the person who supports his kinsmen and relatives even for a wrong and unjust cause. 'Uṣbah refers to paternal relatives, as they are more likely to be those among whom one is surrounded ('aṣaba: to wrap around) and those from whom one derives strength ('aṣaba means, also, to bind). 'Aṣabiyyah and ta'aṣsub in general give the sense of favouring and defending. So much for the lexical meaning.

As to its nature, I believe that 'aṣabiyyah is an inner psychic quality which is manifested in patronizing and defending one's kindred and those with whom one has some kind of affinity or relation,

whether it be religious creed or ideology, or whether it be soil or home. The affinity may also be similarity of profession or the relationship of teacher and pupil, or something else. It is a moral vice and an abominable trait which itself begets many more moral and behavioural deviations and vices as well. In itself a condemnable quality, it may take the form of defence of truth or religion, but in reality it is not aimed to defend a just and truthful cause but for extending one's own influence or that of one's co-religionists and allies.

As to the defence of truth, the efforts to disseminate it and to posit something which is true, are either not *'aşabiyyah*, or, if they are, represent a commendable kind of it. The criterion lies in the distinct aims and purposes, and to the extent to which it involves selfish and diabolical ends or serves just and godly purposes. In other words, when a man supports his kinsmen and friends, if he does so purely for the sake of upholding justice and defeating injustice, this kind of *'aşabiyyah* is commendable and praiseworthy; because supporting justice and truth is among the sublimest of human qualities, being one of the attributes of the prophets of God (A) and His *awliyā*. Its sign is that one should support the party which is on the side of truth and justice, even though it may consist of one's enemies. Such a person is a defender and lover of truth; he will be counted among the champions of human sublimity, a rightful citizen of the ideal human society, and a wholesome member of society whose presence exerts a reforming influence on the evils of the public. And if one's selfish and tribal instincts arouse him to defend and patronize the vices and wrongs of his kinsmen and associates, he is inflicted with the vice of *'aşabiyyah*; he is a corrupt member of society, who corrupts it by confusing vice with virtue, and stands with the Beduins of the *Jāhiliyyah*, who were a group of nomadic Arabs who inhabited the desert before the advent of Islam, in an era of prevalence of darkness and ignorance. This vice had taken hold of them to the highest degree, and among Arabs in general, who are guided by the light of guidance (through Islam) this vice is more than in any other nation. According to a tradition reported from Imam 'Ali (A), God Almighty will punish six groups of people for six kinds of sins: He will punish the Arabs for *'aşabiyyah*, the peasants for pride, the rulers for oppression, the jurisprudents for jealousy, the merchants for dishonesty, and the villagers for ignorance.

#### The Evils of 'Aşabiyyah:

From traditions narrated from the Household of the Prophet (S) it may be inferred that the vice of *'aşabiyyah* is one of the fatal sins, which results in an evil life in the Hereafter and drives man out from the precincts of faith, being one of the abominable traits of the Devil:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ مَنْ تَعَصَّبَ أَوْ تُعَصِّبَ لَهُ فَقَدْ خَلَعَ رِيقَ الْإِيمَانِ مِنْ عُنُقِهِ.

[In *al-Kāfi*, through a chain of authentic narrators], it is reported from Abū ‘Abd Allāh (al-‘Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) that the Prophet (S) said: “The one who exerts ‘*asabiyyah* or the one on whose behalf it is exerted, the tie of faith is taken off his neck.”<sup>2</sup>

That is, such a man is deprived of faith and abandoned. As to the person in whose interest ‘*asabiyyah* is exerted, perhaps he is also included in the ḥadīth due to his compliance to the behaviour of the one exerting ‘*asabiyyah* and hence made to share his lot jointly. And it is stated in ḥadīth that whosoever approves of the action of a certain group is counted amongst it. However, if he does not approve of it and detests it, this tradition would not apply to him.

And:

وَعَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: مَنْ تَعَصَّبَ عَصَبَهُ اللَّهُ بِمِصَابَةِ مِنْ نَارٍ

Al-‘Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) is reported to have said: “Whosoever practises ‘*asabiyyah* (against someone), God shall wrap around him (‘*aṣabahu*) a fold (‘*iṣābah*) of Fire.”<sup>3</sup>

وَعَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ قَالَ: لَمْ يَدْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ حَمِيَّةٌ غَيْرَ حَمِيَّةِ حَمْرَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُظْلِبِ — وَذَلِكَ حِينَ أَسْلَمَ — غَضَبًا لِلنَّبِيِّ (ص).

Al-‘Imām ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (A) is reported to have said: No *hamiyyah* shall ever enter Paradise, except the *hamiyyah* of Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, which was (expressed) at the time when he became a Muslim on account of his anger in support of the Prophet (S).<sup>4</sup>

The episode of Ḥamzah’s conversion to Islam has been reported variously, and is not relevant to our discussion. In any case, it is obvious that faith—which is the invisible holy gift of God to His special servants, the sincere devotees of His Court, and the champions of His love—is contrary to a quality that disregards truth and reality and tramples truthfulness and uprightness under its feet. Of course, if the mirror of the heart be covered with the dust of self-love and the love of the kindred and improper and blind ‘*asabiyyah*, the light of faith will not shine in it; it will not be fit to be the hidden abode of the Most High. The person whose heart has been the mirror for the light of faith and gnosis, the one whose neck has been tied in the firm and unbreakable rope of faith, the one who is the hostage of reality and Divine

knowledge, the one who remains wedded to the religious precepts and confined to rational principles and laws, the one who derives all his impulses from reason and Divine Law—no force of customs, ways, or familiar things can cause him to quiver or deviate from the right path. One can profess Islam and claim *imān* only when he is submissive to truth and humble in front of it, and when he deems his own aims and purposes, no matter however great they may be, as trivial and transitory, before the aims and purposes of his Lord and Provider; he annihilates his own will in the Will of his real Lord. Of necessity, such a person will be free from all traces of ignorant '*aṣabiyyah*'; his face will be turned towards reality, and thick curtains of ignorance and '*aṣabiyyah*' would not obstruct his vision. When called to administer justice and utter the word of truth, he puts a firm foot on the head of all associations and ties, sacrificing all ties of kinship and customary affinities at the altar of the aims and objectives of his Lord. If there is a clash between the Islamic '*aṣabiyyah*' and the '*aṣabiyyah*' of the *Jāhiliyyah*, he gives precedence to his Islamic '*aṣabiyyah*' and his '*aṣabiyyah*' for truth. An enlightened human being knows that all the '*aṣabiyyahs*' and all associations and relationships are merely transitory accidents and are perishable. The only relationship that is permanent and lasting and the only '*aṣabiyyah*' that is true, is the relationship between the Creator and the created being, and is essential and unbreakable; it is firmer, higher, and prior to all the ties of lineage and alliance.

#### A Prophetic Tradition:

The Prophet of God (S) is reported to have said:

كُلُّ حَسَبٍ وَتَسَبُّ مُنْقَطِعٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَّا حَسَبِي وَتَسَبِّي

All the ties of lineage and affinity will be broken on the Day of Resurrection except the ties of my lineage and affinity.

It is obvious that the ties of lineage and affinity of that holy personage are spiritual and lasting, and free from all pre-Islamic biases and '*aṣabiyyahs*'. In fact the spiritual ties of lineage will be more vivid in that world and its merits more conspicuous. On the other hand, the physical and terrestrial relationships that are rooted in human habits and customs are very weak and fragile and are broken easily. None of them have any worth and value whatsoever in the next world, except those relationships that are established according to the Divine celestial system and under the auspices of the precepts of the Law and dictates of reason: only they are unbreakable and unseverable.

### The Otherworldly Form of 'Aṣabiyyah:

It was mentioned in some of the aḥādīth discussed previously that the criteria of the otherworldly forms, which human traits will acquire in the *Barzakh* and on the Day of Resurrection, are the habits and qualities and their strength. That world is the domain of the dominance of the spirit and the subservience of the body. It is possible that men should be raised in the forms of animals or satans. The present tradition which we are expounding, and which maintains that 'the person who possesses in his heart 'aṣabiyyah even to the extent of a mustard seed, God Almighty will resurrect him on the Day of Judgment with the Beduins of the pre-Islamic era', may also refer to the above-mentioned point. The man possessing this vice, after being transferred to the other world may behold himself as one of the pre-Islamic heathen Beduins, who neither had faith in God Almighty nor believed in prophets and prophethood. Whatever the inner and outer form of that tribe had been, he will find himself when resurrected as one of them. Perhaps he will himself not understand as to why such a thing would happen to him, while in the world he professed the true religion of God and claimed to be an adherent of the faith of the Holy Prophet (S). It is mentioned in a tradition that the inhabitants of Hell will not be able to remember the name of the Prophet (S), and, as such, would not be able to introduce themselves as his followers, unless God Almighty resolves on their deliverance. And since, according to some of the traditions, the trait of 'aṣabiyyah is one of the attributes of Satan, may be the heathen Beduins of the pre-Islamic era, as well as the individuals possessing the primitive habit of 'aṣabiyyah would be resurrected in the form of Satan:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: إِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ كَانُوا يَحْسُبُونَ أَنَّ إِبْلِيسَ مِنْهُمْ وَكَانَ فِي عِلْمِ اللَّهِ أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْهُمْ، فَاسْتَخْرَجَ مَا فِي نَفْسِهِ بِالْحَمِيَّةِ وَالْغَضَبِ فَقَالَ: «خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ»

(According to a reliable ḥadīth of *al-Kāfī*), Abū 'Abd Allāh (al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq) (A) is reported to have said: "Verily, the angels counted Satan as one of themselves, and it was in the knowledge of God that he was not of them; then he spoke out whatever was inside him, out of *hamiyyah* and anger, and said (to God): 'Thou createdst me of fire, and him (Adam) Thou didst create of clay.'"<sup>5</sup>

Thus my dear, you should know that this vice belongs to Satan and is a fallacy inspired in you by that accursed being based on false analogical inference. He committed the mistake because of the dense

veils of *'aṣabiyyah*. This veil conceals all realities from the sight, or rather shows all one's vices as virtues and the virtues of others as vices. And it is obvious as to where the deeds of the person who beholds things in a contrary perspective would lead him. Besides being itself a source of human ruin and doom, it gives rise to a number of moral, spiritual and behavioural villainies, the description of which would be cumbersome. As such, a wise person, who understands these villainies as the products of this vice and confirms the testimony of the truthful Holy Prophet (S)—whose truthfulness has been confirmed by God—and the Members of his Household (A), who all state that this trait leads man to destruction and makes him an inhabitant of the Fire, should seriously consider about curing himself, and if, God forbid, there is the slightest speck of this vice in his heart, equal to the size of a mustard seed, he should purge it, so that he may be thoroughly purified before leaving this world and being transferred to the next. He should be free from this vice at the hour of his death, so as to put his feet into the otherworld with a pure soul. He should keep in his mind that he has very little time and very limited opportunity; for he does not know as to when he will have to depart from this world.

#### A Colloquy With the Self:

O my vicious self! Perhaps your death may approach while you are still busy in writing these pages, and transfer you with all your moral vices to the next world from where there is no return. And O you dear reader of these pages, draw a lesson from the life of this writer who may be today under the ground and in the other world, a victim of his ugly acts and wicked behaviour. As long as he was given opportunity, he spent the precious days of his life in vain pursuit of lusts and desires and squandered that gift of God with vain profligacy. Yet you must be careful as you too shall be in a condition similar to his, and you don't know when. Perhaps as you are reading these pages, the opportunity may slip if you go on procrastinating. O brother! Do not put off these matters; they are not to be postponed. Remember, how many hail and hearty people have suddenly been snatched away by the claws of death, and we have no knowledge about what awaited them in the Hereafter.

Therefore, do not let the chance slip and consider every second as precious; for the matter matters a lot and the journey is a perilous one. If you lose the opportunity of doing something in this world, which is the field whose harvest is the Hereafter, you will not be able to do anything any more and you will not be able to straighten your crookedness. There will be nothing left except regret, perplexity, chastisement, and degradation. The men of God were never at ease even for a little while; they were never oblivious of the perilous and hazardous journey

ahead. The condition of the fourth Imam 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (A) was amazing. The laments of Amir al-Mu'minin Imam 'Alī (A) are stunning. What is the matter with us that we are so negligent? Who has given us assurance except the Devil, who makes us put off our actions for tomorrow and wants to bulge the number of his followers and companions by making us share his attributes? Doesn't he, in this way, want to include us in his company so that we may be resurrected in his retinue? The accursed creature always diminishes the importance and seriousness of the matters of the Hereafter in our eyes, and makes us oblivious of the remembrance of God and obedience to His commands by means of the promises of His mercy and the intercession of the intercessors. But, alas, such temptations have no truth and belong to the deceitful paraphernalia of the snares of that accursed creature. Of course, even at present, you are immersed in the mercy and compassion of God, rejoicing in the gifts of sound health and well-being, life and safety, guidance and reason, opportunity and directions for the reformation of the soul and other such myriad favours. Yet you are not drawing benefit from these favours in this world by complacently following the Devil. Beware if you fail to draw any benefit from God's mercy in this world, in the next world also you will not be able to benefit from the infinite mercy of God and the intercession of the intercessors. The guidance provided by them is this-worldly reflection of the intercession of the intercessors in the next world and the other-worldly reflection of the guidance provided by them here is intercession. But if you cannot benefit from the guidance, remember that you will not be able to receive the benefit of intercession either; it depends on the guidance you utilize here. The intercession of the Holy Prophet (S) is general and universal; however, like the blessings of God, the receiver must have capacity to receive it. If, God forbid, Satan robs you of the faculty of faith, you will be incapable and unworthy of receiving Divine mercy and the intercession of the intercessors. Yes, God's bounties in the two worlds are plenty and His mercy unlimited; but, if you really seek His mercy, then why do you neglect His unceasing bounties in this world that are like seeds of His favours in the other? All the prophets of God and the *awliyā'* have invited you to the Divine feast, yet you turn away and you do not accept it on account of the evil insinuations of the Devil. You sacrificed the *muhkamāt* (the firm verses) of the Book of God, the *mutawātīrāt* of the prophets and *awliyā'*, the compelling rational arguments of the wise, and the definite proofs of the *ḥukamā'* for the fiendish fantasies and fancies of your own. Woe to you and me for our state of neglectfulness, blindness, deafness, and ignorance.

### On the 'Aṣabiyyahs of the Intellectuals:

One of the types of 'aṣabiyyahs is stubbornness in intellectual matters and the habit of supporting the statements and ideas of one's own or that of one's teacher or spiritual master not for the sake of defending truth and refuting falsehood. It is obvious that such a kind of 'aṣabiyyah is worse and more improper in some ways than other types of 'aṣabiyyah. This, because a scholar and an intellectual ought to be an instructor of mankind, scholarship being a branch of the tree of prophethood and wilāyah itself. He should be aware of the evil effects and bad consequences of moral vices. If, God forbid, he himself possesses the vice of 'aṣabiyyah and attaches to himself the mean attributes of Satan, he will have scarcely anything to offer in self-defence and will be taken to task severely. The person who poses himself as a guiding beacon of light, a source of enlightenment in the assembly of mankind, as a guide to the path of felicity, and as one who is charged with the duty of guiding men on the path of Hereafter, if, God forbid, he does not remain faithful to his words and his inner being contradicts his outward appearance, he will be grouped with the hypocrites and the pretentious. He will be branded as an evil scholar, a man of knowledge devoid of good deeds, whose retribution is a painful chastisement, as described by God Almighty in the Holy Quran:

... يَسْ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ.

... Wretched is the likeness of those who deny the revelations of Allah. And Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk. (62:5)

Hence it is essential for scholars to retain their integrity and to keep themselves free from such vices, so that having corrected themselves they may be able to reform their society through a truly effective preaching and exhortations that can penetrate the hearts and minds. The corruption of a scholar can lead to the corruption of a nation. And it is obvious that the vice which generates multiple vices and the transgression which begets other transgressions is worse and greater than an isolated, non-contagious vice in the eyes of the Almighty.

Another hideous aspect of this vice in intellectuals is the atrocity done to knowledge itself; as this 'aṣabiyyah on the part of an intellectual amounts to the abuse of knowledge and disrespect to it. The one who is entrusted with this valuable trust and enrobed in its precious robes, it is his duty to preserve its sanctity and deliver it safely to its owner. And if one is guilty of the 'aṣabiyyah of pagan Beduins with regard to it, he is of course guilty of the sin of breach of trust, an injustice and a major sin and offense. The other ugly side of this vice is



the wrong done to the other side. Because, the other side that participates in intellectual discourses also comprises of scholars. He too enjoys a sanctity which it is obligatory to observe and to safeguard his honour. Insulting him will be synonymous with violating Divine sanctities, and it is a great sin. Sometimes, senseless 'aşabiyyahs make one insult scholars. I seek refuge in God from this major offense.

Yet another aspect of 'aşabiyyah relates to the person in whose favour 'aşabiyyah is exercised, who may be one's instructor and tutor. He may be forced to disown his pupil, because all the great masters and saints—*karram Allāh wujūhahum*—are naturally attracted towards truth and justice and are abhorrent to untruth and injustice. They detest him who violates justice and gives currency to falsehood through his acts of 'aşabiyyah. Of course, the harms of spiritual disownment are greater than the harms of parental disownment, for spiritual fatherhood is above physical parenthood. Thus it is incumbent upon scholars—may God increase their station and honour—to protect themselves from all moral and behavioural vices, to adorn themselves with the ornaments of good deeds and moral virtues, and not to be unmindful of the duties of the holy office which the Most High has bestowed on them, the failure to do which may bring ruin whose extent is not known to any one except God Almighty alone. *Wassalām*.

#### NOTES:

1. Al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* (Intishārāt 'Ilmiyyah Islāmiyyah, Tehran), vol. III (Arabic text with Persian translation by Sayyid Jawād Muṣṭafawī), p. 419.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 420.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*

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### Ninth *Ḥadīth* on Hypocrisy (*Nifāq*)

بِالسَّيِّدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلَى نَفَقَةِ الْإِسْلَامِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَغْفُوتَ الْكَلْبِيِّ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى، عَنْ  
أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِيسَى، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سِنَانَ، عَنْ عَوْنِ بْنِ أَلْقَلَانِيسِيِّ، عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي يَغْفُورٍ،  
عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: «مَنْ لَقِيَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ بِوَجْهَيْنِ وَلِسَانَيْنِ جَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَهُ لِسَانَانِ  
مِنْ نَارٍ».

... Thiqat al-'Islām Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Isā, from Muḥammad ibn Sinān, from 'Awn ibn al-Qalānisi, from Ibn Abī Ya'fūr, who reports Abū 'Abd Allāh (al-'Imām al-Ṣādiq) (A) to have said: "One who meets Muslims with a double face and a double tongue, on the Day of Judgement he will come with two tongues of fire."<sup>1</sup>

#### Exposition:

**D**ouble-facedness is the characteristic of the person who assumes an outward appearance and simulates a behaviour which is contrary to his inner state. For instance, one may give an impression of friendship and affection and pretend to be sincere and sympathetic, while in his heart he harbours an opposite feeling. Such a person displays sympathy and friendship in front of people, but is different in their absence.

Double-tonguedness is the quality of the person who praises and flatters people whenever he meets them, appearing to befriend them, but denounces them and speaks slanderously of them in their absence. Therefore, in the light of this description, the first quality may

be specified as 'behavioural *nifāq*' and the second as 'verbal *nifāq*'. Perhaps the tradition refers to the evil of *nifāq*, since these two features are among the prominent and peculiar characteristics of the *munāfiqūn* (hypocrites).

*Nifāq* is one of psychic maladies and a vicious quality with its own specific signs and symptoms. It has also numerous grades and degrees, which, God willing, we shall discuss, together with their method of treatment, in the following sections.

#### *Degrees of Nifāq:*

It should be known that, like other vices and virtues, there are different degrees and stages of intensity and weakness of *nifāq*. In the case of any vice, if one does not take steps to cure it and does not persevere in the course of its treatment, it would lead him towards its extreme degrees, for there is no limit to the degree of intensity of vices and virtues. If man leaves his carnal self to its wishes, its innate propensity towards corruption, its instinctive appetite for worldly pleasures, the assistance of the Satan and the insinuations of the *Khannās*, all together incline it towards evil, and its vices, increasing day by day in intensity, reach the stage when they become an intrinsic, essential and ultimate quality of the soul. Then the regions of one's inner being as well as outer self come under its sovereignty and rule. And if the vice is characteristic of the Devil, such as *nifāq* and double-facedness, which are attributes of that cursed being — whom the Quran quotes as having said to Adam and Eve:

وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا مِّنَ النَّاصِحِينَ.

*And he swore unto them (saying): Lo. I am a sincere adviser unto you. (7:21)*

whereas in reality he was the opposite of what he claimed — the realm of your being will be annexed by the Devil's empire. When that happens, the ultimate form the spirit acquires will be satanic, and its inner essence and substance will also be satanic in nature. It is also possible that the external appearance in the next world will be of the Satan, though here you have a human form and appearance.

Thus, if man does not try to guard himself from this vice and allows his carnal self to act according to its wishes, within a short time all the means of control will be so thoroughly gone that all his labours and efforts will be put into the service of this vice. With whomever he will come in contact, he will meet and greet him double-facedly and with a double tongue. Socially, his intercourse and relations with others will become tainted with the vice of duplicity, dissemblance and

hypocrisy. He will have no other objective except his own personal benefit and no goal except self-aggrandizement. Having trampled upon all the values of truthfulness, sincerity, magnanimity and courage, he will employ duplicity in all of his pauses and deeds, not abstaining from any indecency or perversion. Such a person is away from the domain of humanity and humanness, and on the Day of Judgement he will be raised as a member of the legions of the Satan.

All that was stated above was regarding the degrees of intensity and weakness of *nifāq* per se, but it also varies according to that to which it is related. Sometimes one practises *nifāq* in relation to the religion of God, sometimes with respect to virtues, sometimes in regard to righteous deeds and holy rites, and sometimes in ordinary matters of day-to-day life and common civilities. Also, sometimes one may act with *nifāq* with respect to the Prophet (S) or the Imams (A), and sometimes with regard to the *awliyā'*, the scholars and the believers. Sometimes one may behave with *nifāq* with Muslims and sometimes with God's creatures belonging to other communities and creeds.

Of course, these types of *nifāq* vary in the degree of their ugliness and indecency, though all of them are similar in that they share the quality of ugliness and indecency and are the buds and leaves of the same vicious tree.

#### *Effects of Nifāq:*

*Nifāq* and double-facedness, besides being an abominable, ignoble and vicious quality itself, which no decent person would like to adopt and whose possessor is not only excluded from the human category, but cannot be likened to any of the beasts as well, it is a cause of humiliation and ignominy in this world in front of one's fellows and friends, and brings about disgrace and punishment in the Hereafter also. As mentioned in the tradition, in the Hereafter such a person will be resurrected with two tongues of fire in his mouth. This will be a source of disgrace for him in front of the creatures of God and will bring about his infamy in the presence of His prophets, apostles and archangels. The severity of the punishment is also indicated by this tradition. Because, if the substance of the body becomes that of fire, imagine how severely it will be felt and what a great pain and suffering it will inflict. I seek refuge in God from its severity.

It is reported in another tradition that the Prophet (S) said that the double-faced person will come on the Day of Resurrection in such a condition that one of his two tongues will protrude from the back of his head and the other from the front, and both the tongues will be aflame, making his entire body ablaze with fire.<sup>2</sup> Thereupon, it will be announced that he was double-faced and double-tongued in the world.

He will be known on that day by this vice of his, the following Quranic verse having become applicable to him:

... وَيَقْظَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوَصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ  
الدَّارِ

*... and sever that which Allah hath commanded should be joined, and make mischief in the earth; theirs is the curse and theirs the ill abode. (13:25)*

*Nifāq* is source of many an evil and destructive trait, each one of which may bring about one's doom and eternal damnation. One of them is causing discord and sedition (*fitnah*), which, according to an express text of the Quran, is worse than homicide. Another is slandering (*namimah*), which is denounced by al-'Imām al-Bāqir (A) in the following tradition:

مُحَرَّمَةٌ الْجَنَّةُ عَلَى الْقَائِمِينَ الْمَشَائِينَ بِالنَّمِيمَةِ.

(Entry to) Paradise is prohibited to slanderers who walk on the path of calumny (i.e. are habitual slanderers).<sup>3</sup>

The sins of slandering others and backbiting are worse than the sin of adultery, according to a statement of the Prophet (S), and are equivalent to subjecting a believer to torture, reviling him, and divulging his secrets; each one of which alone is enough to bring about one's destruction.

Let it be known to you that other bad habits which belong to the category of *nifāq* are: making gestures, allusions, winking, making signals with the eyes and so on — things that some persons do in order to mock some others, whereas they pose to be friendly and sincere in front of them. One should be very cautious of his own state and be careful of his deeds and behaviour, because the snares of the self and the designs of the Satan are very subtle, and there are very few people who are able to save themselves from them. It is possible that on account of an inappropriate act of beckoning or an improper winking one may be branded as double-faced and double-tongued. Perchance one may possess this bad habit as long as he is alive and imagine himself to be morally healthy, sound and pure. Therefore, it is essential for an individual to take care, like a devoted and sympathetic physician, of his spiritual and moral health and constantly keep an eye on his own deeds and habits, like a careful and vigilant nurse, and never fall short of his duty. He should know that none of the diseases of the heart is more concealed and elusive, and at the same time so fatal, than this disease,

and no nurse should be more sympathetic and kind than an individual to himself.

*Cure of the Disease of Nifāq :*

There are two ways of getting rid of this greatly evil vice:

The first is to think about the harms that proceed from this vice, in this world as well as in the Hereafter. One should deliberate upon the matter that if he becomes known in this world for having this bad habit, he will be degraded in the eyes of his fellows and become infamous among his fellow human beings. They will avoid his company and he will be deprived of their friendliness. Moreover, he will fail to achieve any merit and to reach his higher goals. Thus, it is necessary for a man of honour and dignity endowed with conscience to purge himself of this ignominy that consumes honour, and not to allow himself to be entrapped in its disgraces. Besides, in the other world, which is the realm of the unveiling of secrets, where things that remained concealed from the eyes of people shall not be hidden, there, he will be raised a deformed, ugly creature possessing two tongues of fire and punished along with the hypocrites and devils. Therefore, it is incumbent upon a man of wisdom, who sees no good in it but harm, ugliness and abomination, to get rid of this vice.

The other treatment, which involves action, is another method of curing the self. It requires the individual to be extremely vigilant regarding his acts and pauses, and that he should act deliberately against his base wishes, wage a war against himself and try to improve his self inwardly as well as outwardly, in deed as well as in speech. He should abstain from affectation, coquetry and dissemblance in practice, and beseech the Almighty's help and assistance during this period to give him supremacy over his carnal self and its desires and to guide and accompany him in this undertaking. His mercy and grace towards His creatures are boundless, and whosoever advances towards Him wishing to reform himself, He extends His support and help to him.

If one perseveres in this for several days, it is hoped that the soul would become purified and the rust of hypocrisy and double-facedness will be removed from it. The mirror of his heart and his inner being will be cleansed of this vice, and it will be ready again to receive the favours and blessings of the Bestower. Because it has been established through rational proofs, and also confirmed by experience, that as long as man lives in this world, he is conditioned by the deeds and actions committed by him, and every one of his deeds, the pious as well as the vicious ones, leave their impressions and effects on the soul. If the deeds are pious and good, they leave a luminous and sublime effect; if not, a dark and negative impression is left on the soul. Thus, as a result, the heart is

either rendered bright and luminous or dark and gloomy, according to the deeds. He is either grouped with the good and virtuous, or with the vicious and corrupt. Therefore, as long as we tarry in this house of action and this place of cultivation, we can freely steer our hearts in the direction of felicity or in the direction of wretchedness. We are hostages of our actions, about which the Quran says:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ.

And whoso doth good an atom's weight will see it, and whoso doth ill an atom's weight will see it. (99: 7-8)

#### Some Forms of Nifāq:

Let it be known to you, dear friend, that one of the forms of *nifāq*, double-facedness and double-tonguedness is *nifāq* with the Almighty, the King of kings, and the Bestower and the Nourisher, with which we are inflicted in this world but are not aware of it. Thick curtains of ignorance and folly and dark veils of the love of the self and the world have obstructed our vision in such a way that it is not possible for us to know our defects before the time of the divulging of secrets and the raising of these curtains and veils and before departing from this world of nature and saying farewell to this house of illusion and this zone of neglect and stupor. Although now we have receded into a state of physical stupor and obliviousness, and are intoxicated by the attractions of physical life and sensual existence, which beautify all moral and behavioural villainies in our eyes, the moment shall come when we shall wake up and come to our senses, and realize that there is nothing left for us to be done, that we have lost the opportunity and have been branded as *munāfiqūn*, double-faced, and double-tongued, and resurrected with two flaring tongues or with two hideous faces. Then, even if we weep and wail, and yell out, "Lord, send me back into the world", the answer will come, "Never". Such will be the fate of our double-facedness; while, in this life, you and I have been claiming faith in the Unity of God throughout, and professing to be Muslims and true believers untiringly, and even making ardent claims of His love.

If we are laymen, we boast of our faith in Islam, our sincerity of faith and our piety. If we belong to the class of 'ulamā' and jurists, we pretend the highest degree of sincerity (*ikhhlās*) and put forth claims to the *wilāyah* and the *khilāfah* of the Prophet (S). We imagine that the words uttered by the Prophet (S): اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْ خَلَفَائِي (O God! Have mercy upon my successors), and by the present Imam (A) — may my soul be sacrificed for him: إِنَّهُمْ حُجَّتِي (Verily they are my proofs....) and all other statements of the Imams (A) about 'ulamā' and fuqahā',



to have been spoken about ourselves.

And if we belong to the class of scholars of philosophy and the rational sciences, claiming to possess true faith based on deductive proofs, we deem ourselves to be men of certain knowledge (*'ilm al-yaqīn*), and those who possess *'ayn al-yaqīn* and *ḥaqq al-yaqīn*, considering all others as possessing imperfect knowledge and infirm faith, and applying all the pertinent Quranic verses and traditions to ourselves.

And if we count ourselves among the mystics and men of *'irfān*, claiming mystic knowledge, ecstasies of love, states of annihilation in God and subsistence through Him (*fanā' fī Allāh, baqā' bi Allāh*) and His vicegerency (*wilāyat al-'amr*), we apply such appellations, and whatsoever that appears to be attractive, to ourselves.

Thus, each one of our various groups claims some kind of high station by employing a vocabulary that it considers suitable for itself and for the display of its particular relation to the Truth. If this outward display complies with his inner reality and this appearance corresponds to his secret inward, he is of course truthful in claims and his blessed condition indeed deserves congratulations: *فَيَسَّأَلُهُ وَلَا زِيَابَ النَّعِيمِ* (May the blessing do much good to him and to its other possessors). But if he is, like this writer, a deformed wretch, he should know that he belongs to the class of *munāfiqūn* and the double-tongued. He should set out to treat himself and make use of the opportunity before it slips away, and do something about his unfortunate condition and the day of darkness and humiliation that awaits him.

My dear, you who claim adherence to Islam, there is a tradition in *al-Kāfī* reported from the Apostle of God (S):

الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ يَدِهِ وَلِسَانِهِ.

A Muslim is one whose hand and tongue spare all Muslims.<sup>4</sup>

What is the matter with us that we give ourselves the right to harass and hurt, by all possible means, our subordinates, and never hesitate to cause them inconvenience or to create problems for them? Or, if we cannot do any harm by our hands, why do we hurt them with the dagger of our tongue, by using derogatory language in their presence, or, in their absence, by opening their secrets, by slandering them and making false accusations against them? Therefore, we, whose hands and tongues do not spare Muslims, our claim of adherence to Islam contradicts our reality, and the state of our hearts is opposite to what our knowledge of Islam tells us. Hence we belong to the category of *munāfiqūn* and the double-faced.

O you who profess to adhere to the true faith and to submit your heart to the sovereignty of the Almighty! If you have full faith in the Oneness of God, and your heart is devoted to the worship of the One and yearns for the One, and that if you do not believe in the existence of any deity except God, if your heart mirrors your outward and your inner is true to your claims, what is wrong with you that you are so subdued and humble in front of the people? Why do you worship and idolize them? Is it for some other reason than this that you believe them to be powerful and influential, and you imagine their power and wealth to be of some consequence? Perhaps the only thing that you do not believe to be effective and active in this world is the Will and Determination of God Almighty. Aren't you humble and subdued in front of all the external phenomena, yet neglectful towards the really Powerful, the First Cause? Yet in spite of this state of mind, you assert your faith in the Unity of God! You should know that you are a foreigner to the community of believers, and belong to the group of *munāfiqūn* and the double-tongued and will be resurrected with them.

You who profess to be a genuine monotheist and of sincere piety, if you are really sincere and abstain from worldly pleasures only for the sake of God and His abode of bliss, what is wrong with you that you are so eager to hear people say in your praise that so and so is such a pious man, and are jubilant when someone says such a thing? Why are you willing to die for the company of the rich and affluent and flee from that of the poor and needy? You must know that neither your monotheism nor your piety are genuine. Your piety and abstinence are for the sake of the world, and your heart is not sincerely devoted to God. Your claims are false and you belong to the category of the double-faced and *munāfiqūn*.

And you who claim to be an appointee to the office of *wilāyah* (leadership) by the *Walī Allāh* (i.e. the Twelfth Imam) and to that of *khilāfah* by the Apostle (S) of God, if your condition is in accordance with the specifications mentioned in the tradition of *al-'Ihtijāj*:

صَائِنًا لِنَفْسِهِ حَافِظًا لِدِينِهِ مُخَالِفًا لِهَوَاهُ مُطِيعًا لِأَمْرِ مَوْلَاهُ.

He who keeps his soul chaste, safeguards his faith, opposes his desires, and obeys the commands of his Master....,<sup>5</sup>

if you are yourself a branch of the tree of *wilāyah* and *risālah* (prophethood), and if you are neither inclined towards the world, nor yearn for the nearness of kings, rulers and nobles, nor you are averse to the company of the poor, then indeed you deserve your name and title and you are certainly one of the proofs (*ḥujjah*) of God among the human-kind; otherwise you are one of the wicked 'ulamā' and the *munāfiqūn*,

and your plight is worse than that of the aforementioned group of people, and your deeds more abominable and your life far more wretched and miserable; since there is no ground for any plea or pretext for the 'ulamā'.

And you who claim to possess the Divine *ḥikmah* and the knowledge of the realities of the origin and the end (*al-mabda' wa al-ma'ād*), if you do possess the knowledge of the realities of causes and effects, and if in reality you know the forms assigned to men in *Barzakh* and the matters of heaven and hell, you should not have found peace for a while and should have spent each and every moment of your life in the construction of the life in eternity. You should have sought refuge from this world and its temptations. You know as to what sort of torments lie ahead and what darkness and severities await you. Yet why didn't you step out from behind the curtain of terms and concepts? Why haven't the rational demonstrations and proofs exerted any influence on your heart, even to the extent of the wing of a fly? Hence, in such a state, know that you stand outside the class of true believers and *ḥukamā'*, and on the Day of Judgement you will be resurrected in the ranks of *munāfiqūn*. Woe unto the man who spent his whole life and energies in acquiring the knowledge of the metaphysical, yet could not overcome his intoxication and infatuation with the physical, so that not even one of the truths ever entered his heart!

And you who claim the gnosis of God, and speak of spiritual fervour, of wayfaring, of His love and your wish to annihilate yourself in the Divine Essence, if you are sincere in your devotion to God and belong to the category of *aṣḥāb al-qulūb*, men of enlightenment with a record of virtuous past, then may it do you much good. Otherwise, inflated, theopathic utterances (*shaṭḥiyyāt*), pretentious ecstasies, and extravagant claims reveal only your self love and your satanic tendencies, which are opposed to the love of God and godly fervour, for God says:

إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءِي نَحْبَ قِيَابِي لَا يَعْرِفُهُمْ غَيْرِي.

Verily, My *awliyā'*, under My vault (i.e. the sky), are known to none except Me.<sup>6</sup>

If you do belong to the category of the *awliyā'* of God, His lovers and those absorbed totally in His love, it is indeed known to God. There is no need for you to boast about your high station in front of people. Do not distract the unsteady hearts of the creatures of God from their Creator, by inclining them towards a creature of His. Do not trespass upon the house that belongs to God. Know that those creatures are dear to God, and their hearts are valuable and precious; they are to

be employed in the service of God. Do not make a sport of the house of the Lord, and do not put your hands on His sanctities, for it has been said, **فَإِنَّ لِلْبَيْتِ رَبًّا** ('Indeed the house has a Master'). Hence, if you are not true in your claims, you will be grouped with the double-faced and the men of *nifāq*. But let me stop here, since it isn't proper for a wretch like me to speak any further.

O you vile self of the writer, who make much pretence: do something about the dark days of your life and find a way out of your wretchedness. If you are really sincere and your heart agrees with your tongue and your inner intention is compatible with your outward appearance, why are you so heedless, your heart so blackened, and your lusts so indomitable? Why don't you think about the journey of death, which is so full of perils? Your days are past, yet you have not given up your lusts and desires. You have spent your days in satisfying lusts and in neglect and mischief. The time of your death draws near, yet you are enmeshed in your vicious deeds and entrapped in your indecent conduct. O preacher, who would not learn any lesson, you stand in the midst of *munāfiqūn* and the double-faced. Being one of them, it is feared that you will be resurrected with two tongues of fire and two faces of fire, if you continue in your present state.

O God, awaken us from this protracted spell of deep slumber, and bring us back to our senses from this state of intoxication and unconsciousness. Illumine our hearts with the light of faith and have mercy on us. We are not champions of this field. You Yourself succour us and deliver us from the talons of the Devil, for the sake of Your chosen servants, Muḥammad and his undefiled progeny, upon all of whom be God's benedictions.

#### NOTES:

1. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī* (Ākhūndī), vol. 2, p. 343.
2. Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *'Iqāb al-'a'māl* (Maktabat al-Ṣadūq), p. 319.
3. *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 369.
4. *Ibid.*, vol. 2; Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *al-Maḥajjat al-bayḍā'*, vol. 3, p. 358.
5. Al-Ṭabarsī, *al-Ihtijāj*, vol. 2, p. 106; al-Hurr al-'Amilī, *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 18, p. 99; al-Kulaynī, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 412; al-Shaykh al-Tūsī, *al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 6, p. 301; al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh*, vol. 3; al-Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 3, p. 187; Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan, *al-Jawāhir*, vol. 40, p. 32.
6. A *ḥadīth qudsī*. Source untraced.

## Tenth *Hadīth* on Desire and Hope

بِإِسْنَادٍ مُتَّصِلَةٍ إِلَى رَئِيسِ الْمُحَدِّثِينَ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ، عَنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ  
مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنْ مُعَلَّى بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنِ الْوَشَّاءِ، عَنْ عَاصِمِ بْنِ حُمَيْدٍ، عَنْ أَبِي حَفْصَةَ، عَنْ يَحْيَى  
بْنِ عَقِيلٍ قَالَ، قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (ع): «إِنَّا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمُ اثْنَتَيْنِ: اتِّبَاعَ الْهَوَى وَطُولَ  
الْأَمَلِ، أَمَا اتِّبَاعُ الْهَوَى فَإِنَّهُ يَصُدُّ عَنِ الْحَقِّ وَأَمَا طُولُ الْأَمَلِ فَيُنْسِي الْآخِرَةَ.»

... Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb (al-Kulaynī)—may God be pleased with him—reports from al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad, he from Mu'allā ibn Muḥammad, from al-Washshā', from 'Asim ibn Ḥumayd, he from Abū Ḥamzah, who narrates on the authority of Yahyā ibn 'Aqīl that the latter reported that Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A) said, "I am apprehensive for you on account of two things: submission to desire and cherishing of inordinate hope. As to desire, it prevents one from *ḥaqq* (Truth, righteousness, God); and as to inordinate hope, it makes man oblivious of the Hereafter."<sup>1</sup>

### Exposition:

**L**iterally *hawīya* means 'to love', 'to desire' and 'to become fond of' something. It may either be something commendable or abominable, or it may be something towards which one is inclined as a result of natural urge. The carnal self is inclined towards lust and desire, if it is not bridled by reason and the Shari'ah. But the possibility of *hawā* being used here as a legal term (*ḥaqīqah Shar'iyyah*) with a special meaning, as maintained by some scholars, seems remote.

The phrase ... *صَدَّ عَنْ* gives the sense of repelling something, turning away, preventing or dissuading from something. But here the verb *ṣadda* is used in the transitive sense of stopping and preventing. God willing, we shall discuss the two evils and their consequent conditions: first, that of being prevented from the truth and from God; and, secondly, that of obliviousness of the Hereafter. We implore God's assistance in

this regard.

### 1. On the Evil of Following One's Desires:

(a) Though it is not directly relevant to our topic, it is essential to know that the human soul is by nature and instinct inclined to believe not only in the principle of *tawhīd* (monotheism), but to follow all truthful doctrines also. Yet, since the moment of birth and stepping into this universe, man starts growing and developing along with his natural urges and animal desires, except for those who are protected and assisted by God, the Holy Preserver. The latter being exceptions and among the marvels of existence, are not our concern here. We are here concerned with the condition of the species in general. It is evident that at the time of his birth, after passing through certain stages, man is no better than a weak animal and has no distinction over other animals, except for his potentiality of becoming a human being. That is, his humanness is potential, not present. Therefore, man is an animal in actuality in the initial stages of his life in this world. No power but the law of animal nature, which governs through the faculties of Desire (*shahwah*) and Anger (*ghadab*), rules over him. And since this marvel of nature is capable of acquiring all kinds of attributes, in order to cater to the needs of these two faculties he employs another fiendish power, the faculty of imagination (*quwwah wahmiyyah*) also in this direction through such means as: lying, deceit, hypocrisy, slander and all the other kind of tools. He grows and develops with these three powers, which are the roots of all other vices and fatal sins, and they too develop and flourish within him with age. If he is not influenced by an instructor or guide, after having grown and reached the age of maturity he becomes a beast of uncommon rarity which surpasses all other beasts and devils in the above-mentioned qualities, becoming only stronger and more completely devilish and bestial. If he retains the same pattern of growth, he will not do anything except follow the desires of the carnal self and servilely obey these three powers. No sign of Divine knowledge or awareness, moral excellence or righteous deed can be found in him, and the innate light of nature gets stifled within his personality.

Thus all the dimensions of spiritual health—which do not go beyond the three above-mentioned things, i.e., Divine knowledge, moral virtues and righteous deeds—are suppressed by the desires of the carnal self. His servility to sensual inclinations and bestial comforts does not allow any of the manifestations of righteousness to appear in his being. The darkness of sensual desire extinguishes the light of reason and faith. He does not experience the second birth which in reality is the birth of the human being. He continues to exist in the same state and is cut off

and removed from God and truth. When he departs from this world in this state and enters the next world, which is the realm of unveiling of reality, he does not find himself in any other form except that of a beast or a devil. With no reminiscence and memory whatsoever of a human existence, he dwells in this state in the abode of eternal darkness, torment and dread, until God Almighty wills what He may. Such is the fate of total servility to sensual desires which causes one to be cut off absolutely from God and righteousness.

It can be concluded from this that the amount of alienation from God is the measure and criterion of the extent of servility to the desires of the self. Conversely, the extent of such alienation can be gauged by means of the extent of such servility. For instance, a person who had espoused these three faculties since the initial stages of his life, having developed and grown with them, if he is influenced and trained by means of the teachings of the prophets and instructions of scholars and sages, gradually submitting himself to the educative influence of the prophets and the *awliyā'* of God—upon whom be peace—it is possible that the innate potentiality for perfect humanness, which is inherent in his nature, may soon become an actuality. When that happens, all the modes of his inner being acquire a human dimension and the inner devil of the carnal self is converted to faith, as the Prophet of God remarked about himself:

إِنَّ شَيْطَانِي آمِنٌ بِيَدِي

The devil inside me has been converted to faith at my hand.

The bestial self then surrenders itself to the human self in such a way that it carries its rider like a docile and subdued celestial mount on the journey towards the skies of perfection, becoming a *burāq* carrying its rider swiftly towards the horizons of the Hereafter, never turning wild again. The powers of Desire and Anger having been subdued by the forces of justice and law (*shar'*), spiritual peace, balance and justice rule over the domain of man's being, establishing there the Kingdom of God and the rule of righteousness and Divine Law. Nothing that is opposed to justice and truth can occur in it, and the whole kingdom is absolutely freed from all sorts of untruth and injustice.

Therefore, in the same way as the criterion of deprivation from truth and righteousness is the pursuit of desire, the criterion of attainment of truth and achievement of righteousness is submission to reason and Divine Law. In between these two extremities, that is, total servility to desire and total subservience to reason, are an infinite number of stages, so that every step towards desire is a step away from righteousness. With every such step the reality is further hidden behind misty veils and the

lights of human excellence and the secrets of human existence grow dimmer. And, contrarily, every step that is taken away from desire is instrumental to the same extent in removing the veils and in brightening the gleams of Divine light in the domain of the inner being.

*(b) The Qur'ān and Ḥadīth on the Evil of Submission to Desire:*

Denouncing submission to desires, God Almighty says in the Quran:

...وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ...

... And follow not desire lest it lead thee astray from the way of God.  
(38:26)

... وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِنَ اللَّهِ...

... And who is further astray than he who follows his desire without guidance from God? (28:50)

And in a tradition of *al-Kāfī* from al-'Imām al-Bāqir (A), the Imam is reported to have said:

قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ: يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ: وَعِزِّي وَجَلَالِي وَعَظَمَتِي وَكِبْرِيَايَ وَنُورِي وَعُلُوِّي وَارْتِفَاعُ مَكَانِي لَا يُؤْتِرُ عَبْدٌ هَوَاهُ عَلَى هَوَايَ إِلَّا شَتَّ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُهُ وَلَبَسَتْ عَلَيْهِ ذُنْبَاهُ وَسَغَلَتْ قَلْبُهُ وَلَمْ أُوتِهِ مِنْهَا إِلَّا مَا قَدَرْتُ لَهُ، وَعِزِّي وَجَلَالِي وَعَظَمَتِي وَنُورِي وَعُلُوِّي وَارْتِفَاعُ مَكَانِي لَا يُؤْتِرُ عَبْدٌ هَوَايَ عَلَى هَوَاهُ إِلَّا اسْتَخَفَّظْتُهُ مَلَائِكَتِي وَكَفَلْتُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَيْنِ رِزْقَهُ وَكُنْتُ لَهُ مِنْ وِرَاءِ تِجَارَةٍ كُلِّ نَاجِرٍ وَأَتَيْتُهُ الدُّنْيَا وَهِيَ رَاغِمَةٌ.

The Prophet (S) said, "God Almighty said: 'By My Honour, My Glory, My Greatness, My Light, My Loftiness, and by the Highness of My Station! When My slave gives preference to his desire over My wish, I put his affairs into confusion, make his life baffling in this world and his heart preoccupied with the world, although I do not give him anything of it except what I have pre-ordained for him. And by My Honour, My Glory, My Greatness, My Light, My Loftiness and by the Highness of My Station! If My slave prefers My wish to his desire, My angels protect him, the heavens and the earth guarantee his sustenance, and I look after his trade and bring the world to him though it should be reluctant and recalcitrant.'<sup>2</sup>

This tradition is a very authentic one, whose text and wording



bear testimony to its pure origin, that its source is no other than God Almighty, the Fountainhead of all knowledge, though its chain of transmission may be a weak one, and to discuss this matter further is not possible here. There is another tradition reported from Amir al-Mu'minin (A), which is different from the one we have expounded:

إِنِّي أَخَوْفُ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمُ اثْنَتَيْنِ اتِّبَاعَ الْهَوَىٰ وَطُولَ الْأَمَلِ.

I am apprehensive for you concerning two things: Submission to desire and entertaining of endless hope.<sup>3</sup>

In *al-Kāfī* al-ʿImām al-Ṣādiq (A) is reported to have said:

اخْذَرُوا أَهْوَاءَكُمْ كَمَا تَخْذَرُونَ أَعْدَاءَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَعْدَى لِلرَّجَالِ مِنْ اتِّبَاعِ أَهْوَائِهِمْ وَخَصَائِدِ أَلْسِنَتِهِمْ.

Be apprehensive of your desires in the same way as you are apprehensive of your enemies. For there is no greater enemy for human beings than their own desires and what their tongues reap.<sup>4</sup>

My dear, remember that desires are endless and ever insatiable. If man takes one step in following them, he will be bound to take a few more. If he submits to one of the desires, he will soon be forced to yield to a number of them. If you open one door to the desires of the self, you will soon be forced to open several other doors to them. Thus a single act of submission will expose you to a number of vices following it and through them you will fall victim to a thousand abominations, until, God forbid, all the roads to God are closed to you, as stated by God Almighty in the Holy Book. That is why the Commander of the Believers (A), the Wali al-ʿAmr and the spiritual master and instructor of mankind, who was assigned the task of guiding the human family, has expressed so much concern and apprehension on account of it. Rather, the Holy Prophet (S) and all the Imams (A) are anxious lest the tree of *nubuwwah* (prophethood) and *wilāyah* — of which the believers are the leaves — should shed its foliage and become as if autumn-stricken. Look what the Prophet (S) has said:

تَنَاجَوْا تَنَاسَلُوا فَإِنِّي أَبَاهِي بِكُمْ الْأُمَمَ وَلَوْ بِالْإِنْفِط.

Marry and procreate, for indeed I shall be proud of you over other nations, even though it should be on account of an aborted foetus.<sup>5</sup>

Obviously, if man happens to stand on such a dangerous path as this, where it is feared that he may fall over the precipice of annihila-

tion, being disowned by his real father—the Holy Prophet (S), who is a mercy for all the worlds—having caused his indignance, what a great misfortune it would be and what disasters and woes it would involve? Thus if you know the Holy Prophet (S) and love the Master of the Faithful (A) and befriend their pure progeny, relieve their blessed hearts from their fear, anguish and uncertainty on your account. In a verse of the *Sūrat Hūd* of the Quran the Prophet (S) is addressed thus:

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ ...

*So be steady as thou hast been commanded, thou and those who have turned (unto Allah) with thee.... (11:112)*

And the Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

سَيِّئِي سُورَةُ هُودٍ لِمَكَانِ هَذِهِ الْآيَةِ.

The *Sūrat Hūd* caused my hair to turn grey on account of this verse of it.<sup>6</sup>

Shaykh Shāhābādī, the accomplished ‘ārif—may my soul be ransomed for him—has said:

Although the same verse occurs in the *Sūrat al-Shūrā*—though without the phrase وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ ('and those who have turned with thee')—the reason that the Prophet (S) has made special mention of the *Sūrat Hūd* is that in it God Almighty has demanded from the Prophet (S) the steadiness of his *ummah* also. The Prophet (S) feared that this task might not be carried out, otherwise he himself had the steadiness, or, rather, he was in fact the very incarnation of justice and righteousness.

So, my brother, if you consider yourself one of the followers of that holy personage and a participant of his mission, come and don't be an embarrassment to him in its fulfilment on account of your ugly, vicious deeds. Think yourself that if one of your children or your kinsmen does something odious or improper by your norms, how ashamed you feel in front of others on their account! And you know that the Prophet of God (S) and Amīr al-Mu'minīn (A) are the true fathers of the *ummah*, for in the Prophet's own words:

أَنَا وَعَلِيٌّ أَبَوَا هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ.

I and 'Ali are the two fathers of this *ummah*.<sup>7</sup>

If we are taken into the presence of the Almighty and are called to account in front of them, and should the record of our deeds reflect

nothing except evil and odiousness, it would be very hard upon them, for they would feel ashamed in front of the angels and prophets of God. What a great injustice it would be! What a catastrophe we shall have invited for ourselves and what treatment will be meted out to us by God Almighty?

So, O unjust and ignorant man who have not only done injustice to yourself but are guilty of injustice to your benefactors, who laid down their lives and sacrificed their worldly possessions and comforts of life for the sake of your guidance, who were assassinated after undergoing the hardest sufferings and the harshest tortures and whose women and children were taken captive for the sake of your guidance and your deliverance, should you, instead of being grateful to them for their merciful efforts, be guilty of such a flagrant injustice and imagine that you have been unjust to yourself alone? Wake up for a while from this deep slumber and be a little ashamed of yourself. Don't allow yourself to commit the same inequities that were committed by the enemies of the *Dîn*. You, who claim to be a friend, do not be unjust, for the acts of injustice committed by a friend and the one who claims to be a friend are more grievous and odious.

*(c) On Numerousness of Desires:*

It should be remembered that the desires of the carnal self are numerous and of diverse kinds, varying according to their intensity as well as the desired object. Sometimes they are so subtle that one is not aware of them as suspect wiles of Satan and of the self, unless he is made conscious and waken up. With all their variety, all of them work together in obstructing people from the Divine path and deviating them from it. Their grades are various. There are the victims of desire who take gold and wealth and the like to be their god; there are others about whom Almighty God informs us in these words:

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ...

*Hast thou seen him who has taken his desire (hawā) to be his god? (25:43)*

Again, there are those who, according to the holy tradition under discussion, are alienated from God by following the desires of the self and the fabrications of the Devil, in the form of false creeds, corrupt norms or something else. There are the perpetrators of mortal and major or minor and venial sins who are kept from the path of God in a measure proportional to the degree of their transgressions. Then there are the followers of legitimate pleasures and desires who, on account of their overindulgence in them, are kept back from treading the Divine

path in a different way. There are the devout given to prayers and formal rites, which are aimed to secure a good life in the Hereafter or to satisfy some worldly purpose or are meant to secure higher spiritual stations or to avoid spiritual decline, who are prevented from the path of God in a different way. There are the practitioners of ethics devoted to purification of the soul and spiritual disciplining for the sake of attaining self control or reaching the paradise of moral excellence, who are kept from God and righteousness in their own manner. There are the practitioners of 'irfān, the wayfarers of the Path, the seekers of ecstasies and of mystic stations and states, who have no other purpose except His vision and His vicinity, yet whose vision is obstructed in a different way and are kept from receiving the special illuminations.

Besides, there are other stages whose description is not possible here. Thus it is necessary for every individual, in accordance with the category to which he belongs, to examine his own condition and purge himself of the desires of the self in order not to be kept from the path of righteousness and of truth, so that the doors of compassion and benevolence are opened to him, whatever his station and stage, and indeed God is the Lord of guidance: *وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْهَادِيَةِ*

## 2. On the Evil of Endless Hopes:

This discussion also consists of two sections:

### (a) *On the Endlessness of Hopes:*

Remember that the first and foremost step towards authentic humanness is that of awareness and awakening (*yaqzāh*), as mentioned by the leading mystics (*mashāyiq*) concerning the stages of wayfaring. There are ten stages in this step, as enumerated by the great shaykh Shāhābādī, which we are not in a position to elaborate here. However, it is essential to mention here that unless man does not wake up to the fact that he is a traveller with an unescapable journey lying ahead and a destination towards which he must move, he will not muster the resolution necessary to reach his goal. Each of these matters needs an elaboration from which we must abstain for brevity's sake. However, it is enough to say that one of the biggest obstacles in the way of the awakening that leads one to forget his destination and neglect his journey and deadens his will and resolution is the feeling that there is plenty of time for the journey, that if one does not set out today he may do it tomorrow, if not this month then the next and so on. Such a state of extended and outstretched hope, together with a false assurance of unlimited life and unbounded availability of time, make man oblivious of his ultimate goal, the Hereafter, and prevent him from

preparing for the unavoidable journey and securing provisions for it, ultimately leading him to completely forget the Hereafter and his goal. May God save us from the state in which one who has a long and perilous journey before him and is given a limited time in which to procure the provisions and dire necessities of the way, does not possess anything having forgotten both about the journey and his destination. It is obvious that if such a state of neglect befalls one, he will fail to procure the necessary provisions for his way, being helpless and at a loss at the time of departure. Such a man will perish on his way and his journey will not take him to his desired destination.

*(b) Provisions for the Long Journey Ahead:*

And so, my dear, remember that you have a perilous journey ahead, for which the provisions of sound knowledge and fruitful action are needed. The time of departure is unknown. Possibly, there is little time and opportunity left. No one knows when the call for departure will come and one would be forced to depart. This prolonging of hope by you and me arises from self love and is the most masterly of the guiles of the accursed Satan. Through it he distracts our attention from the Hereafter and keeps us from attending to its affairs. And with the perils of the journey and the obstacles in the way of preparing for it, if we fail to repent or to return to God and if we fail to procure provisions for the journey, the appointed call shall come unexpectedly and send us unprepared and unprovided on the way, without any store of righteous deeds and useful knowledge which together make up the provisions of the Hereafterly journey.

For even if we have performed good deeds, they are not pure and untainted. A thousand contaminations, each of which is enough to make them unacceptable to God, afflict them. If we acquired any knowledge, it was futile and fruitless for us, our learning being either nonsensical and absurd or itself a big impediment in the path of the Hereafter. Had the deeds that we have done and the knowledge that we have learnt been beneficial, they should have left some mark on us who have been in their pursuit for years and should have transformed our habits and morals. What went wrong that our forty or fifty years' labour has produced an opposite result and has hardened our hearts, harder even than flint? What did we achieve from *ṣalāt*, which is the *mi'rāj* of a *mu'min*? Where is that fear of God which is the outcome of true knowledge? God forbid, if we are called to depart from this world in this present state of ours, there are many a lasting disappointment and remorse in store for us!

Therefore, if obliviousness of the Hereafter caused by endless hope is something on account of which the greatest Wali of God, Amir al-

Mu'minin 'Alī (A) is concerned for us, he is justified; for he knows as to how perilous a journey awaits us and that with such a journey in view no one should ever be complacent even for a while. At all times, one should be busy, without a moment of rest, in gathering the provisions for the Hereafterly journey. If one becomes oblivious of that world or considers it a mere dream, as if that world did not exist and there was no journey to be undertaken, one cannot imagine the calamities that one will have to face and the misfortunes that are in store for him.

It would do us much good if we think for a while about the general state of mind of the Prophet (S) and of Amīr al-Mu'minin (A)—who were the best of God's creatures and free from error, lapse or forgetfulness—in order to understand our own state in relation to theirs. Their cognition of the hardships and perils of the journey had made them renounce ease and rest, while our ignorance has bred forgetfulness in us. The Seal of the Prophets (S) subjected himself to such austerities and strenuously stood in prayer before his Lord for such lengthy hours that his blessed feet became swollen and the following verse was sent down to him by the Most Exalted:

طه \* مَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى \*

*Tū Hā. We have not sent down the Quran upon thee to cause thee distress.  
(20:1,2)*

The state of Amīr al-Mu'minin during prayers and his fear of God Almighty are also well known.

Hence, we should know that the journey is full of perils and this spell of obliviousness and forgetfulness of ours is nothing except a ruse of the Devil and a guile of our own self. These endless hopes and unlimited expectations are the biggest snares of Iblis and the most artful of his ruses. So wake up from this sleep and remember that you are a traveller with goal and purpose. Your destination is the next world and you will be forced to leave this world ultimately. If you are prepared to set out on this journey and have procured the provisions needed, you will not be rendered helpless or stranded on this journey. Otherwise you will find yourself in a distress which knows no relief, a wretchedness that is not followed by felicity, a humiliation that will last and never be followed by honour, a poverty that does not terminate in abundance, a torment that is not followed by comfort, a fire that never cools down, and a regret and shame which knows no end.

My dear, look what the Commander of the Faithful (A) says, in *Du'ā Kumayl*, in his supplications to the Almighty:

وَأَنْتَ تَعْلَمُ صَعْنِي عَنْ حَبِيلٍ مِنْ بَلَاءِ الدُّنْيَا وَغُفُوبَاتِهَا وَمَا يَجْرِي فِيهَا مِنَ الْمَكَارِهِ عَلَى أَهْلِهَا عَلَى أَنَّ ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ وَمَكْرُوهٌ قَلِيلٌ مَكْنُهُ يَسِيرُ بِقَاوُهُ قَصِيرٌ مُدَّتُهُ فَكَيْفَ اخْتِمَالِي لِبَلَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ وَجَلِيلٍ وَقُوعِ الْمَكَارِهِ فِيهَا وَهُوَ بَلَاءٌ تَطُولُ مُدَّتُهُ وَتَدْوُمُ مَقَامُهُ وَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْ أَهْلِهِ لِأَنَّهُ لَا يَكُونُ إِلَّا عَنْ غَضَبِكَ وَأَنْتِ قَائِمٌ وَسَخِطُكَ وَهَذَا مَا لَا تَقُومُ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ...

(My Lord)... You know my frailness before a little of the afflictions and torments of this world and before the kind of calamities that affect its inhabitants, though such afflictions and adversities are transitory and short-lived. And how shall I endure the afflictions of the Hereafter and the severity of its calamities, which are enduring, perpetual and unabating on its inhabitants, since they are nothing other than Your wrath, Your retribution and Your displeasure, which neither the heavens nor the earth can bear.

A torment which the heavens and earth cannot stand has been reserved for you, and it is not enough to awaken you from your deepening slumber and your obliviousness increases day by day!

O slumberous heart! Awake and arise! Get ready for the journey to the Hereafter! فَقَدْ نُودِيَ فِيكُمْ بِالرَّحِيلِ The call of the caravan's departure has been sounded and all around there is the clamour of those who depart and take leave. The agents of 'Izrâ'il (the angel of death) are at work and they are driving you every moment nearer and nearer to the gates of the Hereafter and yet you are neglectful, unmindful and ignorant!

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فِي عَنْ دَارِ الْغُرُورِ، وَإِلَّا نَابَتْهُ إِلَى دَارِ الشُّرُورِ، وَإِلَّا سَتَعْدَادُ الْمَمُوتِ قَبْلَ حُلُولِ الْقَوْتِ.

O God, I implore Thee to save me from the house of illusion and the abode of delirium and help me return to the abode of joy. Grant me the ability and preparedness to die before such an opportunity is lost.

#### NOTES:

1. Al-Kulayni, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 336.
2. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 335.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Al-Ḥurr al-'Āmili, *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, Bāb 1, ḥadith 2.
6. Al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-bayān*, vol. 3.
7. Al-Āminī, *al-Ghadir*, vol. 3, p. 100.

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