# Gleam of Light

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| Title | : | Gleam of Light |
| Extracted from | : | Al-seraj.net |
| Printed By | : | Ja’fari Propagation Centre  94, Asma Manzil, Room No. 10, Bazar Road, Opp. Khoja Masjid, Bandra (W), Mumbai – 400050. Tel.: 2642 5777, E-mail: [jpcbandra@yahoo.com](mailto:jpcbandra@yahoo.com)  jpconline.org |

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Gleam of Light 1 - 10

# 

# Gleam of Light 1 – 10

## Love is the Foundation

Love is one of the firmest supports of faith, and it provides the foundation for the sacred relationship between the worshipper and his Divine Master. This love does not penetrate the heart until all other loves have been removed. The heart is like a jewel, a spiritual jewel. It never really shines until its possessor has mastered the highest levels in polishing it. After completing the prerequisites, love takes over the heart little by little, and brings with it the light that illuminates the path ahead. The worshipper will continue under the care of the Lord to the point that love consumes every corner of his heart. By then there remains no love for anyone but Almighty Allah and His devoted servants.

If the worshipper struggles onward persistently through his life, he will perfect that sacred jewel before his departure from this world. He will be amongst those who pass on from the material world with the greatest joy, that small number who have earned the highest reward.

## The Pain of Separation

The intense pain of separation, lack of feelings of communion in worship, prolonged suffering, and seeking protection from the things that cause ingratitude towards Almighty Allah all precede the closing of the bitter distance between the worshipper and the Divine Truth. The longer this challenging condition lasts, the more enticing the fruits of divine communion will seem. But one should be on guard lest this temporary condition becomes a genuine spiritual illness that kills the heart.

So long as he is determined to benefit from this condition of separation, developing an intense and firmly rooted connection with Almighty Allah in his heart, the worshipper will move swiftly in putting an end to this bitter feeling.

## Attitude Towards Others

When one develops the firm belief that Almighty Allah’s merciful care extends to all, including his own family and others around him, his relationships get turned on end. He gets new strength in dealing with them and bearing injury from them. This is a gift from the grace of Almighty Allah, who nurtures all beings after creating them. Almighty Allah increases the worshipper’s love and kindness for others far beyond what is normally found in human relationships. Further, Almighty Allah blesses those around His servant and brings them closer as the Holy Qur’an mentions.

The dearest of Almighty Allah’s people is the one who is beneficient to others and brings them happiness. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) once said, “Those of you who will sit closest to me on the Day of Judgment will be the ones with the finest morals and the ones who treated their families the best, and I am the best of you in showing kindness to my family”.[[1]](#footnote-1)

## Paths of Satanic Influence

There are several reasons Satan is able to influence the human heart. First of all, we can’t physically see him and his kind as the Holy Qur’an mentions. Secondly, human nature is incredibly weak, for as the Holy Qur’an says, ‘The human being was created in weakness.’ Thirdly, we are ignorant of the paths Satan takes to get inside us while he knows them well. Finally, we neglect to prepare ourselves to face off with him in times of temptation.

Relying on the Divine Master nullifies all of these issues. He is the one who sees the Devil, while the Devil cannot see Him – this nullifies the first problem. He is the All-Powerful, the Mighty, who lifts weakness from whom He wills, so that takes care of the second issue. He is the All-Knowing who defeats ignorance, thus eliminating the third problem. And He is the Living, the Self-Subsistent, who takes us out of neglect, and that removes the fourth. So we need not rely on anyone but Him!

## The Restive Mind

Sometimes a dense flurry of thoughts develops during ritual prayers. This condition reveals the thick chains with which the Devil and the corrupt self bind us, preventing us from focusing on the Divine Master. The worshipper should be cautious because these involuntary thoughts could well destroy the soul. A person in this condition is like someone who is praying in the marketplace. Every moment, sights pull his attention to and fro. The root of the problem is that he willfully follows the mental conceptions that pass before him.

Insofar as the worshipper lacks concern for cutting off these disruptive images, even if in a few of his prayers, his worship will become a forum for all kinds of thoughts and delusions rather than the divine conversation it is supposed to be. There is a hadees about this issue which says, “(When the prayer gets like this,) it is rolled up like a ragged gown and used to beat the face of its owner.”

## The Inner Reality of the Holy Qur’an

At some point the seeker realizes that the actual Holy Qur’an is not simply what rolls of our tongues when we recite. In the heavenly realm, those external words appear as living proofs of Almighty Allah. The celestial meanings of the Holy Qur’an are not fully perceived but by those it is bound to: the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his Holy Family (a.s.). To seek comprehension of these meanings, which would crush mountains if sent down on them, requires the aid of the Divine Master. He is the one who can help us perceive the inner meanings which enable the heart to enter the stage of liberation. Amongst the preparations for this stage are recitation of Holy Qur’an, meditation on its meanings, and acting on its content.

## The Instrument of the Will

The thing that distinguishes the human being in the realm of living things is the instrument that establishes the will. It issues commands to the body’s muscles, moving it towards its goal whether for good or ill. The Devil naturally places a high value on stealing this instrument away from the human being. Just as conquering a kingdom depends on taking over the castle that rules it, the forces of Satan strive to occupy the center of will and administration in the kingdom of the human. From there they can dominate the soul by spreading false desires.

On the other hand, the forces of the All-Merciful also attempt to rule over the soul, seeking the aid the reason, innate human character, the proper guidance. The side that wins the struggle is whichever one finally dominates in the person’s actions. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) mentioned the control of this instrument when he said, “One reasons by it, thinks by it, comprehends by it. It is the commander of the body and the limbs never revolt against it or act contrary to its rule and command.” The one attempting to perfect outward actions while neglecting their inner origin is like the one who expects the enemy to manage the affairs of his castle for him.

Ameer al-Mu’mineen Ali (a.s.) described the crucial battle between those two armies in his Supplication of the Morning, “If Your aid forsakes me during the battle between the Devil and my soul, You will have forsaken me to a place of hardship and deprivation.”

## Forms of Devotion

Devotion to Almighty Allah comes in many different forms. One form is a longing desire to enter into communion with Him. Another is sorrowful weeping for what we have done in bygone days. It can come as an astonishment or a sense of bewilderment we feel when we contemplate His greatness and supremacy over the Universe. It can manifest as fear in the face of His absolute Lordship. We might feel humility when pondering the total dependency of everything in existence for His generous care. Or we might undertake constant self-observation to strive for the blessings of Divine companionship. These are the various forms of devotion by which we can attain higher and higher levels of serenity and contentment.

## Presence of Heart

Presence during ritual prayer is an important step towards perfecting the heart, and it plays a crucial role in eliminating the snares and delusions that reside in it. One doesn’t succeed here but by constant practice, struggle, and self-denial in thought, will, and desire. One must struggle to the point that his intellect is completely submitted to the Divine will.

Gaining mastery over stray thoughts is one of the most challenging matters in the perfection of the soul because these delusions multiply in the heart without limit. Driving delusions away is difficult once they have dominated the heart, and they cause the worshipper to give in to the corrupt self. The will follows suit, and finally the body joins in and turns the delusion into action without a thought. This is one of the paths of the worshipper’s undoing, and he should pay close attention to avoid it

## Strong Admonitions

When the seeker looks at some of the sayings of the Holy Infallibles (a.s.), he finds that they emphasize certain matters with strong admonitions and forceful language. They did this in order to caution their followers against certain matters. When we consider how obstinate we are in ignoring the central realities of life, we see how this kind of severity is needed to get us moving. It’s like waking someone from a long hibernation.

One example of this kind of saying is the one in which Ameer al-Mu’mineen Ali (a.s.) talks about the nature of the relationship between the worshipper and his Lord: “I don’t know anyone but he is ignorant of the reality of what lies between him and his Lord”.[[2]](#footnote-2)

# Gleam of Light 11- 20

## Free Time

Countless empty hours pass by during a person’s lifetime, hours that are not occupied by any of life’s daily responsibilities. Added up, these hours make up a huge chunk of life! The wise believer uses this time for recitation, working towards heavenly goals, fulfilling the needs of less fortunate people in the community, or taking up halaal pastimes.

One thing the true believer should aim for is to keep a state of deep thought and reflection, calling on his Master in the depths of his heart as the hadees mentions: “He speaks to them in the midst of their hearts.” In those spare hours he can travel by heart and take an amazing journey. In his journeys he will find pleasures the essence of which are beyond description.

This kind of travel doesn’t require a lot of effort or money. The traveler can depart by night or by day, transported by the Divine Master. Amongst the most precious destinations in this sacred trip are the moments of supplication and recitation after prayer and waking up for the midnight prayer.

## The Face of the Lord

The expression “the face of the Lord” appears time and again in the Holy Qur’an and hadees. How can the one who doesn’t recognize the beauty of this face long to see it? A human being can’t possibly long for a face he’s never seen. Setting the goal of true communion with Almighty Allah is difficult for those who are not familiar with Him. How can one aim to see a face he neglected when it was right in front of him before? There is a big difference between the intention of the one who has opened his eyes to the Absolute Beauty and the one whose intention is mere words.

## Turning Away from Almighty Allah

When the worshipper turns away from the Master, the Master will turn away from him. If the worshipper constantly remembers this it will keep him from doing the things that will cause this awful situation! When the Divine Master turns away from the worshipper, getting Him to turn back requires a massive effort. So the wise person will abandon everything that might cause Almighty Allah to turn away from him. That’s a lot easier than persuading Him to turn back once He has turned away. Eventually, the worshipper reaches the stage where he can’t bear to turn towards anyone other than Almighty Allah.

## Communion with Almighty Allah

When the Almighty Master grants the worshipper times of affection and encounter, he perceives the Absolute Beauty from which all beauty in the Universe is derived. This causes sacred desire to grow in him, drawing him to strive for more of these encounters. These occasions are the result of continuous self-control and training. This discipline keeps him steadily moving in the path of guidance and prevents him from losing the pleasure of union once he has gained it. After all, that heavenly pleasure makes all the world’s joys seem insignificant.

## The Joy of Self-Restraint

Self-restraint, especially in the face of extreme adversity, opens amazing horizons the worshipper has never seen before. This revelation and the wonders that follow it inspire the worshipper to master his desires to the point he is in a state of constant self-control. This isn’t a major challenge for him, and if he even carries on for a short time he is rewarded with peace and tranquility.

The worshipper who controls his desires is like the person who leaves behind certain worldly pleasures for something of greater value, like the migrant worker who leaves behind some of his lesser loves to earn a living.

## The Pure Heart

Approaching the Divine Master with a pure heart brings perfect peace. This is the whole point of worship. The heart has the power of will, while the mind has the body of thought and the body is the instrument of implementation. The heart though is what drives us to the object of desire, whether divine or profane. The mind and the body cannot normally resist the heart’s intense gravitation to what it desires. Those worshippers who carry this intense devotion charge forward, paying no attention to anyone save Almighty Allah.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) talked about this pure devotion when he commented on the verse, ‘Their Lord quenched them with a pure drink’ by saying, “He purified them from everything except Almighty Allah. There is no one who can purify us from the filth of existence save Almighty Allah”.[[3]](#footnote-3)

## For the Love of Almighty Allah

The one who struggles for the good of others without considering the special relationship between him and his Lord is like the one who struggles for the good of the Sultan’s subjects while ignoring the Sultan. It is as if the Sultan were paying him to move his limbs without any inner feeling. The wages we receive for continuous devotion to the Divine Truth far exceed what we earn for serving others without spiritual commitment.

The best act is the one that combines service to others with devotion to Almighty Allah, as the Holy Qur’an says: ‘And they give food to the poor, the orphan, and the captive for the love of Him, saying, We feed you seeking Allah’s Countenance only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you’.[[4]](#footnote-4) The charity is indeed for others, but the intention should be only for the sake of Almighty Allah, not expecting thanks or reward.

## Demons of the Heart

The belief that there are devils hovering around the hearts of the Children of Adam should make us extra cautious in dealing with others, even the righteous. The Devil constantly strives to incite trouble by influencing human words and deeds. We need to be cautious around people for no other reason but that they are not infallible, and prone to this devilish influence. We have to be ready to fend off the Devil’s plan at any turn. We can never completely rely on anyone, nor can we be one hundred percent at ease, no matter how refined their behavior or knowledge may seem. We are advised in the hadees, “Look at each individual without pretext, and evaluate whatever he says.”*[[5]](#footnote-5)*

## Calling People to Almighty Allah

Calling people to Almighty Allah is one of the affairs of the Most High Himself. Almighty Allah said concerning His Prophet (s.a.w.a.), ‘(He is) one who invites to Allah by His leave, and as a lamp spreading light’.[[6]](#footnote-6) If the summoner is not supported by Almighty Allah, his call will only be a nuisance to others. The ability to affect people’s hearts is a gift from Almighty Allah, and it doesn’t depend much on mastering the rules of eloquence or striking certain poses. This fact was expressed in the hadees, “You find a man whose words are flawless, who speaks so eloquently, yet his heart is darker than the darkest night, and you find a man who is incapable of putting his feelings into words, yet his heart is as radiant as a lamp”.[[7]](#footnote-7) So there is a secret to winning over people’s hearts!

## Going Too Fast

The traveler in the path towards the Divine Truth will often try to speed along. This often comes after heightened vigor when he tries to escape the bonds of his worldly desires. Maintaining this speed for too long is like fighting a losing battle that will expend all his energies. It will make him desperate and might even cause him to lose ground.

In the beginning of the journey, the seeker is in an ambiguous position. He doesn’t participate with the people of the world in their sensual desires. These are forbidden to him and he hopes for superior spiritual delights. Yet he doesn’t participate with the people of the hereafter in their higher pleasures either. He can’t yet perceive those pleasures because he is only at the beginning of the journey.

If he tries to rush out of this state of confusion and disorientation too quickly, it could set him back to the very beginning of the path. There he will be exposed to the revenge of the devils whose influence he tried to escape in the first place.

# Gleam of Light 21- 30

## Divine Favor

We travel along the path to the Divine Truth in two main ways. Usually, we move ahead by means of struggle, but this sometimes brings us success, sometimes failure. On the other hand, I can move ahead by means of divine selection when Almighty Allah holds the worshipper in special favor. Almighty Allah has indicated this special relationship many times: ‘And I have chosen you for myself’, ‘and I cast down upon you love for Me, that you might be brought up before my eyes’, ‘So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance and made her grow up a good growing, and gave her into the charge of Zakariya’, ‘Allah chose Adam and Noah’, and ‘Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills’.

When he is taken into the circle of Almighty Allah’s favor, the worshipper is spared a lot of hardships and pitfalls in the path to the Divine Truth. But what brings about this special favor? It can be continuous struggle for a long period of time, a major sacrifice even if only for a short time, or constantly seeking refuge in the Divine Master. These are amongst the many ways, for as it has been said, “The ways to Almighty Allah are as numerous as the breaths of the creatures.”

## The Difference between Knowledge and Faith

Knowledge is simply a mental image, a reflection of some natural interaction upon the intellect. Even religious knowledge, like knowledge from holy texts, is not some sacred thing that automatically distinguishes the one who holds that knowledge. It isn’t necessary to immediately act on that information. Rather, we should allow it to ferment in the soul until it transforms into firmly rooted faith. It will then ignite an intense desire to act.

There is a huge gulf between knowledge and action, a gap that is not crossed but by the ship of faith. Look at how persistent some people are in defying the dictates of reason and true character, much less the things that have been spelled out clearly for them like religious prohibitions. They have the knowledge but it means nothing to them.

Almighty Allah said in the Holy Qur’an, ‘The possessors of the Book did not differ until after knowledge came to them’. Almighty Allah is giving us a lesson here about how important it is to keep and embellish faith within the heart. He wants us to transform our theoretical knowledge into something that will drive us towards great benefit. If it weren’t for Almighty Allah’s help, knowledge would bear no fruit, and it can even bring us harm!

## Living in the World

The one who thinks he has a great character while he’s in a state of seclusion is like a beautiful woman preserved in her house. Her true integrity and virtue remain unknown until she walks about in rough areas. It’s the same with the soul. Its true integrity and position on the path of guidance can be known only through the challenges of the real world. The worshipper shouldn’t be deceived by the tranquility he feels when he is in seclusion from others. Being around others not only shows us our flaws, it can uncover hidden treasures, too!

## The Lure of Perfection

Adorning one’s self with knowledge and good deeds is to the soul what cosmetics are to a woman. As much a woman makes herself up to highlight her beauty, she somehow deludes herself as she deludes others. Whoever possesses this kind of beauty has to constantly be on guard against falling into the traps that come with it. The one whose intellect is unembellished is like the one whose face is unembellished – he doesn’t encounter the same number of challenges and temptations. On the other hand, the one who dresses up his knowledge and actions, especially to build a reputation, has a very precarious illness.

## Tuning In to the Will of Almighty Allah

Intimacy with Almighty Allah at some stage requires intimacy with His Will. Sometimes a person feels close to Almighty Allah because he has observed a certain command or ritual. But at the same time, he neglects what would please Almighty Allah moment to moment. Perhaps he could offer more prayers, help a brother in need, or something else. The true worshipper is finely tuned in to what would please the Almighty Master in every situation whether it fits in with his own plan or not. With every moment, he can choose to do any number of good deeds in keeping with his responsibilities, rather than simply sticking to rituals.

## The Inner Voice

There is a voice in the human mind that gets pretty distracting sometimes. This voice mixes the true and the false, the comical and the serious. The individual might pour anger upon this voice as if it were an actual person. He might even swear at it and outwardly show signs of anger on his face as if he was arguing with someone. He has to listen carefully to this voice and be cautious, especially when it contradicts the will. He must prevent this chatter from spilling over into the real world. He could be judged according to it and earn the anger of the Divine Master.

## The Tongue Uncovers Meaning

The movement of the tongue uncovers meaning; it doesn’t create meaning in itself. Invocation by tongue without invocation by heart holds no inner significance and leaves none of the spiritual effects that would illuminate the soul and earn divine reward. Just as in the everyday world, there is no value in moving your tongue without meaning anything by it. In the world of worship it is just as useless, even if such thoughtless worship gives some kind of superficial reward. This reward is simply a mercy that is reserved for those worshippers whose prayers are deficient or inadequate.

## The Theft of the Jewel

The worshipper’s faith is like a jewel in his hand. As much as he enhances its value, the Devil increases his desire to snatch that jewel away. For this reason, experienced travelers on the path towards Almighty Allah get more cautious as their faith increases. They fear they might neglect this grave danger, the infamous thief who has stolen the jewel of faith from so many worshippers. Such fear prevents the worshipper from falling into arrogance, hypocrisy, pride, and other unworthy traits, and will inhibit such profane feelings.

## Going Direct to the Causer of Causes

When we seek greater wealth or renewed health, we often pursue material causes for help, especially when we are desperate or heedless. But the best strategy is to turn to the Causer of All Causes. This sacred dependence is what attracts Almighty Allah’s divine care in fulfilling our hopes and needs. In addition to eliminating the heedlessness that afflicts us when we rely on material causes, we will fulfil our needs and bond with the Divine Causer of Causes at one and the same time.

## Divine Companionship

If the traveler deepens his sense of divine companionship, he will never feel sad or lonely when he is alone. Quite the contrary, when he is around other people he will feel fear that they might block the path to intimacy with the Divine Truth. This is how some people justify their isolation from others, but it would be better for them to follow the example of the Saints. They should inwardly guard against straying from the path of the Divine Truth while outwardly participating in the world.

Since we spend so many hours alone in this world and all of them alone in the grave, it is best that we develop feelings of Almighty Allah’s companionship as soon as possible.

# Gleam of Light 31- 40

## Natural Sciences

Delving into the natural sciences sharpens knowledge of the greatness of the Creator, and necessarily strengthens one’s bonds with Him, regardless of whether the area studied is in the smaller bodies (medicine) or of the greater bodies (astronomy). The Divine Truth has said, ‘We will show them Our signs on the horizons and in their selves.’ It is quite possible for the one delving into these studies to combine in his own soul the effects of the amazement he experiences at the grandeur of existence with the effects of the servility he experiences in the realm of religion. In reality, the initiator of sacred law is the same who initiated the natural world, and who commanded the people to pray and who issued the whole of creation and all of what is in it. People who research in these studies approach religion with sanctity and conviction, and their worship is blended with understanding and acceptance. Almighty Allah brings this subject to our attention in the Holy Qur’an, where he says, ‘Worship your Lord Who created you’, to the statement, ‘Who made the Earth spread out for you.’ When he benefits from turning to the blessings in the world of creation, so it prepares the awakened soul for humility before the Creator, the Bestower of Blessings.

## Divine Management

The belief that the Divine Truth is managing all of existence by His power, whether through His choosing to make something or choosing not to, and that inability is a quality of the servant and not the All-Powerful Master, this belief causes great tranquility in the servant. Even in the gloomiest situation, the servant will find peace in Almighty Allah’s everlasting kindness, just as Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) when he was placed in fire. No threat will ever diminish the contentment and tranquility that belief has caused, whether before, during, or after enduring hardships.

## The Encounter of the Night Prayer

The night prayer is a very special meeting between the pious saints and their Lord. For that reason, these lofty individuals wait with intense yearning all through the day for this hour of the night. In fact they carry trials and griefs of the daytime waiting for that hour of purity which takes them out of the worries and bothers of the material world. This is the hour which helps the servant in bearing the worries of the waking hours during the coming day. For that reason, the night prayer which was merely recommended becomes an opportunity almost impossible for them to miss. How could they forsake the blessed station they have reached before? The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) drew attention to this issue. Three times, he advised Ameer-al-Mumineen (a.s.) to pray the night prayer, and he concluded by asking Almighty Allah, “Dear Almighty Allah, help him!”

## Affiliating Yourself with the Divine Truth

When the servant accomplishes an action for the sake of Almighty Allah and it wins him a closer affiliation with Almighty Allah, the distinction of that affiliation becomes greater than the deed itself, whether that action was great or small. The servant who is attuned to the will of the Master struggles hard to attain the basis of his connection with Almighty Allah, and the size and scope of the action don’t mean anything to him after that. Although some action may seem important, it is petty in relation to Almighty Allah who makes existence altogether seem a petty thing. The distinction of affiliation however can never be overestimated, because it is part of the sacred bond with the Most High.

## The Ease of Obedience

After a certain stage of inner purification, the servant reaches the point where his behavior conforms naturally to the manner mentioned in the sayings of the Infallibles (a.s.). It is as if he need not refer to the sayings because they themselves refer to the spiritual ground of humanity which he faces. At first, his behavior is bound by the restrictions of Sacred Law. But as time goes on, he does not have a hard time following the rules, even the difficult ones. The servant moves quickly in this mode, and does not stop until he reaches the point of encounter with Almighty Allah. The servant’s disposition is purified so that the obedience required for this level becomes easy. The difficulties he faced in struggle and self-denial dwindle.

## House of the Divine Truth

The believer is the house of Almighty Allah on Earth. In this way he resembles the Holy Kaaba, only the human believer is even holier. The relation to Almighty Allah occurs in these two cases, but the relation of the heart, which is the Throne of the Merciful Master, is more sacred than the relation of stones. There is a clear difference between the one who has feelings and intellect and the one that does not. Beyond that, every service rendered to that ‘house’ is a service rendered to the one who owns it. Likewise harm done to the house is harm done to its owner. This was related by Imam Reza (a.s.) when he said, “Whoever angers one of my friends, I call on Almighty Allah to punish him sternly in this life, and make him one of the losers in the Hereafter”.[[8]](#footnote-8)

## Worship For the Sake of Almighty Allah

It is not good for the one who is striving for higher levels in the path to Almighty Allah to seek reward for his actions. Rather winning the pleasure of the Divine Master is about the greatest possible motivation that encourages the servant to do certain actions or to abstain from them. This motivation influences the quantity of those actions, their quality, and the level of their sincerity. The matter of reward is reserved for the Hereafter, while gaining closeness to the Divine Master is something for this world as well as the Hereafter. The worship of one who seeks Almighty Allah for Almighty Allah’s sake is the worship of the free.

## Face of the Heart

Just as the human being has an outward face that indicates his attention to a matter or person, the same is true in the inward life of the soul. The heart, too, has a face by which he indicates love or rejection towards what he confronts. After long struggle and continuous self-control, the face of the heart can be permanently fixed on the Almighty, while the outward face turns towards various things.

## Prayer is the Peak of Divine Encounter

The essence of one’s relationship with the Lord can be seen during the daily prayers. The ritual prayer is the peak of encounter between a servant and his Lord. The measure of the degree and extent of that encounter reflects its relationship and level. The true believer is not deluded by the worship of others, nor is he deluded by his own good behavior outside the prayer. He will not tolerate laziness during his conversation with Almighty Allah because it is the trait of the hypocrites. If they stand for prayer, they stand with laziness.

## Knowledge Does Not Mean Certainty

Storing theoretical information, even useful information, is a different process than developing certainty rooted in the heart. Information may or may not bring that feeling of certainty, although it might bring about the tranquility that is the basis of it. It does have its role as one of the tangible preludes of certainty in the chain of causation. The evidence that supports this idea is the fact that there is no relationship between spiritual readings, like books on mysticism, and spiritual actions that bring about tranquility and then certainty to the heart.

# Gleam of Light 41- 50

## Attracting the Hearts of Others

Having sway over the hearts and minds of others, even for the sake of guidance, requires the intervention of the Almighty Master of hearts. Therefore there is no need for acting or fake behavior to attract peoples’ hearts like false shows of affection or phony virtues. What is the value of dominating hearts in the first place? And secondly, what guarantees that this false domination will continue? If you look around, the deterioration of relationships – for trivial reasons – is the best evidence of this.

## Pleasure of Rich and Poor

The rich and poor often enjoy some of the same pleasures in this material world. The difference is that the rich has the money and power to assure that this pleasure will continue into the future, while the poor cannot guarantee the enjoyment will continue. It is not worth killing one’s self over this kind of power. The future could turn into the present at any moment, wherein the poor might achieve a level of pleasure for himself, without falling into the worries and greed which often befall the rich.

## Personal Affection

It is necessary to make the tragedies of the Household of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) a personal tragedy as if we ourselves have lost a loved one. As the ziyaarat of Ashura says, “What a tremendous tragedy I’ve experienced with you”. Whenever one experiences a tragedy with a loved one, he doesn’t expect reward for his crying and grief. Sometimes we see people using their sorrow for Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) to earn worldly reward in their supplications, but we should expect no reward. It doesn’t take a lot of force to be effected by this tragedy. It is said that the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.) carries a burning sorrow that can’t be put off. This affection will cause loyalty and devotion that will cause the traveler to faithfully continue his journey with them, and this is the important issue.

## The Month of Reception

The month of Ramadan is the month of being received as a guest by Almighty Allah – and this is not just a metaphor or a turn of phrase. The guest can request all of his needs and wants from his Host in this month which usually cannot be requested at other times. Many times the gifts will be distributed without request, which is the way of the Generous Lord. So what about the case of the one who asks? And what about the case of the one who pleads? The eve of Eid is sometimes called the Night of Great Gifts, and yet so many people neglect this great opportunity.

## Combining Distance and Closeness

A person living in society should combine the feeling of distance from others - because they do not hold the keys of his happiness - and the feeling of love and passion towards other people because the Divine Legislator commanded us to be good to one another. As mentioned in many hadees, we must be kind and gentle with one another and treat others as if they were orphans of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), even though they might combine good deeds with bad. Combining these two characteristics can lead us to guide them as well as to avoid falling into their pitfalls

## Self Control

Self-discipline and control requires knowledge and experience of the in’s and out’s of the soul. We shouldn’t overburden the soul beyond its capacity for worship. If we do, it will defy us even in matters that do not require great effort. We should rather encourage it by reminding it of realities that will inspire it to move, amongst them knowledge of the necessity of traversing this path which culminates in the Divine Truth to whom returns all creation, that the will of the Divine Master is not achieved except by continuous self-denial, and by reminding it of the superior spiritual joys we will receive in exchange for our sensory pleasures.

## Opening the Door to Misdeeds

Many times in our lives we talk about the motive and drive of our ego, even in issues which require self-denial and absolute purity of seeking closeness to the Lord of the Universe, like summoning people to Almighty Allah. Quite often the ego seduces us to perform actions for other than Almighty Allah, like seeking revenge for honor, strengthening one’s dignity, defending one’s name, or other secondary intentions. These intentions will not be hidden from the One from whom nothing is hidden, the One who knows what the hearts contain. In these situations refraining from the action is much better than doing it.

## A Warning to Reformers

The reformer who attempts to bring people out of darkness and into light is bound to win the animosity of devils. He will bring on their revenge because of his attempts to free others from the domination of Satan, and he considers that to be a challenge to him and his forces. For this reason, the friends of Almighty Allah should live in a state of caution and fear of falling into Satan’s traps which they will find in every stage of their lives. They are not safe from these dangers except by the favor of the Almighty, especially when facing difficult tests in money, dignity, or religion.

## Seeking Refuge in the Divine Truth

If one truly believes that the Devil runs in the veins of the sons of Adam like blood and that he has sworn to lead human beings astray since time immemorial, he will reconsider how he thinks about many of life’s issues. He makes no movement and enjoys no rest but he is under this satanic influence. When one comes to terms with this reality, he will be on guard with every move against the possibility of falling into danger. Even if it is a weak possibility, the potential danger is powerful. The fruit of this true fear is constantly seeking refuge with the Divine Master. Almighty Allah even requires this of us even when we are in a state of obedience, like before we recite the Holy Qur’an.

## Exerting Effort is True Worship

It is not possible to achieve the state of total servitude without repelling one’s whims and desires. The one who has the ability to spill blood and spread corruption in the world through his powers of desire and rage but transcends these conditions and adheres to truth and righteousness deserves to be called Almighty Allah’s authority in the world. The extent to which the struggle and success intensifies is the extent to which his rank of devotion will be elevated. This was the case with Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) in his dealings with himself, his family, and his people. He did not achieve the rank of leader until he passed through stages of trial, as is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an.

# Gleam of Light 51- 60

## Signs of Support

The servant may witness signs of support on the path to Almighty Allah: feelings of calmness and openness of the heart, with a sense of divine patronage when moving along the course. The heart of the believer is the best example of that. Sometimes we get in a rut – feelings of lapse, faint-heartedness, listlessness, or lack of interest with the person we are working with indicate a swing in the other direction. Considering all that, the servant has to carefully consider all these signs to avoid falling into the Devil’s snare.

## Choosing Almighty Allah’s Pleasure

The believer should not pick and choose what acts of worship and obedience he likes best. The one who prefers to withdraw will frequently turn to an individual practice in harmony with his preference for isolation. Likewise the one who prefers to be around people will tend towards a social practice that brings him into contact with others. But the obedient servant is the one who seeks closeness to the pleasure of the Lord. He looks in every stage of his life to the kind of servitude the Divine Master requires of him. Look at the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), who was engaged in servitude while in isolation in the cave of Hira, while summoning people to the truth in Mecca, and while in a state of war during his time in Medina. The case was the same for the Holy Successors who came after him (a.s.).

## Like an Old Rag

The human heart sometimes falls into a condition of emptiness, when it holds neither good nor evil. In this condition the heart is like an ‘old rag’ as some hadees express. In this condition one has to search within himself for what causes the problem. If he finds an apparent reason, like acting in a disobedient way, casting aside preferable behavior and taking up its opposite, he should attempt to remove himself from this situation by leaving behind its cause. If he can’t find an obvious reason he should leave the whole thing alone. It might be intended as expiation for past sins, as a means to raise his spiritual rank, or as protection against arrogance.

## Sunrise and Sunset

The moments of sunrise and sunset are greatly emphasized in Islam by numerous texts. They are the beginning and ending of a stage. It is the time when the angels report the earnings of the servant whether good or bad, and those deeds become like a weight attached to the neck of the servant as is described in the Holy Qur’an. It is a great chance to repent for one’s deeds or make up for them before being held accountable. The servant has two jobs at this time, firstly to make account for all the things he did in accordance with Almighty Allah’s will, and secondly to plan what he will do in the coming day. If he does these things and performs the supplications and actions recommended for these times, he will witness a great change in himself.

## Inner Characteristics

One of the important things about monitoring oneself is to be mindful of the spiritual diseases that kill the soul, like envy, vengeance, greed, and so forth. Even if the servant does not outwardly show these traits, they will darken the heart. He should be aware that if he does not dig up such a trait by the roots, it could take him by surprise in a moment of heedlessness. It is like the dirt that settles at the bottom of a container – when the container is shaken, the dirt will rise.

## Your Daily Schedule

The servant should plan a daily schedule from beginning to end with things that please the Divine Master. It is like the employee who work for nothing but the satisfaction of his employer from the beginning of his work time till the end. If the believer truly felt the depth of Almighty Allah’s dominion over him, he would not lose a single moment towards either gaining greater reward or avoiding unfortunate consequences. He should especially refer to what deeds and supplications have been recommended for the day and night in the various books of devotions. When it comes down to it, the whole point of life is the remembrance of the Divine Truth.

## Eternal Deeds

What turns a passing action into something enduring and eternal is when it is related to the Divine Truth. The one who wants to make his deeds eternal should follow this course and establish this relation. Take the Kaaba for example – it is nothing but black stones. It didn’t attain its eternal trait as the House of Almighty Allah on Earth until it was related to the Divine Truth. The eternal actions of Ibrahim and Ismail (a.s.) in building the Kaaba were not recorded as such until their acts were accepted by Almighty Allah, such is the case with the rest of the rituals of Hajj. Deeds which outwardly appear to be great but don’t share this relation are doomed to pass away, like fleeing oppression, liberating a country, spreading knowledge, building a mosque, or otherwise..

## Terrible Calamities

Human beings often fear that unexpected calamities will happen to their families, their money, or themselves. A person always needs to protect himself from accidents before they occur. For this he needs the protective supplications and verses that were given to keep him from destruction. These are the Qur’anic shields, and whoever recites them is protected from the devils, be they amongst the jinn or the humans. Some examples include the Verse of the Throne (آيت الكرسي), the Chapter of the Unbelievers (الكافرون) the Chapter of the Dawn (سوره الفلق), the Chapter of the People (سوره الناس), the Testimony (الشهادة), the Boulder (السخره), and the Dominion (الملك). It is certainly easier to defend against a misfortune before it happens than it is to lift it once it has already hit. There is a hadees which says that Almighty Allah has appointed angels as protectors for every human being. They protect him lest something should fall upon him from a mountain top or that he should fall into a well. But when Almighty Allah’s judgement finally comes down nothing can prevent it.

## Group Worship

During the first night of the holy month of Ramazan we recite the supplication, “I and those who don’t defy your command reside in your land, by your favor be kind to us.” In this supplication the servant joins himself to the group of obedient servants of Almighty Allah so that divine mercy will descend upon all. It’s the same whether people are gathered in the same place, the same time, for the sake of obeying Almighty Allah, as in Hajj, communal prayer, jihad, or gathering to recollect the virtues of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.). This diffusion of mercy, so to speak, is mentioned in the hadees which says, “Angels pass through prayer sessions. They stand upon the people’s heads and they cry along with them, they say “amen” to their supplications. Almighty Allah said, ‘I have forgiven them and given them security from what they fear.’ The angels said, ‘But, Lord, there is one there who did not think of you.’ Almighty Allah replied, ‘I forgave him because he was sitting with them.’”

## Eating Spiritually

There are a lot of books written on the topic of table manners. The most important table manner of all is to develop the feeling that the Divine Provider has grown all these foods from the Earth feeding them from same water. We should feel almost shameful for our inability to give constant thanks for these constant blessings. Sometimes we feel like thanking the one who supplies the food even though he is nothing but a tool of the Divine. We don’t need to be less thankful towards others, but we should have much greater feelings towards the one who is the source of this food – the Creator of all.

# Gleam of Light 61 - 69

## Intense Inclinations

Intense desire for something often brings about success, whether in material issues or spiritual ones. It might be natural as expressed by the desires for food and sex which carry him beyond his needs without difficulty. Or the inclination might be acquired, like when the servant conforms his desires with what his master loves or hates. Without this kind of love and inclination in the soul of the servant, his journey towards total obedience will ridden with difficulty. The key to soaring through the world of servitude is to develop this intense love for the Divine Master and what He wills: Those who believe love Almighty Allah (more than anything else).

## Evil Thoughts

A person often feels not such good feelings for his brother Muslim. Many times it doesn’t seem to have an origin except satanic whisperings which overrun the heart with delusions. The Devil thrives on spreading animosity and anger between the believers. His efforts depend on spreading baseless delusions. We have been provided with many sacred texts which tell us to give our fellow Muslim the benefit of the doubt, to not say anything but what is noble, and to repel evil with what is good. We are told to give to the one who deprived us, to make connections with the one who cut us off, and to pardon the one who treated us badly.

## The Goal of the Islamic Missionary

When calling others to Almighty Allah, it is not important to count the heads of those who you’ve gathered. Rather it is important that Almighty Allah see you making your best effort. As much as he faces conflict with others, he gets closer and closer to Almighty Allah, even if his message doesn’t resonate in the hearts of the people. Even the Prophets (a.s.) face these challenges! Look at Prophet Noah (a.s.) – he lived amongst his people for 950 years, yet very few people accepted his message. That was the case with the Prophet Muhammad and his Family (a.s.). The numbers who remained with them throughout were the smallest of the small. In the business of the Lord the most important thing is the quality of the product, not the number of buyers. What is the value of a large number of people buying a defective product?

## Too Much Sleep

Sleep is one of the streams by which the well of life is spent. It is best to close up this stream to prevent the servant from wasting his life on something so unnecessary. We should be mindful of the time we go to sleep, the time we wake up, and the suitable amount of sleep to get. We should avoid what makes us sleep more. A lot of people fall into what could be called false sleep – whenever the amount of sleep they physically need is less than what they actually get. It is best to deprive ourselves and drive ourselves away from laziness, as the Holy Qur’an says: ‘their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in Fear and Hope: and they spend (in charity) out of the sustenance which We have bestowed on them.’**[[9]](#footnote-9)** If we are able to leave our beds we can save ourselves many hours spent towards blessings that endure beyond this world. It is related that Ameer-al-Mu’mineen (a.s.) said, “Whoever extends his sleep loses deeds he can never reclaim”, and he said, “The worst enemy is sleep – it destroys life and wastes rewards.”

## Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder

When we are in a state of absence from one we love, we long for reunion, especially when the pain of separation is greater and the duration longer. When reunited, we fear separation, especially when we haven’t taken full advantage of that connection. Sometimes being separate is better than this. If one receives blessings upon reunion, and his devotion would increase with further separation, then how much better his reward would be! Arriving on the beach of safety calms the heart and lessens one’s desire to strive for something better. When tossed about on the sea of separation, one’s desperate pleadings rise. Whatever the situation, the servant should put his separation and union in the hands of the All-Wise who always treats the souls of His creatures with justice.

## The Original Enemy

The Holy Qur’an calls us to take the Devil as our enemy. It is not sufficient just to claim him our enemy and call it a day. We have to be on guard against this enemy who is ever alert for the opportunity to destroy the spirit of the servant of Almighty Allah. This enemy feels deep hatred for the children of Adam. It was the Devil’s refusal to bow before him that caused his eternal damnation, so he wants to slake his thirst for revenge on us. The servant who wants to live in awareness of this hated enemy should live like the one who has a bounty on his head in a hostile land. He should live in such fear!

## A Gauge for the Soul

If we assume there is a gauge to measure the rise and fall of the soul, we would find that the indicator that shows the lowest level the soul sinks to shows the actual spiritual level. Hence the worshipper’s actual level is determined by his lowest part, not the highest one. The soul’s rising is an exception to the rule. Its decline is in accordance with its true nature, as it tends towards frivolity and whim. This is the rule by which the worshipper discovers the level of his closeness to the Divine Truth. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) mentioned when he said, “Whoever wants to know what Almighty Allah has for him should first think about what he has for Almighty Allah.”[[10]](#footnote-10) In that way he will become aware of the extent of his weakness. This awareness of his weakness will consequently protect him from conceit and arrogance, and will be an incentive for him to get out of that weak condition

## Dangerous Situations

Sometimes when one gets together with others there are temptations and dangers of falling into sin, like banquets, markets, and gatherings with rebellious people. The believer has to put himself on guard against these slippery spots before he gets into trouble. Sitting with these people costs something even more important than money – it costs us life’s precious moments. He holds on tightly to his cash, but it would be even better for him to keep a tight grip on this time he will never get back to prevent against wasting it on others. The tragedy increases when he realizes that not only did he get nothing in return for his time, but he angered the Almighty Master. It is as if he spent valuable money on something that brought about his own demise. The most miserable person on the Day of Reckoning will be the one who sold his faith for the foolish pleasure of others.

## Lustful Thoughts

Dwelling on lustful thoughts by making pictures in the mind has powerful effects on the body, and can even reach the point of janabah. If we see these effects when thinking about such low things, imagine what would happen if we dwell on higher matters like creation and resurrection! Might it not cause the worshipper to ascend to the heights of the spiritual world rather than the false world? These thoughts, too, could leave their impression on the body as the Holy Qur’an describes: ‘the skins of those who fear their Lord tremble thereat; then their skins and their hearts do soften to the celebration of Allah's praises’**[[11]](#footnote-11)**, and ‘they turned back, their eyes streaming with tears of grief that they had no resources wherewith to provide the expenses’**[[12]](#footnote-12)**, and ‘For, Believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His signs rehearsed, find their faith strengthened, and put (all) their trust in their Lord’.[[13]](#footnote-13) Recall many examples of this physical effect, like when Moses (a.s.) fell down in a swoon, the whistling sound that came from the chest of Abraham (a.s.) when he worshipped his Lord, the condition of the Prophet Muhammed (s.a.w.a.) when receiving revelations, and that of his successor, Ali ibn abu Talib (a.s.), when standing before his Almighty Lord.

# Gleam of Light 71-80

## Signs for Those Who Understand

In order to be affected by the significance of a sign, one has to have the understanding to perceive it. The sign has a meaning only to one who has the key to unlock it. If one does not know the language of the symbol how can he possibly understand it? Take for example the case of the scientist who analyzes all of nature but nonetheless misses the truth. He is like the one who reduces a painting to nothing but wood and color. He analyzes the material and the paints that make up the painting but does not comprehend the beauty of the picture itself. This is the result of a lack of understanding, as is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an: ‘Truly, in this, is a Message of remembrance to men of understanding.’[[14]](#footnote-14) They indeed have eyes, ears, and tools to discover and invent with, but they are blind to the beauty of the Creator.

## The “Bismillah” is a Request for Permission

Saying “bismillah” before doing something, like eating for example, is really a request for permission in doing what Almighty Allah has given us to do. Even if it seems like a petty action, in its finest essence it is an opportunity to gain great blessings. It is this way for everything Almighty Allah has given us to do. Anything we do without saying “bismillah” is in fact fruitless. How can Almighty Allah reward us for something we didn’t dedicate to Him, something we did without intending to gain His pleasure?

## Ingratitude after Departure

The worshipper has to watch himself carefully after moments of communion with Almighty Allah. Sudden ingratitude by the worshipper’s choice is a bad attitude to take with the All-Generous Master of the Universe who granted him that moment of communion. This communion might come while worshipping Almighty Allah or when recollecting the lives of His blessed Saints (a.s.). Yet just afterward the worshipper joins the company of others, doing things that won’t win him the Master’s pleasure, like useless chatter, bad jokes, or backbiting. The likes of this ingratitude can prohibit the worshipper from communion with Almighty Allah in the future, and this is a truly terrible consequence! It is true that sometimes ingratitude takes place without the worshipper intending it. This might happen in order to repel arrogance, or as a reminder to him that Almighty Allah is the one who holds the bridle of our hearts.

## Writings of Those Who Go Astray

We have to carefully examine some of the things we read about Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.). A lot of misleading things have been written about them, especially in the areas of spirituality and beliefs. One of the hidden agendas some people use to highlight their own spiritual superiority is to emulate the course of the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.). By doing this they spoil the hearts that are thirsty for divine knowledge. The Imams (a.s.) have their own unique method in the process of perfecting human behavior. Firstly, they establish sacred law, then they establish balance in the path, and finally they bring together all the elements of worship. They disciplined their companions in this method and many who followed this path were distinguished by it. We should encourage the ones who were led astray to return to Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.), or at least to ease their resistance to following them.

## The Heart is Almighty Allah’s Shrine

Occupying the heart with something other than Almighty Allah is a grave offense, even if you are doing something good like fulfilling the needs of others. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, “The heart is the sacred shrine of Almighty Allah, so don’t let anyone into the shrine of Almighty Allah except Almighty Allah”.[[15]](#footnote-15) The worshipper should not neglect devotion to his Master even if his limbs are occupied with something else. Beautifying acts of worship on the outside doesn’t make things better if one is inwardly distracted from the Divine Truth. The inner and the outer each have their role to play. Sometimes one will be strong while the other is weak as it says in the hadees, “Almighty Allah may love a servant but dislike his work or He may dislike a servant but like his work”.[[16]](#footnote-16) Combining these two aspects is a serious challenge. Although it seems difficult, with effort and perseverance the worshipper will bring the two into harmony, as did Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.).

## Taking Advantage of Opportunities

The worshipper should take advantage of his time, seeking communion with the Divine Master no matter what circumstances he is in. This divine gift can come even when he least expects it, like in corrupt places or unworthy situations. There is a story about Prophet Moosa (a.s.). He said to his Lord, “O Lord, I may be in places I am ashamed to remember you.” The reply came, “O Moosa, remember me in any case”.[[17]](#footnote-17) The worshipper should never turn away from his Lord, even in these situations. It might cause this great blessing of communion to go away. Communion especially arises in the places dedicated to bringing it about and the heart is brought to attention without much effort – like the lectures where we recollect the lives of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.). The worshipper will have little problem getting benefit in that context, even if he’s not so pure. During and after those gatherings are the best times to get prayers answered.

## Almighty Allah is in Charge

Almighty Allah is in charge of all the smallest parts of the Universe. Not even a single leaf falls without His knowledge and could never fall without His permission. The same goes for those who are under the hand of His divine care. Almighty Allah manages his life in every affair, from the biggest to the smallest. Prophet Moosa (a.s.) would refer everything to Almighty Allah, even when it came to the salt for his dough or food for his animals. These feelings deepen the love between the worshipper and his Lord and will cause tranquility and peace to spread into every aspect of his life. In Holy Qur’an, the Almighty even ties the Prophet’s personal matters of marriage and divorce to Himself, like when He said, ‘It may be he would divorce you’,[[18]](#footnote-18) and ‘...when Zayd had accomplished his want of her, We gave her to you as a wife.’**[[19]](#footnote-19)**

## Big Rewards for Little Effort

Some people are surprised at the great reward they get for light worship. If that surprise takes on a dimension of disbelief then it points to a serious deficiency. We have to bear in mind the power of the Divine Master over everything that happens in the entire Universe, even on a level we can’t perceive. We must bear in mind the extent of His generosity that encompasses all things and preserves the very heavens and the earth. The One who holds all-encompassing power and unlimited generosity has no problem granting a reward out of proportion with the deed. The reward is based more on Almighty Allah’s generosity than on our pious deeds, so where is the surprise in that?

## The Higher Level of Prayer

The prayer is like a complex formula that the All-Knowing Allah arranged just like arranged the stars. The All-Wise One who placed the heavenly bodies in their courses is the same One who set the various parts of this formula in their places. Fulfilling the outer requirements of the prayer is enough to take care of one’s basic responsibilities. But you should also consider that in addition to this outer part, there is an inner aspect which is the celestial realities of the outer parts of the prayer. The one who offers the outward form of the prayer without the inward has abandoned the second part in part or in whole. The hadees explains, “You get nothing for your prayers except what you have offered from your heart”.[[20]](#footnote-20)

## Inner and Outer Purity

Almighty Allah mandated that our body, our clothes, and our place of worship must be clean during the prayer, as the prayer is the highest form of devotion to the Divine Truth. The prayer is the pillar of the faith and the ascension of the believer. Perhaps the closest one can come to the spirit of the prayer is by emphasizing cleanliness in all its forms. One should not only be concerned with outward filth, but as the Almighty said, ‘And keep away from impurity’.[[21]](#footnote-21) A person who is inwardly dirty does not deserve to face the pure Almighty Allah just for cleaning his outward skin. The inwardly dirty person does not deserve permission to see the Sultan, even if he was unaware of his dirty condition.

# Gleam of Light 81-90

## False Imagination

The drive for pleasure can often cause a false picture of reality to grow in our minds, a reality that doesn’t really exist. The secret of this, as the Holy Qur’an mentions, is that Satan dresses things up so that we don’t see their true nature. That is why we have the supplication, “Dear Almighty Allah, show us things as they really are.” Often a person will carry an intense desire for a certain passion only to be disappointed when he gets it, like the young man who yearns for marriage. When he finally gets it and doesn’t feel like he expected, it causes him animosity towards the world. This is why the inventions of pleasure-seekers to feel more and more pleasure reach the level of insanity! This will not affect the people who have tranquil hearts. They are well aware that the life of this world is temporary, and the joys of the hereafter are well beyond the joys of the world. They are beyond the need going on these desperate searches because they uncover sacred pleasures, even in the mundane world. After all, any joy we feel unrelated to the hereafter is offensive.

## Always Losing Time

The human being is losing out; because every breath he takes sees another portion of his life pass away. If he doesn’t strive to be obedient to Almighty Allah, his life will end in grief and regret. If the worshipper lives in awareness of this constant passage of time, he will be on guard against this bitter shock. How can the worshipper be content to waste his time moment to moment when it is possible to take hold of what is eternal before Almighty Allah? This was related in the hadees which said, “The loser is the one who passed his life away doing that which took him further from Almighty Allah.”[[22]](#footnote-22) Every second of our life is part of a grand and precious balance, so we shouldn’t waste time! As the saying goes, the nights and days are using you, so why don’t you use them?

## Heart, Mind, and Body

The heart, the mind, and the flesh each have their role to play in prayer. The first feels the worship, the second comprehends the worship, and the third, the body, has the least reward. The body is mere matter, and has more in common with animals than with angels. Unfortunately most of the time we focus on bodily worship, and completely neglect the spirit of the worship. The heart and soul are what the Master wants from our worship, so mere bodily worship will have little benefit. The worship that is only skin deep will only have a skin-deep effect. It won’t have the deep effect that it is supposed to. Consider the Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) as the Lord showed him the kingdom of the heavens and the earth.

## Self-Denial

Self-denial in the things we love and hate is one of the most important means of purification and self-discipline, especially when the self gravitates towards food or clothing and the like. We have to stand before our desires and train ourselves to surrender to the power of the intellect. The intellect should have the total role in the administration of the self, and its position is determined by the Almighty Lord. Imam Ali (a.s.) is related to have said, “If your self gets tough, get tough with your self, it will surrender.”[[23]](#footnote-23) The worshipper will get a great feeling of elevation and esteem for denying the self, a reward he gets in this life before the Hereafter. This sweet feeling not only makes up for the pleasures that were lost, but it reaches the point that the human being lives in a state of divine pleasure at leaving behind earthly pleasure. Some even enjoy the pleasure in obeying Almighty Allah in taking a pleasure than the pleasure itself. For example, a worshipper may enjoy obeying the injunction to get married more than the pleasure of marriage itself. To reach this degree is a great achievement.

## Manifestation of Almighty Allah on the Horizons and in the Self

Almighty Allah manifested on the horizons, creating this precise system, astonishing the greatest intellects throughout the ages. But how does Almighty Allah manifest in the world of the self? Just as there are endless wonders on the horizons, so the number wonders in the world of the self is incomprehensible! No wonder in that, for the One who ingeniously created the outer world is the same One who created the inner world, but that inner world is even more brilliant because it is the very throne of divine manifestation. The worshipper should dwell on this subtle reality till he reaches the stage related in the hadees: “My servant, obey Me until you become My likeness. If I say to something ‘Be’, it will be, and if you say to something ‘Be’, it will be.”

## Money is an Instrument of Pleasure

Money is an instrument for acquiring pleasures. For the one who is not dominated by material pleasure, their won’t be much cause for greed and passion in collecting it. Money dominates the people of pleasure because it is the only way they can buy their pleasures, things to fill their stomachs and bring them comfort. The one who masters himself has set himself free from a terrible chain that so many of the people of the material world have been trapped in. The one who advances through the material world of pleasures will find himself deeply occupied with gathering money, whereas the one who is not tempted by pleasure is not tempted by the instrument for gaining pleasure; that is, money. At this stage it is not hard for the worshipper to fend off the desire for money, because his whims have become easy for him to master rather than the other way around.

## The Night Encounter

Saying the night prayer is the occasion for encounter between the Divine Master and His elite worshippers. For that reason the call is not heeded except by those the Divine Master has looked upon with the eye of kindness and pleasure. It comes in the hour during which the sleep of neglect covers all, even the animals. Just by performing the night prayer – never mind for now the issue of divine communion – is a great gain simply because it brings us out from under the influence of that powerful master, sleep. How much more valuable it is when we combine it with humility and seeking refuge in Almighty Allah? Almighty Allah’s appointment of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to his lofty station was connected to his commitment to the night prayer in the early hours, in addition to his many other excellences. You could say that the night prayer is what distinguishes the saints and purified souls, the ones who intensify their longing for the night, waiting for the spiritual pleasures of the early hours. Imam Hassan Al-Askari (a.s.) is reported to have said, “Arriving at Almighty Allah is a journey not completed except by lengthening the night.”[[24]](#footnote-24)

## Inner Confusion

The one who wants to move steadily in the path towards Almighty Allah has to distance himself from anything that causes anxiety or agitation. Inner confusion will cause him to become like muddy water, and he will lose the ability to reflect images of beauty. Pushing away the causes of anxiety and not dwelling on them is like avoiding someone when you can’t pay a debt you owe them. Removing the causes of anxiety is like paying off a debt you are able to pay. Transcending anxieties and turning the mind away from them when you are unable to either push them away or remove them is like one who is totally unable to pay off his debts after he got the money. We should refer the issue in every case – especially the last one – to the Causer of All Causes.

## The Causes of Guidance and Misguidance

Adherence to the material world and reliance on the animalistic desires are amongst the causes of misguidance. The human being moves quickly towards misguidance if his desires master him and he doesn’t struggle against them. Ameer Al-Mu’mineen (a.s.) demonstrated this movement when he asked, “How is it possible for one to be guided when his desires have conquered him?” At the same time, taking higher and higher levels in closeness with the Divine Truth is amongst the causes of guidance, and that is following His will and desire. He clearly summoned the people to Him, saying, ‘And flee towards Allah’. Just as misguidance drives the individual into the abyss, so does following the will and legislation of the Divine Truth purify the worshipper. The path towards the goal is made smooth for the one who pays heed to the Divine Will which the Almighty described when He said, ‘He wants to purify you.’

## Compensatory Suffering

The hardships that strike the believer who has devoted his life to the Lord of the Universe are like the hardships that befall a worker who is working with materials that might harm his body. If he carries on knowing that whatever he suffers is a kind of compensatory payment, he won’t get depressed about his situation even under intense suffering. He will be deeply pleased as long as he is aware of the compound compensation he will get well beyond the suffering he is experiencing now. This is quite unlike the one who suffers a hardship and he is unaware that it raises his rank or serves as way to pay for past sins. He gets depressed as the hardship continues because he sees a loss of pleasure without any compensation.

# Gleam of Light 121 - 130

## The Immaculate Saints are the Affairs of Almighty Allah

The Prophet and the Immaculate Imams (a.s.) are amongst the affairs of Almighty Allah. So turning towards them by sending blessings on them, performing their benedictions, seeking intercession through them and so forth is a way of getting close to Almighty Allah because of the respect it shows for Almighty Allah’s affairs. This approach relates to Almighty Allah through and through without their being any form of blasphemous association that ignorant people see in it. As much as the worshipper honors the affairs of Almighty Allah, he honors Almighty Allah Himself. The father isn’t harmed when other people honor his son, however much they glorify him, if he knows it is on account of his fatherhood. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, “We (the holy Imams) have a Lord who protects us by night and by day whom we worship. Say what you like about us, but consider us the creatures of Almighty Allah”.[[25]](#footnote-25) It is clear that when the Imam says, “Say what you want,” he means the true statement which doesn’t contradict basic religious principles.

## Hardship as a Wake-Up Call

Some hardships are meant as a wake-up call from the corrupt reality that the believer is living in, whether it is a general condition or a particular sin. Before we get annoyed with the hardship and pray for it to be lifted we should ponder the sins which may have caused the hardship. We should then seek forgiveness for those sins without simply being concerned with getting out of the hardship in search of peace. It is well-known that the effects of sin overtake the individual through hardness of the heart, sudden death and so forth, and even have effects on nature: preventing the rains from falling, causing the earth to dry up, and spoiling the air. The hadees have listed a series of sins and the punishments which are connected to them. It would be good for the worshipper to refer to these statements to avoid the causes of punishment before falling into them.

## The Basis of Humanness

The basis of humanness in the individual lies in just two instruments: the mind and the heart. The first obtains images and organizes matters that cause acceptance or rejection. The second turns the individual towards or against what is favorable or repulsive. The person traveling to Almighty Allah has no choice but to master these two instruments. By constant God-consciousness he can fill every corner of his mind, if he does not already dominate it, and by strong feelings of love he can fill every corner of his heart. Without mastering these two instruments one can never walk the straight path in this life.

## Requirements for Receiving Spiritual Gifts

The worshipper so often hopes to get distinguished spiritual gifts, like seclusion from everything but Almighty Allah, perfected love, or some of the miracles commonly given to spiritual seekers, but doesn’t get the response we wishes for even after intense persistence. The reason for that is the worshipper’s lack of commitment to the requirements for those spiritual conditions, like when one turns away from Almighty Allah after intense communion. He exposes himself to severe punishments like what Almighty Allah threatened the Disciples of Jesus (a.s.) with when they sought the miracle of the heavenly banquet. He said, ‘I am going to send it down unto you, but if any of you disbelieves after that, I will punish him with a torment such as I have not inflicted on anyone in the Universe’. The isolation of the worshipper from these spiritual levels is actually a mercy to him because of his inability to receive these high degrees. It is not because of any stinginess on the part of the boundless generosity of the Lord..

## Intense Loneliness

If the individual really considered the reality of the solitude he lives in, he would feel extremely lonely. He was alone before the souls were breathed into the bodies. He will be alone in the grave before the day they are resurrected. He will come to his Lord alone just as He created him the first time. He is alone in this world during the hours of his sleep and many of the hours he is awake. All that remains are the hours in which he interacts with others, during which bodies merely encounter other bodies by material sensations. Souls are not mingled with other souls so that loneliness would be truly lifted. The only way this loneliness can be lifted is by keeping company with the Creator of Souls. As the prayer says, ‘By you they reached the most delightful and intimate conversation.’

## Creativity of Almighty Allah

It is possible to approach an understanding of Almighty Allah’s management of the universe which lies between the “B” and the “E”, the creative word of Almighty Allah. We can gain this understanding by examining the ability of the intellect in producing great images. We can imagine wondrous things like the whole universe being filled with gold for example. Whether the creative intellect produces wondrous images or base ones, it is all the same. From this example we know that Almighty Allah’s reward can either be earned by a good deed or it can be granted as a favor. In the power of Almighty Allah they are the same. So we should not be surprised by the great reward that might be given for a small deed. There is no hardship or effort in it for Almighty Allah, regardless of the reward.

## Reasons for Constant Remembrance

There are many reasons for constantly remembering Almighty Allah. The first of them is keeping in mind the detailed attention with which Almighty Allah watches over His servant. How does the servant have the right to turn away from the One who never forgets him at all? The second is the absolute overty of the servant which causes him to love remembering Almighty Allah, seeking His mercy. The third is keeping in mind the greatness of the reward which Almighty Allah has promised – and He never goes back on His promise – reflecting the word of the Most High, ‘Remember Me, and I will remember you’. The effects of Almighty Allah’s remembrance of His servant can’t even be perceived because the range of these effects would encompass everything in this life and the Hereafter and what cannot be reckoned. The divine hadees related by Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says, “Almighty Allah said to one of His prophets, If I am obeyed I am pleased, and if I am pleased I give blessings, and there is no end to my blessings. If I am disobeyed I become angry, and if I become angry I render my curse, and my curse reaches the seventh generation”.[[26]](#footnote-26) How can the servant comprehend Almighty Allah’s remembrance of him when He is the Master behind all causes?!

## The Disruptiveness of Sleep

Sleeping cut us off from Almighty Allah because it prevents His remembrance in every form, whether by heart or by tongue. Sleep leaves the individual poor on the Day of Judgment as it has been said. It is for this reason that sleep is not recommended except what is needed, to the extent necessary to maintain the body. Likewise it is not recommended to toss and turn in bed as this deprives us of the benefits of either sleeping or waking. Moosa (a.s.) asked his Lord who was the most disliked amongst His creation. Almighty Allah replied, “The one who is like a corpse by night, and idle by day”.[[27]](#footnote-27) Reciting many traditional prayers before going to sleep reminds the believer that this act, which resembles death, is a means of regaining the life energy needed to worship better.

## Amazement and Interaction

The human being becomes amazed when he witnesses the intricate detail with which the creation was made. It usually ends there, but what is really sought from the worshipper is that he extends this intellectual amazement with the detail of creation to a condition of spiritual interaction with the greatness of the Creator. This interaction gives the individual a sense of tranquility about his present and future affairs because he sees that all aspects of the creation are in the hands of the One who manages everything in the wide and never-ending universe. He will take on a condition of submissive humility when he sees that the One he stands before is the Owner of all this broad and precise existence.

## Moving the Will of Almighty Allah

The worshipper might sometimes be amazed that Almighty Allah fulfills his greatest needs upon a simple request. He might turn to Almighty Allah with only a short prayer, but it could bring a reply even if he offers it with no persistence or resolve. In reality this is nothing to be amazed about if the worshipper recalls that prayer, even if it is a spontaneous prayer offered by the worshipper, nonetheless has an effect in moving the will of the Divine Master towards fulfilling his needs. It is well known that if the will of Almighty Allah moves to fulfill a need, there is nothing in the heavens and the earth that is impossible. The amazing thing is that the worshipper seeks to fulfill his needs through prayer, not that the Divine Master is able to establish His will. It is impossible for Almighty Allah’s will not to be fulfilled, as everything is in answer to His will and hastens to bring it about.

# Gleam of Light 131 - 140

## A Full Belly

The worshipper feels a distinct condition of distance from Almighty Allah when he fills himself up with food and drink. He almost can’t enter into communion with Almighty Allah in that case because of the heaviness that this kind of consumption naturally causes. The worshipper bears a tool of sin in his belly, an excess of food, which he has taken without permission from its Owner. To the contrary, he was forbidden from it when Almighty Allah said, ‘Eat and drink, but do not be wasteful’. How can the prayer of the worshipper be answered when he carries the very tool of sin, even if he is pardoned by the One he has offended?!

## Rare Opportunities

No doubt there are sacred places and blessed times in which the Divine Master loves to be called upon. It is up to the worshipper to take advantage of those opportunities by being aware of monthly events before they arrive, and by understanding the benefits of certain places before he visits them. He can do this by referring to books of prayer like the writings of Sayyid Ibn Taaoos (may Almighty Allah have mercy on him) and others. When these opportunities pass by, the worshipper is in a state of neglecting them. This state of neglect could be a form of divine punishment, and that is because of the accumulation of sins without seeking forgiveness or because one has willfully turned away from these events. Of course, being prohibited from a great victory is a great loss, for those who truly understand the meaning of victory and loss.

## Obedience and Repentance

It has been said that the one who repents of his sins is like the one who has no sins at all. But that should not imply that he is equal in all aspects to the one who originally has not sinned and has resisted the causes of sin, especially after a long period of struggling to keep from falling into that downward slope. The worshipper must face the fact that some spiritual levels which Almighty Allah gives by His grace could be forbidden to him after he participates in sin, even if his repentance is accepted.

## Hours of Strength and Weakness

The worshipper might face temptations during an hour of strength, and pass safely through these dangers. He believes that this resistance is a permanent strength within himself, an enduring condition in his life. But then he lets down his guard during an hour of weakness, which everyone passes through, and so approaches the bounds of the forbidden. Thus he falls into the Devil’s trap by which he seeks revenge in nullifying the worshipper’s initial success. It has been said, “Truly, the one who circles a dangerous pit is doomed to fall into it.”

## The Main Desire

The main desire which overtakes men – especially in the prime of life – is the desire for women. It is reported that Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, “The people in this world and the hereafter have no pleasure greater than the pleasure of women”.[[28]](#footnote-28) Islamic law has established strict boundaries in the relationship with women in order to ensure mastery over the five senses. It commands the individual to avert his eyes, to forbid himself from the pleasure of hearing and speech, shaking hands, being alone with a woman, and from sitting in a place where he would feel the heat of her body, amongst other restrictions. The gist of Islamic law in this matter can be understood by the words of Almighty Allah: ‘And if you ask something of them, ask from behind a screen’, and ‘Be not soft in speech lest he in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire’, and ‘(They should) draw their cloaks over their bodies. That will be better for them not to be known and not to be bothered’, and ‘Tell the believers to lower their gaze’, and ‘don’t display yourselves like you did in the time of ignorance’. Beyond these, the worshipper doesn’t need any special text for newly-invented temptations once he knows the general meaning of the texts we already have.

## Hours of Distraction

Some of the most difficult hours the human being passes through are the hours in which he finds neither good nor evil within himself. Rather he finds in these hours only distraction and aimlessness. These hours pass by the worshipper without winning him any benefit in this life or the hereafter. It would suit the worshipper to avoid these times by avoiding their sources. Amongst them are aimlessness in life, being thoroughly occupied with amusement in word and deed, the absence of any larger aspirations in life, and lack of any order in worldly or spiritual life. The wise person has to get himself out of this fruitless waste of time. He must reflect on the limits of the human life span. He needs to recognize the fact that he will never be allowed to return to this world to replace his faults with good deeds. He must remember the divine companionship which is always there even if he doesn’t remember it – for remembering this companionship is what calls him to occupy himself with what pleases Almighty Allah at every stage of life, and it is respect for this companionship which causes detailed self-evaluation.

## Watching Events Go By

After the stage of delegating one’s concerns to Almighty Allah, the One who directs all matters, the worshipper arrives at the level where he merely watches events unfold as they are planned by the All-Wise Almighty Allah. He doesn’t become cheerful over something pleasing in them, just as he doesn’t feel anguish over something sad in them. That is because he doesn’t see himself more involved in the issue than he is commanded to. He hastens to do what the Divine Master asks of him, and that is to relinquish the matter to Almighty Allah. He gives the matter up to what the Divine Master needs to do and that is to determine fate. The worshipper wants something and the Divine Master wants something, but nothing happens except what the Divine Master wants. What is the rank of relinquishing control in comparison to determining fate? The first is in the rank of causes. The second is in the rank of causes and effects together. Of course if these sensations deepen in the soul of the worshipper they would cause him to feel pleasure and tranquility with Almighty Allah’s will, even during the most difficult stages of instability. As much as hardships intensified upon the Chief of Martyrs (a.s.), his aura was illuminated, as it is related in the histories of Kerbala, because he saw the action of Almighty Allah upon himself and upon his Holy Family, and it was nothing but beauty as his sister (a.s.) declared in the court of the tyrant.

## Forgetful Remembrance

The one who performs dhikr by the tongue without the attention of the heart is like a person who pretends to pay attention to his guest but is actually distracted. If his guest realizes that he is not paying attention, he might turn away from him; even punish him for his poor manners. The one who makes dhikr by tongue puts himself in the position of conversing with Almighty Allah. So if he turns his heart away, it is like degrading Almighty Allah a form of hypocrisy could earn him rebuke. If the Divine Master – the one who knows the innermost thoughts – rewards the worshipper for this kind of dhikr marked by distraction and neglect, it should be considered a favor from Him and His generosity. Almighty Allah deserves to be thanked for this, and thanked with a degree of shame because the worshipper didn’t observe the kind of worship that befits the face of Almighty Allah. Ameer al-Mu’mineen (a.s.) described the angels in spite of their closeness to Almighty Allah and the abundance of their worship: “If they observed Your essence which is hidden from them, they would belittle their own deeds, and they would know that they did not worship You as You deserve, nor did they obey You as You deserve.”[[29]](#footnote-29)

## Every Hour Has Its Own Obligation

Everyday and night carries a special obligation for the worshipper before his Master. Thus it can be said then that every day and night carries its its own prize and penalty independent from what he earns in the days and nights that came before and are yet to come. He can’t compensate for a penalty today using a prize he earned before. Likewise the worshipper’s success in doing good one day doesn’t allow him to relax in the days to come, relying on what came before as we often see after a period of devotion like Hajj or the blessed month of Ramadan. The worshipper may rely on what he earned during these periods, but in truth he becomes committed to a new obligation on account of them. The worshipper has no choice but to protect the fruit harvested on a day he can never return to.

## The Dominance of the Stomach

The act of eating, in and of itself, is one of the desires human beings were created with. This desire, like other desires, has certain wisdom behind it. But the worshipper forgets – not only during, but before and after – to perform the recommended deeds associated with eating, and that is because his desire dominates him. We see that the people who seize upon food and devour it merely out of desire are like animals seizing upon prey, and it is the same with the other desires. It may be that the wisdom behind acts recommended during eating and sex is to reduce the dominance of the desires over the individual and to remind him of the One who possesses all things. This causes the worshipper to be stable no matter what he does, even in fulfilling the desires which were permitted to him on the condition that he doesn’t neglect his duties of worship.

# Gleam of Light 141 – 150

## Keeping Distance from the Forbidden

One of the tests to determine the worshipper’s level of devotion is that he doesn’t lean towards the forbidden, much less that he acts on it. His will, whether he likes it or dislikes it, follows the inclination of the Divine Master and His will. That is the secret of Joseph’s (a.s.) favor before Almighty Allah, as he found the prison preferable to what others called him to. This is the gift that Almighty Allah gives His worshipper after an advanced stage of struggling in worship. He makes faith more beloved to him, and He makes him hate blasphemy, corruption, and disobedience. The worshipper’s suffering upon refusing his desires would then be reduced, so he has the opportunity to reach higher stages in communion with Almighty Allah. He will fee pleasure rather than suffering, and he will experience generosity from God rather than the deprivation from his soul.

## Stages of Domination

The devil has various stages of domination over a human being. The first is simply the stage of temptation. The devil whispers in his heart, stimulating his desires through those around him. As the Qur’anic verse mentions, ‘I didn’t have control over you. I just called you and you answered me’. If the devil sees you answering his call again and again, he moves to the second stage which is the stage of satanic protection. In the words of Almighty Allah, ‘Their protectors are the devils’. Finally, it reaches the point where the worshipper loses control of himself altogether. This is the third stage, the stage of complete control. As the Holy Qur’an says, ‘The devil beat him to insanity’.

## Using Challenges and Self-Observation to Get Closer to Almighty Allah

We can achieve higher and higher levels of perfection by facing challenges even over the short term or through intense self-observation for the sake of Almighty Allah. This is because the worshipper can’t manage without the support of the Divine Master during every stage of his life. This support comes in the form of divine mercy, granted to the one who is facing difficulties. Almighty Allah says, ‘Those are the ones upon whom are Allah’s blessings and mercy’. This mercy also comes to those who are in a constant state of dhikr, as we learn in the Holy Qur’an: ‘Remember Me and I will remember you’. On the other hand, being unmindful of Almighty Allah and not facing our challenges is as far as you can get from this divine mercy.

## Are Your Prayers Accepted?

Islam uses many expressions for prayer, like “ascension”, “the pillar of the faith”, and “the sacrifice of the pious soul”. But too often our prayers don’t match up to these descriptions because we are preoccupied with things other than Almighty Allah. If the worshipper completes the prayer without achieving anything like these desciptions, he should be aware that he didn’t fulfill the higher purpose of the prayer. When the worshipper faces his Lord in this condition on the Day of Judgement, he will not have offered a single prayer as he was supposed to, even though he was told about it many times.

## The Relationship between Servitude and Love

The primary relationship of the worshipper with his Lord, even if it is mainly a servile relationship based on command and response, can develop after a period of pure worship into a gentler relationship. The relationship becomes marked by greater intimacy and closeness: “O You who are the most intimate companion!” closer proximity: “O my close Neighbor!” companionship: “O Dear One, O my Friend!” loving friendship: ‘And Allah took Abraham as His beloved friend’, and intense love: ‘And those who believe have the strongest love for Allah’. If this is the nature of Almighty Allah’s relationship with the worshipper in this world, what will it be like on the Day of Judgement when the cover is lifted and the veil between the worshipper and his Lord is drawn aside?

## Happiness is Following the Will of Almighty Allah

Feeling happy about a time, a place, or a person should be connected with how close these things bring you to Almighty Allah. Each one of these can have its own positive effect upon bringing the worshipper closer to his Lord. The worshipper might find these times, places, or people burdensome, but our disposition does not always reflect reality. As Almighty Allah says, ‘It is possible that you dislike something while it is good for you’. The best places are not necessarily where you live, but rather the places that help you be the most obedient. The best people are not friends, but rather those whose sight reminds you of Almighty Allah. The best of times are not the hours of great pleasure, but rather the ones in which you have performed a good deed. Using these standards would transform many of the desires within the soul and many actions in the outer world, because it would change the foundations upon which we deal with times, places, and people.

## Friends of the Devil

If the worshipper believes that there are devils swarming around the hearts of his followers and places of disobedience, he would feel further and further away from these people and places even if they were very close and familiar to him. He knows that familiarity with these people and places puts him within range of the devil’s attacks. In light of this we can understand the caution that wise people take around others these days. They aren’t worried so much about the individuals themselves so much as the ones, who are controlling them, like the devil and the carnal soul.

## A Benefactor, Not a Master

A father should treat his sons as a benefactor rather than a master. This relationship starts with the father’s seed deposited in the womb of the mother. What is this humble role, however much it is venerated by Islamic law, in relation to Almighty Allah’s role as Creator? The One who manages the affairs of the people from beginning to end is truly in a position of Masterhood. Even though Almighty Allah may have delegated some of His authority to us in dealing with others, we have to work in accordance with the pleasure of the true Master in all our relationships. This applies to all of our various roles: parent, spouse, servant, benefactor, leader, caretaker, and so forth.

## Suppressing Anger

Anger is a characteristic deeply rooted within the soul. This is because the human being is a creature which has the abiility to reflect and experience feelings, and many times he is not pleased with the things people say and do. So naturally, feelings of anger arise in the soul. The solution is not to prevent this state from arising, because it arises unintentionally when one faces someone or something disagreeable. The solution is to prevent these feelings from being exposed to the outside world. This is what is referred to as restraining one’s anger. The problem is not in the anger itself, but rather in not managing it. There is a hadees which says, “Whoever restrains his anger, Almighty Allah fills his heart with faith”.[[30]](#footnote-30) We should recognize that an incident of anger could be acceptable from an Islamic point of view, but the motives behind it could be faulty, for the motive may not be a spiritual one. It could just be an excuse to vent one’s frustrations like when one goes to far in reprimanding a child even though the reprimand itself is justified. In another case, it could be that the anger has spiritual motives, but the individual goes beyond Islamic norms in expressing it. He gets angrier than even Almighty Allah Himself! The one who is quick to anger is like one who is quick to smash a priceless vase. Acting on his impulses, he destroys something that can’t be brought back. But the one who can restrain his anger can make a proper decision and then act on the anger in a proper way if he must.

## Bodily Marriage and Spiritual Marriage

The act of marriage, as the Holy Qur’an describes it, ‘He has created partners for you from your own souls in order that you might find solace in them’, binds souls together before it binds physical bodies, as can be seen in the tranquility that comes from marriage. This is a spiritual effect rather than a bodily one. In truth, many couples don’t realize this fact, and so their main concern is with bodily matters like beauty and bodily pleasure. What brings about true bliss is the bonding of souls, a bond which cannot be severed no matter how old we get, as opposed to the bodily connection which loses its shine after only a few months. The Holy Qur’an makes tranquility, love, and mercy the goals of married life. All of these effects are blessings that come from the binding of souls, as opposed to sexual intercourse and reproduction which are physical issues.

1. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 71, p. 387 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 78, p. 107 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Majma’ al-Bayaan, v.10, p. 623 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Holy Quran, 76:8-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 73, p. 153 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Holy Quran, 33:46 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Al-Kaafi, v. 2., p. 422 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 74, page 230 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Holy Quran, 32:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 73, p. 40 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Holy Quran, 39:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Holy Quran, 9:92 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Holy Quran, 8:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Holy Quran, 39:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 70, p. 25 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 46, p. 233 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 3, p. 329 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Holy Quran, 66:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Holy Quran, 33:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 81, p. 260 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Holy Quran, 74:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 10, p. 110 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 78, p. 119 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 78, p. 379 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 25, p. 289 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 14, p. 459 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 13, p. 354 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Al-Meezan, v. 31, p. 118 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 7, p. 200 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Behaar al-Anwaar, v. 69, p. 382 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)