# Akhlaaq

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# Index

[Preface 10](#_Toc303317642)

[Publisher’s Note 12](#_Toc303317643)

[Islamic Conception of Good Life 13](#_Toc303317644)

[Piety and Righteousness 13](#_Toc303317645)

[The Recompense for Piety and Righteousness 17](#_Toc303317646)

[The Advantages of Doing Good and Its Mode 21](#_Toc303317647)

[Manifestation of Sympathy by Ants 21](#_Toc303317648)

[Virtue And Vice 23](#_Toc303317649)

[The Magnificent Power of Belief 25](#_Toc303317650)

[How to Believe 26](#_Toc303317651)

[Conviction (Yaqeen) 27](#_Toc303317652)

[The Stages Of Conviction 29](#_Toc303317653)

[Reliance on Allah 31](#_Toc303317654)

[An Account of Reliance on the Almighty Allah 34](#_Toc303317655)

[The Excellence of Reliance on the Almighty Allah 36](#_Toc303317656)

[Acquiescence in Divine Dispensation 37](#_Toc303317657)

[Submission to Divine Will (Tafweez) 39](#_Toc303317658)

[Surrender to Almighty Allah (Tasleem) 42](#_Toc303317659)

[Divine Will and Destiny 44](#_Toc303317660)

[Pre-Destination 44](#_Toc303317661)

[Divine Planning 45](#_Toc303317662)

[Patience 46](#_Toc303317663)

[The Kinds of Patience 48](#_Toc303317664)

[Sincerity in Action 50](#_Toc303317665)

[Do Not Say What You Can Not Do 51](#_Toc303317666)

[Sincerity of Effort 51](#_Toc303317667)

[Avoiding Personal Publicity Do All For God 53](#_Toc303317668)

[Self Sufficiency Contentment 54](#_Toc303317669)

[Self Reformation 55](#_Toc303317670)

[Keeping an Eye on One’s Own Faults 57](#_Toc303317671)

[Modesty and Faith 58](#_Toc303317672)

[Modesty and Modern Civilisation 62](#_Toc303317673)

[Truthfulness 65](#_Toc303317674)

[Avoid Lying 66](#_Toc303317675)

[The Evil of Falsehood 69](#_Toc303317676)

[Falsehood and Conditions of Its Permissibility 71](#_Toc303317677)

[False and Concocted Stories 72](#_Toc303317678)

[The Sin of Hearing the Concocted Stories 73](#_Toc303317679)

[The Meaning of the Word ‘Siddique’ 73](#_Toc303317680)

[Fulfilment of Promises and Agreements 74](#_Toc303317681)

[Tender Evidence and Tender It Aright 75](#_Toc303317682)

[The Redemption of Trust 76](#_Toc303317683)

[Promise and Agreement 77](#_Toc303317684)

[Unnecessary Oaths Taking 78](#_Toc303317685)

[Misappropriation 81](#_Toc303317686)

[Avoid Malversation 81](#_Toc303317687)

[Regard For the Wise and Just King 82](#_Toc303317688)

[The Evil of Nearness to the Unjust Rulers 82](#_Toc303317689)

[The Disadvantages of the Society of the Rich Men and the Oppressive Kings 85](#_Toc303317690)

[Conditions for Approaching the Authorities 89](#_Toc303317691)

[Neediness 92](#_Toc303317692)

[Explanation of the Term (Faqr) Neediness 92](#_Toc303317693)

[Neediness Borders On Unbelief 93](#_Toc303317694)

[An Illustration of the Needy and the Well-To-Do 94](#_Toc303317695)

[The Anecdote of a Needy Person and of a Rich One 95](#_Toc303317696)

[Another Anecdote 96](#_Toc303317697)

[Do Not Berate the Supplicant 102](#_Toc303317698)

[Disclosure of Secrets 102](#_Toc303317699)

[Secret Counselling is Unseemly, Avoid It 104](#_Toc303317700)

[Good Advice to Friends 105](#_Toc303317701)

[Do Not Counsel Others Neglecting Your Own Self 106](#_Toc303317702)

[Avoid Aggression towards Others 107](#_Toc303317703)

[Public Service 108](#_Toc303317704)

[Behaviour with an Infidel 108](#_Toc303317705)

[Do Not Harass Believing Man and Woman 109](#_Toc303317706)

[Avoid Suspicion Spying Backbiting 110](#_Toc303317707)

[Condemnation of Backbiting 112](#_Toc303317708)

[The Torment of Backbiting 113](#_Toc303317709)

[Condemnation of Backbiting and Torment Therefor 117](#_Toc303317710)

[You Will Reap As You Sow 117](#_Toc303317711)

[Meaning of ‘backbiting’ 120](#_Toc303317712)

[Conditions of Permissibility of Backbiting 122](#_Toc303317713)

[Listening To the Utterances of Backbiting 129](#_Toc303317714)

[Redeeming the Sin of Backbiting 131](#_Toc303317715)

[The Condemnation of Double-Faced Person 132](#_Toc303317716)

[Tale-Bearing (Fault Finding) 133](#_Toc303317717)

[Avoid Arrogance, Conceit, Pride 136](#_Toc303317718)

[Condemnation of Arrogance 139](#_Toc303317719)

[Condemnation of Arrogance 140](#_Toc303317720)

[The Qaaseyah Address 141](#_Toc303317721)

[Gold and Riches Carried Great Weight with Him 144](#_Toc303317722)

[The Treatment of Pride 152](#_Toc303317723)

[Reformation of Mind 153](#_Toc303317724)

[Behaviour at Ones Own Praise 155](#_Toc303317725)

[Forgiveness and Forbearance 156](#_Toc303317726)

[Continuation of the Hadees of Abuzar 156](#_Toc303317727)

[The Recompense for Forbearance 159](#_Toc303317728)

[In Praise of Forgiveness and Forbearance 162](#_Toc303317729)

[The Forbearance of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) 165](#_Toc303317730)

[Forbearance of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) 167](#_Toc303317731)

[Forbearance of Hazrat Imam Hasan (a.s.) 174](#_Toc303317732)

[Forbearance of Imam Husain (a.s.) 175](#_Toc303317733)

[Forbearance of Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) 176](#_Toc303317734)

[Forbearance of Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) 180](#_Toc303317735)

[Good Mannerliness and Moral Culture 180](#_Toc303317736)

[Condemnation of ill-Manners 182](#_Toc303317737)

[Condemnation of Imprudence 184](#_Toc303317738)

[Respect and Regard for Others 185](#_Toc303317739)

[Tolerance and Self-Respect 186](#_Toc303317740)

[Honour the Erstwhile Associates 186](#_Toc303317741)

[Observe cleanliness everywhere in everything even in heart and brain 187](#_Toc303317742)

[Do Not Quarrel Among Yourselves 188](#_Toc303317743)

[Sincere Repentance 189](#_Toc303317744)

[Self-Reproaching Spirit 190](#_Toc303317745)

[Self-Evaluation and Self-Criticism 190](#_Toc303317746)

[Greeting a Muslim 191](#_Toc303317747)

[Help to Needy Persons 192](#_Toc303317748)

[Justice and Generosity 194](#_Toc303317749)

[Maintenance of an Orphan 194](#_Toc303317750)

[An Old Woman Embraces Islam 194](#_Toc303317751)

[Justice is the Basic Requirement of Human Character 197](#_Toc303317752)

[Humility 198](#_Toc303317753)

[An Account of Humility 199](#_Toc303317754)

[Merits of Humility 200](#_Toc303317755)

[The Humility of Najjashi – The King of Abyssinia 202](#_Toc303317756)

[Humility of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.): 204](#_Toc303317757)

[The Humility of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) 206](#_Toc303317758)

[Condemnation of Jealousy 210](#_Toc303317759)

[The Remedy of Jealousy 210](#_Toc303317760)

[Charity 213](#_Toc303317761)

[Generosity 214](#_Toc303317762)

[Evils of Greediness and Merits of Distribution of Wealth among Poor 216](#_Toc303317763)

[Extravagance 217](#_Toc303317764)

[Avoid Evil Company 219](#_Toc303317765)

[Adopt Soft Tones in Talking 221](#_Toc303317766)

[Hilarious Talks 221](#_Toc303317767)

[Etiquette and Polite Talk 222](#_Toc303317768)

[Debate Etiquette 223](#_Toc303317769)

[Do Not Abuse Anyone, nor Use Vile Words for Others 223](#_Toc303317770)

[Bhooli Hui Baaten 225](#_Toc303317771)

[Do Not Adjudge a Piece of Information without Due Investigation nor Act in Accordance Therewith 225](#_Toc303317772)

[Islamic Mode of Walking 225](#_Toc303317773)

[Avoid Bribery and Usury 226](#_Toc303317774)

[Keep Correct Measures 227](#_Toc303317775)

[Buying and Selling 228](#_Toc303317776)

[How to Rule Over the People 229](#_Toc303317777)

[Exhorting Towards Virtue and Forbidding From Vice (Amr Bil Maroof and Nahy Anil Munkar) 230](#_Toc303317778)

[The Rights of Neighbours 231](#_Toc303317779)

[Separation and Reconciliation 233](#_Toc303317780)

[Friendship and Friends 237](#_Toc303317781)

[Scissors for Friendship 239](#_Toc303317782)

[The Enemies 242](#_Toc303317783)

[Behaviour with the Neutral, the Foolish and the Proud 244](#_Toc303317784)

[Company of Different Types of People 245](#_Toc303317785)

[Clothes and Dress 245](#_Toc303317786)

[Axioms of Wisdoms 246](#_Toc303317787)

[Tit Bits For Practical Observance 253](#_Toc303317788)

[Enthusiasm Can Do Wonders For You 253](#_Toc303317789)

[How to Conquer Your Frustrations and Be Creative 253](#_Toc303317790)

[Kill worry and live longer 253](#_Toc303317791)

[You can have power over your difficulties 253](#_Toc303317792)

[You can have life if you want it 253](#_Toc303317793)

[Stop Being Tired-Live Energetically 254](#_Toc303317794)

[Learn from mistakes – and make fewer 254](#_Toc303317795)

[Why be tense? How to adjust to stress 254](#_Toc303317796)

[Your life can be full of joy 254](#_Toc303317797)

[Lift your depression and live vitally 254](#_Toc303317798)

[How to Feel Well and Have Vibrant Health 255](#_Toc303317799)

[Peace of mind your source of power and energy 255](#_Toc303317800)

[Self-confidence and dynamic achievement 255](#_Toc303317801)

[Living above pain and suffering 255](#_Toc303317802)

[Live forever 255](#_Toc303317803)

[Commentary 256](#_Toc303317804)

## Preface

Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem

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

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

As is obvious, it would be futile to search in this book for any scientific treatment of the psychological reactions of an individual, man woman or child on the group of whom he may be a component part, or of the effect of the group psychological workings on the individual thought or action. The book leaves all that to the learned philosophers and thinkers and bases its entire theme and effort on the simple fact that an individual acts and acts with volition. It therefore proceeds to lay down – rather to state what Islam has laid down as to how an individual should exercise that volition of activity so as to be not only an acceptable member of the society here in this life but also to make a good sowing whereby he would be assured of a good harvest in the life Hereafter.

Needless to say, the conception of the life hereafter is based on the belief in God or Almighty Allah as Islam puts it. Therefore the ethics of human behaviour taught by Islam presupposes the ever present consciousness by an individual of the existence of Allah as Omnipresent, Omniscient and as representing the highest good from the most ideological point of view. This ever presents consciousnesses therefore the first requirement of all ethical behaviour. In Islamic terminology it is called “Taqwa” sometimes translated as Fear of God or as Piety. Call it whatever we may the fact remains that Taqwa is the fundamental trait of human conduct in Islam. Accordingly the book starts with a discussion of this important subject of Islamic Ethics and proceeds to lay down guidelines how an individual should behave himself according to the teachings of Islam not only with reference to the injunctions of Holy Quran but also as those injunctions have been further expounded by the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his Holy Ahlul Bait (a.s.) through word and deed.

Trustees,

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# Publisher’s Note

The Trustees of the Peermahomed Ebrahim Trust have undertaken to present to the general public good read­ing matter, suited to their physical, mental, moral and spiri­tual needs. The sensational pornographic reading material that goes by the name of literary production in the market has served to vitiate the whole social milieu, so that the restraints on social conduct are ever-more being relaxed, with resultant indiscipline in the home atmosphere, no less than in the wider fields of human activities outside the home. If such a situation is allowed to go on flourishing uncheck­ed, a veritable hell on earth is the natural outcome, as we are witnessing in the waves of crime sweeping over some of the so-called civilised countries of the West, which are already affecting us. “Back to Religion” is now the watchword of the saner elements among them. It is with this sense of perturbation that the trustees have embarked on the venture of publishing books, which are calculated to offset the baneful effect of low-grade, anti-social forms of reading material, and to inculcate a taste for and appreciation of sound and healthful mental food.

No commercialization is aimed at by this venture, as would be apparent to even the most superficial observer, from the standard of prices of the books, which are fixed below the actual cost, and that too, because free distribution of books depreciates the worth of the same in the eyes of the general reading public and are also waste.

The Trustees are conscious of the fact that in spite of all precautions on their part to avoid errors if something goes amiss in the form of errors of judgement involuntarily for no one can be in a position to comprehend the entire field of knowledge on any subject. Of one thing, they can assure the discreet tenders, to wit, that the material for reading is being presented with the best of intentions for the benefit of the public and for the pleasure of the Almighty Allah. If any reader finds anything which contradicts this objective, his observations in this behalf shall receive the maximum possible care to redress any remissness that may be pointed out as having crept into the reading matter with the best of wishes for the reader, we remain.

# Islamic Conception of Good Life

And seek, by means of what Allah has given you, the abode in Hereafter and forget not your share in this world, and be good to others even as Allah has been good to you, and seek you not mischief in the earth, Verily Allah loves not the mischief-makers.[[1]](#footnote-1)

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

The virtuous among you is not one who gives up the life here for the life Hereafter nor the one who gives up the life Hereafter for the life here, but of you the virtuous is he who exercises moderation and harmonises both the lives.

Islam thus condemned asceticism and celibacy.

## Piety and Righteousness

The basic trait of Islamic ethics is Taqwa which is a derivative from the root “Itteqa”. The word Ittiqa has a very wide connotation. Briefly it means a constant belief and consciousness of Almighty Allah as the embodiment of the highest good. The word Taqwa is generally translated as Piety or sometimes as Righteousness. In a sense therefore it is the state of conviction in Almighty Allah as the embodiment of the highest good which enables an individual to strive to achieve that good and thereby also to suppress every urge to disobey Almighty Allah. On the whole it may be understood to mean to act in the true spirit upon Almighty Allah’s Commandments – positive as well as negative. The following verses will make the import of Taqwa clear:

So fear you (the wrath of) Allah as much as you can, listen you (to His word), obey you (only Him), and spend you (in His way), it is better for yourselves; and whosoever is saved from the greed of his (own) self, these it is who are the successful ones.[[2]](#footnote-2)

O you who believe fear you Allah as you should: and (see that) you die not but as Muslims.[[3]](#footnote-3)

And made you in nations and tribes, that you may recognise each other; Verily the most honoured of you with Allah is the one of you who guards (himself) the most (against evil),verily Allah is All-Knowing, the All-Aware.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Verily, Allah does accept (an offering only) from those who guard (themselves against evil).[[5]](#footnote-5)

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, righteousness is rather one who believes in Allah and the last Day and the Angels and the Book, the Prophet and gives his wealth out of love for Him to the kindred and the orphans and the poor and the wayfarer and the needy and for those in bondage; And established prayer and pays the poor-rate; and those who fulfil their promise when they make a promise and the patient ones in distress and affliction and in the time of war; these are they who are the trustful and these are they who are the pious.[[6]](#footnote-6)

And those who respond to their Lord, and establish prayer, and (conduct) their affairs with counsel among themselves, what We have provided them with their sustenance they spend.[[7]](#footnote-7)

And the recompense for an evil shall be an ill-return like it, but (if) one pardons and amends his reward is incumbent on Allah: Verily He loves not the unjust.[[8]](#footnote-8)

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

There are a number of stages in attaining that degree of piety. The foremost stage is (to guard against) unbelief and polytheism which merit everlasting hell torment. In the second stage come avoidance of forbidden things and fulfilling the obligations. Thirdly are the commission of desirables and the avoidance of undesirables. This stage of avoiding leads one gradually to the Zenith of piety, where one does not attend to anything except to the Sovereign Almighty Allah.

The more one becomes perfect in this matter, the more acceptable does his action becomes. His actions lead to divine nearness, divine love and divine gnosis and high moral standing. The Almighty Allah has referred to this stage in the following verse;

O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah with the care which is due to Him, and do not die unless you are Muslims.[[9]](#footnote-9)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to Abuzar (r.a.):

O Abuzar! You should betake yourself to action with piety rather them abundance of action. The actions which are performed in a spirit of piety and righteousness are never light in merit. How actions can be light which is acceptable to Almighty Allah as Almighty Allah says,

…Allah only accepts from those who guard (against evil).[[10]](#footnote-10)

O Abuzar! One does not attain piety unless he does take a severer reckoning of himself than he does of his partner by means of such a reckoning he shall become acquainted with the reality of his own self. One comes to know the source wherefrom one is fed, wherefrom he drinks, wherefrom he obtains his clothing – whether he get all these requirements from lawful or unlawful sources. He shall then endeavour to obtain all these things lawfully.

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

O Abuzar! The person who wants to gain honour among the people should be-take himself to piety and righteousness

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

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

O Abuzar! The persons who follow the Commandments of Almighty Allah in the matter of avoiding the unlawful and paying loyalty to Him are those who remember Almighty Allah a great deal, even if their record of prayers, fasting and recitation of the Holy Quran may be below par.

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

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

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

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

## The Recompense for Piety and Righteousness

It is narrated that Imam Sadiq (a.s.) was approached for the exegesis of the Holy Quranic verse,

O you who believe, fear you Allah as you should and (see at) you die not but as Muslims.[[11]](#footnote-11)

He (a.s.) replied:

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

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was approached by someone who asked as to what was the most excellent action. In his reply he referred to the spirit of piety and righteousness.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said: A little of action with piety is superior in merit to abundance of actions without the spirit of piety. The narrator asked him as to the nature of abundance of action without piety. He (a.s.) replied:

Supposing a person does good to his neighbour, and his kins-folk to a great extent. He feeds the needy believers munificently. He plays host to a great number of guests yet he commits an unlawful action, when he seizes an opportunity. All his actions shall be regarded as having been unsupported by piety. A little action supported by piety is as follows:

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

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) was approached by Umar ibne Sajid who made his submission thus;

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

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

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Sadiq (a.s.) said to Abu Sabab:

How few are the person among you who follow Hazrat Imam Ja’far (a.s.)? Verily, only those people belong to the circle of my companions who practise righteousness, who adore Almighty Creator, and who hope for recompense only at His hands. Such alone are my companions.

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) reported Almighty Allah as saying to the son of Adam (a.s.):

Avoid those things which I have made unlawful for you in order that you may become righteous par excellence.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) was asked by someone as to who are the persons of virtue? His reply was:

The person who avoids the things made unlawful by Almighty Allah.

According to another tradition he is reported to have said:

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

According to another narration he is reported to have said:

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

The top worshipper is he who gives up sinning.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said:

The person who professes friendship for us should act as we act. He should seek help from virtue. Verily, the best thing which can be of help in this life and in the life hereafter is righteousness. There is the obligatory gratitude for ever boon one receives from Almighty Allah by keeping aloof of the unlawful things under an attitude of righteousness.

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

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

## The Advantages of Doing Good and Its Mode

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) advised Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.):

O Ali, do good to the deserving and also to those who do not deserve because this virtue is not limited. It is just human to do good. To be good to the deserving is an act of kindness of yours towards him. Doing good to those who deserve not is an exhibition of your worth.

## Manifestation of Sympathy by Ants

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

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.[[12]](#footnote-12)

This phrase occurs at the beginning of every chapter of Holy Qur’an, except one namely Surah-e-Tauba/Baraa-at: It is used by Muslims before starting every work reading, eating, sleeping or anything whatsoever. Islam teaches man to start every good effort with the Holy name of Almighty Allah Who is Beneficent and Merciful, invoking His Mercy to bless his efforts with success.

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

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

They fail to realize that the very first sentence of Holy Qur’an describes Allah as Beneficent and Merciful. And that formula is used by every Muslim hundreds of times every day. And the Muslims believe that by invoking the Mercy of Allah (s.w.t.) they get His limitless Blessings in this world as also in the world hereafter.

Once, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) while passing a graveyard, ordered his companions to get out of it in haste. On the return journey, he asked them to walk slowly. On being asked the reason of his first order and then of its change next time, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) informed them that there was a man being chastised in one of those graves, on account of his wickedness “I did not like to remain in a place where a human-being was being punished, though he was a wrongdoer. Fortunately, at the next moment the child of that dead person was taken to a teacher to start his education. The teacher told him to recite. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful”...As soon as the innocent child invoked the Mercy of Allah (s.w.t.), the command came to the Angels to change the punishment into the Blessing of Allah (s.w.t.). “Reason: Almighty Allah says: It is not becoming to My mercy to punish the parent while his son calls Me beneficent and merciful”. So in the return journey the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) walked by that graveyard with comfort, Glorifying the Mercy and Benevolence of Almighty Allah.

Let us turn towards Almighty Allah every time we begin a work. The word “Bismillah” (In the name of Allah) may mean also “For the sake of Allah” and “To the service of Allah”. Thus this formula, if comprehended fully, will serve also to save us from wrong action and misdeed, as certainly, it will be illogical to commit a mischief “for the sake of Allah” and “to His service”. Let us remember Almighty Allah and we will become free of sins and errors.

## Virtue And Vice

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

A sage says: “A person describes that in his neighbourhood lived a man. When he fell sick, the person went to visit him His last hour had almost come. He was undergoing the agonies of death and crying. Two mountains of fire are approaching me. The person consoled him that it might be all his imagination but he replied, No it is really so. I had two scales-one weighed less and the other more than what it should. The former I used when purchasing something and the later when selling. This is perhaps the punishment for being cunning.

This last hour of life is called the time of ‘Ehtezaar’ because at this time arrive the Angels of reward and punishment and the dying man sees the harvest of his life. Dishonesty in transaction was characteristic of the followers of Prophet Shoaib (a.s.) as has been described in Holy Quran: The sayings of the Imams (a.s.) in the discussion; of ‘masockhat’ show that the wicked persons were deprived of their human attire and given animal form. Another very popular narration derived from the speech of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) is quoted below:

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

He said, “I have taken great pains to accumulate you. For this purpose I did not even care for the lawful and the unlawful and you will help me only this far. Come with me into my grave.” His wealth replied: “I cannot do so but I can buy you a coffin”. After a while another figure appeared. The sick man asked who you are. “It replied”: “I represent your children.” The sick man sighed and said: “I am in a very adverse state. I have taken so much trouble for you; used tactics, did legal and illegal acts and accumulated wealth for you. What can you do for me now? “He was replied”: “We are prepared to serve you as long as you are alive. After your death, we will bury you” The sick man asked” Nobody is there to go into the grave with me?” The reply was: “No”. The sick man felt very sorry that he had brought up his children with great pains and labour, educated them and did all he could for them but still no one was prepared to accompany him After sometime appeared a third figure. The sick man asked: “Who are you?” The reply was: “I represent your deeds.” The sick man asked. “I am in great distress, what can you do for me” It replied: “I will do everything according to your deeds. I will even go into the grave with you.” The sick man started, and said “For God’s sake you do not accompany me into the grave. My deeds are not good. I have done many illegal things in acquiring wealth for me and my children” It replied: “I will not leave you. I will not even leave you on the Day of Judgement” The sick man kept on entreating and imploring but all was in vain.

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

## The Magnificent Power of Belief

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

Get in harmony with Almighty Allah; change your thoughts and your way of living. Believe and succeed… The secret is, have faith, believe, and practice. As you train your mind to believe, defeatist tendencies are reversed, and everything tends to move out of the area of the impossible into that of possible… Stop doubting, stop thinking negatively.

Charm is not procured from a bottle. It comes from the right thinking and honest living…. Goals are never reached unless they are first specifically formed in the mind… The more jealousy one has in one’s nature the more critical one is of those who have accomplished things… Never compare yourself or your achievements with others, but make your comparisons only with yourself… Do not defeat yourself by holding spiteful and jealous thoughts. Think straight, with love, hope, and optimism and you will attain victory in life.

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

If you think you are beaten, you are;

If you think you dare not, you don’t;

If you want to win but think you can’t

It’s almost certain you won’t;

If you think you’ll lose, you’re lost;

For out in the world we find

Success begins with a fellow’s will;

It’s all in the state of mind;

Life’s battles don’t always go

To the stronger and faster man,

But sooner or later the man who wine

Is the man who thinks he can?

No accomplishment, no assistance no training can compensate for lack of belief.[[13]](#footnote-13)

“We are what we believe we are.”[[14]](#footnote-14)

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

## How to Believe

1. Believe.

2. As you train your mind to believe, everything tends to move out of the area of the impossible into that of possible.

3. Never compare yourself or your achievements with others, but make your comparison with yourself.

4. A sign of mental health is to be glad when others achieve, and to rejoice with them.

5. Make your life what you want to be through belief in Allah and in yourself.

6. Start living by faith, pray earnestly and humbly, and got into the habit of looking expectantly for the best.

7. Think, believe and visualise success.

8. Keep on believing as long as you live.

## Conviction (Yaqeen)

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

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said;

Everything has a measure and climax.

The narrator asked him as to the limit of Divine reliance. His reply was:

The climax of Tawakkal and conviction is that one should not fear anyone, except Almighty Allah.

According to another narration he is reported to have said:

A sign of the rectitude of Conviction is that one should not do anything to please his fellow-men which may merit Divine displeasure. He should not blame other men for not having got something which Almighty Allah had not given him. Verily, the greed of a greedy person can neither amplify his sustenance nor can the displeasure of anyone stand in the way of his apportioned sustenance reaching him.

If a person flees from his sustenance as one flees from his death his sustenance shall overtake him just as death overtakes him.

Verily, Almighty Allah, in His justice has bracketed happiness and ease with conviction and Divine will. Sorrow and grief are bracketed with one’s displeasure with the Divine will.

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

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said:

None of shall receive the recompense for faith except the one who is convinced that all trouble and ease or hardships and comforts have been apportioned for him. It cannot be warded off. If it is warded off, he should think that it was not apportioned for him at all. It could not have overtaken him by the efforts of anyone or of himself. No one has the power to bring about profit or loss, sorrow or ease except Almighty Allah.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was deciding the cases of certain persons, sitting under an inclining wall. A man made the submission that he should not take a seat under the wall, which was likely to fall. He said that every one is protected by the time appointed for him. When he was free from his job, he rose up, moved away from under the wall, the wall fell down. Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) added that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) often did so. It is the stage of perfect conviction.

Saad Ibne Qais has narrated:

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

His (a.s.) reply was:

O Saad! Do you not know that the Almighty Allah has appointed a number of Angels to guard every man. Two of them are scribe Angels while two others keep guard on him. A man may have a fall from a mountain. The man may be thrown into a well. He may be in a situation of peril. It is only when the Divine dispensation so wills that they depart.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) had great affection for his slave named Qambar. When Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) went forth from his house, the slave joined him with his sword ready, lest some enemy might course him injury.

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

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

## The Stages Of Conviction

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

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

It is narrated of Imam Raza (a.s.):

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

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

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

It is narrated that a companion of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said:

On the eve of battle of Siffeen, Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was making preparation with his army. He was riding the steed of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) named Murtajez. The sword Zulfiqar was belted to his waist. He had, in his hand, the spear of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Muawiya was advancing towards him slowly. Someone cautioned Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) to take necessary precautions for his safety lest the hard-hearted enemy felt upon him unawares. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to him:

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

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

## Reliance on Almighty Allah

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

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

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

Whosoever fears (the wrath of) Allah, He will make for him a way (out of the troubles). And provide him with sustenance from whence, he reckons not, and whosoever relies on Allah, then sufficient is He for him. Verily, Allah accomplishes His purpose, indeed has prescribed Allah for everything the due measure.[[15]](#footnote-15)

O Abuzar! Almighty Allah says on oath of His own Majesty:

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

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

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

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Patience is the foundation of loyalty to Almighty Allah. It means to be satisfied with the will of the Almighty Allah whether it conforms in favour of or against one’s own wishes. When a person acquiesces in Divine will, it shall, be as a matter of course, the good result of such an attitude.

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

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

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Almighty Allah sent a revelation to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

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

It is narrated of Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) as having said:

The person who has the gnosis of Almighty Allah’s authority is the most entitled to adopt the way of submission and acquiescence. The person who acquiesces in divine dispensation gets his recompense enhanced by Almighty Allah. The person who is offended at being the target of Divine dispensation, shall have, in any case, have that dispensation taking effect in his case, but he shall lose his right to recompense therefore.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) was asked by someone as to the criteria of the identity of a believer so as to know whether he is really a Momin. His (a.s.) reply was:

You can do so by his attitude of acquiescence in Divine will, whether it profits him or harms him.

According to another narration, he is reported to have said:

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

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

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

## An Account of Reliance on the Almighty Allah

On the basis of reliable authority Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) is narrated to have said:

Riches and honour are revolving. They come to stay wherever they find reliance.

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

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

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

In another tradition he his reported to have said:

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

Verily, the pious ones shall be in a secure place[[16]](#footnote-16)

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

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

Prophet Moosa (a.s.) went to fetch some fire. He was raised to the status of ‘Kaleem’ (one who has the honour to speak with Almighty Allah). He became a prophet. Queen Bilqees of Saba came out on the tour of her land; she won her honour to Islam. The magicians of Pharaoh came to uphold his prestige. They won their way to Faith.

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

Prophet Moosa (a.s.) made a submission to Almighty Allah:

O my Allah! You send me on an errand, while You make me leave my minor children behind.

Almighty Allah said to him:

Are you not pleased that I should be their protector and Sustainer?

Moosa (a.s.) made the submission: Undoubtedly. Thou art the best of Sustainers and the best of the Guardians.

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

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

(i) In the womb of his mother, he was maintained in perfect comfort and protection against heat and cold. He provided him with all his needs.

(ii) At his birth, He let flow a stream of milk from his mother’s breast, by way of his sustenance, whereby he got the strength for growth. His own planning and action had little to do in all this.

(iii) When he was weaned from the milk of his mother’s breast, he instilled love in the minds of his parents. They toiled and spent their earnings for him with perfect love and affection. He was fed as well as they could feed him. Now when he has grown up to manhood with the competence to earn for himself, he has begun to think of all sorts of meaningless thoughts. He has become suspicious about Almighty Allah. ‘He thinks it burdensome for him to pay the dues of the Divine Saw He begins to be miserly in his expenditure on his own household, lest the sustenance should diminish. His faith in Almighty Allah has been impoverished. He does not think that whatever has been given to him is for the purpose of spending to win the recompense in this life and in the life Hereafter, Such a person is certainly very undesirable.

## The Excellence of Reliance on the Almighty Allah

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said, about the Satan as saying:

All persons are under my control except five whom I am unable to beguile, by any means within my power.

(i) The person who reposes reliance in Almighty Allah in all matters.

(ii) The person who is engaged in Divine glorification all through the night and day.

iii) The believer who wishes for his believing brother the same what he wishes for himself to despair.

(iv) The person who does not give way in the face of a calamity.

(v) The person who acquiesces in Divine dispensation. He has no worry about his sustenance.

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

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

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

## Acquiescence in Divine Dispensation

Imam (a.s.) continued:

Do you not know that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said?

When during my heavenly ascent I passed by the Sidra-tul-Muntaha, I cast a glance at its leaves and branches. I saw female breasts hanging down some of the branches. There was flowing milk out of some of them. From others it was honey that flowed. There was fat oozing from some of them. Others gave out Hour. From yet others dropped fruits. There were apparels hanging from some of them I wondered as to the place, where they were falling. Angel Jibraeel (a.s.) was not with me, from whom I could enquire. I had ascended higher beyond his competence. Almighty Allah then inspired my heart:

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

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

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

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

The person who does not acquiesce in My will and who does not have faith in My plans, should choose some other Lord for himself besides Myself.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said:

The person who acquiesces in the Divine will shall always enjoy happiness.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

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

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

Man is face to face with Divine bounties, Divine will and life’s hardships. It behoves him to face hardships with patience, to submit to the Divine will willingly and to be grateful for the Divine bounties.

It should be borne in mind, that there are a number of traditions, in favour of the acquirement of these praiseworthy qualities. It is appropriate in this context to dilate thereupon.

## Submission to Divine Will (Tafweez)

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

It has been related in Kafi by Sekatul Islam that Jabir Ibne Abdullah Ansari in his old age met Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.). He enquired of his welfare. Jabir submitted, O my Master! I love my old age more than young age: my illness more than health and prefer death of life. Hearing this Imam (a.s.) said: “O Jabir, owe choice is not as stated by you; I should love old age if Allah bestows and young age if He wills. In the same way if He desires my illness I would love it and if He intends my health I would love it, if He wills my death I would be glad and if he allows me to live I would be pleased.” Jabir kissed the forehead of the Imam on hearing the above and submitted that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had prophesised that I would see his son whose name would be the same as his own and he would spread the learning in the way the agricultural land is split open.

The term Tafweez is also synonymous with Tawakkul (reliance) on Almighty Allah. One should have a strong faith in this. One should give up all hopes from anyone else. One should never prefer the wishes of others to the wish of Almighty Allah. One should not depend on anyone else, nor upon one’s own self, in any matter. One should have complete dependence on Almighty Allah. The highest stage of Divine worship is that one should particularise all authority and all help with Almighty Allah. One should regard the authority and power of man as altogether subservient to Him.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Polytheism engendered in the hearts of men more secretly then the track of the feet of an ant. Supposing a person takes off a ring from one finger and puts it on another finger with the object that it would remind him of a certain matter, shall be committing an act of polytheism.

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

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) asked of Angel Jibraeel (a.s.) the meaning of Tawakkal (reposing reliance in the Almighty Allah) His reply was:

By Tawakkal is implied that a man should know that men has no say in the matter his profit and loss.

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

Someone asked Imam Raza (a.s.) as to the meaning of ‘Tawakkal’ His reply was:

It implies that you should not fear anyone when you know that the Almighty Allah is with you.

Acquiescence in the Divine will means that one reposes complete reliance on Almighty Allah. Everything he does, he does according to the Divine commandments. Whatever comfort, hardship, indigence and affluence come to him should be regarded as in his own interests in as much as everything comes to happen under Divine will. Almighty Allah has the Omnipotence to ward it off. Had it been expedient, it would have been barred, as a matter of course. He is not unkind as to do him any harm. He is not miserly as to want withhold it from him. He is not unknowing as not be in the know of one’s interests. He is not hand-bound to give to him what is of advantage to him. With perfect faith in these qualities one should gratefully accept what is granted to him while in the pursuit of what is just and lawful according to Allah’s command. One should not have the least complaint about it.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) was asked as to the exegesis of the Holy Quranic verse: Whosoever relieth on Allah, then sufficient is He for him.[[17]](#footnote-17)

His (a.s.) reply was:

Tawakkul has a number of stages. One of them is that one should have complete reliance on Almighty Allah in all one’s affairs. One should be agreeable to that comes to pass. One should have the conviction that Almighty Allah is never slack in looking after one’s interests. He does not withhold His kindness from anyone. One should know that whatever has come to pass is under His command. One should leave to Him all one’s affairs in perfect confidence. One’s reliance should always be on Him in every matter.

## Surrender to Almighty Allah (Tasleem)

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

Almighty Allah has, in Holy Quranic spoken:

So know, by your Lord! They believe not (really) until they have set these up, their judge in all that they dispute about, among themselves and, thereafter, find not in themselves any vexation (at all) against what you decide and submit (themselves) with total submission.[[18]](#footnote-18)

It should be borne in mind that these praiseworthy qualities are fundamental to Faith because other virtues and deeds hinge upon them. For example: one who reposes faith in Almighty Allah shall have given up all hope from men. He shall desist from all those sins which are perpetrated because of pinning hopes on fellow beings. One is prone to disobey Almighty Allah because of his eagerness to please others. One is apt to be zealous to work according to Divine commandments. One should not be slack in parrying out the religious rites of worship being free of the fear of all human beings he shall not ignore his responsibility of bidding the good and forbidding from the evil. He shall avoid making any changes in the legal directives, having nothing to do with flattering others. He shall not earn his sustenance by unlawful means, knowing that it is apportioned by Almighty Allah. He shall be saved from begging from other creatures. In this way, the Grand Majesty of Almighty Allah shall be ever more instilled in his mind. He shall look upon human beings as of no importance. On receipt of every boon, his love for the donor shall be enhanced, because of his faith in Almighty Allah as the Sustainer and the real Bestower. There are many stages in this attitude. One is ever in a state of tranquillity of his mind because of his conviction that everything is determined by Almighty Allah for his good as a part of his resignation to Divine will. He does hot become embarrassed in the time of affliction; rather he faces it patiently and is ever grateful to Almighty Allah. No sorrow or trouble overpowers him. He never ignores under these conditions his attitude of adoration toward Almighty Allah. He is not inimical to anyone, on the ground of not having received any favour from Him. He does not forget Almighty Allah when he receives a favour because of his gratitude to him. He has no feelings of envy for anyone for their greater possessions. He does not quarrel with other people in the matter of worldly things. His love for friendship for other fellow beings is based on seeking the pleasure of Almighty Allah. His acts of worship become sincere and altogether free from any hypocrisy. He is not shaken to sorrow or the vicissitudes and happenings of the world.

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

What do you want to know – the condition of a person at whose pleasure, the sky and the earth move? Whatever happens in this earth and in the Heavens is on the basis of His blessing.

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

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

There are innumerable advantages in adopting this attitude of mind. A person who surrenders himself completely too divine command gets all his doubts and misgivings removed from his mind. He bows down in obedience to all the directives received from Almighty Allah and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). He is freed from all discussions of cause and effect. This attitude of mind is fundamental to religion. Many people are, however, misled by these of their ignorance of the same.

## Divine Will and Destiny

From what has been explained in connection with the meaning of Tawakkul, one should not be misled into thinking that a man under Tawakkul may sit behind the door of his house giving up all participation in the business of the world all this is against the spirit of Tawakkul. Suppose a man throws himself into a well and says that he does it because of his Tawakkul. It is far from Tawakkul which, as we have said before, is to do one’s best in accordance with the directives of Almighty Allah, and one should act accordingly. One should keep in mind the same measure which he has been commanded. One should not derive income from unlawful means. One should not give up the obligatory and approved forms of worship. One should not be greedy and accumulate no more than what suffices his needs

## Pre-Destination

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Do not give up seeking your sustenance by lawful means. It is a support to you in religious matters. Bind the feet of the camel and then rely on the Almighty Allah. So you should endeavour in performing the rites of worship and thereafter rely on the Almighty Allah. You should think then that all your organs, your hands, your feet, your senses, your talents, your sustenance, your houses, your clothing, which have helped you to perform the rites of worship are all bestowed by Almighty Allah to you. Besides this it is Almighty Allah who bestowed upon men the great boon of right guidance and faith. Not withstanding all these matters you should not think of negation of your discretion in the matter. You should attribute sinfulness and evil to your own self. Admit the same. Regard yourself as meriting punishment therefor. Do not try to probe into the mysteries of pre-destination.

It suffices for one that the leaders of the religion have spoken of it thus: Too much probing therein leads to misguidance. Our Imams (a.s.) have forbidden it.

There may be a few among the scholars who tried to go deep into the matter, yet escaped error. It is part of the surrender that one should just admit the issues as explained by the scholars, which ones’ intelligence is incompetent to grasp.

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

The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to Abuzar (r.a.).

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

## Divine Planning

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hazrat Abuzar (r.a.) did as he was commanded. The story has been told in the beginning of this book.

## Patience

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

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

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

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

Paradise is encircled by troubles and afflictions and patience in the face of them. As such, whoever faces patiently shall as a matter of course enter Paradise.

The Hell is encircled by pleasures and desires. The person who is enamoured of pleasures and desires shall be thrown into Hell. It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

When a believer is placed in his grave, to his right stand prayers, to his left Zakat. The goodness that he may have done to his parents and kinsfolk stands at his head. His attitude of patience stands by his side.

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

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

There will not be a period of time when a kingdom will not be available to anyone without bloodshed and slaughter, nor shall one come by affluence without usurping the assets of others and without practising miserliness. Mutual friendship will not be available without giving up religion and without following the egoistic urges. Whoever happens to belong to that age should put up with his: poverty patiently, even though he may have the competence to get rich by practising usurpation and miserliness. He should put up patiently with humiliation even though he may have the competence to gain honour by following the wrong doers. One should be patient on enmity on the part of others, which they display because of his goodness, even though he may have the competence to win their friendship by following them. Almighty Allah shall grant him the recompense of the specialty favoured and truthful ones, who have testified to my mission.

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

My revered father, at the time of his departure from this world took me in his lap and said:

O my son! You should bear with patience the Truth, however bitter it may appear.

## The Kinds of Patience

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Patience is of three kinds.

(i) Patience with the exertions of worship.

(ii) Patience with giving up of sins.

(iii) Patience with affliction and trial.

The person, who faces trouble with patience and wards it off with the power of patience, shall have three hundred stages of merit from Almighty Allah. The distance between one stage and the next shall be as is the distance between the earth and the sky. The person who is patient with the exertions of worship shall have six hundred stages. The distance between one stage and the next shall be equal to the distant between one extremities of the earth to the sky. The person who is patient with his giving up the sins shall have one thousand stages in his favour. The distance between one stage and the next shall be equal to the distance between the extremity of the earth and the extremity of the Heavenly Throne.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

If a believer is involved in a trouble and puts up with it patiently, he shall have the recompense of one thousand martyrs from Almighty Allah.

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

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

Where are the people who were patient?

Then shall come up a body of men, the Angel shall advance to welcome them. They will ask as to how they fared with patience.

They shall reply:

We put up patiently with the exertions of worship. We put up with the toil of giving up sin,

At this an Angel shall proclaim on behalf of Almighty Allah,

These people spoke the truth. Let them enter Paradise without reckoning.

Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to Abuzar (r.a.):

O Abuzar! Almighty Allah says:

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

O Abuzar! Almighty Allah does not look to your features.

He looks to your hearts and deeds.

O Abuzar! Piety resides here. (He pointed to his breast).

## Sincerity in Action

It should be borne in mind, that these words emphasise the same subject as has been dilated upon before, namely Divine worship, Divine remembrance, gratitude, glorification, wisdom, gnosis and piety. All of them are worthy of appreciation only when they spring from the heart. If they are confined only to the words of the tongue while the heart remains uninfluenced without leading to resultant action, they are in the nature of hypocrisy and show. They do not relate to Almighty Allah. They will benefit neither the person himself nor anyone else. The words of wisdom, which form the basis of one’s actions and which spring from the heart, shall be deemed really as words of wisdom. Other people also shall derive benefit therefrom. Even silence shall be part of wisdom. His action and conduct shall serve as sermons for others; it will be as if all his organs speak the language of wisdom. Wisdom will spring from the fountain-head of the heart and flowing from the tongue, shall reach all the organs of the body. The people shall gain guidance even by looking at him. On the basis of reliable authority, a tradition says:

You should invite other people to the path of guidance without using the tongue. It implies that the actions which are performed with sincere intent for the sake of Almighty Allah have this importance.

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

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

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

That (shall be so) and whoever respecteth the signs of Allah, verily it is (the reflection) of the piety of the hearts.[[19]](#footnote-19)

## Do Not Say What You Can Not Do

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

## Sincerity of Effort

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

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

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

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

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

It transpires from Hadees, that when a man’s Faith gets perfected, he ceases even to dream.

Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) says:

Nobody thanks the believer for the good he does. Nor does he win renown; He does not aim at renown. He acts for the pleasure of Almighty Allah. As such, his acts of goodness go up high. On the other hand the infidel is thanked profusely for any acts of goodness that he may do. He wins notoriety, inasmuch as he aims at display.

Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) is reported to have said:

The people did not thank the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) for his acts of goodness to them. They were un-grateful to him. They antagonised him. In the same way they are averse to obey us and to give us the rights due to Ahlul Bait (a.s.). So is the case with our adherents. Few are the men who give them thanks for the good they do.

It is related that Mufazzal bin Umar made a submission to Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.):

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

Imam (a.s.) was reclining on a pillow at the time On hearing this from Mufazzal he sat up straight and delivered himself thus:

It is not so. When a person is befriend by Almighty Allah the people get prepared to antagonise him and speak ill of him. They thereby sin against him. He gets the reward therefore.

When Almighty Allah is offended with anyone, the people make friends with him.

They praise him very highly. They commit sin thereby.

He then added:

Who can be greater friend of Almighty Allah than Prophet Yahya bin Zakariyyah (a.s.)?

The people turned against him, and slew him outright.

Who can be a greater friend of and more beloved of Almighty Allah then Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibne Abi Talib (a.s.)?

What did the people do to him hut to put him into troubles of all sorts? Who can be a greater friend of Almighty Allah than Imam Husain Ibne Ali (a.s.)? What cruelties did not the people heap on his head? In short he was martyred.

## Avoiding Personal Publicity Do All For God

In the Holy Quran and as well as in the precepts of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) pride and conceit have been declared sins, and in the religious life, the Muslim has been trained to do everything to please Allah. Remember, for such a devotion as prayer, on which depend the acceptance of all the good devotional acts and for fasting which is specially for Allah, we declare our Niyyat (intention) to attain nearness to Allah. And in Jehad (Holy war of defence) too it is restricted to “Fee Sabeellillaah”, in the way of Allah. In giving alms to the beggar and in feeding the hungry sincerity is absolutely essential. It is mentioned in Chapter Dahar, and in the Seerat of the descendants of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) it is mentioned that in co-operating with the beggars, orphans and prisoners it is stated that: “We feed you for the sake of Allah”. In performing a pilgrimage to the Holy shrine of Imam Husain (a.s.) which is considered the best of all the human acts, it is a condition that there must be sincerity.

## Self Sufficiency Contentment

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

O Abuzar! You should become self-sufficient by virtue of the affluence that Almighty Allah has granted you. Be contented with what He has bestowed upon you. Do not make yourself dependent on others. You will then be all the more self-sufficient and independent.

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

His (s.a.w.a.) reply was:

Suppose you get a meal for the day and a meal for the night. You should consider yourself self-sufficient. Do not become dependent on others. Do not beg anything of others. The person who betakes himself to contentment, with the sustenance which the Almighty Allah has granted him, is the most self-sufficient and well-to-do.

It should be borne in mind, that self-sufficiency and affluence are not achieved without contentment. By self-sufficiency is implied, independence of one’s mind. There are people who are self-sufficient by virtue of the self-sufficiency of the mind. They repose reliance in Almighty Allah only. They are not greedy of accumulating wealth. They do not pin their hopes on other human beings.

There are others who are in possession of treasures of wealth but they look to be needy because of their greed for money and their love for riches. They are ever after accumulating added wealth. They undergo disgrace in the eyes of the people because of their greediness. The more they acquire, the greater is their greed for more. The world is like saltish water. The more you drink the thirstier you feel. So is the case of the seeker after worldly riches. The more one gets, the greedier he becomes.

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

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

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The person, who is contented with the portion granted by Almighty Allah, is the most self-sufficient.

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

## Self Reformation

A person, who longs for Salvation and Eternal Bliss, should not relax vigil on his baser urges He should ever remain on the look out of his short-comings. He should ever yield to self-deception He should set out in a way as if searching for the faults of an enemy.

One seldom admits the presence of faults in himself. But if one exerts to find out one fau1t, he may come about a number of them. It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

When a man sees anyone of his own faults and avoids it he comes to know of many other faults as well. One should ever be in search of his own mental stocktaking. One should be mindful that he has to be subjected to full reckoning of his mind, on an appointed Day. He must get prepared himself for it from now on. He should remember fully the explanation he shall have to give. Any relaxation on his part shall affect his reckoning badly on the Day of Judgment.

The life that has been bestowed upon man is the most precious gift. Every moment of it can be used to earn Eternal Bliss. One should ever be mindful as to the engagement of each moment. If one has spent it in righteous action, one should get the recompense therefor. If the moment is spent in sinfulness, one is sure to be exposed to Divine Chastisement. If one has done nothing, he shall be deemed to have wasted a very precious gift.

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

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

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

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

Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said to a person:

Almighty Allah has appointed you as the physician of your mind. You should take care of its health-keeping by treating its ailments. You should note its working. One should cherish one’s restraining conscience as ones son and companion, while the passionate ego should be looked upon as ones enemy, against whom one should wage a Holy war. One should cherish the righteous actions as one’s father to be followed.

## Keeping an Eye on One’s Own Faults

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

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

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

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

There are three moments for a believer, O My son!

He implores Almighty Allah in one. He takes stock of his own mind in the second. He enjoys the lawful pleasures in the third in a spirit of gratefulness.

Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Take a reckoning of your ego, before the time of the Final Reckoning. There shall be fifty stops on the Day of Judgment, each one of them being of a thousand years duration.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) says:

The person who does not seek out and correct his own faults becomes over powered by greed and passions and the person who does not take stock of his ego leads a life worse than Death.

Imam Ali Ibn al-Husain (a.s.) said:

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

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

## Modesty and Faith

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to Abuzar (r.a.);

O Abuzar! Be mindful of the presence of Almighty Allah. I swear by Almighty Allah, who holds my life in His power, that when I go to answer the call of nature, I cover my head and face out of modesty because of the presence of the two Angels who are always with me.

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

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

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

The person who longs for Eternal Bliss should (defy the allurements of this life.

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

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

It is obvious that in a situation of sin, a man possessing modesty shall at once be reminded that Almighty, Allah sees him. He shall have the belief that his actions shall be presented as a matter of course, as those of a member of the Ummat to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Infallible Imams (a.s.). He knows it for certain that there are two scribe Angels who are ever with him to record his deeds. If Almighty Allah would remove the veils of Heavens, all the Angels would witness his deed of sinfulness. He shall be put to shame on the Day of Judgment in the presence of all the creatures and the prophets. With such ideas in his mind, with such conviction, he will never give way to any untoward urge.

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

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

…God forbeareth not from the Truth…[[20]](#footnote-20)

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Modesty is of two kinds – the modesty based on reason and modesty based on stupidity Modesty based on reason proceeds from knowledge and intelligence.

Modesty based on stupidity stems from ignorance.

Imam Ja’far e-Sadiq (a.s.) says:

Modesty is part of Faith, while Faith is the Passport to Paradise. Modesty and Faith are linked together. If one gives up one of them, the other dies of itself.

A tradition lays down that the question of Faith does not arise in the absence of Modesty.

It is also laid down that a person who is possessed of three virtues, shall have his sins condoned and replaced by good deeds, howsoever numerous they may be. The three virtues are the following:

1. Truthfulness

2. Modesty

3. Good Mannerliness.

Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) says:

O People! Have no modesty (shyness) in the matter of acquiring knowledge. The person with narrow forehead is deficient in knowledge.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

Among the proverbs of the olden sages is one which is very commendable namely, one may do anything when he forsakes modesty.

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

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

Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said:

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

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

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

## Modesty and Modern Civilisation

(The hypocrites) enjoining evil and forbid what is good…..They have forgotten God; so God is punishing them of this forgetfulness.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Here at the risk of being branded as ‘out-of-date’ we want to comment upon this materially developed and spiritually decayed civilization of our time. A civilization in course of time reaches its highest Peak; and then its glory turns into vain glory; it becomes drunk of its power and achievements. And then it goes down the path of decay; and finally, to death.

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

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

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

Result? Every kind of vice has been glorified and accepted into the Society. Adultery is preached to be a healthy thing for a marriage; persons of same sex enter into ‘matrimony’ with an encouraging nod from the ‘priest’; pre-marital sexual relations have been accepted as the norm of the day; gambling is practiced in place of worship; people are led to believe that drinking liquor is a pre requisite of ‘being civilised’. And religion has ceased to lead the people; it is being led by the masses. All these symptoms point to the advanced stage of deterioration of our civilization.

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Islam is naked; modesty is its garment.

Modesty is a virtue for men and women both, though it is more commendable in women. But in our days, thanks to the modern civilization, man appears to be more modest than the woman.

This industrial age has turned woman into a piece of merchandise. No advertisement is eye-catching unless it has a woman’s body in it, exposed to the various degrees of nudity. Films and television are a flop unless they have sex-appeal, and plenty of it. Magazines and books flourish on the lustful desire of man, by providing a lot of erotic material in writing words and painted photos. Hotels and restaurants, in gone-by days, used to boast of their excellent good and superb service. Now they arrange dances and strip-tease performances to satisfy the customers. Commercial firms expressly say that their receptionists must have a “presentable appearance”. Even in political life a modest wife is considered a liability!

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

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

In the last century, when the Westerners penetrated in the heart of Africa they found some tribes who were roaming naked. Those pioneers of ‘civilization’ forced the tribes to wear clothes. Now those advocates of ‘civilization’ are themselves discarding the clothes. One often wonders if the ‘primitive tribes’ of last century were not more civilized than the rest of the world. After all, it is rest of the world which is now imitating the ways of that ‘so-called primitive society.’

Here are a few recent news headlines and captions of articles from British magazines showing a glimpse of shamelessness rampant in the modern days:

“Group Sex”

“Swinging (wife-swapping) Couples – Modern Sexual Phenomenon”

“Psychologists Seek Play Pens That Make Sex Fun for Kids’

Sex in the 70’s -an Era of Experiments for Youth”

“Practicing Marriage without a licence”

“Group Nudity Called Cure for Loneliness”

“Premarital Conceptions Found High”

“Britain’s First Sex Supermarket opens in London Today”

“Dramatic Increases in Co-eds Engaging in Premarital Sex”

“Swingers” is the term used by married couples who participate in group parties – or orgies – where husbands swap wives – disrobed in bed.

The Sunday Time (London), in illustrations five columns wide, showed front views of both men and women, completely nude. There was no retouching. Alongside was a picture of a man and woman in sexual intercourse, nude in bed. Under the pictures was this caption: “BBC scores big hit with children’s sex film”. And under it this subhead, “ ,000 of school” buy it; one teacher out of 100 says ‘pornographic’”.

## Truthfulness

This is one of the highest qualities of man. It comprehends a number of good qualities and virtues. Truthfulness concerns both saying and doing. By saying one is protected against sin. One does not avoid obedience to Almighty Allah under it One does not miss to perform any divine obligation. This is because, the believer claims conviction of the Exalted Majesty of Almighty Allah and of Paradise and Hell.

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

Among the adjuncts of truthfulness is that a truthful person is never remiss in the matter of approved forms of conduct. He shall always refrain from doing anything obnoxious. There is no one who does not claim that he is subject to the will of the Almighty Allah and that he wants to refrain from sin. An acquaintance with the Divine Commandments in respect of Paradise and Hell demands that one shall observe the etiquette in his approach to Almighty Allah, the Monarch of Transcendent Majesty. He should not even think of missing the best. He thereby is ever desirous of nearness to Almighty Allah and Divine gnosis He shall gather limitless benefits from his extensively vast beneficence. Such conviction and Faith are opposed to one’s missing the best. He shall not look to anyone except Almighty Allah for his wants;

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

Thee (alone) worship we and of Thee (only) we seek help.[[22]](#footnote-22)

He shall be false in his own claim; if he disobeys Almighty Allah even in a trifling matter for that in reality will be obedience to Satan instead of to Allah.

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

## Avoid Lying

Lying is such a serious offence that it can be called the basis of all human moral turpitude. A man who lies is capable of doing every evil easily. His words lose all value in the eyes of the strangers as well as friends; his associates know well in their mind that the person is a liar, though they may not say so openly.

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

Shall I inform you (of him) upon whom descend the Satans.[[23]](#footnote-23)

And unto him who disputeth with thee therein after the knowledge hath come unto thee, Say! (O Our Prophet Mohammad) (Unto them) “Come you, let us summon our sons, and (you summon) your sons, and (we summon) our women and (you summon) your women and (we summon) our selves and (you) yourselves and then let us invoke and lay the curse of Allah on the liars”![[24]](#footnote-24)

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

O Abuzar! There are four qualities which only a believer possesses.

(i) Quietness: It is first part of Divine worship.

(ii) Humility before the Almighty Allah, and modesty for the sake of the Almighty Allah towards His Creation.

(iii) Divine reliance in all circumstances.

(iv) Stringent Means: O Abuzar (r.a.)! Aim at benefiting others and doing good even if you may not bring the same into practice. You shall not then be counted among the negligent ones.

O Abuzar! The person who guards his sex instinct and who controls his tongue from speaking nonsense and falsehood shall enter Paradise.

Abuzar (r.a.) asked as to whether one is answerable for what escapes his lips. His reply was:

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

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

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

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

Abuzar (r.a.) asked as to the manner of repentance on the part of a person who has spoken a lie intentionally. His reply; was:

It is seeking forgiveness and performing five timed prayers regularly. Thus shall his sins be washed off.

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

O You who believe! Fear you Allah and be you (always) with the Truthful ones.[[25]](#footnote-25)

In the same way falsehood is the root of all sins and misdoings. There are a number of traditions and Holy Quranic verses, which go to show that falsehood is a major sin! It also transpires from a number of traditions that falsehood whether it is a matter of fact or by-way of buffoonery or joke – is unlawful, in all cases.

There are certain situations wherein falsehood is approved, while truthfulness is disapproved. As for instance, the truthfulness which injures a believer is not allowed or where there is danger to his life. Such falsehood is incumbent, which leads to saving a believer’s life, or his freedom, or his loss. Suppose a believer has placed in trust a piece of property with us! It would be incumbent upon us to deny, if an aggressor demands the same from us We may even swear an oath therefore, in such cases even Tauriyyah is allowed for instance, we can tell him that the assets, which he demands are not with us.

The person who has a truthful tongue generally as his conduct, accept him as pure.

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

According to another narration Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said:

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

## The Evil of Falsehood

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) said:

Truthfulness is the adornment of speech.

In another tradition he is reported to have said:

Speak the truth for Almighty Allah says:

O you who believe! Fear you Allah, and be you (always) with the truthful ones.[[26]](#footnote-26)

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

It is narrated that Imam Ali Ibnul Husain (a.s.) advised his sons:

Avoid speaking falsehood, whether in a trifling or in an important matter, whether as a matter of fact, or out of fun. The person who speaks false in trifles, shall develop in him the boldness to speak falsehood in important matters too.

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

Do you not know that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to say?

The person who always speaks the truth is enlisted among the truthful persons by Almighty Allah. The person who always speaks falsehood is enlisted as a liar.

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

Almighty Allah has provided locks to sins. Drinking intoxicated is the key there of speaking falsehood is worse than drinking. He added:

Speaking falsehood is destructive of the Faith.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e Sadiq (a.s.) said:

It is a major sin to forge a lie against Almighty Allah; and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

The foremost to bear testimony to the falsehood of a liar will be Almighty Allah. Next will be the scribe Angels, who always keep him company. Last of all he himself shall testify as having spoken falsehood.

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

A man does not feel the zest of Faith unless he gives up falsehood, whether it is a matter of fact, or it is by way of fun.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) reported of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as having said:

The person who speaks falsehood loses the beauty and comeliness of his face.

On the basis of reliable authority, it has been said:

Almighty Allah involves the liar in forgetfulness in order that he may be disgraced sooner.

## Falsehood and Conditions of Its Permissibility

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

There are three kinds of speech: truth, falsehood and the words intended at the reformation of the people.

Someone asked him as to what was meant by the words of reformation. His reply was:

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

In another narration it has been said that:

Almighty Allah likes the person who speaks a falsehood, in order to bring about reconciliation between two persons.

According to another tradition it has been said that:

Almighty Allah shall call every liar to account for speaking falsehood except in regard to the falsehood concerning the following three matters:

(i) First is the case of battle. One may speak falsehood, to over power an enemy in the cause of religion.

(ii) Second is the case of a person who thereby means to bring about reconciliation between two parties.

(iii) Third is the case of a person who may have held out a promise to his wife, which he does not think expedient to fulfil. He may speak falsehood and put her off, or he may not fulfil the promise.

He added that:

It would not be considered a falsehood if one says something to bring about conciliation between two parties to a dispute.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

There are three occasions on which it is permissible to speak falsehood;

(i) In military planning.

(ii) In one’s promise to his wife.

(iii) In the case of bringing about a compromise between two contending parties.

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

(i) Conveying something from one person to another, which would sow the seed of discord between two persons.

(ii) Conveying to a person something about his wife which may lead to grief and mischief between them.

(iii) To contradict a person who spreads false news.

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

## False and Concocted Stories

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

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The worst of the reports are those which are false, the stories which are meaningless and absurd like the Shahnama and about the pagan history are also condemned. The scholars have termed them as unlawful.

## The Sin of Hearing the Concocted Stories

Ibne Babwaih (a.r.) has, in his “Book of Belief” pointed out that:

Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) was asked as to his views about the storytellers; whether it is was permissible to hear their stories.

His reply was:

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

## The Meaning of the Word ‘Siddique’

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

(i) By ‘Siddique’ is meant a person comparable to the seventy-two ‘Siddiques’ of other Ummats.

(ii) A good action which raises a man to the title of ‘Siddique’ is amplified several times by Almighty Allah by His special grace.

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

There may be some other forms of explaining this:

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The Almighty Allah shall admit three persons’ to Paradise without subjecting them to the final reckoning, the just ruler, the truthful merchant and the old man who spends his life in Divine worship.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

There shall be seven persons, who shall, be given shelter under the Divine Throne on the Day of Judgment when there shall be no shade elsewhere,

(i) The just ruler.

(ii) The youth who may have spent his days of youth in Divine worship!

(iii) The person who leaves the Mosque but his heart remains attached to the Mosque till he goes back again to the Mosque!

(iv) Two friends who may have kept each others company in worship!

(v) The person who remembers Almighty Allah in solitude and tears well-up in his eyes because of the fear of Almighty Allah.

(vi) The person who is invited by a beautiful young woman for adultery but he withstands the temptation because of the fear of Almighty Allah.

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

## Fulfilment of Promises and Agreements

This is an exalted quality of human character and one that imparts lustre to the humaneness of man, making him trustworthy and dignified. Every field of life demands this quality down from the people of a household up to those of the highest status. Undoubtedly the bearer of this quality is the ideal man. Womenfolk, too, are made responsible for acquiring this quality. Just notice the authoritative tone of Almighty Allah in commanding it.

O you who believe! Fulfil the contracts made (by you).[[27]](#footnote-27)

And when you speak be just; though it be against a kinsman: and fulfil you Allah’s covenant: This He enjoineth you with so that our may be mindful.[[28]](#footnote-28)

## Tender Evidence and Tender It Aright

Supposing there is a dispute between two persons. One of them is dishonestly perpetrating injustice. The other man is subject to inequity and outrage. A third person is knows of the true facts. If he keeps mum under the impression that it is no business of his to meddle in other people’s affairs, to earn the ill-will of any party and to get into uncalled for trouble, it will mean besides an increase of occasion of inequity to the injured side, a veil thrown on the right and a nourishment of the selfish tendencies of the man in the know of the factual position. If a considerable number of people make up their mind to raise their voices against inequity, and that if an occasion arises, they shall not eschew truth, the criminals would not be swelled in numbers at such defiant rate.

O you who believe! do stand firmly with justice, Witnesses for Allah sake, though it be against your own selves or your parents or your kindred, be he rich or poor, for Allah is closer (than you) to them both: Therefore follow not your inclination, lest you deviate (from the truth and if you swerve (from the truth) or turn aside, then Verily Allah is All-Aware of what you do.[[29]](#footnote-29)

O you who believe! be always upright for Allah, bearing witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably; Act you equitably that is nearer to piety, Fear you Allah; Verily Allah is (fully Aware of what all) you do.

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

## The Redemption of Trust

It is a matter of great felicity for us to be among the best trustees, who is unaware of the trust worthiness of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). The narratives of the trust worthiness, the esteem, the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) are known the world over. The impression of his uprightness on other minds can be gauged only by those who had known him or had dealings with him. Never did he cast a covetous glance on any man’s belongings; nor did ever an evil thought cross his mind. These are the firm fundamentals of his honesty and trustworthiness, and thus do the exemplar of humanity with his understanding of this world and belief in the Hereafter, preserve the decorum of conduct among his fellow creatures:

Verily Allah does command you to render back your trusts to their owners, and when you judge between men, to judge with justice; verily, how excellent is what Allah exhorts you! Verily, Allah is the Hearer and the Seer.[[30]](#footnote-30)

And from among the people of the Book are such whom if you entrust (even) a heap of gold, he will restore it to you; and from among them are such whom if you entrust (even) a dinar, he will not restore it to you unless you keeps standing firmly upon him demanding it; This is because , they say it is not incumbent on us (to be faithful) to the ignorant: and they utter a lie against Allah while they know (what they do is wrong).[[31]](#footnote-31)

Words and deeds:

Chaos has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned; that God may give them a taste of some of their deeds; in order that they may turn back (from evil).[[32]](#footnote-32)

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

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

Says Holy Quran:

O you who believe! Why do you utter what you do not act upon. It is serious matter before Allah that you utter what you do not act upon.[[33]](#footnote-33)

## Promise and Agreement

O you who believe! Fulfil all obligations.[[34]](#footnote-34)

This Verse is admirable for its comprehensiveness and clarity. The word used here is ‘Uqud’ Its literal meaning ‘Bondages’. This word is used in the Islamic language, for every kind of obligation and by using it God has reminded mankind that every promise, agreement and undertaking is a kind of bondage from which man cannot free himself except by its fulfilment. That is why we find in the Islamic traditions that “Man is a slave of his promise”.

Obligation can be of various kinds. There are some involuntary obligations: Obligations, towards God; obligations towards our fellow human beings, towards our family, towards our neighbours, towards our friends and our enemies. We have no option but to fulfil them there are other obligations which we impose upon ourselves – e.g., between employer and employee; ruler end ruled. There are obligations between trading partners. A nation concludes a treaty with another nation. All such obligations are self-imposed.

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

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

## Unnecessary Oaths Taking

Imam Husain (a.s.) said:

One should refrain from taking excessive oaths, for a man vows not but for the following four reasons, viz.

1. It may be due to inferiority complex which impels him to take oaths to make the people believe in what he ways.

2. Or it may be due to his unawareness of the proper manner of speech and so to patch up what he says, he takes oaths during the talk;

3. Or due to fear of being accused and knowing that people won’t consider him to be true he thinks that without taking an oath people will not accept what he says.

4. Or he simply lets his tongue loose and uncontrolled and goes on taking oaths.

No doubt genuine oath is essential, but there ought to be absolutely sound reason for taking it.

Unfortunately, it has been marked, that many people indulge in indiscriminate oath taking, and that also very conspicuously. Such people should carefully study the above saving of Imam Husain (a.s.) because it explains the circumstances which prompt a person to take an oath unnecessarily.

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

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

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

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

In the Holy Quran and in the Ahadith of Ahle Bait (members of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)’s family) swearing has not been considered a good thing, however truthful it may be. An oath, if taken before the just ruler for arriving at a decision and to help the proper person get his right, is permissible. To the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) the Almighty has explained the oaths of the Munafeqeen (Hypocrites) with great contempt that: “Those liars – in order to save themselves have made their oaths to serve as shields”.[[35]](#footnote-35) On another occasion Allah (s.w.t.) said: And yield not to any mean swearer, defiant going about with slander. It appears that the Arabs were habitual swearer, therefore on another occasion Almighty Allah, in accordance with their habit has made prophesy about their swearing. This refers to the inner condition of those who refused to accompany the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) on a journey, and Allah said: “They will swear to you by Allah when you return to them so that you may turn aside from them; so do turn aside from them; surely they are unclean and their abode is hell; a recompense for what they earned”[[36]](#footnote-36)

Of course incase of the fear of not being able to perform good deeds or fulfil good desires, as it generally happens that obstacles come in the way of doing good deeds, there is an occasion where, if we say in this manner: By God, if such a work of mine is done I will offer two Rakat of prayers; or if that is completed then I will keep a fast. Only such an oath (swearing) is good, because this is connected with enhancing the rules of obedience to God; and refers to becoming engaged in His praise, this becomes a promise to Allah, therefore is no longer objectionable.

## Misappropriation

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

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

## Avoid Malversation

Malversation is of many kinds. Defalcation in regard to money matters or goods, in conversation, in regard to duty and work, in short in everything and in every matter of duty entrusted to us, if we fail to keep it or do it not as is required, it constitutes malversation. What is the harm there in? One may ask this question. It will be sufficient to say in answer that it is something very reprehensible for a self respecting honourable man. For the depraved person, however, even something more disgraceful, does not matter. The defalcator loses confidence and is deprived of esteem. Not only is this but also there loss of a great many future successes. A man possessed of reason and foresight will give to it great importance. In any case a man is subject to reward and punishment. He will reap what he sows.

And from among the people of the Book are such whom if you entrust (even) a heap of Gold, he will restore it to you; and from among them are such whom if you entrusted (even) a dinar, he will not restore it to you unless you keeps standing firmly upon him demanding it; This because they say ‘It is not incumbent on us (to be faithful) to the ignorant and they utter a lie against Allah while they know (what they do is wrong)’.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Verily Allah does command you to render back your trusts to their owners, and when you judge between men, to judge with justice; verily, how excellent is what Allah exhortes you; Verily, Allah is the Hearer and the Seer.[[38]](#footnote-38)

## Regard for the Wise and Just King

A reliable tradition from Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) states that he had asked the Shias to be obedient to their kings and not to degrade themselves by disobeying them. If the king is just then a Shia should pray God for the king’s benefit, if the king happens to be cruel then a Shia should pray for a compromise with him as one’s benefit lay in the benefit of one’s king. If the king is wise and just he is equal to a kind father therefore pray those things for him which you pray for yourself and do not pray for those things which you do not pray for yourself.

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

According to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) a person who for the benefit in this world praises a cruel king and gives him respect: will be a companion of the cruel king in Hell. For Allah (s.w.t.) has said

Do not be inclined towards those who commit cruelty intentionally otherwise you will be burnt in the fire of Hell.

## The Evil of Nearness to the Unjust Rulers

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

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

For one thing, one has to abet their mis-doings. Secondly one has also to be steadfast in one’s affection for them, while the Almighty Allah’s commands contradict it. He says:

And (You believers) incline yet not unto those who act unjustly, lest touch’s you the Hell-fire, for you, besides God, there is no protector, nor shall you be helped.[[39]](#footnote-39)

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

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

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

Fifthly it is the usual custom in the assemblies of the dignitaries that one has to endorse what they say. One has to acquiesce in even their absurdities and their unlawful activities, while it is a fact that this attitude borders on hypocrisy. It may even lead to forging lie in respect of Almighty Allah and his Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Sixthly one is unable to prevent any act of aggression that may come to his notice in their assemblies. As a matter of fact one has to support such acts in order to win nearness to the dignitaries. As such, one has to go against the command of the Shariat in regard to forbidding the evil. The Shariat expressly commands that one would be committing a major sin if he does not forbid an unlawful act.

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

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

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

On the basis of reliable authority, Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) is narrated to have said:

A miser finds no comfort. The jealous person is deprived of real relish in life. Kings have little faithfulness. A liar is devoid of magnanimity. A stupid fellow does not command respect.

On the basis of reliable authority, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is narrated to have said:

The kings among the mankind are the most insincere. They have very few real friends.

It is narrated of that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

If a friend of yours rises to an office of authority, you shall find that his friendship for you is reduced to one tenth of what it was before his assumption of the office. Even, in that case you should not take him as a bad friend.

## The Disadvantages of the Society of the Rich Men and the Oppressive Kings

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

There are four things which vitiate the heart, and which lead to hardening of the heart. They nurture the habit of hypocrisy as does water help the growth of a plant.

(i) Assemblies of dancing and singing.

(ii) Using obscene language.

(iii) Society of the rulers.

(iv) Moving about in search of game.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The person who moves in the Society of the royalty tends to become mischief-monger. The more the nearness he acquires to the Kings the farther he moves from the Almighty Allah.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

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

It is narrated of Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) as having said:

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

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Hazrat Eesa (a.s.) said to Bani Israeel: ‘Do not abet the oppression of an oppressor. You will lose your merit in that case.’

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The person who applauds a tyrannical ruler in his face, and humbles himself to him in his greed for the wordily gains, shall be in Hell in his company. The person who shows the path of oppression to a tyrant shall be in the company of Haamaan in Hell. The person who quarrels in favour of an oppressor or abets him shall have at the time of his death the message from the Angel of death. You are to be filicated with the curses of Almighty Allah, and the abode in Hell.

It is narrated of Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

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

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

One day Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) was going somewhere. In the way he found me sitting in the company of Qazi of Medina. He asked me the next day as to what business I had in his company. I told him that I had good relations with the Qazi and I go to him off and on. He said to me as to why I had ignored the fact that he may be cursed by Almighty Allah and his companions may be bracketed with him.

At the time of departure from this world Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) made a will to Imam Hasan (a.s.):

O My son! Keep friendly relations with a virtuous man because of his piety. With the transgressing rascal, you may keep yourself on good terms. That will safeguard your religion from his mischief. But in the heart of your hearts entertain hatred for him.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The person who excuses an oppressor on his acts of oppression gets some other oppressor overpowering him. If he prays to the Almighty Allah for the removal of the oppression from him, his prayer is not accepted, nor shall he get any recompense for putting up with the oppression.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The abettors of the oppressors shall be made to stand under the fiery curtain on the Day of Judgment till the whole of the Creation is free from the reckoning affair.

According to another narration He (a.s.) is reported to have said:

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

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

On the Day of Judgment an Angel shall proclaim from Almighty Allah: Where are the tyrants and the supporters of the tyrants, those people who put ink into their inkpots, seated a bag of money for them or did give them any sort of help? All of them shall be counted among tyrants. No one acquires nearness to a king but that he moves farther from Almighty Allah.

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

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Safeguard yourselves by means of piety and righteousness.

Safeguard your faith with outward loyalty. Instead of taking your needs to the king, you should turn to Almighty Allah. You should adopt contentment. You should know for certain that the believer who humiliates before the king or an enemy of the Faith shall become a non-entity.

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

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The person, who abets an officer against an oppressed one, shall be subject to the wrath of Almighty Allah, unless he forsakes such abetment.

## Conditions for Approaching the Authorities

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

(i) Because of outward expression of loyalty. In case there is a danger to one’s life, property or honour it would be necessary to go to them for safeguarding against the danger.

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

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

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

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated by Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

One who cannot take his request to me personally, then those who can should convey the same to me. As a matter of fact, who conveys the request of a needy person to the monarch when he himself is unable to do it, shall have his feet steadfast on Pul-e-Sirat on the Day of Judgment by the Almighty Allah.

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

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

He (s.a.w.a.) then turned to Ziyad Bin Khaled and spoke to him:

O Ziyad! If your happen to be appointed to a position of authority by such persons, then try to do good to your believer brothers. It may serve to relieve you of your sins.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

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

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

The friends of Almighty Allah do attend the courts of the monarch and through them Almighty Allah protects his friends from their harm.

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

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

Luqman (a.s.) used to visit the monarch, the nobles and the persons in authority with the set aim of leading them to the right path with his guiding sermons. He used to have pity on them, when he found them suffering from all sorts of afflictions and trouble. He used to feel sorry for them on seeing them allured by the fleeting undependable worldly items. He learnt lesson from their life stories. He would adopt those forms etiquette of theirs which would help him acquire greater control over his mind. He would wish to traverse the stages of his exertions by overcoming his egotistic urges.

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

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

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

## Neediness

Hazrat Abuzar (r.a.) required to know of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) thus:

There are people who fear the displeasure of Almighty Allah. They adopt the way of humility. They remember Almighty Allah at all times. Will they be the first to enter Paradise?

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied thus:

No. The poor and the needy shall be the first to enter Paradise. They shall jump over the rank and file of other people gathered on the Doomsday into Paradise. The watch Angels at the gate shall ask them to stop for reckoning. What reckoning is there for us to answer? We possessed neither power nor pelf to be required to answer for any piece of injustice perpetrated by ourselves. We only did worship Almighty Allah, when he summoned us, we came over.

## Explanation of the Term (Faqr) Neediness

There is in the traditions approval of the Needy persons.

There is also a condemnation of the needy persons. Affluence is denounced sometimes. At other times it is praised.

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

From certain traditions it transpires that the condemnable form of neediness implies that one is narrow-minded about religion. The form of affluence which is praiseworthy is liberality of mind shown by a man. The greediness for excess of wealth is the condemned form of affluence. In brief, what we must bear in mind is that whatever is there in this world for the benefit of man is in the form of a gift from the Almighty Allah. It is there for the amelioration of the lot of mankind; Men, however, turn those gifts into the means of evil doing. Different forms of possessions are intended to be a means of helping man to serve the Almighty Allah. But for such forms of wealth, there can be no question of charity, zakat, pilgrimage and the heavenly rewards for the same.

There are people who do not spend their funds for the purposes for which they are created. They spend to earn the recompense for evil doing and sinfulness. As such wealth has two facets – the one of virtue and the other of vice. In the same way, neediness should give rise to the virtue of patience. He should look patiently to Almighty Allah for succour in time of need. He should not have any inclination to fall into unlawful ways.

One gets to the nearness of Almighty Allah through an attitude of piety and righteousness. Man, however, fails to cognise this fact. He falls into neediness for help from other men. He begs of them. Getting forgetful of the Almighty Allah, he falls into unlawful ways. He sinks to the abyss of unbelief (Kufr), by blaming Almighty Allah of injustice. A tradition has it to the following effect.

## Neediness Borders On Unbelief

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

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

Thus says Almighty Allah:

Nay! Verily man is wont to rebel![[40]](#footnote-40)

A point to be noted in this connection is that the Holy Quran does not speak of a man becoming self-sufficient (غني). It says that when man looks upon himself as well-off, he becomes rebellious. For it is never conceivable that a man may grow into a self-sufficient being. The better-off he becomes the greater become his necessities. As a matter of fact he becomes ever-more needy.

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

## An Illustration of the Needy and the Well-To-Do

The cause of the Needy and the well-to-do resembles persons who arrived in a harbour in two boats-one filled with merchandise, while the other is empty. The person in the empty boat disembarks and without do proceeds home. The person with the merchandise shall be stopped at the octroi post to render full account to the authority. He shall not depart for home until he has given his full account.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says:

Man feels averse to Death and to a loss in wealth. The fact however, is that Death relievers a man of worries of the world while diminution in wealth decreases the worries on account of the reckoning.

Hazrat Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) said:

Two things ruin man the fear of Neediness as also the longing for power and prestige.

It is narrated that Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) said:

The poor among the Shias of Ali (a.s.) should not be looked down upon. Every one of them shall intercede on the Day of Judgment, such large numbers of men as would equal the numbers of the two big tribes of the Arabs – the Rabiah and the Muzar.

It is related that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The troubles of this world are gifts from Almighty Allah for the believers. The Almighty Allah has kept Neediness in His treasures.

According to a tradition Neediness is a trust from Almighty Allah. The person who keeps it concealed shall get a heavenly reward equivalent to the recompense of a person who spends his life in fasting and who worships all night.

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

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

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

## The Anecdote of a Needy Person and of a Rich One

In another narration He (a.s.) is reported to have said:

Almighty Allah has not granted spurious affluence to our Shia. He has apportioned to them just enough for their needs whether in the east or in the west. Almighty Allah shall attend to the poorer among our Shia as if He is apologetic or as one brother offers an excuse to another brother. He would say that He did not put them to neediness to degrade them, but to show you special favours in return for the same. He would require them to lead to the Paradise every one who rendered them any help in the world. The needy men shall ask for the gifts which the men of the world enjoyed. Almighty Allah shall offer seventy times the luxuries to them and their friends.

## Another Anecdote

It is narrated that a man came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in fine clothes. There arrived another man in tattered untidy clothes and he took his seat by his side:

The man tried to avoid contact with the untidy man and shifted aside:

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to him:

Do you fear that his poverty shall affect you too?

The man: Sir that is not the case The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

Do you fear that your clothes shall by soiled by contact with him.

The man: No Sir. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

Do you fear that he would take away your riches?

The man: No Sir. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

Then why did you behave as you did?

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

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

The poor Man: No Sir

The rich Man: And pray, why.

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

It is narrated that Prophet Moosa (a.s.) received in revelation thus:

When you get poverty, welcome it. Beware when you get affluence as a sort of torment in life.

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

Lucky are the poor people who go patiently through life they are the people who behold the panorama of the sky and the earth. O the poor people! Be contemned with your poverty. Almighty Allah shall grant you great recompense for your patience. You shall not earn full recompense if you do not do so.

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said;

A proclaimer shall proclaim on the Day of Judgement: ‘Where are the poor people?’ A group of people shall respond: ‘Here are we our Lord.’ The Divine Proclamation shall ring clear: ‘You were not made poor because of any disgrace. It was to raise your rank this day. Go and lead to Paradise those who did you good in the world.’

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

Hazrat Imam (a.s.) said to him:

You get a point of goodness added to your record of deeds for every such thing you have desire for.

It is related that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

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

Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) said that Almighty Allah says:

I have not granted opulence to the rich people because they are honoured in my sight. Nor are the poor people placed in a state of poverty because they are despised. I have rather made the poor people trial for the rich ones. Had there been no destitute, the rich would have been debarred from Paradise.

Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

The rich persons among our Shias are trustees for the poorer among them on our account they should look after them, so that Almighty Allah may look after them.

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

Poverty and neediness is an adornment for the believers.

Just as Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) says:

Poverty is bloody death.

The narrator asked: Which kind of poverty?

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

This very point has been expressed by Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) thus:

Poverty is horrible death.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

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

It is narrated that Imam Raza (a.s.) said:

The person, who goes to see a poor believer, may give him a salutation. If such salutation is not of the same respectful kind as he uses for the rich people, he shall deserve the wrath of the Almighty Allah on the Day of Judgement.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to Abuzar (r.a.):

O Abuzar! This world allures the souls as well as the bodies; Almighty Allah shall surely require an account of the lawful boons which we have availed of. Why shall He not call us to account for the unlawful things?

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

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

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

Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) said that once the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) met a camalier in the way. He (s.a.w.a.) asked for some milk. The camalier said:

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

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prayed for his increased prosperity. A little further on him met a goat-herd. He asked him for some milk, he milked all the goats. All this quantity together with what was in the store, he placed before him. He presented one goat as well to him. He offered yet more to him if it would please him.

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

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

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied:

The less of the worldly possessions one has the better for him. One should have just what would suffice him. Super-abundance is likely to make one forgetful of Almighty Allah.

He (s.a.w.a.) then added:

O Almighty Allah, grant to Mohammad (s.a.w.a.) and the progeny of Mohammad (s.a.w.a.) the amount of sustenance which would be sufficient for their needs.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) related that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

O the Almighty Allah! Grant your Grace to Mohammad (s.a.w.a.) his progeny and their friends to evade the unlawful forms of sustenance. Grant them such sustenance as would be sufficient for needs. Bestow upon our enemies a super abundance of wealth and children.

Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) says that the Almighty Allah says:

The believer is grieved about his straitened circumstances, and yet that is a way to Divine nearness and knowledge, he is pleased when he gets in plenty, which may become the cause of Divine remoteness and forgetfulness.

It is reported by Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) that Almighty Allah says:

The most favoured and the happiest believer is he who earns a large share of righteousness. He worships well. He is not known among people, He gets just enough for his needs: He is contended there with when departing from this world tie leaves behind very little patrimony. He has few people to mourn his death.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to Abuzar (r.a.):

O Abuzar! Happy are the people who are not allured by this world. They have the Hereafter in their view. They look upon this earth as their bedding and the dust as their furniture. They look upon water as perfume. The Divine word is their covering. Their prayers are their apparel. They offer the world in return for the Hereafter. O Abuzar, the tilth of the Hereafter is good doing. The tilth of this world consists in the abundance of riches and children.

This Hadees has reference to the Holy Quranic verses

Whosoever intends the tilth of the hereafter we increase for him in his tilth; whosoever intends the tilth of this world, we give him of it and for him in the Hereafter shall not be any share.[[41]](#footnote-41)

## Do Not Berate the Supplicant

The poor supplicant is distressed by his need. He begs from people considering them to be well-to-do and liberal. Therefore to berate him is an aggression on one’s part. His heart will be injured and one’s moral sense will be sullied, giving rise to the displeasure of the creature and creatures. This same point has been expressed thus by Meer Anees: ‘O rich man you may keep the money-bag well-tied but for God’s sake do not knit your brows.’

And Almighty Allah says:

And as to the beggar, chide him not.[[42]](#footnote-42)

## Disclosure of Secrets

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

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

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

It should be borne in mind that there is a code of etiquette covering the associations and assemblies. Among them the most praiseworthy injunction is not to disclose the secrets of one another. Many kinds of mischiefs and faults spring from there. A person opens his mind when in a society of his friends. He does not keep his secrets to himself because of his faith in friendship. There may arise danger to ones’ life by the disclosure of a secret. All sorts of enmities may spring up as a result of finding faults with others. This too is as kind of backbiting and is to be placed in the same class, if a friend discloses a secret to one as a sacred trust; it is a very reprehensible thing to betray the trust. Suppose; one discloses it to another person who may disclose it to some other friend of his and this may continue to a lengthy extent. It is possible that there may be an enemy among the chain.

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

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Anything said in an assembly is a sacred trust accepting three cases.

(i) Where some body’s life is endangered.

(ii) Where unlawful sex relations are involved.

(iii) Where unlawful possession of another’s property is aimed at.

It is narrated that Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) said:

There are three persons, who shall be in the shade of the Exalted Throne when there shall be no shade anywhere else,

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

(ii) It is the person-who arranges the services of a servant to serve a brother believer

(iii) It is the person who guards his secrets.

It should be borne in mind, that just as it is incumbent to guard the secret of others, so it is necessary to guard ones own secrets as well. One should not disclose to others the secrets, which, if disclosed, may lead to one’s own harm. Not everyone is worthy of trust as a friend.

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

The person who guards his own secrets shall exercise control thereon. When the same is disclosed it becomes an open secret.

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

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said to his companions:

Do not disclose your secrets to anyone. In case, it is a secret that does not harm his interests, in case it falls into the possession of an enemy, there is no harm in disclosing it. It often so happens that a friend turns into an enemy some day.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said:

Be on your guard in the matter of friendship. The friend may turn to be your enemy someday. Also be on your guard in regard to your enemy. May be, he may turn to be your friend someday.

## Secret Counselling is Unseemly, Avoid It

Whispering looks unseemly even in a party of four men, what to say of taking counsel for evil aims which is all the more reprehensible. In the first place the man before whom or is done gees the impression that the talk may be concerning him, which can lead to heart burning and hatred, In the second place whispering in a party is such an ungainly act which only an uncultured man can attempt. It is not in consonance with the Islamic teaching. Allah forbids it as such and forbids it emphatically.

Secret counsels are (stimulated) only by satan that he may cause grief to those who believe, but he shall harm them not in any way but with the permission of Allah: and upon Allah alone depend those who believe.[[43]](#footnote-43)

## Good Advice to Friends

One should never hesitate to give advice to a friend in anything where he may be going wrong or where he may otherwise either need it or ask for it. It is against the principle of honesty and regard for the friend’s well-being not to check him from going wrong or to refuse him the required piece of advice when he needs it. It is however necessary that the advice should be tendered in a way which does not give any offence to the friend. For instance, the matter may be opened to him by way of an anecdote whereby he may realise that he has to model his behaviour in the matter accordingly. No slandering or accusations should be allowed to pass, as people with this sort of attitude are apt to make mountains out of mole-hills through their enmity, in brief one should use full care and discretion in one’s demeanour towards friends, bearing in mind that love and proper regard are the real leaven of society and civilisation. As such all those factors which conduce to harmony among people need to be attended to very meticulously. Just as man needs to attend to factors which conduce to the orderliness of society, such as to equity in order to combat tyranny, to chastity as safeguard against animal passion and to courage so as to oppose and face enemies, so does one need to look to the most fundamental of human requirements namely the sentiments of mutual love and accord.

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

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

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

## Do Not Counsel Others Neglecting Your Own Self

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

What! Enjoin you upon the people righteousness and you forget you forget your own selves? Yet you read the scripture? What! Do you not understand?[[44]](#footnote-44)

The Almighty Allah has forbidden mischief mongering very emphatically and it has been dubbed as a crime more serious than even murder. It must be borne in mind that mischief whether great or small, whether in a household or in a tribe or in a country is an evil in every case. The womenfolk should be particularly warned in as much as they need this tool for pampering their egotism. They excite the affectionate and simple men-folk against their adversary in such a way that a household may get into turmoil or displeasure among a few considerate people may cause discord among them. The Holy Quran testifies that people who deprive Allah’s creatures from the love which Allah commands and which lead to the beautification of the world are inmates of Hell. They are oppressors and accursed. Undoubtedly Almighty Allah curses those people who feel chagrined when they see two hearts united and who plan to bring about discord between them.

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

And slay them wherever you find them and drive them away whence from they drove you away for mischief is more greivous than slaughter.[[45]](#footnote-45)

## Avoid Aggression towards Others

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

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

And fight in the cause of Allah (against) those who fight you but be not aggressive, or verily Allah loves not the aggressors.[[46]](#footnote-46)

Of all the difficulties that a human being has to face in his life the most injurious is the moment when an innocent person suffers cruelty at his hands, and it its agony the sufferer, the oppressed curses him. This painful wail is such that even Governments topple over as a result thereof, and life’s beauties are ruined. No sword has such sharpness as the effect of the cry of an oppressed person. Once a cruel person snatched of a fish from a poor and weak man, and had it included in his sumptuous feast. While taking a morsel of the cooked fish it bit his hand. Those who treated his wound advised him to sever the injured part from the body, but the pain increased ahead of the severed part till at last an unknown voice said: “O cruel man, return the fish to the owner otherwise your entire body will be cut to pieces”.

## Public Service

This is a vast subject. Undoubtedly personal interest has to be sacrificed for national interest. It is essential that this urge will be found in one having public interest at heart. One should first have full control over himself then he should persuade others to do well. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: ‘How can that man improve others who has not been able to improve his own self.’ Improvement of self is also compulsory for one, and to give benefited to others is also compulsory for man. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: ‘He is the best of all who is a source of benefit to other people.’

## Behaviour with an Infidel

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

(1) Separate prayers are prescribed for the child, woman and the sick at the time of sneezing: and for an Infidel who sneezes, the Muslim who is present is required to say: “May God Guide you”.

(2) If, in some one’s family there is a non-Muslim whose food and maintenance depends on his money and the Infidel is enlisted in his family, then it is compulsory to pay Fitra on his behalf, just as for a Muslim Member of the family.

(3) From the narration of Musarif it appears that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) ordered him to quench the infidel’s thirst and save him from the peril of destruction by providing him water to his fill.

(4) Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) advised that the new convert boy whose parents were Christians should do good to his parents; and when they were dead, not to leave their last rites (of burial etc.) to others, but he should himself perform that duty. An infidel had thrown his daughter in the well, and when he became a Muslim he asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as to what penalty he should pay for his past sin? The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) asked if he had a mother. When the man said no, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) asked: Have you got a maternal aunt?” The man replied in the affirmative. So the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘Do good to her, as she is like a mother, for this good will serve as a penalty for the sin you committed.’

## Do Not Harass Believing Man and Woman

Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) in his prayer of Talab-o-Afw-o-Rahmat says:

Save me from doing harm to every man and woman who has adopted the faith; and every Muslim man and woman.

One should not eat if a neighbour is hungry It is not necessary that the neighbour should be a Musalman and if he is a Musalman then the reward is doubled; and if he is a relative then the reward is tripled. The rules have prescribed a limit of 40 houses, in the neighbourhood, and if this is practised none can remain hungry.

In the biography of Prophet Yaqoob (a.s.) it is mentioned that he used to feel spiritually aggrieved if anyone of his neighbours was left hungry. And from time that once a neighbour had to remain hungry on the previous night it became a daily practice of his that a man shouted in a loud voice, saying:

One who is not fasting may come and take the mid-day meal at Yaqoob’s house.

And this very man used to announce at night; whoever is fasting may come and have food with Yaqoob. In this invitation it was not necessary that only the faithful should join in the meals, rather whoever was hungry should come. And in the practices of Prophet Abraham (a.s.), who was Prophet Jacob (a.s.)’s ancestor, it is abundantly apparent that in the feeding, every hungry person had a right to come and partake of the food. Prophet Abraham (a.s.) entertained guests who had not accepted, the faith (of the Oneness of God). Seventy families of Zoroastrians (fire worshippers) were once his guests.

## Avoid Suspicion Spying Backbiting

It is unseemly to suspect anyone without proper testimony in as much is its evil effect falls on one’s own self in the first place. A man vitiates the atmosphere of his own mind by accusing others. It will be far more beneficial to spend one’s energies on one’s own improvement instead. It is the most vicious habit to be spying other. Allah condemns this vice. Why should we spy as to what sort of a person is the other fellow? Let him be wicked or devilish or a disgrace to his family. One may out of regard just tell another who may be following a wrong path that it was wrong. Yet he has his option, it is not, however, proper to spy into the others flaw so as to propagate it in an unwholesome manner. It has been forbidden, and it is sin to do whatever is forbidden.

The same applies to backbiting wherein included egotism is generally. By backbiting the mind gets loaded, white one’s temperament gets degraded. If we just attend to the Quranic words, backbiting will appear an obnoxious act. It is, however, necessary to make it clear that on certain occasions it is not only admissible but also binding to bring into general notice the transgressions of individuals, like protests against aggressors. The door of aggression gets wider if the aggrieved do not complain. Herein is aimed only the interest of the prevention of the aggression.

This point been explained in the Holy Quran,

Lover not Allah, open utterance of evil in speech except by one who has been wronged. And Allah is the Hearer, the Knower.[[47]](#footnote-47)

O you who believe! Avoid such suspicion, for verily suspicion (in) some (cases) is a sin, and spy you not, and let not some of you backbite the others; What! Likes one of you to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it; and fear you (the wrath of) Allah; Verily, Allah is Oft-Returning (to mercy unto the repentant), the Most Merciful.[[48]](#footnote-48)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to Abuzar (r.a.):

O Abuzar! Avoid backbiting. Backbiting is more culpable than adultery.

Abuzar (r.a.) asked him as to how it was more culpable?

His (s.a.w.a.) reply was:

If a man commits adultery and asks for forgiveness, his penitence is accepted. The sin of backbiting is not forgiven, unless the person, in respect of whom backbiting has been done, forgives it.

O Abuzar! It is in the nature of disobedience to Almighty Allah and to fight to death with Him and these amounts to unbelief. To eat his flesh, in other words; to backbite him is in the nature of disobedience to Almighty Allah, His assets are as inviolable as is his blood.

Abuzar (r.a.) asked as to what was implied by backbiting? His (s.a.w.a.) reply was:

It is to speak of your brother in a way that would be un-congenial to him.

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

His (s.a.w.a.) reply was:

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

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

O Abuzar! Supposing someone backbites a Muslim and another defends him, by dint of his own power, he shall be helped in this life and in the life Hereafter, by Almighty Allah, in case, the latter, instead of defending him, adds to his disgrace, not withstanding possessing the power to defend, he shall be put to disgrace by Almighty Allah in this life and in the life of the Hereafter.

## Condemnation of Backbiting

It should be borne in mind, that there is no difference of opinion among the scholars, as to the unlawfulness of backbiting. A number of traditions and Holy Quranic verses bear out fully on its unlawfulness. It transpires from certain traditions that it is a heinous sin. There is a body of scholars who are in agreement on this point; The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), in the above noted Hadees has pronounced backbiting as being more culpable than adultery. This shows that it is more culpable than a heinous sin. Nevertheless this vice is more rampant than any others. The underlying mental defects which give rise to it are very common among men. They are envy, malice and enmity. There is no distinction in this matter, in the old and young, the learned and illiterate, the rich and the poor. Everyone has someone as his enemy, or some envious one among his rivals. There is very little of a hindrance in regard to the commission of this vice, as is the case with other sins. There is no restraining factor in the commission thereof on the score of custom, taboo or any convention or a fear of notoriety.

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

Helpless impotency and outward religiosity do not stand in the way of commission of this sin. Such vice does not require the incurrence of any expenditure or the use of any weapon, an utterance by tongue is the easiest action. For this reason this vice is very wide-spread. Almighty Allah has forbidden this vice emphatically, in unambiguous terms more than any other sin:

O you who believe! avoid such suspicion, for verily suspicion (in) some (cases) is a sin, and spy you not nor let some of you backbite the others; What! Likes one of you to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it; and fear you (the wrath of) Allah; Verily Allah is Oft-Returning (to mercy to the repentant), the Most merciful.[[49]](#footnote-49)

## The Torment of Backbiting

It is narrated the Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The person, who publicises about a believer, what he has seen with his eyes or heard with his ears, shall be included in the class of men of whom Almighty Allah speaks thus:

Verily, those who love to spread scandal about those who believe, they shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and the Hereafter Allah knows and you know not.[[50]](#footnote-50)

According to another narration, it is narrated, that Imam (a.s.), reported that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Backbiting is a quick-acting weapon for ruining ones own Faith, it is like the bastinado, which injures the flesh under the skin.

He added:

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

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Suppose a person speaks of a Muslim in terms, which expose his shortcomings, which hurt his honour, which degrade him in the eyes of the people. Such a person is driven out by Almighty Allah from under His guardianship. He is given over to the guardianship of Satan. Satan gladly accepts him. Almighty Allah does not any longer befriend him, nor does He help him in anyway. He turns him to Satan.

It is narrated that someone asked for elucidation from Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) about the tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) which is:

The wife of a believer is unlawful for another believer.

His reply was:

The word ‘wife’ here does not pertain to wife of another believer actually. It means that it is unlawful to expose the faults of another believer and disclose his secrets.

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

The person who believes in Almighty Allah and the Day of Judgment, should not sit in an assembly where the people speaking of Imam (a.s.) and where they backbite a Muslim.

According to a tradition, it is narrated:

The person who backbites a Muslim gets his fast fouled and ablutions nullified. There shall emit a stinking smell from his body on the Day of Judgment, like the smell of a carcase. All the people shall feel the obscenity of the smell thereof.

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

The person in whose presence someone backbites a believer, and who repudiates the charge being levelled against him, shall have Almighty Allah removing from him a thousand Kinds of troubles, in this life and in the life to come. In case, he shirks to repudiate the same, not withstanding his capacity to do so shall have seventy-times the sinfulness which the backbiter merits.

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

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

The most sinful is that stupid fellow who back bites a Muslims. The most degraded person is he who tries to degrade others.

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

You have not discharged the obligation of association with him by conveying to us what he had said. Nor have you respected our rights by telling us what we do not know about our brother. Everybody has to die as a matter of course. All shall then be resuscitated, and gathered there. The Day of Judgment is the time of reckoning; Almighty Allah shall give His decisions on that day. Beware! Never to indulge in backbiting, it is the affair of the inmates of Hell. Know it fully well, that the person who publicises the faults of others displays that he has maximum faults in him.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated by Alqamah: I went to Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) to ask him as to the qualities of a person whose testimony is acceptable, His (a.s.) reply was:

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

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

The reply was:

Will it be the Prophets and their appointees only, the infallibles whose testimony is to be acceptable? Unless you see him sinning, with your own eyes, nor there come forth two witnesses testifying to his sinning, the person is fit to have his testimony accepted, even though he may, in reality, be a sinner. The person, who tries to expose him, is committing backbiting. As such, he is outside the pale of Allah’s grace.

He is under the patronage of Satan. Verily, my revered father has narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The person who, by way of backbiting, Imputes faults in a believer, which he does not possess, shall not have the honour to be in his company in Paradise. If it is a fault, which is actually present in him, the sacred ties of faith, between you shall be sundered. Backbiting shall merit ever-lasting Hell, and it is a dreadful ending.

## Condemnation of Backbiting and Torment Therefor

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to Nauf Bakali:

O Nauf! Avoid backbiting for it is a dressing of the denizens of Hell.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Do not backbite, in as much as, if you backbite others, the others shall backbite you, as a matter of course. Do not dig a pit, for others lest you yourself fall into it.

## You Will Reap As You Sow

According to another tradition, Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

It is a characteristic of the hypocrites to backbite you, if there arises a point of difference between them and yourself.

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

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

In another narration, he is reported to have said:

Sanctity of Faith gets broken between him and the person whom he backbites, even though he may flatter him in his face.

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

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

He (a.s.) further added:

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

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

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

Someone made the submission that all of them liked meat, and meat is generally kept in the houses. His comment on the point was:

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

According to a reliable tradition, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Avoid misgivings about others. It is a matter of great falsehood. Tread the path of Almighty Allah as brethren, together as He has commanded you to do. Do not give each other bad names. Do not seek faults in others. Do not indulge in using obscene language.

Do not backbite. Do not quarrel. Do not harbour jealousy or enmity towards anyone. Verily, jealousy eats up Faith, just as the fire consumes firewood.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Make mention of a believing brother, in his absence, in such a praiseworthy manner as you would like him to make mention of you, in your absence.

According to another tradition, he is reported to have said:

There is no form of piety more meritorious than avoiding everything pronounced as unlawful by Almighty Allah. Avoid harming other Muslims. Do not indulge in backbiting.

According to another tradition, he is reported to have said that Prophet Moosa (a.s.) received a revelation:

The backbiters will be the last of the persons entering Paradise, in case their repentance is accepted. In case their penitence is not accepted, they shall be the first to enter Hell.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

There shall be four persons who shall be the source of great trouble to the denizens of Hell. They shall get the boiling water of Hell to drink. They shall create a dreadful roar with their cries. The denizens of Hell shall speak to each other, about these persons, for adding troubles to their torment:

(i) One of them shall be suspended in the arc of Hellfire.

(ii) One shall have the entrails of his bowels drawn out of his belly.

(iii) The third shall have blood and pus flowing from his mouth.

(iv) The fourth shall be the person scathing his own flesh to eat.

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

The person owed a large amount of money, at the time of his death. He did not leave anything behind with which to discharge the obligations to the creditors.

About their query as to the second man, whose entrails were being drawn the reply would be:

This person did not care about the place where he urinated He voided himself where and when he liked.

As to the third person from whose mouth blood and pus were flowing out, it shall be said:

The person conveyed every evil word on to others which he heard from anyone with the mention of his name.

About the fourth person who scathed his own flesh to eat, it shall be said:

The person was given to backbiting, thus eating the flesh of others.

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

## Meaning of ‘backbiting’

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

Some other scholars explain it:

The term ‘backbiting’ is implied to mean that a particular person is spoken about, in his absence, in the manner which would displease him if he heard the same, provided the shortcoming which is mentioned, actually exists in him and the people in general regard it as a defect it may be by word or by gesture, openly or secretly or by writing.

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

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

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

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

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

In certain cases the term ‘backbiting’ covers both backbiting as well as false accusation.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated by Dawood bin Sarhan that he asked Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) about the meaning of the term ‘backbiting’, and Imam (a.s.) replied:

Backbiting implies the foisting of a fault on a brother believer, which does not exist in him, or exposing some fault of his which Almighty Allah has not disclosed and that which has not been proved in a court of law on the strength of regular evidence, which would merit legal chastisement for him.

Another condition to establish a case of backbiting is that it should be a defect in the eye of the general public. In case one speaks of a good point, as being the part of one’s character, which the latter takes ill, it shall not be a case of backbiting. For instance, if it is said of a person, that he is regular in his Tahajjud, which he takes ill, it shall not be a case of backbiting. It will be a case of backbiting only, when a defect is pointed out, which is a source of displeasure to him. The defect may be physical, moral, operational or in regard to the family origin and lineage. For instance, one may call someone as the son of a washer man or of a weaver in a derogatory manner.

There are defects which if referred to, do not constitute ‘backbiting’. The same shall be taken up later on.

It has been pointed out what backbiting is involved whether it is by word or by insinuation.

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

There are numerous instances of such self deceptions on the part of backbiters. Even during the sermons and lectures while glorifying Almighty Allah and expressing one’s own humility, the preachers expose the faults of others very openly.

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

## Conditions of Permissibility of Backbiting

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

(i) Complaint of an aggrieved, person who may speak of the aggression of an aggressor to someone who is in a position to restrain the aggressor. In such a case it would be permissible for the aggrieved to complain of the aggressor and for the other man to listen thereto. This, however, is permissible only when the person to whom the complaint is made is in a position to remove the aggression. He too should have no other aim in listening except the redress. The complainant should also bear this in mind to do it for the purpose of redress. He should take the complaint only to the person who can be depended upon for help and to no one else.

(ii) Backbiting is permissible when the same is intended to restrain someone from committing an evil. It may be that by speaking of a defect in the presence of some other, the man may desist from doing the evil deed.

There are certain conditions attached to it.

(a) One should be sure that the person spoken of is used to evil deeds.

(b) He should be sure of his words being effective.

(c) There may be no apprehension of trouble or loss, consequent upon saying anything. Suppose the attitude of the person is not really vicious, but it appears to him to be so. It may be (for instance) a difference of opinion one party giving weight to the religious opinion of one Mujtahid, while he himself is in favour of the opinion of another Mujtahid, opposing the first one has no justification to condemn and backbites him. Similarly, if he knows that his words shall not carry effect in restraining him, from his evil deed, he should not say anything at all. In case there is an apprehension of loss of property, life or honour in speaking it. It is not permissible for him to say anything.

Suppose he knows that he will give up his evil action, if approached in privacy, one should not try to disgrace him in an open assembly. Keeping these commandments in view, one should try to restrain him from evil deed purely to win the pleasure of Almighty Allah. There should not be the least inkling of personal malice or ill-will. One should not try to satisfy one’s own rancour in the garb of a person, acting for the purpose of forbidding an evil, by speaking ill of him.

(iii) It should not be counted as backbiting, if some untoward reference has to be made when approaching a scholar on a legal point. For instance, he may complain about his father as having forcibly occupied some property of his for which he may seek legal advice to lodge a suit. In this matter too, his reference to his father should not be clear cut. For instance, he may say that, certain father has behaved in such and such a manner towards his son, or he may ask advice on the legal point. In case, this may not be feasible for him to do so, he should take care that none else gets any knowledge of the fact except the scholar.

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

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

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

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated by Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Express your abhorrence against the innovators, who may try to thrust neologies in the religion they should be publicly repudiated. In no case should they be allowed to attempt to vitiate the right religion of Islam. The people should be saved from their beguilement. They should abhor their neologies. Almighty Allah’s recompense therefor, is Paradise and raising their status on the Day of Judgment.

According to another tradition, it is narrated that Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Avoid the company of innovators, lest the people should regard you as one of them.

It is narrated of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as having said:

A man is in the religion of his companions. There are a number of traditions on this point. Some of them have already been dealt with under the account of neologies. There is nothing as destructive of the Faith of the people of faith as are these innovators. An open disbeliever has his disbelief quite manifest. The people should avoid them.

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

(iv) It is not in the nature of backbiting that the errors of the Mujtahids should be made manifest. Suppose one Mujtahid has a certain view on a specific issue and another Mujtahid has a different view, it is incumbent upon them to point out the error and to bring forth the necessary arguments to support it. As such, the scholars of the bygone days have been pointing out the errors of their contemporaries and of their predecessors. Neither party suffers any loss in this matter. Every one of them tried his best with honest intent to save the religion and to gain, the recompense therefor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

By backbiting is implied an expression of something about a brother, which has been kept secret by Almighty Allah, in case there is a character trait like quickness of temper, anger, hastiness the mention thereof does not constitute backbiting.

(ix) The mention of the sins of the person, who commit a sin openly, does not constitute backbiting. For instance, to speak of the tyranny of a tyrannical officer, who is involved in glaring oppression and immorality does not constitute backbiting. He does not care for being called a tyrant.

Suppose someone speaks of a tyrannical administrator, as ruling over a certain locality, while he himself is not displeased on hearing it, shall not constitute backbiting. But in case he is pained to hear it, it shall be a case of backbiting. If a person commits sins openly, while he takes it ill to hear the same from others, this too, according to a well established view, does not constitute backbiting.

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

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) said:

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

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The person who is given to glaring transgression and sins, merits no honour or respect, nor is speaking ill of him, in his absence, unlawful.

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

There are three persons who do not merit any honour or respect:

(i) The innovator who introduces neologies in religion of his own sweet accord.

(ii) The tyrannical administrator.

(iii) The transgressor who is involved in glaring transgression and vices.

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

A transgressor is the least deserving of respect.

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

Suppose there is a person who in his dealings with others is not unjust. He does not speak any falsehood. He does not back out of his promises. Such a person is magnanimous par-excellence. He is of the right standard of justice. It is incumbent on man to have his friendship. Backbiting him is unlawful.

A number of traditions in the same strain are narrated from Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) on the basis of reliable authority. The scholars have accepted a form of backbiting which is close to the kind of backbiting under reference.

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

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

## Listening To the Utterances of Backbiting

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

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said:

The person who listens to the utterance of backbiting is one of the two backbiters.

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

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

The person, whom an utterance of backbiting of a brother believer is presented for hearing and he comes forward to help him, shall receive help from Almighty Allah in this life and the life to come. In case he does not come out for help to him notwithstanding being in a position to help, he shall meet with disgrace by Almighty Allah in this life and the life to come.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Suppose; a person refutes the tale of backbiting in respect of a believing brother. Such an attitude shall stand as a curtain between him and Hell, on the Day of Judgment.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) as related that of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The person who defends the honour of his believing brother shall He, as a matter of course, is granted Paradise by Almighty Allah.

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

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

It may be further elucidated thus;

We should, as a matter of course, forbid him if we deduce from his apparent condition, that his backbiting is improper. In case, the person has a religious outlook of a righteous law-abiding person, carrying out his dealings, honestly, we should adopt some suitable manner of keeping him back from backbiting, which would not pinch him. We may, for instance, explain in a suitable manner, the conduct of the victim of backbiting or we may put him off, in some other proper manner.

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

## Redeeming the Sin of Backbiting

For penitence in respect of backbiting, there are some conditions, over and above the penitence in respect of other sins. This matter belongs to the category of human rights. One should go to the person to whom the tale of backbiting has been ascribed with the object of humiliating him.

One should then detail to him the good qualities of the person contrary to what has been said before. One should try to exonerate him.

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

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Backbiting is more abominable sin than adultery.

Someone asked him as to how it was so. His reply was:

The adulterer takes to penitence. The Almighty Allah accepts his penitence. The penitence sought by a backbiter is not accepted unless the victim pardons him.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Someone asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as to the redemption of backbiting. The reply he gave was:

He should ask forgiveness for the victim whenever he happens to think of him.

According to another tradition the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is reported to have said:

The redemption for backbiting is that one should pray forgiveness of the victim.

The scholars in this behalf have tried to reconcile the traditions in the following way:

One should seek pardon from the victim if he has come to know of it. In case he is in the dark then seeking forgiveness for him is necessary. In case he has died or left without address, one should resort to seeking forgiveness for him.

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

## The Condemnation of Double-Faced Person

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to Abuzar (r.a.):

O Abuzar! The person who is double-faced and double tongued in this life shall be so even in Hell. It should be borne in mind that among the character traits of the hypocrites is that they speak very sweetly and smilingly to others persons outwardly.

They display towards them great love and affection.

In their absence they talk of them like enemies. They condemn them. It is one of the meanest character traits.

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

Unlucky is the man who is double-faced and double-tongued. He is all praise and all flattery when one is face to face with him. In one’s absence he backbite him. If one is gifted with something, he is jealous. If one is in distress he flies away.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

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

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

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

This is the person who was double-faced and double-tongued in the world. This shall acquaint all the people gathered on that day with his evil trait.”

According to another tradition, Almighty Allah is reported to have revealed to Prophet Isa (a.s.):

You should have one tongue in public and in seclusion. Your heart should also be of the same pattern. I make you fear the evil of your own self. I know the evils of the human ego quite well. There should not be two tongues in the mouth or two swords in the same scabbard or two thoughts in one and the same mind.

## Tale-Bearing (Fault Finding)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to Abuzar (r.a.):

O Abuzar! A ‘Qatat’ will never enter Paradise.

Abuzar (r.a.) asked as to the meaning of the term Qatat. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Qatat is the person who finds faults with others.

O Abuzar! The person given to finding faults with others shall not have any respite from Divine torment in the Hereafter.

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

Shall I tell you of the most reprehensible persons among you?

On being urged to do so He (s.a.w.a.) proceeded as follows:

They are the tale-bearers. They create enmity among friends. They ascribe such faults to others as do not exist in them.

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

Paradise is banned for tale-bearers.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

There are four persons who shall not have access to Paradise.

(i) Person who is a sooth-sawyer.

(ii) Person who is a hypocrite.

(iii) Person who is given to drinking.

(iv) Person who finds faults with others.

According to another tradition it is narrated that he (a.s.) said:

Prophet Moosa (a.s.) during the course of his prayers to Almighty Allah saw a person under the Exalted Divine Throne. He asked Almighty Allah as to the identity of the person who has being favoured with the shade of the Exalted Throne. He got the reply:

This bondman was well-behaved towards his parents. He never did Tale-bearing.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has forbidden indulging in tale-bearing as also listening to such utterances.

He (s.a.w.a.) added that the person given to tale-bearing shall not enter Paradise.

He (s.a.w.a.) went on to say that Almighty Allah says:

I have banned the entry of three persons into Paradise.

(i) Person who proclaims his deeds of goodness to others.

(ii) Person who is miserly in his attitude.

(iii) Person who is a tale-bearer.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

There are three persons who shall not have access to Paradise.

(i) Person who sheds Muslim blood.

(ii) Person who is given to drinking.

(iii) Person who is a tale-bearer.

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

On the night of the Heavenly Ascent, I saw a woman with a head like that of swine and body like that of a monkey. She was being tormented in thousands of ways.

The companions asked him as to the sin which had merited her torment. His (s.a.w.a.) reply was:

She was a tale-bearer accustomed to telling lies.

## Avoid Arrogance, Conceit, Pride

Conceit and pride have proved the downfall of many a great man here, what to say of the common people like ourselves – who are made of dust and to dust will return, having no power even our time and our life. Does it behove us in the least to be conceited with this life?

How foolish are those who are stiff-necked towards others forgetting their real worth and becoming arrogant. Supposing they are well-to-do in comparison with the needy and they are more comely in comparison with the needy and they are more comely in comparison with the ugly, whose beneficence is this all? Surely it is a gift from Allah who can bring every thing to naught in the twinkling of an eye. How does it befit anyone then to show vanity or pride under such helplessness? It is but proper not to say anything that may rebound to our face. We should move like human beings in such humility as not to injure Allah’s creatures and at the same time as may please Allah. May Allah grant every Muslim such wisdom and foresight that he may cognise the meaning of Almighty Allah’s commands.

And turn not the face at people (in scorn) and walk not in the earth exulting; verily Allah loves not any self-conceited boaster.

And be moderate (in your movement); and lower your voice; verily the most unpleasant of voices is the braying of the asses.

And walk you not on the earth exultingly; for you (by your insolent) cannot rend the earth nor reach (the heights of) the mountains in stretching (yourself) all this, the evil of it, with the Lord is hateful.[[51]](#footnote-51)

He (Satan) refused (to obey God) and was proud.[[52]](#footnote-52)

Pride, greed and envy are the three basic evils which are the foundation of all sins and crimes in this world; all three were clearly demonstrated in the very beginning of mankind when Satan refused to bow down before Adam and arrogantly declared that he was better than Adam. It was ‘pride’ which led to disobedience of God, Eve, owing to her greed, was persuaded by Satan that eating from the ‘forbidden tree’ would be in her benefit. That also led to disobedience of God, Cain became envious of his brother Abel and killed him. Envy led to the capital sin and crime. It is for the sake of these moral lessons that this story has been repeated several times in Holy Qur’an.

Pride is one of the most condemned sins in Islam. Four verses of Holy Qur’an clearly state that Hell is the abode of proud persons. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

Allah says, greatness is my prerogative, and whoever tries to share it with me (i.e. becomes proud) I will put him in Hell.

Islam has framed its code of life in such a way that pride is crushed continuously. Take for example the rules of salutation; it has been stressed that you should be the first in saying ‘Salaamun alaikum’! Do not wait for others to salute you. And it makes no difference whether the other party is older or younger than you or equal to you in age. Not only this code, but the reason given for it also is a sure remedy of pride. It has been explained in this way. If the other party is older than you, you must salute him, because owing to his longer stay in this world, he has got more chances of performing good deeds than you have; if he is younger than you, you must salute him, because owing to his shorter stay in this world, he has got less chances of committing evil deeds and sins than you have; if he is your contemporary, remember that you know your own, but not his, vices and sins; therefore you must be the first to begin Salaam to everyone without any distinction of age or rank.

Prayers in the mosques are another example of crushing the pride. There are no reserved seats. Whoever comes first, sits nearer to the priest. A pauper stands in the first line, a millionaire stands behind him and in prostration the feet of the pauper touch the head of the millionaire, reminding him that in the presence of God it is piety which counts, not the coins.

Pilgrimage to Mecca is another reminder of this lesson. Poor and rich, great and small, ruler and the ruled, all are dressed alike, with shaven heads and nearly bare feet, and perform all the functions of Hajj side by side.

Thus minds are cleansed constantly of ‘pride’, one of the fundamental evils.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to Abuzar (r.a.):

O Abuzar! The person who desires that people should stand before him row after row should assure himself of a place in Hell.

O Abuzar! The person who dies, with even the least inkling of conceit in his mind shall not even cognise the perfume of Paradise except that he expresses penitence before his death.

Someone made the submission to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he was enamoured of adornment to an extent that he wished that his shoe-laces and lash should be nice. He wanted to know, whether that would make him to be counted among the proud ones. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) asked him as to the condition of his heart.

He made the submission:

My mind is full of the Knowledge of Almighty Allah. I enjoy perfect peace with Him. There is not the least idea of disobedience to Almighty Allah or of wavering from the path of Almighty Allah.

To this His (s.a.w.a.) reply was:

This does not constitute arrogance. By arrogance is implied, that one forsakes the right in favour of the falsehood. In that case one looks upon himself as superior in honour to the others and as having a higher birth. In other words he thinks himself as superior to others in all respects and looking upon others with disdain.

O Abuzar! The greatest number destined for Hell will be of the arrogant people.

## Condemnation of Arrogance

Someone made the submission as to whether anyone shall be saved from arrogance.

His (s.a.w.a.) reply was:

Yes, it is the person who wears coarse woollen cloth, who rides a donkey, who milks his own goat with his own hands and who associates, with the poor people.

O Abuzar! The person who carries his own load of shopping goods from bazar to his house is free from arrogance.

O Abuzar! The person who allows his clothes to hang behind him with an air of arrogance shall not find Almighty Allah looking to him with grace on the Day of Judgment.

O Abuzar! The person who carries his clothing well tucked up and does not leave it dangling like the arrogant people, who mend his own shoes, who place his head before Almighty Allah is free from arrogance.

O Abuzar! It behoves a person who has two suits of apparel, to keep one for him and to gift the other to his poor believing brother.

O Abuzar! In the near future there shall be persons among my Ummat, born and bred up with silver spoon in their mouths, for whom the flatterers shall sing songs. They shall be among the undesirable persons of my Ummat.

O Abuzar! The person who gives up adornment by way of humility for the sake of Almighty Allah, despite his being in a position to enjoy, shall have Almighty Allah favouring him with His grace.

O Abuzar! Lucky is the person who behaves kindly towards the people for the sake of Almighty Allah without there being any worldly defect for the humility or without there arising any fault in his religion or without there being any kind of disgrace in this humility, or without there being any offence having been committed to force him into such humility and who deports himself like a poor person without there being any neediness on his part, who spends his wealth in lawful pursuits, who shows pity to the poor ones and who associates himself with the intelligentsia.

Also lucky is the person who has his inner mind based on righteousness, as well as his appearance and the people remaining immune from his mischief.

Also lucky is the person, who acts upon his knowledge, who spends his savings in the way of Almighty Allah, and who withholds himself from absurdities.

O Abuzar! Wear coarse clothing, so that arrogance may not find its way towards you.

## Condemnation of Arrogance

It should be borne in mind, that arrogance is the worst of all traits. This leads to disgrace in this world and in the life hereafter. The disbelief and hostility of the misguided ones of every nation have sprung up from this very trait. The first act of disobedience to the Almighty Allah sprang from arrogance when Satan refused to prostrate unto Hazrat Adam (a.s.). Thus was he exposed to everlasting curses.

## The Qaaseyah Address

In the sermon known as the sermon of Qaaseyah, Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) has said:

All Glory and Praise is to Almighty Allah, Who took for Himself the apparel of Honour and Majesty. He reserved these qualities for Himself. He made the same unlawful for anyone else. He announced curses on Satan. He made the same unlawful also for anyone who proceeds to compete Him in His attributes.

To start with, He put the Angels to test in this behalf, not withstanding that he know the innermost working of their minds Himself. He said to them thus:

Remember when your Lord said to the Angels: ‘Verily I am about to create man from clay.’

And when I have completed and have breathed into him of my spirit, then fall you prostrating in obedience unto him.

And did fall prostrating in obedience the Angels ail together.

Save Iblis; he was proud and was of the disbelievers.

Said (Allah)! ‘O lblis! What prevented you that you should not prostrate in obeisance to him whom I created with my two hands? Are you proud or are you of the exalted ones?

Said he: ‘I am better then he. You have created me of fire and you did create him from clay.’[[53]](#footnote-53)

Satan became the leader of the arrogant ones and the prejudiced ones. He was the first to invent prejudice. He proceeded to compete with Almighty Allah in his attribute of Power Grandeur the attribute which befits him only.

Satan put on the dress of disobedience, putting off his head the sheet of loyalty and obedience.

Do you not see as to what great extent the Almighty Allah disgraced him for his arrogance? He threw him from his high position to the abyss of degradation. He was accursed in this world. In the hereafter, he shall be doomed to Hell-fire. The Almighty Allah, if he had so willed, would have created Prophet Adam (a.s.) from light that would have dazzled the eyes and human reason would have been wonder struck at it. Its perfume would have enchanted the creation. If he had done so, all would have bowed unto him. The angels would have made submission to him willingly. Almighty Allah put his creation to trial in a number of ways. The reality and the reason underlying were kept hidden from them in order that in such a trial the obedience and the disobedience may be distinguished from one another. Their arrogance was removed thereby.

O People! Learn a lesson therefrom because of his arrogance Almighty Allah treated Iblees in that manner. Because of his disobedience all his good deeds and worship were set at naught. He had worshipped Almighty Allah for six thousand years. Who can then vie with Satan in the matter of worship? Who can then he saved if he gives way to arrogance. Protect yourself against this enemy lest he may involve you in the same mishap like his own. Try to protect yourself against beguilement. Offer obedience to Almighty Allah. Betake yourself to the way of humility. Trample your arrogance and conceit under your feet. Throw off from your neck all ideas of superiority. Prepare yourself against your enemies. Satan and his hordes – with the armament of humility verily, there are armies of Satan both mounted and on foot in every nation. Do not be like Qabeel (Cain) who was arrogant towards his brother although Almighty Allah had not given him any superiority to Habeel (Abel). He was jealous of his brother under a mis-conception of his own superiority His self-exultation created an angry fire in his heart. Satan filled his mind with arrogance. He earned ever-lasting shame by slaughtering his brother. He became a share-holder in the sin of all murderers.

O People! Fear Almighty Allah. Do not be ungrateful for His bounties. Do not be jealous of the merit and greatness of other men. Learn a lesson from the chastisement that the arrogant fellows of the nations gone-by had to undergo. Just imagine; how lowly they are lying in their graves. Seek refuge with Almighty Allah for the things which lead to arrogance, just as you seek Divine protection against the other worldly afflictions. Verily, if Almighty Allah had allowed pride to anyone he would have chosen His Prophets to start with. Almighty Allah has approved humility for them and not conceit. These personages led their lives very humbly on this earth. They rubbed their foreheads on the earth unto Almighty Allah. They spread their arms of kindness and affection for their believer brethren.

The people in general looked upon them as weak persons. In reality, Almighty Allah put them to test. Almighty Allah tried them with poverty, hunger, exertion and fear of enemies.

Thus he put them in the crucible of trial. They were purified like gold through their attitude of submission, obedience, love and sincerity. Do not be led into the idea that Almighty Allah is pleased with the people whom he has given super-abundance of wealth and progeny. Such super-abundance of wealth is a source of trial for them. So is poverty and neediness a form of Divine trial.

Almighty Allah puts to trial the arrogant ones through His own friends. These people, because of their arrogance pay no heed to them on the score of their broken down condition. They look upon them with disdain – Verily, when Prophet Moosa (a.s.) and his brother Haroon (a.s.) went to Firaun (Pharoah) they were dressed in coarse wool. He has the staff in his hand. He told him that his monarchy would stay if he became a Muslim. Firaun (Pharaoh) turned to his courtiers to say,

Behold! What a presumption is this on the part of these two weak persons to condition the stay of my monarchy on my acceptance of Islam, I am the sole monarch of my Domain. Here are the persons, who are wretched beggars. They have no gold bangles to put on their wrists.

## Gold and Riches Carried Great Weight with Him

He looked down upon them in their poor condition with coarse woollen clothing’s, if Almighty Allah had so willed. He would have granted His Prophets limitless treasures of gold, mines of jewels, number of gardens, palaces and riches. The entire creation including the animals, the birds, the genii and mankind of the Universe would have been made subservient to them.

This would have, however, stultified the whole scheme of trial. They could not have won their title to Heavenly recompense. Those who accepted their prophethood would have also failed to win their credit for their success in the test. How could the believers have achieved their title for recompense for their obedience? The nonbelievers would not have deserved any chastisement for belying them.

All-wise Almighty Allah sent His Prophets (a.s.) to His creatures with strong determination. He kept them in a state which was apparently weak. Their hearts and their eyes however were rich with contentment. Apparently they suffered from poverty and indigence. Their hearts, however, were filled with Divine grace. Suppose; Almighty Allah had gifted them with power and pelf which no one could withstand. Suppose; they were monarchs in their lands. People of the world would have bowed down to them automatically in their greed for their power, pelf, rank and privileges. They would have willingly obeyed them. There would have been no chance for them of arrogance and rebelliousness. They would have professed Faith in them, not however, with an attitude of sincerity and a sense of gratitude for Divine blessings, but under fear of their wrath and torture or for the craving for power and pelf. Their acts of goodness which have been divided between the pleasures of Almighty Allah on the one hand and urgings of their own ego on the other, Almighty Allah, however, willed that His Prophets (a.s.) and His commands should be respected in an attitude of sincerity and subservience without the least taint of doubt therein, thus were His commandments to be acted upon. Thus were the men required to express their humility to His Majesty? Under these circumstances, the greater the intensity of the test, the more re-compence was to be earned. Don’t you see that the Almighty Allah has tested all His bondmen from Adam (a.s.) down to the Last of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Hajj as the means to inculcate humility and to shed away arrogance, a structure made of stones which can neither benefit nor harm anyone was sanctified to be His own house. The stones can neither see nor hear. The hours are a place of peace and safety to mankind. This was inducted on a tract of stony land, which is the most un-even place which has very narrow passes around it. There are impassable mountain ranges. In the vast desert there was neither any water-spring nor any river, nor any well, nor any water channel. For away from the towns and human habitats in a jungle where even the beasts cannot live, how difficult for a human being is to get to such a spot.

Almighty Allah, however, commanded Prophet Adam (a.s.) and his progeny to come to that place, however, farther from it they resided. They crossed the rivers and the jungles to get to it, they should circumambulate round that house with their dust-laden faces and broken-down conditions. They were to put off their usual dresses in favour of a sheet of cloth to cover their bodies. Their hair was to disfigure their appearance. All this constituted grave testing. Almighty Allah proclaimed it to be a source of attaining his grace and Paradise. If He had willed, He would have chosen a land of fragrant green verdure. The region would have been flat with springs, water courses and fruit trees of varied kinds. The place could have been surrounded by towns and habitats. The roads would have been safe and easily negotiable. Under such conditions, however, the testing would not have been consummated adequately. It would not have deserved such recompense.

Almighty Allah could have made the walls of the Holy Kaa’ba from Turkish Jewels. He could have illuminated it with His own Divine light. The people would have been enchanted thereby. They would not have withstood Satan successfully.

Satan could not have beguiled mankind. Almighty Allah, however, tests His Creation by such varied kinds of hardship. He requires them to worship him under all conditions of hardships and afflictions in order that their hearts may be purged of all conceit and arrogance. They should be accustomed to obedience and loyalty to Him such hard rites of worship have been prescribed as the gates to His grace and compassion. He has made them the source of His mercy and forgiveness.

The same is the case with the things which He has proclaimed as unlawful. The Almighty Allah has prescribed prayers, fasting and payment of the poor-rate in order that they may serve as a source of tranquillity to mans bodily organs and that they may be a symbol of surrender to Him. They should serve to bring tears to the eyes of man, to instill in him an attitude of humility. Their hearts should thereby be purged of all defects or arrogance and conceit they put their foreheads before Almighty Allah on the earth as token of their humbleness. They rub their organs on the earth by way of surrender to Him. Under the commandments of Almighty Allah fasting on the part of men, draws their bellies to their backs. In obedience to him they expend their money in helping the needy persons with their Zakat. Just things over it, what steps have Almighty Allah taken to uproot all ideas of conceit and arrogance from the minds of the men.

The address of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) is very lengthy. Only a few excerpts have been given. One should study that address from one end to the other to become acquainted with the evils of arrogance.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) was asked about the lowest stage of disbelief. His reply was in one word ‘Arrogance’.

According to another tradition, arrogance of every sort is hidden within the man’s frame. Pride is, however, specified only for Almighty Allah. Anyone who takes to pride is disgraced severely by Almighty Allah. It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

Honour and pride are specified only for Almighty Allah. The person who wants a share therein shall be cast into Hell, headlong.

According to another tradition, it is related:

The person with the least amount of pride shall never be admitted to Paradise.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

For persons given to pride there is a valley in Hell called ‘Saqar’. It complained of intense heat to Almighty Allah and sought permission to ease its breath. With the intensity of its breathing the whole of Hell was lit up with fire.

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

Almighty Allah shall resurrect the proud people in the form of tiny ants. They shall be trampled under the feet of the creation till such time, as Almighty Allah finishes the reckoning.

On another tradition, it is narrated:

Every man has a bridle in his mouth, which is held in the hand of an angel. When a person gives way to pride, the angel draws the reigns and tells him to be lowly and that Almighty Allah may disgrace him.

Such a person continues in his feeling of superiority. He is, however, looked upon as an inferior by the people in general. If he betakes himself to humility, the Almighty Allah raises him in honour and the angel encourages him, to be raised in status as having been honoured by the Almighty Allah. Such a person regards himself ever more humble. In the eyes of the people in general, he enjoys supreme honour and respect.

It should be borne in mind that by ‘Pride’ (arrogance) is implied that one looks upon himself as superior. He tries to exhibit his superiority to the people. There are several kinds of this attitude.

(i) The worst kind of pride is that which leads to disbelief. Many traditions refer to this kind of pride. In this, the man is arrogant to Almighty Allah. He declines to obey and to be loyal to Him. He declines to admit the excellence of the prophets, the Imams and the righteous scholars in an attitude of disobedience. The disbeliever shows this kind of pride against the Prophets and their rightful appointees. Their superiority complex stands in the way of their obedience to them.

Because of their perverted mental blindness, they look upon them as inferior to themselves.

(ii) The second kind of pride is that a person looks down upon other people in an attitude of superiority to himself.

(iii) Another kind of pride springs from the second kind.

One builds palatial buildings. He puts on costly clothing. He keeps pedigree horses as his mounts. He enjoys a number of servants by way of pride against his poorer contemporaries.

(iv) Another kind of pride is that one expects an attitude of humility on the part of others, while his own attitude is that of superiority and pride towards others. He wishes that others should humiliate themselves before him, as a token of his honour and prestige.

He likes to assume an especially high position in an assembly under the idea of his self-grandeur. Performance of virtuous deed which interferes with the idea of his self superiority is left undone by him. In all his movements he displays his sense of superiority.

These different kinds of pride are interlinked with each other closely. There are others as well. They stem from them. There are number of traditions on the subject.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The worst of arrogance is for a man to look down upon others and to regard adherence to righteousness as a folly.

Someone asked him as to how the acts of righteousness are dubbed as a folly by anyone? His (a.s.) reply was:

It means that the person ties to befool the righteous people, while he himself is ignorant of what is right. Thus he taunts them.

According to another tradition, someone asked him:

It like palatable food, I like perfume. I like riding a pedigree horse. I like to possess slaves. Does such an attitude imply pride and arrogance?

His reply was:

He accursed tyrant is he who looks down upon other people and who dubs the right attitude as ignorance.

The person made the submission again: “I do not dub an attitude of righteousness as ignorance, but what it means by looking own upon others”?

His (a.s.) reply was:

It means that one holds other people insignificant and one tries to impress them with one’s superiority and aggression. These are the people who are known to be transgressors.

According to another narration it is narrated that He (a.s.) said:

This person having the minutest practicle of pride in his heart shall not enter Paradise at all.

The narrator says that on hearing this, I uttered the words:

Verily, we are Allah’s and verily to Allah we shall return.[[54]](#footnote-54)

He asked him as to the relevance of these words.

He made the submission, if it is so as you have said is there a heart which is free from pride?

His (a.s.) reply was:

You have not fully understood what I meant. I mean that by the term ‘pride’ is implied that there are persons who deny and who are arrogant towards the attitude of righteousness.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is reported that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) passed by an assembly of people who had gathered at a place. He enquired as to the purpose of their gathering there. Someone told him, that there was an insane person on the spot, who was playing strange pranks. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) remarked:

He is not mad but he is suffering from mental derangement. But he is the one who can be taken for a mad man. He struts about. He looks to the right and left in an attitude of conceit. He shrugs his shoulders proudly. He exhibits his superiority complex. All the same, he looks forward to enter Paradise.

May be that he is disposed to disobey Almighty Allah. The people are not safe against his mischief-mongering. They do not expect any good of him. This constitutes his derangement, from which he is suffering malevolently.

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

The time will come when the people of my Ummat shall walk proudly. They shall shrug their shoulders with arrogance.

Slaves from Iran and Rome shall be serving them. There shall ensue among them strife and fighting against each other.

According to another tradition, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) related that Angel Jibraeel (a.s.) said to him:

The perfume of Paradise shall be sensed from a distance of thousand years, but some people shall not sense it at all. It is the person who is disobedient to his parents. It is the one who is oblivious of his obligations of kinship. It is the aged adulterer. It is the person who allows his clothing to dangle in an attitude of pride. It is the person who misleads persons with his mischief. It is the person who displays his deeds of goodness to others. It is the person who is overwhelmed by worldly allurements.

On the basis of reliable authority, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is narrated to have said:

The person who rears up a building with a view to gain fame and showiness shall have that building converted into a chain of fire for his neck of the length of the seventh zone of the Earth. He shall then be cast into Hell.

The companions asked him as to what was meant by rearing a building with a view to showiness and fame. His reply was:

It means that constructions are in excess of one’s needs and one builds them out of pride.

He forbade everyone to walk about in a proud manner.

He (s.a.w.a.) added:

The person who gives airs to himself by putting on fine clothing shall be thrown into the abyss of Hell in the company of Korah, (Qaroon). He was the first person to take pride in his riches, for which reason Almighty Allah caused the earth to swallow him up together with his palaces.

He (s.a.w.a.) added:

The person, who gives airs to himself, is like the one who challenges the Majesty of Almighty Allah.

He (s.a.w.a.) added:

The person, who looks dawn upon a beggar and assaults him, shall be resurrected in the tiny figure of a man as small as a tiny ant in size. He shall be cast into Hell.

## The Treatment of Pride

It should be borne in mind, that there are certain forms of treatment of pride. The foremost among them is for the man to ponder over his own origin and ending. One should think of ones’ puny form and fragility of his body, which make this temporary life the target of danger every moment. Certainly, death shall annihilate him in a short while. One should have realization of ones faults and weaknesses. One should look to one’s ignorance and one’s helplessness.

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

I wonder that the person, who gives airs to himself, has been created from a tiny sperm. He shall be converted into a stinking carcase. Between the two stages, he is unaware as to what is to happen to him the next moment.

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

I wonder at Adam’s son. He was to begin with a tiny drop. In his ending he shall be a stinking carcase. Between these two states, he contains within his body urine and faeces. All the same he is arrogant.

A second stop in the treatment of pride is that one should adopt such deeds as engender humility. For instance, one may take to the society of the poor and the needy persons. One should take a lower seat in an assembly. One should avoid the society of the elite. One should adopt such deeds as contravene the habit of pride.

It is narrated: ‘The person who wants to shun pride should take his meals in the company of his own servants. One should milk his own milch cattle.’

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The person is free from the defect of conceit if he patches his own garments. He mends his own shoes. He carries home from the market his daily purchases.

The third method of treating this malady is to think that the consequence of pride goes against the proud ones. He thinks that pride will bring him prestige. Experience, however, goes against it. The words of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) convince us that its consequence is disgrace in this life and in the life to come. On the contrary, humility and modesty spell honour both in this world and the next world. He should also meditate on the attitude of the religious leaders. They behave humbly and modestly. One should study these traditions which condemn pride. One should realise the excellence of humility.

## Reformation of Mind

One should not rest contented with outward acts of goodness. One should strive to reform one’s inner mind.

It is reported that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) hinted:

Goodness in the open and vileness in one’s own mind is a kind of hypocrisy.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to Nauf Bakali:

O Nauf! Never deport yourself in a manner that you display your acts of goodness to the people while in your mind you might be thinking of disobedience to Almighty Allah. If you do it, you will be disgraced by Almighty Allah.

In another tradition, it is narrated that He (a.s.) said:

The person who strives to reform his inner mind, shall have Almighty Allah reforming his entire appearance. The person who arranges matters between himself and Almighty Allah shall find Almighty Allah arranging his affairs among the people.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated of Hazrat Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) as having said:

The actions of the person in the Scales, on the Day of Judgment, shall carry light weight if his appearance is better than his inner self.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The Almighty Allah shall make known to the people, the person’s acts, who conceal his acts from the people. He shall, thereby, gain great happiness; The Almighty Allah shall make known to the people the acts which one tries to conceal which contravene the pleasure of the Almighty Allah. Such acts shall be the cause of his disgrace.

According to another tradition, it is narrated:

Suppose the person who adorns himself with the acts which are approved by Almighty Allah, just by way of showing the same to the people, while in his inner mind, he does not pay heed to them but he commits such acts as are disliked by Almighty Allah. When he comes before Almighty Allah, He shall be wrathful towards him.

There are a number of traditions on this point.

It should be borne in mind, that one should keep both his outside and inside on the righteous basis. One should try to be as good within, as he is in appearance. It should not happen that one’s exterior may become as vile as his inner mind. One should avoid the accursing finger so as not to lead others into suspicion thereby. The atheists say such things about the mystics.

Apparent sins are more heinous than the secret sins. The secret sins are more readily pardoned than the apparent sins. There are a number of traditions on this topic, some are those, which have been referred to already, and it stands to reason as well.

Suppose, a persons disobeys his master without letting him know. The master shall not be offended at him by such an act of disobedience as he would be if he were disobeyed openly. By his open disobedience he is humiliating his master in the presence of the people around him. It has also been forbidden, for a person to expose himself to the allegations of disobedience by going to places of accusation.

There are a number of traditions on this subject too, some of which have already been referred to.

## Behaviour at Ones Own Praise

When a man hears his own praise he should not become proud but with humility he should offer his thanks, and keep on trying to make that his principle of practice for which he had been praised. On this question, there are the teachings of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his descendants:

(1) In the prayer named after Kumail which is recited on every Thursday night, Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) says: “How good were those things of which I was not worthy, but you gave them renown (in my life time) and spread them”.

(2) Whenever anyone praised Ameerul Momineen (a.s.), he used to exclaim: “O Lord, you know me even better than myself, and I know myself better than those who praise me, so whatever is their opinion about me, make me better than that and forgive those things which they do not know”.

## Forgiveness and Forbearance

This quality too is one of the most exalted qualities of man, would that Allah exalted every Muslim, nay every human being with its grandeur. The existing uncleanliness and degradation of the world would have been some what lessened thereby, and our lives in this world would have been relatively satisfying.

And the recompense for an evil shall be an ill-return likes unto it, but (if) one pardons and amends, his reward is incumbent on Allah; Verily He loves not the unjust.[[55]](#footnote-55)

Adopt you moderation, and enjoin virtue and turn you away from the ignorant ones.[[56]](#footnote-56)

## Continuation of the Hadees of Abuzar

O Abuzar! The person who does not possess the three qualities shall be at a loss on the Day of Judgment. They are:

(i) Virtue by means of which one has been able to avoid the unlawful things ordained by Almighty Allah.

(ii) Forbearance, by means of which he has been warding off the stupidity of the fools.

(iii) Good manners with which he has behaved towards other people.

It should be borne in mind, that forbearance is a quality of the friends of Almighty Allah, the prophets (a.s.) and the Imams (a.s.). One possessing this quality forgives the mischief and evil of others and one exercises control over one’s anger. Reason and the Shariat testify to the excellence thereof.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said in an address:

Shall I tell you the good manners which carry great worth in this life and in the life hereafter? You should adopt an attitude of forgiveness towards the person who offends you. You should be compassionate and well-behaved towards the person who is cruel to you. You should do well to the person who does you evil. You should behave generously towards the person who deprives you of his generosity.

It is narrated that Imam Ali Ibnul Husain (a.s.) said:

Almighty Allah shall gather together the moral equipment’s of all the Creation on the Day of Judgment. An announcer shall make an announcement on behalf of Almighty Allah:

Where are the people of generosity?

On hearing this, there shall come forward a body of men. The Angels shall question them as to their excellence and goodness. They shall say that they endeavoured to preserve the link of friendship with those who sundered such link and that they used to share with those who deprived them of their shares, and that they forgave those who oppressed them. The Angels shall then tell them to go to Paradise for such acts.

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

To take upon one’s self the toils of repentance for forgiveness is easier than the repentance for torment and chastisement.

It is narrated that Imam Ali Ibnul Husain (a.s.) said:

There is no draught more palatable to me as the draught of curbing anger by pardoning the person who might have offended you.

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said about his father having told him:

Your father has no superior type of comfort and enlightenment to the control over anger which has fortitude as its end.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The person who controls his anger is honoured by Almighty Allah in this life and in the life hereafter. Almighty Allah Himself speaks of them:

..…..and who restrain (their) anger and forgive (the faults of) of men, for Almighty Allah loves those who do well (to others).[[57]](#footnote-57)

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

The person who controls his anger despite the fact that he has the competence for revenge shall have his heart filled with peace, Faith and Divine pleasure by Almighty Allah.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Exercise patience at the oppression of your enemies by reminding yourselves of the bounties of Almighty Allah. Verily, the person who disobeys Almighty Allah by antagonising you shall not have a better recompense than yourself; in as much as you have made submission to Almighty Allah, as far as he is concerned.

It is narrated that Imam Ali Ibnul Husain (a.s.) said:

I like the person who exercises forbearance at the time of anger.

## The Recompense for Forbearance

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

Almighty Allah befriends the person of modesty and of forbearance.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Almighty Allah has never honoured any person for his ignorance and ill temper. He has never disgraced anyone for his forbearance.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Man has a great supporter in forbearance. If you happen not to be possessing forbearance, you should force yourself to acquire it.

In another tradition He (a.s.) is reported to have said:

In a quarrel between two persons two Angels step in. To the person who has been unreasonable and foolish, they say, ‘You have had your say and you yourself deserve all that. You shall have to suffer soon the consequences of what you have said.’

To the person who has put up forbearingly and patiently will all this, they say, “You have behaved forbearingly. If you stick steadfastly to your attitude you shall receive the recompense therefore from Almighty Allah. He shall soon forgive you”.

In case the second of the two has also behaved in the same unreasonable manner, both the Angels go back to the Heavens. They leave their case to the scribe Angels.

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

We are of the Ahlul Bait (a.s.) of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). We have the magnanimity to forgive the one who works aggression against us.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Prophet Eesa (a.s.) advised Prophet Yahya (a.s.): ‘When the people condemn you for any evil, if the same evil happens to be in you, you should know that they have only reminded you of your sin. Ask for forgiveness of your sin from Almighty Allah.’

In case they ascribe to you a fault which does not exist in you know that you have earned recompense without having told for that.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said:

Three persons must see to it, that they do not avenge themselves against three persons.

(i) The gentle person of good origin should not wreak vengeance against a mean fellow of low origin.

(ii) Forbearing persons of humility should not avenge themselves against a stupid fellow.

(iii) The virtuous and righteous should not avenge himself against a vile scoundrel.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Almighty Allah shall grant Hoor-ul-Ein, on the Day of Judgment, to the person who possesses three qualities:

(i) Control over his anger.

(ii) Putting up with sabre wounds received in the way of Almighty Allah.

(iii) Abandoning the unlawful things when one has access thereto for fear of Almighty Allah.

According to another tradition it is narrated that Imam (a.s.) said:

The person who possesses the following three qualities has his Faith perfect.

(i) Forbearance against aggression.

(ii) Control over anger.

(iii) Forgiveness of faults committed lay offenders. He shall receive bounties of Paradise to an unlimited extent from Almighty Allah. Almighty Allah shall accept his intercession in favour of such a large number of people as there is the number of the people of the tribes of Mazar and Rabeeah (these two tribes are known for their large numbers).

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

The person who controls himself on the occasions of went; fear and anger shall have Hell-fire made unlawful for him.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The person who does not possess the following qualities has nothing to do with me or Almighty Allah.

The holy companions asked him as to what these three qualities were? He (s.a.w.a.) replied:

(i) Forbearance whereby the ignorance of the stupid and the ignoramus can be warded off.

(ii) Good manners which enable one to put up with other people.

(iii) Righteousness which restrains a man from the disobedience to Almighty Allah.

## In Praise of Forgiveness and Forbearance

According to another narration, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is narrated to have said:

The quality of forgiveness leads to enhanced honour. As such, one should forgive the faults of others. The Almighty Allah shall enhance the honour of such a person.

According to another tradition, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The person who curbs his anger shall have his heart filled with the light of Faith by Almighty Allah. Almighty Allah enhances the honour of a person in this life and in the life of the Hereafter, who pardons a man who has done him some injury.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was asked by someone as to who was the most powerful and energetic person. The reply was:

He is the person who is very forbearing and very forgiving.

To the question as to who was the very forbearing, His (a.s.) reply was:

It is the person who never yields to anger.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Forbearance fits most beautifully on a person who has the power to take revenge. The most farsighted is the person who controls his anger.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated in the exegesis of a Quranic verse that one should forgive the faults and sins of other without taking revenge and chastisement.

It is narrated that Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) as having said:

Prophet Moosa (a.s.) made the submission to Almighty Allah as to the recompense of a person who bears patiently and abuses and persecution on the part of other persons for His pleasure.

He received the reply from the Almighty Allah:

His recompense is that I shall help him in the time of distress on the Day of Judgment.

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

Almighty Allah, in a revelation to a certain prophet, commanded as follows:

On going out in the morning on the day following, you should eat the first thing that you find. Conceal the second thing that you find there accept the third which may come to you. Do not disappoint the fourth which you meet. Flee away from the fifth which you come across.

When the day dawned, the prophet came out to see before his eyes a mountain standing. He began to ponder as to the way; he could eat it up as required by the Divine command. He was struck with wonder at all this. He, however, thought, that Almighty Allah would not have commanded if he had not given the power to do it. Under this idea he proceeded forward with the object to eat it up. The nearer he came to it, the smaller the mountain became. When he came very close upon it, he found it to be no bigger than a morsel of food, which he ate up. He found it to be so delicious that nothing had been so found by him before.

He advanced forward to find that there lay a plate of gold before him. He dug a hole in the earth to conceal it there, as he had been commanded. He bent forward and concealed it there but on looking back, he found that the golden plate had come out of the earth. He thought to himself that he had nothing to do with it, as he had complied with the Divine commandment. On going forward, he saw a bird flying and a hawk in hot chase of it. The bird sought for refuge with him. The prophet opened his sleeve to give shelter to the bird as required by the Divine command. The hawk approached the prophet to say that it should not be disappointed of his prey in whose chase it had been busy for a very long time past. The prophet had the command not to disappoint the fourth thing, which he may find. He cut a peace of flesh from his thigh and gave it to the hawk. On going forward, he found a decaying carcase of an animal. Immediately, on its sight, he fled away from it as required by the Divine command. He came back.

At night Almighty Allah revealed to him that having complied with the Divine commands, he should know about the reality of the objects, which he had come across. The mountain represented one’s anger. One who is incited by anger, does not know himself or his wrathfulness. If, however, he controls his anger, cognises his own reality and curbs the anger, the results is like the palatable morsel which he relished. The golden plate represents good actions to find their manifestations, however hard a man may try to conceal them. The Almighty Allah thereby grants honour to this man in the world and recompense in this life in the Hereafter.

The bird represents the man who gives good advice which should be accepted, as it is tendered.

The hawk represents the person who comes to you with a need. He is, in no case, to be disappointed.

Stinking carcase represents backbiting. Backbiting and carping should be shunned as one shuns the decaying carcase.

If you want to cognise the excellence of forbearance, and of the control over anger, you should study the lives of the prophets. They received severe injuries at the hands of the people. They underwent great distress because of the harsh words and vulgarity of the misled persons. Particularly, one should study the great hardships of ill-mannered speech and insolence to which the non-believing Quraish subjected the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the attitude of forbearance and patience which he showed to them.

Not even once, he uttered an Imprecation against them. His words constituted a mine of the highest moral attributes, while the Arabs were of the lowest level of the society. He behaved towards them with perfect mildness, while on the part of these ill-mannered persons, there was hurled at him all sorts of vulgarity. Nonetheless he forgave them all.

## The Forbearance of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)

It is narrated of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said; that he was one day, on his way. A rustic of the desert came from behind him. He caught him by his wrapping cloth sheet. He pulled it with so much force that his neck became lacerated. He demanded of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to give him something, He looked at him, smiled and gave him a lot of money. The Almighty Allah praised him thus in this context:

And most certainly you stand on sublime morality.[[58]](#footnote-58)

On the fall of Mecca most of the aggressors from among the Quraishites fell into his hands as captives. They came to him in the Holy Mosque in disarmed condition. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) stood at the gate of the Holy Kaa’ba. The people gathered there waited for severe reprisals. They asked him as to how he would treat them. His reply to them was:

In the manner of Prophet Yusuf (a.s.) treatment towards his brothers. There is no blame on you. Almighty Allah shall forgive you if you accept Islam.

It is narrated that Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) said:

The Jew woman who had mixed poison in the meat she presented to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was brought before him. He asked her as to the purpose she had done it.

She said that she had done that to know whether he was an ordinary king or a true prophet. In the latter case, he would not receive any damage, while in the former case, he would be destroyed and thus leave the people in peace. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) pardoned her and led her go.

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

To a Jew some Dirhams were due from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). He came one day and demanded the payment. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) told him that he did not possess the money at the time. He said that he would not go without getting the payment nor would he allow him to move from the place. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) told him that he would not move away and that he could have payment when it could be arranged.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) remained sitting with the Jew till it was the time for the Afternoon prayers. He would not allow him to move for the prayers even. He performed his prayers at the same very spot. Then the two evening prayers, these two he also performed at the same spot. The night was spent there on the spot. In the morning too, the Jew did not let him move. He had to perform even his morning prayers at the same spot. On seeing that the Jew was not prepared to depart, the companions began to threaten him. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) asked them as to why they behaved like that. They replied that the person was not allowing him to move about.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to them:

Almighty Allah has not sent me to oppress people nor do I oppress the person who is under my coverage, nor do I allow any oppression to anyone who is not in my care.

The Jew gladly accepted Islam at day-dawn. He offered half of his property to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to be spent in the way of Almighty Allah and said: ‘I did this to test the truth of your prophethood. I have studied in the Torah, in respect of yourself as mentioned in the name of Mohammad Ibne Abdullah, birth place Mecca, migration to Medina, as being neither harsh of temperament, nor ill-mannered, nor using any obscene language and speaking to the people in subdued tones. I now bear witness that:

‘Allah is one, and that you are His true prophet. Here is my property, make use of it as you choose.’

It is stated that the Jew was a very wealthy man.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) added:

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had, as his bedding, his own cloak. His pillow was made of the skin of sheep filled with the peelings of a date-tree. The cloak, one day, was folded two-ply to make it soft bedding for him, so that he may be more comfortable thereby, at which he remarked:

My prayers have been delayed tonight because of soft bedding. It is henceforth to be spread without folding it.

## Forbearance of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.)

It is quite well-known that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) himself received great trouble at the hands of his own companions as well as from the companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Not withstanding his power of authority, he forgave all of them. All turned against him in the battle of Jamah, Many of his companions were martyred. A number of vulgarities were shown to him. The battle ended and he forgave them all, not withstanding that he could put them to chastisement, as he, had chosen. He bade farewell with all honour to Aeysha, the leader of the every force. For her company he sent seventy ladies with her.

Not withstanding the numerous acts of insolence on the part of Marwan bin Hakam and the actual harm that he did to him, he was set free. Abdullah bin Zubair was taken captive, but he was set free, although he had been his inveterate enemy. So was his treatment at Nahrwan to the Kharijites. The accursed Ibne Muljim had inflicted a fatal wound on him. He was brought before him. He did not pass orders of death against him. He even commanded Imam Hasan (a.s.) not to give him more than one stroke, of sword nor to cut off his nose or ears. He was given the same food as he himself ate.

Thousands of Kharijites living in his time God forbid dubbed him openly as a non-believer. They gesticulated in all sorts of insolent ways to make fun of him, he himself always forgave them. He did not do them any harm.

It is narrated that one day Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) went to the market to the traders in dates. There he saw a slave girl weeping there. He asked her as to the cause of her grief. She made her submission:

I was given a Dirham by my owner to buy dates for him. I bought the dates and took them to my owner, who did not approve of the purchase. He ordered me to take the same back and return to him. I have come to return the same but the shopkeeper does not take them back.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to him:

Why do you not return the money and take back the dates from her. She is a helpless slave girl.

The person did not recognise him. He stood up and in his anger hurled a fist blow on his chest. The people took him to task for having behaved towards Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) like that. The shopkeeper began to tremble. His face turned pale. He at once took back the dates and gave back the coin to slave girl. He then made the submission to Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (a.s.), to ask if he was then pleased with him.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) replied:

You have discharged your obligation to one who had right to it, and I am pleased with you.

It is narrated of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) that he had a slave. He called him several times without a response from him. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) came out and found that the man was standing behind the door. He asked him as to why he had not responded to his call. He made the frank admission that it was due to laziness on his part and partly due to the fear that he might be chastised. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) expressed his gratitude to Almighty Allah for having given him a character which makes other men not to apprehend any harshness on his part. He set the slave free at the spot.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was engaged in fighting against Amr ibne Abde Wad. He sprawled him on the ground but did not slay him. Some of the companions blamed him of losing the opportunity.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) told them that there must be a reason for it, which Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) himself would reveal. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) once again threw him on the ground and slew him He came back to the companions. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) asked him as to the reason for not having slain his adversary on the first occasion. He (a.s.) replied:

Amr, in the first place had used obscene language. He threw his sputum on my face. I feared, lest my slaying him might fall under my egotistic impulse. It may amount to a sort of revenge for having offended me. The anger was subdued and the impression removed that it might be due to the impulse of the ego. When the anger was subdued, I did slay him for the pleasure of the Almighty Allah.

It is narrated that once Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) while on his way, saw a woman carrying a water-skin on her shoulder. He took the water-skin and told her that he would carry it to her home. In the way, he asked her of her domestic affairs.

She said, that her husband had been sent by Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) on a Military campaign, where he had lost his life. I now live with my two orphan minor children. I have no source of income. “I get some wages by doing menial work in some houses. Thus do I bring up my children?”

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) left the water-skin at her place and returned home All through the night he was worried. In the morning he took a big bag, put in it some flour, dates, meat and some other eatables and carried it to the woman’s house. His companions offered to carry the same for him but he posed the question as to who would carry the burden for him on the Day of Judgment.

Supposing in this world some people carried it for him. Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) came to the door of the woman with the load of eatables. He knocked at the door and on being asked as to his identity by the woman she was told that he was the same person who had carried her water-skin to her home and that he had brought some eatables for her children. The woman opened the door and prayed that the Almighty Allah may be pleased with him. She added: ‘The Almighty Allah shall, on the Day of Judgment settle between me and Ali (a.s.).’

He (a.s.) said to her:

I want to earn some recompense. Let me add ferment to the flour and then (shall bake some loaves of bread for your children. Meanwhile you may look after your children, or I may look after the children and you may add ferment and bake loaves of bread.

The woman told him that she could do the job of adding ferment to the flour and baking the bread better than himself. She asked him to look after the children. Meanwhile the woman busied herself in fermenting the flour. Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) busied himself with cooking the meat. He was feeding the children with dates and small pieces of meat by way of small morsels in their mouths. He spoke to the children to forgive him for his remissness on the part of Ali (a.s.). The fermented flour was ready. The woman asked him to light the fire, in the oven. When Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was lighting the fire, a woman of the neighbourhood who recognised him came upon the scene. She cursed the woman for having employed Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) in such a job. On hearing this woman fell at the feet of Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). She said to him as to how she would show her face to Almighty Allah for this affair whereupon Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to her:

Do not be put to shame. It is for me to be put to shame for an explanation to the Almighty Allah.

It is narrated that – Zarar bin Zamorah once want to Muawiya, who asked him to speak about the attributes of Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). He wished to be excused. On being pressed further, he spoke:

By Allah! Ali Ibne Abi Talib (a.s.) possessed great foresight. He was a hero of heroes in the battlefield of the Holy wars? Whatever he said was always based on truth. His orders were always just. Numerous springs of Divine knowledge flowed from him. There was an ocean of wisdom and gnosis sparkling from his mind. He had a disdain for the embellishment of the world. He busied himself, during dark nights, in the worship of Almighty Allah. His eyes were always welling up with tears for fear of Almighty Allah. His thoughts and ideas comprehended a distant future. He was always seen in contemplation. He addressed his ego by pointing to it with his finger and always recited hymns of Almighty Allah He preferred coarse and cheap clothing for himself. He preferred in his food, those articles which possessed little Zest. By Allah! He looked on among our ownselves. He never gave airs to himself. He would have me sit by himself, whenever I visited him. He gave fitting reply to whatever I enquired of him. He behaved towards us on equal terms, yet due to the awe which he inspired in ourselves, we could ill-afford to speak to him. We could hardly look upto his face; such was his spiritual grandeur. When he smiled, his teeth sparked like gems. He had a soft corner in his heart for the people of piety and virtue. He was a friend of the down-trodden. The people of wealth and high position could not expect any favour from him. The weak and the depressed people never apprehended any perversion of justice on his part. By Almighty Allah!

I found him standing in the worship of Almighty Allah speaking in such anguish and restlessness to Almighty Allah, as if he had been stung by a snake or a scorpion. He wept bitterly as if he had been afflicted with a severe calamity. I feel as if I hear his voice still in my ears, even now. He would repeat:

O Worldly allurement! You have tried to beguile me; you have tried that I should be allured, by you. Fie, Fie! Get begone from before me. Offer your beguilement to someone else. I have nothing to do with you. I have divorced you thrice and I never mean to revoke it. Yours is the small span of life. You are a mere insignificant object. All longings for you are meaningless. Alas! There is a little of provisions for the long and solitary journey ahead. There have to be overcome a number of dangerous stages.

On hearing this, tears welled up in Muawiyya eyes and there was uproar in the whole of the assembly. They all cried out: ‘By Almighty Allah! Abul Hasan was exactly as you have portrayed him. How do you feel the separation from him?’

Zarar made a reply: ‘I feel like a person whose only son has been slaughtered on his chest.’

He wept a great deal and left the assembly weeping bitterly.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated by Abuzar (r.a.):

Janab Ja’far Ibne Abi Talib (a.s.) brought a slave girl from Abyssinia for presentation to Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). She was worth four thousand dirhams. She managed his household. Hazrat Fatema (a.s.) found that Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was lying with his hand on her head-covering. She apprehended something unexpected. Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to her on oath, that there was nothing wrong with the matter.

Hazrat Fatema (a.s.) asked permission to go to her father, which Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) gave her. She had hardly reached in the presence of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), when Jibraeel (a.s.) arrived with salutations and the message from the Almighty Allah;:

Hazrat Fatema (a.s.) is coming to you with a complaint against Ali (a.s.). You should not give credence to anything against Ali (a.s.).

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), on the arrival of Hazrat Fatema (a.s.) said:

You have come with a complaint against Ali (a.s.).

She affirmed the point. On oath of the Almighty Allah, he told her to go back at once and to tell him that she was in agreement with him in everything even if it is unpalatable to him. Hazrat Fatema (a.s.) came back and repeated the same point thrice to Ameerul Momineen (a.s.).

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said to her:

You have complained about me to my friend. I am put to shame in the eyes of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). I take the Almighty Allah as my witness, that I free the slave girl just now. I give in charity the poor and needy people in Medina all the four thousand Dirhams which I possess.

He then put on his cloak and shoes and came to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Hazrat Jibraeel (a.s.) arrived on the scene at the same time with salutations from the Almighty Allah and message:

Tell Ali (a.s.) that in return for seeking the pleasure of Hazrat Fatema (a.s.) by freeing the slave girl, I grant him full authority over Paradise.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) then announced that he was the disburser of Paradise and of the Hell-fire.

It is narrated of Hazrat Sadiq (a.s.) as having said:

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) found one day Hazrat Fatema (a.s.) as having a coarse sheet of cloth, just as is used as a covering for the camel. She was working at the grinding stones with one hand. With the other, she was giving suck to her son. He was moved to tears at her condition and advised her to put up with the hardships of this world, in return for which she would receive everlasting comforts in the Hereafter.

She replied that she did recite hymns of the Almighty Allah and that she was grateful to Him for His great bounties.

A revelation was conveyed from Almighty Allah:

And soon will give you your Lord that you shall be well pleased.[[59]](#footnote-59)

## Forbearance of Hazrat Imam Hasan (a.s.)

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated by a person from Syria who saw Imam Hasan (a.s.) riding through a street of Medina. He began to chide the Imam (a.s.). When he had his say, Hazrat Imam Hasan (a.s.) turned to him, and saluting him smiling said to him:

O Sheikh! You appear to be a stranger to this place. You are perhaps working under a misconception. If you want riches, I shall provide you so that you may become rich. I shall provide what you ask for. I shall guide you if you had a mind to it. If you want a mount, I shall supply you one.

If you are hungry, I shall feed you. If you want clothing, I shall offer you the best of apparel.

If you are in straitened circumstances, I shall give you enough money to make you well-to-do. If you are in fear of pursuit by someone, I shall offer you refuge. In short, I shall fulfil any need you may have. If you come along with me, I shall take you as a guest and I provide you all comforts that you may require, because I have a spacious house with all sorts of comforts.

On sensing such kindness on the part of Imam (a.s.), he wept at his own condition and cried out:

I bear witness that you are the rightful Caliph on the earth. I realise now that Almighty Allah knows best as to whom to select for His prophethood and Imamate. I had entertain been inveterate hostility more than anyone else, towards your father and yourself. I, however, have now been converted to your best friends.

The man accompanied Hazrat Imam (a.s.) to his house and as long as he remained in Medina, he was his guest. He joined the friends of the Ahlul Bait (a.s.).

## Forbearance of Imam Husain (a.s.)

It is reported:

There occurred a little friction between Mohammad bin Hanafiya and Imam Husain (a.s.), Mohammad bin Hanafiya wrote a letter to Imam (a.s.):

My dear brother, you and myself have Ali Ibne Abi Talib (a.s.) as our revered father. Your revered mother is Bibi Fatema (a.s.), the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Supposing this whole world is transformed into gold and comes to the possession of my mother, even then, she shall not be able to become as an equal to her.

On reading this letter, you should at once come to pacify me, in as much as; you are on a higher plain of excellence and beneficence, with compliments.

When this letter reached Imam Husain (a.s.), he went to meet him without any delay. Thereafter there never occurred any occasion of disagreement with them.

It is narrated that Imam Ali Ibnul Husain (a.s.) said:

I was going to Karbala from Medina in the company of my revered father, Hazrat Imam Husain (a.s.). I found that wherever he stayed enroute and wherefrom he advanced on the march, he made mention of Prophet Yahya (a.s.) very frequently.

He said one day:

This world is so disgraceful and contemptible, that the decapicitated head of a person of piety of the status of Yahya (a.s.) was made a present to a wicked indecent woman of Bani Israel.

The forbearance of Imam (a.s.) was very remarkable. His sons, his kinsfolk and his friends were martyred at the hands of the accursed enemies. He had the Angels of the Heavens, the earth, the genii, the animals, the birds and all the species of nature under his command by the will of Almighty Allah. He did not wreak vengeance on the slayers. He did not even utter an imprecation against them.

According to a narration, he had three hundred and sixty wounds on his Holy body. According to another narration, one hundred and eighty wounds of spears and four thousand wounds of arrows were on his body. Even then be had pity for those hard-hearted enemies. He tried to lead them to the right path of guidance with his Divine power.

## Forbearance of Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.)

It is narrated that one day a slave woman was, one day, pouring water on the hands of Hazrat Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.). The water-pot tilted from her hand and wounded the forehead of Imam (a.s.) He raised his head. The slave woman recited the verse:

...and who restrain anger...[[60]](#footnote-60)

He remarked: I restrain my anger.

Then she recited the verse:

.. and forgive the faults of men...[[61]](#footnote-61)

He remarked: “I forgive you. May Almighty Allah also Forgive You”

She then recited the Holy Quranic verse:

Allah love those who do good (to others)[[62]](#footnote-62)

He remarked: ‘I free you’.

According to another narration it has been reported:

A cup containing some food fell down from the hand of a slave-woman of Imam (a.s.) and it broke. She turned pale for fear of Imam (a.s.) and she began to tremble. He told her not to be apprehensive He freed her there and then.

It is narrated that someone used vile language against Imam (a.s.). His servant tried to catch hold of him, but he forbade him to do so, adding:

We may perhaps be committing more faults than what they say about us.

Turning to the man he asked him as to whether he had any need to be fulfilled. On hearing this, the man felt ashamed Imam (a.s.) ordered that a dress and one thousand dirhams should be given to him. The person went away weeping at such display of high morals and piety. He proclaimed:

I bear witness that you are, in fact, of the progeny of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and a symbol of Divine mercy.

According to another narration it is reported that a person used vile language against Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.). He spoke to him thus;

I have a critical stage to go over in the Hereafter. If I can cover it safely and sound by, I shall not mind what you say. In case I am embarrassed there, I shall be in a worse condition than you say of me.

It is narrated that someone spoke ill of Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.). He paid no heed to him. He again addressed him in the same strain. He said to him thus: –

I overlook and forgive your fault.

It is narrated, according to a tradition, that:

Imam Ali Ibne Husain (a.s.) had a freed slave. He was appointed to look after his farming. One day he went to see how he was doing the job. He found that he had spoiled the whole farm because of his negligence. He hit him lightly by way of reprimanding him. He was, however, very much worried at this. He summoned the slave to his house. The slave found him stripped of his shirt, with that same lash before him. He was afraid lest he should receive more lashes. Hazrat Imam (a.s.) gave the same lash in the slave’s hand and asked him to give him a similar lash on his body, just as he had received.

And also expressed regrets for having been remiss that day. The slave said to him: ‘I thought that I will receive more beating for my fault, for I deserved it.’

Imam (a.s.) insisted that he should use the lash. The slave however, excused himself and gave up the right of retribution. Finding that he was not prepared to use the lash, he gave the farm in which he was working to his possession.

It is narrated that one day some guests came to his house for meals. The servant, who was serving, brought a hot dish. It fell from his hand. A minor child of Imam (a.s.) was so seriously wounded that he died as a result of the burns. The slave was very much worried. Imam (a.s.) consoled him by saying, that it was no volitional act on his part. Why should he fear for that? He freed him there and then. He himself got himself busy in serving the guests. After this, he attended the funeral ceremonies of the child and buried him.

It is narrated that Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) passed by a group of people. Someone told him that the people were speaking ill of him. He stood there to say to than.

If it is true what you say of me, and then may Almighty forgive me. If it is false, then may Almighty Allah forgive you?

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) sent a slave of his on some errand. He took a great deal of time in coming back. Imam (a.s.) came out to find that he was sleeping soundly. He took his seat near his head and began to fan him. He woke up on receiving a draught of cool air. All that Imam (a.s.) said was;

It does not become of a man to sleep all through the day and night. You have your night for yourselves and your day should be for ourselves.

It is narrated that Sufyan Sauri related that:

I was present once with Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) I found his complexion changing, I asked him the reason of his worry, Imam (a.s.) said in reply.

I have forbidden my servants and my children to go up to the roof of the house. I went home today to find that a servant, with a child in her lap was ascending the stairs. She was perplexed on seeing me. The child fell from her tap and died. I do not grieve for that child. I feel grieved as to why the slave servant had such fear of me. I have twice before advised her to have no fear on my account. I have freed her. It is narrated that a pilgrim came to the mosque of Medina. He was dead-tired. He was overcome by sleep on awaking he thought that someone had taken away his money bag. He found Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) in prayers. The man did not know him. He asked if he had taken his money bag. Imam (a.s.) asked him as to what was in the money bag. He said it had one thousand dinars. Hazrat Imam (a.s.) took him to his house and gave him one thousand dinars. The man came back to his house and found that his money bag was there. He felt ashamed and by way of apology came to Imam (a.s.) to return the Dinars. He then said: ‘We do not take back what we have once given.’

The man was surprised at this. He enquired about Imam (a.s.) and learnt that he was Imam Ja’far e-Sadiq (a.s.). He thought to himself that such magnanimity was the trait of such personages only.

## Forbearance of Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.)

Forbearance and the control over his anger on the part of Moosa Kazim (a.s.) are universally acknowledged. Stories of his excellent virtues and praiseworthy manners are well-known in all the circles. Friend and foe alike acknowledge his greatness. They cannot be detailed even if the oceans of the earth become converted into ink and the whole of the creation gets busy in describing the same. These few traditions have been given to show as to how highly placed our Imams (a.s.) were in the matter of forbearance and mildness. They behaved towards other creatures so well. We too should follow in their footsteps; we should tear out all ideas of pride. It behoves us not to be duped by the beguilement of Satan. We should not look upon ourselves as possessed of high prestige and great learning. We should not think that such and such acts sit well with us or that; we would suffer in our prestige by helping a brother believer. May Allah protect us against all such satanic beguilement?

## Good Mannerliness and Moral Culture

A study of morals comprises three aspects – firstly the aspect relating to the reformation of personal habits and traits of character secondly that dealing with domestic matters and those connected therewith, called family management and laws and thirdly that concerning the regulation of Social life called civics and affairs of citizenship. As such whatever has been set forth in this book and whatever is to follow should be regarded as a whole within the purview of ‘Morals’, in all the three aspects.

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

O Abuzar! A man remains at a distance from the Almighty Allah upto the time his moral status remains below par.

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

Among the believers the one who has good manners is really perfect in Faith.

It is narrated that The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

On the Day of Judgment, there shall nothing be superior to the good deeds in The Scales, except good manners.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

There is nothing superior in merit in the eyes of Almighty Allah to a man who attracts other people to himself by his pleasing manners.

In another tradition he is reported to have said:

Good manners raise a man to the status of that person who observes fast during the day and performs worship at night all through his life.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The most superior in merit for entry into paradise among my Ummat will be high morals and negation of the things made unlawful by Almighty Allah.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Good manner melt away the sins just as the Sun melts the snow. Doing good to the fellow beings and behaving to the people with good manners keeps the homes prosperous and lengthens the life span.

In another tradition he is reported to have said:

Good manners are gift from Almighty Allah, which He bestows on His creatures. There are character traits which are born and are natural to a person. There are others which a man acquires by dint of his own exertions and volition.

The narrator asked as to which of the two categories was superior. To this the reply was:

The person who has been endowed by Almighty Allah with the virtuous trait as a part of his nature cannot move against it. The other man acquires good manners by his own effort and volition. He exercises control over him self. He works for the development of good manners to win the pleasure of Almighty Allah. As such, he is superior and his recompense is greater.

According to another narration it is laid down:

Almighty Allah grants a recompense of a warrior in the way of Almighty Allah to the person of good manners.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated by Aala Bin Kamil that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

When you meet people, you should deport yourself in such a manner that you excel the other person in behaviours and the debt of gratitude for the goodness done by you to him should be greater than that of the other person.

As matter of fact, it sometimes happens that a person is remiss in the matter of performance of worship. His good manners, however, raise him to the status of the persons who have kept fast during the day and stood in worship at nights all through their lives.

## Condemnation of ill-Manners

On the basis of reliable authority Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) is narrated to have said:

Ill-manners eat up the Faith and good deeds just as honey is spoiled by vinegar. An ill-mannered person always keeps himself in a state of distress.

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

Penitence on the part of an ill-mannered person is not accepted. He expresses penitence for one sin while he involves himself in another worse than the first. A believer always possesses good manners, clement temperament and forbearing nature. The un-believer is ill-mannered, ill-behaved and hardened in nature.

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

O the Shias! Almighty Allah has chosen the religion of Islam for you. As such, try to live with it good mannerliness and generosity.

It is reported that someone asked that Imam (a.s.) as to the test of mannerliness on the part of a person. The reply was:

Keep your mind in mild temperament. No one should receive any injury from you. Speak to others polity and sweetly.

When you meet your Muslim brothers greet them with a cheerful and smiling face.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Angel Jibraeel has conveyed to me from Almighty Allah to hold fast to good mannerliness. As a matter of course, one gains the good of this life and the life in the Hereafter through good manners. On the Day of Judgment, the nearer to me shall be the person possessing good manners and the one who does well to the poor.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said:

You cannot please all the people by gifting your assets to them. Make yourself attractive to them by pleasing manners.

In another narration he is stated as having said to Nauf Bin Bakali:

O Nauf! Acquire good manners in order that the Almighty Allah makes your reckoning easy.

## Condemnation of Imprudence

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

When the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was informed of the death of Saad bin Maaz, he along with his companions came to his bier. He stood by his body at the time of his funeral bath. When his bier was ready, he accompanied it with his shoes and his wrapping sheet off, like the persons in mourning. He supported his bier sometimes on his right shoulder and sometimes on his left shoulder. When they reached the grave, he himself laid him to rest, in the grave with his own hands.

He (s.a.w.a.) then took part in filling up of the grave. Then He (s.a.w.a.) said;

I know, the body of Saad shall decay, Almighty Allah likes that whatever is done should be done well.

When the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was levelling up his grave, the mother of Saad said: ‘May you be felicitated with Paradise.’

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

O mother of Saad! Keep silent. Saad is now under the pressure of the grave.

When the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was returning home, the companions asked him to how it was that he had given so much care to Saad, which he has not been bestowing on any other bier, accompanying it without shoes and wrapping sheet; the reply given them was:

I saw the Angels accompanying the bier in the same way, in mourning. I followed them.

The companions asked him as to how it was that he was supporting the bier sometimes with his right shoulder and sometimes with his left shoulder.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied:

My hand was with the hand of Jibraeel. I moved to the side to which he moved.

The companions made the submission as to how it was that he himself had participated in his funeral bath, he himself had performed the funeral prayers, he himself laid him to rest in the grave, and yet there was the pressure of the grave on him.

His (s.a.w.a.) reply was:

Saad was rather rude towards his people and his friends.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Miserliness and rudeness should not be the character, trait of a Muslim.

## Respect and Regard for Others

According to a tradition of Imam Ali Ibnul Husain (a.s.) one should consider all the Muslims as one’s relations, all the aged as one’s father, all the children as one’s children and all one’s equals as one’s brothers; then none would be cruel to each other, nor use bad language or reveal each other’s weakness. If Satan is tempting one to consider oneself better than others, then to cure oneself of this obsession one should act as follows. If one sees a person elder in age then one should regard him better than oneself as the elder must be better in faith having been able to do more good acts. If one sees a person younger to oneself then one should think him better than oneself as having fewer occasions to commit sin. If one comes across a person equal to oneself in age then one should think that one is definite of one’s own sins but doubtful about his sins. Since doubt is not preferable to certainty one should think that the other person is better than oneself.

If people pay respect to you, you should think it to be on account of their personal goodness and politeness and if they are reserved with you, you should think it as on account of your behavioural shortcomings. Following these precepts will make life easy and you will have more friends and few foes. You will be happy as a reaction to the kind acts of others and will be unaffected by the deplorable actions of others.

## Tolerance and Self-Respect

Looked superficially tolerance and self respect appear to be contradictory terms, but in reality there is no contradiction. A balance between the two is, however, hard to achieve. A slight inclination, towards one disturbs the balance. Overweening self-respect is conceit, while tolerance is co-terminus with abject servility. It is expected that believers, neither permit a loss of self-respect nor is their behaviour prompted by wrathful disdain. They are not un-balanced like the uncivil or the ignorant. One blessed with these boons has, so to say, a guarantee of honourable life.

And when hear they any vain talk, they withdraw from it, and say they: ‘For us shall be our deeds, peace be on you, we desire not the (society of) the ignorant.’[[63]](#footnote-63)

Adopt you moderation, and enjoin virtue and turn you away from the ignorant ones.[[64]](#footnote-64)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is addressed in this verse and perhaps some may excuse themselves from its observance, regarding it as an obligation on the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Yes! The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is addressed no doubt, but the precept contained herein is meant for all Muslims to follow.

## Honour the Erstwhile Associates

It is part of a fine moral culture. Just think who cares for a poor person, while all acknowledge the rich. We must be especially considerate towards old associates. Poverty and riches are fleeting things. In the words of the famous Urdu poet Mir: –

He is a block-head who considers himself a sage. Never deem the other person inferior. It is a sign of high build and righteousness to admit superiority in the inferior.

And keep steadfast you yourself with those who call to their Allah morning and evening seeking His pleasure and let not your eyes turn away from them.[[65]](#footnote-65)

## Observe cleanliness everywhere in everything even in heart and brain

Cleanliness has untold benefits. The foremost benefit is one’s own sense of satisfaction. People coming from outside are gratified on sight of the household cleanliness. They do not feel any reluctance in the use of Pan, water-cot or the bed.

Health of inmates of the house is benefited. What is the difference between an animal and a person un-interested in cleanliness and non- abhorrent to dirtiness? Is it too much to remind that even animals have a sense of cleanliness, how helpless is the man who degrades himself below the level of animals.

External cleanliness leads to internal cleanliness. To those effects is the emphasis laid on cleanliness before prayers which are void if the clothes or the body or the spot of prostration be unclean. Ablutions are obligatory over again after the least defilement.

Mere external cleanliness is not enough. Spiritual cleanliness is the main aim of Islamic teachings. Only when the heart is illuminated by the light of faith, the thoughts are purified and the temperament is free from the worldly deceits, forgeries, malice, ill-will, enmity, vendetta, etc. that a man is entitled to be called pure.

Therein are men who love to be purified; and Allah loves the purified ones.[[66]](#footnote-66)

And your raiment, purify!

And every kind of abomination, Shun it.[[67]](#footnote-67)

## Do Not Quarrel Among Yourselves

Just as factionalism and sectarianism have been weakening Islamic Unity so also mutual quarrelling and friction have been the cause of the ruin and decline of the solidarity of Islam. There is nothing more distasteful than quarrelling, what to say of mutual quarrelling. May Allah protect us from it, As a result of this vice the world is turned into hell and life becomes unbearable. Quarrelling ruins all, whether a house-hold, a family, a brotherhood or a nation. Ill-lack and dishonour supervene. May Allah save even the enemy from mutual friction; in as much as this same is the fore-runner of ruin.

Under the same principle which the Holy Quran has laid down for the unification of the human race come our social and private lives as well If we cognise the Divine will, the sound principles which have been laid down are sufficient for guidance at every occasion of our life. In case we cannot act upon (the commandment) ‘Quarrel not among yourselves’, in our domestic life, and lose the honour of our family (thereby), how can we expect that the grand task of the unification of the human race will ever be accomplished by us?

Hearken the magnificent point laid down:

And obey you Allah and his Prophet and quarrel you not, for then you will be weakened in heart, and will depart your power and be patient; Verily Allah is with the patient ones.[[68]](#footnote-68)

## Sincere Repentance

O you who believe, turn to Allah with sincere repentance, in the hope that your Lord will remove from you your sins and admit you to Heavens.[[69]](#footnote-69)

To describe ‘sincere repentance’ Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Repenting and never committing that sin again.

According to the Islamic belief, a repentance uttered by tongue, without a change of heart, is no repentance at all; Repentance must produce change in habit, honesty in dealings; fear and love of Allah in prayers, improvement in character, and generosity in behaviour and humility in nature.

Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) described the characteristics of repentance in the following words:

Repentance has six elements. A repentant must be really sorry for what he had done; he must have firm determination not to do it again; he must make amends for whatever wrongs he did to others; he must fulfil all the obligations of religion which he had neglected previously; he should fast long enough to melt away the flesh grown from unclean and unlawful food; and he should feel the taste of obedience to God, as he was previously enjoying the taste of obedience to God, as he was previously enjoying the taste of sin.

When a man repents sincerely Almighty Allah makes him as clean as he was on the day he was born. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

One who repents from sin is like the one who never committed any sin.

## Self-Reproaching Spirit

In Islamic terminology, one aspect of human soul is called ‘Lawwamah’ (self-reproaching spirit.) It is one of the surest means of perfecting one’s character and behaviour. As Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) said,

Check your account (of deeds) before you is called to render it (after death) in the presence of God).

We must check our account and make up the short comings before it is too late.

## Self-Evaluation and Self-Criticism

Realistic self-evaluation and self-criticism are essential for the development of the soul. Only in this way can we save ourself from being a prey of conceit and pride. Before we go to sleep we must relieve the whole day, seeing whether our behaviour was upto the required standard of spiritual perfection. If we detect any slip, any wrong or any impurity, we must repent sincerely and firmly resolve to amend it at once.

If we cultivate this habit of continuous self-criticism, we will progress, in no time at all, towards that stage of spiritual perfection which is called in Islam ‘Mutmainnah’ when a soul feels rest and satisfaction by grace of Allah, but this self-criticism must begin before our vision has been blurred, before evil makes a slave of our soul. Otherwise we will fail to recognise the evil when we see it.

When a murderer justifies (nay, really feels justified in) his crime; when a robber thinks, that, by his actions, he is rectifying the imbalance of the society, then only a special grace of God based on his own strong determination can save him from plunging into the lowest Hell of disgrace.

Unfortunately, modern society is heading blindly towards that same degradation; Social thinkers spend their whole energy in inventing new excuses for law-breakers. Stealing is white washed by the impressive name of ‘kleptomania’ sex-perversion and dirty habits are explained away as just a protest against society. Criminals are afforded more protection in law than their helpless victims, under the disguise of liberty of the individual. And the real tragedy is that all of it is done in the name of progress.

Is the ‘conscience’ of modern nations merely stunned, or really dead?

## Greeting a Muslim

Side by side with instructions on self-improvement, Islam lays stress on considerateness for other’s welfare by felicitations and prayers for Divine Grace in their favour.

One is reminded of a certain habit of ants, when studying the relevant versus of the Holy Book. While moving about, each ant stops to meet the ant coming from the opposite side. Heaven knows what they say, but this much is certain that they convey to each other their feelings of sincere fellowship and in a way as if each ant has made it obligatory on itself. Almighty Allah in that same way guides the Muslims to offer felicitations before any thing else, on meeting a person or entering a house without distinction of poverty or riches. The person initiating the greetings is given a higher role, while the response to it has been made obligatory. At the same time it is emphasised to make the response cheerfully and sincerely or at least in the same spirit as shown by the person offering the greeting.

Vivid superficially it may sound insignificant to us, but going a little deeper we notice an ocean of social etiquette condensed in a drop of water. A cheerful salutation with ‘Assalamo Alaikum’ May peace be your person draws human beings closer together. Both sides get possessed of a fellow-feeling and human kinship.

The principles governing greetings may be laid down thus; The smaller number should greet the larger number of people, the rider should salute the pedestrian, the one on mule-back to the one on donkey-back, the one on horse-back to the one on mule-back, the younger to the elder, the way-farers to the seated, The salutation and its response should be audible. The idol-worshipper the drunkard at his table, chess players at play, the eunuchs, slanderers of married women, usurers, the adulterer, should not be accosted with greetings. One busy in prayers should also not be accorded greetings. A hand shake for the resident and a caress for the traveller may be an addendum. The offer of greetings and making response to it is mentioned in Holy Quran in three places:

When you are greeted with a greeting, then greet you with a better (than it), or return it; Verily, Allah, of all things, taken account.[[70]](#footnote-70)

And when come to you, those who believe in Our signs, say ‘Salamun alaikum’ (peace be on you) your Allah has prescribed mercy on Himself, (so that) if anyone of you do in ignorance, then turns (repentant) after that and amends (himself) then verily He is the Most-Forgiving, The Most Merciful.[[71]](#footnote-71)

And when you enter houses greet you your people with a salutation from Allah, blessed (and) goodly; thus does Allah make clear to you His signs that you may understand.[[72]](#footnote-72)

## Help to Needy Persons

Righteousness is not just to turn your faces towards the East or the West (in prayers). But the true righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book (Qur’an) and the prophets; and gives his wealth, for love of Allah, to the kindred and the orphan and the poor and the traveller and to those who ask (for help), and for ransoming the captives.[[73]](#footnote-73)

Just to observe some external rites is not Islam. True faith and good actions are the primary requisite of a Muslim. Faith is the seed which gives birth to good deeds; and if the faith does not create an urge to perform noble deeds, our faith is dormant, and we must try to awaken it by conscious efforts.

If a Muslim does not help needy persons, if he does not bestow love and kindness upon the orphans, if he turns out the people who are in need of assistance, then his claim of righteousness is just a claim – and nothing more.

Often we have seen our kith and kin in distress; several times we have been approached by stranded travellers seeking shelter and food; daily we hear the cries of starving persons in famine-stricken areas; so many times we have looked upon a child whose very countenance was a monument of affliction and hardship. What has been our usual reaction in these circumstances? Have we parted with some of the wealth to help the poor fellows? And have we done it with kindness and a sense of gratitude? And above all, have we done it for love of Allah? Let us search our soul!

The above-mentioned verse of Holy Qur’an exhorts us to have faith, and to support that faith by charity and good deeds, based upon ‘Love of Allah’: We should realise that the fellow human beings are, in the eyes of Islam, ‘dependents of Allah’ and that our wealth is, in fact, a property of Almighty Allah, given to us in trust to be spent in the way of Almighty Allah. When we help our fellow brethren, we should remember that we are giving the property of God to the dependents of God. It should be based upon love of Allah, without any shade of worldly motives. A secret desire to enhance our social prestige by charity destroys the fibre of that charity. A help given with a motive to gain political or other worldly advantage is a body without soul.

Alas, how many good actions are ruined by unworthy motives! Have faith, bestow charity; and bestow it ‘For Love of Allah’. That is the basic teaching of Islam

## Justice and Generosity

Ismail Ibne Abdul khaliq has narrated his Kitab-e-Wasaael that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The Muslim in general and the rich Muslim in particular should spend money properly i.e. spend as ordered by Allah, as it will stabilise Muslims and Islam or else fall and decline of Islam and the Muslims is certain.

According to the same book Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) also said,

On the day of judgement Almighty Allah shall ask the poor and needy in the world, to take with them to Paradise the persons who had obliged them in the world by fulfilling, their needs.

Verily, God commands (you) to do justice and be generous....[[74]](#footnote-74)

## Maintenance of an Orphan

It is recorded in Vasa’el that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to Ali (a.s.):

O Ali! Paradise becomes incumbent upon one who rears an orphan to make him independent and self-sufficient. O Ali! Allah will create as many lights as the number of hair on the head of an orphan for a person who caresses an orphan.

## An Old Woman Embraces Islam

At the time when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was busy preaching, Islam, rumours spread in Mecca, Medina and their surrounding localities that sorcerer named Mohammad entraps people in his grip by his sorcery. An old woman during one of those days after purchasing certain articles from Medina was trying to hurry to her place lest the sorcerer might entrap her. She gathered all the purchased articles in a bundle but was unable to lift it on her head due to its heavy weight. She sought help from many to assist her in lifting but with no response. In the mean time, a man with luminous face was seen. No sooner did the old woman shout at him than he reached her and lifting the bundle said: ‘Mother! Let us go, I will carry the bundles to your home.’

When they reached her home, she said, ‘Brother! I am a poor woman and can not pay you any thing for the work you have done for me but for the kindness you have shown to me I will advise you to guard yourself against a sorcerer named Mohammad in this city (Medina).’

He smiled and said, ‘Mother! I am Mohammad whom you call a sorcerer.’ The old woman was dumb founded and became speechless. His luminous face and excellent behaviour made her kneel down at his feet and she embraced Islam.[[75]](#footnote-75)

Islamic code of conduct is based on Justice and love in every sphere of life. For example, it commands the trader to “give full measure and weight”. It is Justice. Then it exhorts him to give more than the agreed quantity while, side by side, the buyer is encouraged to try to take less than that. It is love. In this atmosphere, friction and litigation are things unimaginable.

Another example: Islam prohibits hoarding food grain when there is a shortage in the market. It is justice and it rules out that possibility of artificial famine and black market which are the cause of our present day society. But our religious leaders have gone further, setting the example of Islamic love and sympathy.

Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) used to purchase his one year’s requirement of food grains at the beginning of the year. Once there was a danger of famine in Medina. He asked his men how much grain was left in his store. They assured him that there was enough to suffice for a long time. Hearing it, he ordered them to take out all that grain and sell it at once at a much cheaper pries. They protested that his family would have to suffer from the famine if the grain was sold out. Imam (a.s.) replied.

Let us alleviate the present calamity as much as we can. Afterwards, we will be just one of the public, sharing with them the hardships of the famine. We shall eat when they will eat; we will be hungry when they will be hungry.

This was love. And what is our behaviour these days? Famine conditions are created artificially to raise the prices. Such people literally feast on the dead bodies of the poor. The present day economy of the world, which is based on un-Islamic principles, encourages human greed instead of suppressing it.

Islamic love and sympathy have no room in the structure of today’s commerce and industry even in countries called Islamic.

People are taught from the childhood the Godless theory of the struggle for self-preservation and the survival of the fittest. Everybody is made to believe that his survival depends, not on co-operation with others, but on killing the weaklings. In this background, strife’s and conflicts are inevitable.

This way of life, which denies the authority of God in our daily life, offers no solution to the sufferings of our times. The only refuge is in the precincts of Islam which accepts the authority of God in every sphere of life, fee it material or spiritual.

## Justice is the Basic Requirement of Human Character

Verily, God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin; and He forbids all shameful deeds and injustice and rebellion.[[76]](#footnote-76)

This verse of the Holy Qur’an has been truly claimed by the commentators as the ‘essence of ethics’. The basic requirement of human character is ‘justice’. It is a comprehensive term which includes all virtues of human conduct. But to raise himself higher than this lowest rung of the ladder, a man needs something warmer and more human-doing of good deeds even where they are not demanded by justice, returning good for evil, being kind to those who (in worldly language) have no claim on him.

After exhorting to be generous to all, special mention has been made of those whose claims are recognised in social life; your kith and kin. This includes all moral and ethical, as well as legal and obligatory, duties of a man towards his family, and relative. It ensures a good society by ensuring a good family.

And the opposites, the evils, are to be avoided, because a cup of honey becomes poisonous if a few drops of poison are mixed with it. A man is to refrain from ‘shameful deeds’, and injustice. In Islam, end does not justify the means. A just and good end must be reached through just and good means. Therefore, it was necessary to warn mankind of ail shameful acts, as well as unjust means.

And last, but not the least, man is to guard himself against rebellion – rebellion against God, rebellion against good conscience. Some people say: ‘It is a very high standard; a very distant goal.’ And then they decide that distance is a good excuse to abandon the path.

This attitude is the result of the weakness of their conviction or Faith. Ironically the spirit can be strengthened by pursuing the right path only. If you want to go from Dar-us-Salaam to London you have to make a start, otherwise you will never reach there. So, if you are to achieve perfection of character; you have to start the spiritual journey – in right direction. Distance of goal is not an excuse to sit idle on the road-side: rather, it is a challenge.

## Humility

And the servants of Most Gracious God are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant people address them, they say: ‘Peace’.[[77]](#footnote-77)

This verse of the Holy Book shows the best way to deal with such stubborn fools who thrive on their ignorance. The true believers are to ignore them.

The same idea has been stressed upon in another verse:

And when they hear vain talk, they turn away therefrom and say. To us our deeds and to you your deeds; peace be to you, we seek not the ignorant.[[78]](#footnote-78)

The men of low society can never forgive any slight – real or imaginary. But a really big man can afford to ignore his detractors. In fact, it is not weakness; it is the sign of great strength.

And as true faith is the greatest power, the believer can easily ignore the invectives of unbelievers.

The ignorant unbelievers want to involve the believers in their illogical arguments; the believers should refuse to be dragged in such vain talks, saying that we do not want to have any connection with ignorant persons. After all, it is not possible to rectify each and every absurdity in this vast world.

The ideal discussion is that which is held with an intention to reach the truth, without prejudice and without conceit. Such a dialogue is welcome in Islam. But if a stubborn ignorant tries to drag a believer in baseless arguments, not to seek the truth, but to show how wise he is Holy Qur’an’s advice is to ignore him completely.

## An Account of Humility

Humility is a moral excellence superior to other excellences. Honour and Dignity are for Almighty Allah alone. The more humility a man has, the more exalted he becomes in the Eyes of Almighty Allah. The earth is a mine of precious jewels of all kinds. It brings forth flowers and fruits of ail kinds. Man, too, not withstanding his status as the highest creation and his multifarious excellences, owes his origin to the earth. Satan has his origin in fire which is rebellious in nature.

Man, as such, should behave with humility. He should not seek for domination and conceit. He should give no weight to his family and lineage. It would suffice for him as a piece of real lesson to think of his origin from a drop of semen and nourished by blood which did not flow out as menstrual blood during the period of pregnancy. He is filled in his bodily frame with dirt, blood, phlegm, faeces, urine and so on. He looks with disdain on any amount of these, when the same come out of his body. After death he is in the most offensive state. Left to itself, his body decays with stinking bacterial infection, he is then worse off than any animal.

How, then, can any ideas of grandeur comfort with his nature? The more knowledge and understanding he acquires, the more humility he should show in his conduct.

All dignity and grandeur are for Almighty Allah. For man the best course is to express the maximum humility. The more he adopts the way of humility, the higher is he raised by Almighty Allah in honour? If he seeks grandeur for himself, he shall he doomed to disgrace all the more.

## Merits of Humility

Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said:

Almighty Allah has appointed two Angels. One of them is charged with exalting the person who behaves with humility for the sake of Almighty Allah. The second one is charged with degrading that person who is proud in their bearing. Almighty Allah, through revelation, announced to Prophet Dawood (a.s.):

I disgrace the proud people even as I exalt those who behave with humility.

A tradition is narrated of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as saying that Almighty Allah questioned, through revelation, Prophet Moosa (a.s.) as to whether he knew why he was given so much honour as to deserve the title of one with whom. He holds conversation (Kaleem). Prophet Moosa (a.s.) could give no reason for such high favours.

I find you possessed of more humility then any other man, especially when you put your face in the dust while praying, came the reply from Almighty Allah.

On the basis of reliable authority Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said:

A commendable form of humility implies that one does not mind occupying a seat lowers than that of his status in an assembly, that one should take the precedence in making a salutation, that one gives up quarrelling even when on the right and that one does not feel elated when he is praised by the people for his piety.

Imam Raza (a.s.) is reported to have said;

By humility is implied that one discharge one’s obligations to other people properly, just as one wants others to discharge their obligations to him.

Some one asked him as to the standard of humility which one must possess to be regarded as humble. To this He (a.s.) replied thus:

There are number of stages of humility. One should not try to appear more than what he really is. One should avoid pride. He should do to others what he wishes others to do to him. One should return good for evil from others. One should subdue one’s anger. One should be prepared to pardon the offenders. Such virtuous people are befriended by Almighty Allah.

It is narrated that Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said a man of Medina, carrying something himself, which he had purchased in the bazar. He felt awkward on seeing Imam (a.s.) who spoke to him thus:

By Allah, if I had not an ear for the carping tongues of the people of this city. I would have carried home myself the purchases from the bazaar for use of my family.

It is narrated that one day Imam Ali Ibnul Husain (a.s.) was passing through a street, mounted on a mule. He saw in the way a number of lepers busy feasting together. They invited him to take part in the feast He excused himself on the ground of being with fast, but for which he would have gladly joined them. On reaching home he ordered that fine food should be prepared to which he invited them and sat with them to sup.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) bequeathed to Imam Hasan (a.s.) as follows!

O my son. Adopt humility. It surpasses every kind of worship.

A saying of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

Almighty Allah grants honour to the person who adopts humility.

Imam Ali Ibnul Husain (a.s.) is reported to have spoken thus:

There is no honour for an Arab and Quraishite higher than the excellence of humility.

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

Prophet Noah (a.s.) boarded the Ark with the necessary items of use. The Ark started and came to the Holy Kaa’ba and made seven circumambulations round it. He then started again. The mountains were appraised by Almighty Allah that the Ark would anchor on some one of the hills. All the hills raised themselves up and prayed, for that honour. The Joodi hillock in all humility expressed its lowly stature as being inappropriate for that honour. Almighty Allah approved of its humility and made it the anchoring site for the Ark which came to a halt there in response to the prayers of Prophet Noah (a.s.) for rest.

## The Humility of Najjashi – The King of Abyssinia

It is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Hazrat Ja’far Ibne Abi Talib (a.s.) was staying with Najjashi, the king of Habash. He relates that: One day the king summoned me I went to him and found him seated on the ground. We were struck with awe for him. On seeing us he expressed thanks to Almighty Allah for having granted to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) the victory at Badr. The news had been conveyed to him by his special intelligence service. He named some of the men who had been taken captive. He gave other relevant details about the battle. When asked as to why he was sitting on the ground he replied thus:

Among the commands given to Prophet Eesa (a.s.) by Almighty Allah is one which requires that one should express extraordinary humility on the occasion when a special favour is shown to a man by Almighty Allah.

And what greater favour from Almighty Allah is there than that He has granted victory to Our Prophet (s.a.w.a.) against the infidels at Badr.

The news was conveyed to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who spoke of humility as a means of winning honour. He advised them to adopt the way of humility and charity, whereby one is granted Divine Mercy, with exalted ranks both in this life and in the life to come. One should be prepared to pardon others as far as possible.

It is narrated that Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) as having said:

Almighty Allah honours the person who discharges his obligations to the other believing brethren. The man, who behaves with humility towards a believing brother, is counted among the truthful (Siddeqeen) by Almighty Allah and one among the Shias of the Ahlul Bait (a.s.).

There arrived one day two believers father and son in the house of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) He stood up as a mark of respect, to welcome them. He got them seated in a place of honour. He ordered meals for them and took his meals with them in all kindness. After the meals Qambar brought water for the guests to wash their hands.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) stood to render this service himself. The guest demonstrated that he would not agree to have water for washing his hands from Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) who insisted that he should have no objection thereto. One believing brother by rendering such service to another believing brother shall earn heavenly reward. He required him to have his hands washed with perfect equanimity. As he finished washing his hands, he gave the water pot to the young boy with the words:

Had not this young boy been accompanying his father, I myself would have served him with water to wash his hands. It is, not appropriate in the eye of Almighty Allah that the son should receive equal honour with the father. The father has served a father. Let the son serve the son.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) son Mohammad bin Hanafiyah then helped the young boy with water for washing his hands.

Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) advises the Shias to follow in the footsteps of their leader.

## Humility of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

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

A person paid twelve Dirhams to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). He gave the amount to Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) to purchase for him a shirt. He bought from the bazaar a shirt and brought it to him. He did not approve of it as being too costly. He asked him to return the same to the shopkeeper. He took it back and brought back the money. He had searched for a cheap shirt but he could not find one.

He and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) went together to the bazaar. They found in the way a slave-girl weeping. On being asked as to the cause of her weeping, she said that she had lost four Dirhams, which her master had given her for certain purchases from the bazaar. She was afraid that her master would punish her. He gave her four Dirhams and told her to go home.

They came to the bazaar and purchased a shirt for four Dirhams, which he put on and expressed gratitude to Almighty Allah. On returning from the bazaar they came across a beggar who was asked and who wanted some one to provide him with clothing. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) gave away the shirt he had purchased just then.

With the four Dirhams left with him he purchased another shirt, which he put on with gratefulness to Almighty Allah.

On their way back they came across the same slave-girl. He asked her as to why she had not gone home. She said that she was afraid lest her master should beat her.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) offered to go to her master to intercede for her. He went there and called at the house with the usual salutations. There was no response. He called out again there was no response. He called out for the third time, this time the owner of the house appeared and reciprocated the salutation of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). On being asked as to why he had not responded in the first instance when he was called at, he replied that he wished to have the blessings of his salutation more then once.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) told him that he had gone there to intercede on behalf of the slave-girl. She is late for home, but she should not be punished. The man in thankfulness for the arrival of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) freed the slave-girl. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) expressed gratitude to Almighty Allah for such favour. He spoke of the twelve Dirhams as being of an especially propitious nature. Two believers were clothed out of the fund, while one slave was set free.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated by Mohammad bin Muslim that he presented him self to Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) one day. He was busy with his meals. He allowed him the honour of his company in the meals. When they had finished, he (a.s.) spoke:

From the time my grandfather, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was called to Prophethood, he was never seen to recline in that way. He never ate wheat bread for three consecutive days, not that he could not afford it as a matter of fact he used to give away a hundred camels in one sitting

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) could have enjoyed every kind of luxury if he had a mind thereto. In fact the Angel Jibraeel (a.s.) offered to him the keys of all the treasures of the earth thrice with the assurance that the acceptance of the same would not lessen in any way the high rank in store for him in Paradise. He humbly declined to accept the offer. There never arose an occasion when someone made him a request which he did not accede to if he could. When he did not have the necessary funds he would ask the supplicant to wait for another opportunity. He never held back to himself any favour which he received from Almighty Allah. He even would become a guarantor of Paradise to others, which Almighty Allah would honour.

## The Humility of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.)

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) used to be seated as slaves did. He took his meals as the slaves did. He offered the beggars and the needy wheat bread and meat, while he himself took barley bread and olive oil for his meals. He would purchase two pieces of cloth. The finer piece would go to the slave, while the coarser one would be used by himself. He would cut off the sleeves if the same happened to be too long of two alternatives he would opt for the harder one. He never did even build a house for himself. Nor did he possess one cubit of land. He left nothing by way of inheritance, except a sum of seven hundred Dirhams which he wanted to spend in buying a slave for service to his family people.

No one could attain to his standard of Worship and humility Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) would study his book of prayers and he would lay it aside with the words:

Who can carry out all these forms of worship?

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) went to a cloth merchant one day and ordered two pieces of cloth to be shown to him. The merchant respectfully submitted that he was welcome and he could have anything he liked. He moved to another shop seeing that the cloth merchant had recognized his identity. There was a young man in the other shop, who did not know him.

He purchased two pieces of cloth from him. One piece was worth three Dirhams and the other one cost him two Dirhams.

He offered the superior one to his slave Qambar, who submitted that he should himself have the superior one, since he had to mount the pulpit for his sermons to the people. He replied:

You are young and you should like to put on better clothes. How can I face Almighty Allah if I wear better clothes than my slave.

It is known from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that we should have the slaves wear what we ourselves wear and we should have the slaves eat the same food as we ourselves eat.

When the piece of cloth got sewn for his shirt, lie found that the Treves were a little too long. He had them cut off and got them used for making caps for the poor people.

The cloth-merchant from whose son the cloth had been purchased learnt that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) had been to his shop. He came to him and said that his son had charged him more than the due cost of the cloth. He wanted to return two dirhams as the excess charged from him by his son’s ignorance of his identity. He (a.s.) said.

I shall not get back what I paid of my own accord.

It is narrated that Umar bin Harees came to the presence of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) Janab Fizzah, slave maid of Bibi Fatema (s.a.) who lived long after the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.) brought a bag with a seal of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) thereon. On opening it there appeared from it dried pieces of bread with the bran on the same. He asked Fizzah as to why she had not put the flour through the sieve before baking it. She told him that Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) had forbidden it as such. She added that she used to do so and she added some palatable pieces of food to the fare as well. He forbade it and he began to put his seal thereto.

He said that he took out some dried pieces of bread.

He soaked them in a cup of water. He added some salt thereto and ate the same. He (a.s.) said, ‘O Umar, I am nearing my end. I do not want this bread of mine to be singed by Hell fire on account of eating. This diet suffices me.’

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that Swaid bin Ghaflah came to the presence of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) on the Eid day. He (a.s.) remarked thus:

The Eid jubilations are proper for the man who is sure of having his sins condoned.

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

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) used to carry home on his own shoulders fuel wood and water for domestic use. He used to sweep the floor. Bibi Sayyeda (a.s.) used to grind the flour. She would then get it fermented and bake the same into bread.

It is narrated that he once bought some dates in Kufa. He put them in a sheet of cloth and he was carrying them home.

He was met by certain of his companions, who offered to carry the same for him.

He (a.s.) said:

The custodian of the family is the proper person to carry the burden of his family. The man of merit does not suffer any diminution of his merit through carrying the burden of his family.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) used to walk bare-footed on five occasions, carrying his shoes in his hands, firstly when he went out for Eid prayers, secondly when he went out for the Friday prayers, thirdly when he went out to a person in sick bed, fourthly when he accompanied a bier.

He (a.s.) would say:

It behoves one to go bare-footed when moving on some righteous errand.

It is narrated that he moved in the city without any escort. He would show the way to anyone who might have lost the way. He would give support to any weakly person he come across. He would stop to correct anyone who might be reciting the Holy Quran incorrectly. He used to repeat the Holy Quranic verse which means:

That abode in the Hereafter, We assign it for those who intend not to exult themselves in the earth, nor (to make) mischief (therein)! And the end is (best) for the pious ones.[[79]](#footnote-79)

Ibrahim bin Abbas says that he did not find anyone who was more mannerly than Imam Reza (a.s.). He never behaved towards anyone except in his perfect mannerliness. He never cut the speech of anyone. He never refused to accede to the request of anyone. He never sat recliming against a pillow in the company of others. He never stretched his legs when in company. He never used unseemly language in respect of a slave or servant. No one ever heard him laughing. He slept little. He remained in worship for the greater part of the night. He spent large sum in charity, in the darkness of night to prevent being identified. He would sit on the same table spread with his slaves and servants.

According to a narration of Mohammad bin Ebad, he slept on seek cloth during summer, while in winter it used to be a heavy coarse cloth! He was Clothed in simple poor dress while at home. He, however, used costly good clothing when going out in society.

One day he happened to go to a bath. There was a stranger, He asked him to massage him, which he began to do. There arrived other men who took the stranger to task. The man fell at his feet and began to apologise. He told him not to mind it. There are innumerable narrations expressive of the humility of the infallible Imams (a.s.). It would take too long to give all of them here. What has been given should suffice for the purpose.

## Condemnation of Jealousy

It should be borne in mind, that this bad habit is generally the ground for backbiting. It is the worst of the human traits. The underlying cause of this first act of disobedience to Almighty Allah as perpetrated by Satan was jealousy. The scholars are thus agreed that the expression of the same is a major sin. It is a sin against the principles of justice. It implies a malady of the heart and the mind. A man is chastised therefore both in this life and in the Hereafter. There are some other evil traits, as well, for which a man is chastised both in this life and in the Hereafter.

Jealousy implies that the person wishes deprivation of a blessing vouch-safed to the other parties. In case a person wishes the same blessing or a superior one for himself without being desirous of seeing the other person deprived there from, it shall not be counted as jealousy, but it shall be a lawful ambition. If such a desire is for a good quality, it is all the more praiseworthy. The jealous person, who wishes for a desire for a blessing enjoyed by another party, gets distressed whenever he sees anyone in possession anyone of a blessing. The blessings of Almighty Allah in favour of His creatures are limitless. How can all those blessings be snatched away? As such, he is always in the grip of distress and chagrin on seeing Almighty Allah’s creatures enjoying ease and comforts. The greedy person too is ever desirous of getting for himself the wealth of the whole of the world – an impossibility. As such, he never enjoys any peace of mind. The person of evil temper quarrels with everyone else because of his evil temper. He cannot overcome every other person. As such, he is consumed in the fire of his own rage. He remains mentally deranged. In short, every evil trait leads to such a result.

## The Remedy of Jealousy

The jealous person should ponder over the fact that the person favoured with a blessing has not done him any harm. He has not usurped any portion of his fortune, nor has anything belonging to him been reduced in quality by him. Almighty Allah has favoured the party with such blessings would have favoured him with a hundred fold superior blessing if He had willed. He has not thought it proper to give him according to His expediency. Had be been endowed with superior blessings who knows what difficulties he might have had to encounter.

He should think that by a feeling of jealousy, the other party does not suffer any loss. It is through and through the cause of his own distress in this life and in the life hereafter. Looking at these matters in this light he should turn to the Almighty Allah. He should try to subdue his egoistic self and face it manfully. He would then be able to wash out from his mental make up such evil habits with the grace of Almighty Allah. There is nothing more miserable than these habits in the eye of reason and religion.

On the basis of reliable authorities, it is narrated of the infallible Imam (a.s.):

Jealousy consumes the Faith just as fire consumes dry wood.

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

Never be jealous of the blessings, I have favoured the people with. Do not cast a glance at them. Hold your own ego. Verily, the person who is jealous of others is the enemy of those favours which I have bestowed on my creation. The person who behaves in this manner, I have nothing to do with him nor has he any concern with me.

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

A believer is not given to jealousy. His view is that of lawful ambition. The hypocrite is not desirous of anything for himself. He is only jealous.

According to another tradition, it is narrated of him as having reported of Hazrat Luqman (a.s.) advising his son:

O my son! The jealous person has three characteristics.

(i) He backbite a person in his absence.

(ii) He flatters him when he is face to face with him.

(iii) He rejoices when, he sees you in distress.

According to another tradition it is narrated thus:

The jealous person never finds any comfort in life.

Do they envy people for what God has given them of His bounty?[[80]](#footnote-80)

‘Envy’ is the third basic evil; and itself is a product of pride, greed and anger. It is the most foolish of all evils every evil has some attraction to catch the eyes of mankind, except envy. It has no immediate or long-term benefit, no comfort, and no sweetness. On the contrary, an envious man burns his own heart, wastes his own time thinking why God has given such bounties to my neighbour, and keeps awake the whole night imagining that neighbour as ruined. But all this wishful thinking affects nobody but his own psychology and health. It is a fire which burns the fire-maker only.

The inner layers of envy are worth studying. Why a man indulges in this most futile exercise? Does he think that God should consult him before bestowing His grace upon someone else? Does he imagine that he is a partner of God, and that nothing, especially no good, should happen on the Earth without his consent? If not so, then why so much heart-burning on the decisions of God? On the other hand, does he think that God’s grace is a limited quantity which must be taken away from one to give to another? If not so, then why envy your relatives or friends? Why not ask God to bestow His grace upon you also as He has done with them?

Envy ruined Satan when he began burning his heart on the status of Adam. It destroyed Cain when he became envious of his own brother Abel. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

Envy eats away the good deeds as fire eats away the wood.

Islam has prescribed a medicine for this spiritual sickness love. It shows the way towards the Love of God through the love of His creatures. The best person in the eyes of Allah is that who is best for the creatures of Allah.

It also emphasises that the real grace and bounty is not that of this world. The bounty and grace in the life – hereafter is the real one. Therefore, you should not make the comforts of this world ultimate goal of your life. Your aim must be the ‘Eternal Grace of God’ – That grace cannot be obtained by envy; it may be obtained by love. Love of God, love of His Prophet, love of the family of the Prophet, love of your parents and your relatives, love of your neighbours, love of your brothers in religion, love of your fellow human beings – these are some aspects of love which are stressed by Islam, to make a man free from envy and spite, let the ‘love’ conquer ‘envy’, and be a real Muslim.

## Charity

And whatever you give, verily God knows it well.[[81]](#footnote-81)

‘Charity’ is not just doling out some cash or material to a needy person. It involves far deeper feeling and far more subtle psychological attitude. Sincerity of purpose is the soul of charity. Unfortunately charity has become one of the most misunderstood virtues in our time.

Industrial progress and commercial environment of modern society has degraded charity into a medium of business propaganda. How many times do we see an advertisement for a charitable cause which ends with the line ‘space kindly donated by M/s xyz’?

According to Islam, a charity must be only for the sake of God, without any shade of worldly motive. Islam condemns ‘those who spend their wealth to show to the people’ (Holy Qur’an)! Such baseless charity has been described to be ‘like a hard barren rock on which is a little soil; on it falls heavy rain and leaves it just a bare stone.’ (Holy Qur’an)

The second condition to remember is that charity must be of such a thing which we have earned lawfully. Holy Qur’an says; ‘Give of the good things which you have honourably earned’. Mass psychology may have awe for the tactics of Robin Hood; but religion cannot glorify or endorse such methods. It follows that only such charity is real charity which is done by one’s own free will. A forced charity is meaningless in Islamic language. A handful of rice given with our own free will for God is more valuable in Islam than a shipload given under compulsion or for worldly motives.

And what can be given in charity. Holy Qur’an says: ‘Never shall you attain righteousness unless you give freely of that which you love’.

So this is the test of real charity: Do you give something that you value greatly? If you give your life for a cause that is the greatest gift you can offer. Next in degree are your personal efforts, your talents, your skill, and your learning. Then come, the charities involving your earnings, your property and your possessions there are other aspects of charity in position or reputation.

Whatever the form of your charity, it is the unselfishness which Allah (s.w.t.) demands; and whatever you give verily God knows it well.

## Generosity

Be generous as Allah is generous to you.[[82]](#footnote-82)

It is the foundation of Islamic generosity. Almighty Allah gave us every thing, right from our very existence up to the highest place of honour in His presence in the life hereafter. Our natural instinct demands that we should express our gratitude towards Him – in words as well as in actions. Prayers prescribed by religion serve the purpose of saying ‘Thank you’ to Him. But how can we prove in action that we are really thankful to Him? The verses of Holy Qur’an quoted above shows us the way. It is by service of humanity that we can show our gratitude towards Almighty Allah.

Naturally, it follows that, when we help any person, we should not do it in expectation of any return or any thanks from the beneficiary. On the contrary, we must be thankful to him that, by accepting our help, he gave us a chance to demonstrate our gratitude to our Creator. Virtue is its own reward, because it satisfies our natural urge to manifest our thankfulness towards Almighty Allah.

This, according to Islam, must be our attitude when we are helping others. But what is our obligation when we are on the receiving end of the side? Islam teaches us that we must be thankful, in the first place, to Allah; because He is the actual source of help. And then we should be thankful to that man whom Almighty Allah made His agent in that help. Thus all persons who were instrumental in that help must be thanked sincerely. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

He, who did not thank people, did not thank Almighty Allah.

A recent incident has reminded me how far the world is yet from real religious tenets. In the last few days, there was much hue and cry about National Service. Had our society been based upon above mentioned mutual respect and co-operation, as taught by religion, such things would have been impossible. The nation would have helped the students without any expectation of payment in any form. But the students, on the other hand, would have insisted that they should be given a chance to prove their appreciation of and gratitude towards nation for the help given in time of need. How inspiring would it have been to see the nation, poor as it is, giving education to its youth, without feeling the necessity of reminding him of his obligations; and then to see that youth, not shouting against the representatives of nation, but insisting that he, on his own accord, would serve the nation on a nominal pay and donate the balance to nation, not for two years only but so long as the full expenses incurred during his education are not reimbursed.

Let us pray a time comes when this vision remains a vision no longer; when not the conflict of interests, as taught by materialism, but sincere co-operation, as taught by religion, becomes the basis of our society.

## Evils of Greediness and Merits of Distribution of Wealth among Poor

And when they are told, Spend you of (the bounties) with which God has provided you, the unbelievers say to those who believe; ‘Shall we then feed those whom, God would have fed Himself, if He had so willed’? You are in nothing but manifest error.

‘Greed’ is the other fundamental evil. All these litigations, all these disputes, all these conflicts, are nothing but a manifestation of greed, basically a personal evil, a gradually been extended to national, and then international, affairs. These wars, whether hot or cold; these races of armament; these international intrigues; these power blocks; what is their real reason? An uncontrollable greed to dominate the world!

Islam trains a man to subdue his greed to the greater benefit of mankind. It has forbidden ‘interest’ and thus abolished the system of earning money from money. Islamic society cannot tolerate an economic system based upon taking and giving interest. If you have money to spare, give it without any worldly motive, just for the sake of pleasing Allah by helping his creatures. Do not follow those unbelievers who refused to help poor on the pretext that God could have given them wealth, had He so willed. They have been condemned in the verse quoted above. Do not take a share in that condemnation by acting like them!

Alms and Zakat are another method of sub during the undesirable greed. Ameerul Momineen Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.) has said:

O son of Adam whatever you earn above your needs you are just its treasurer for others. The world will become a paradise, if mankind heeds to this ethical code and changes its attitude accordingly. Also he has said: “Whatever poverty and distress in this world, is owing to the greed of rich men who do not comply with the rules laid down by Islam about their financial obligations.

Division of inheritance is another method by which Islam compels Muslims to distribute the wealth accumulated during a lifetime. Quran lays down the detailed rules of its distribution among heirs. But it does not become silent after this. It says that if any poor person is present, give something to him also.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

Allah says, the poor are my dependants, the rich my agents; if my agents will not give to my dependants, their due I shall put them in Hell and I shall not care for them.

Let us root out the ‘greed’ from our hearts. Only then this world will be a place to live upon.

## Extravagance

Verily, God is not pleased with the extravagant.[[83]](#footnote-83)

There is a marriage in the neighbourhood. The parties belong to middle class. They cannot afford a big feast; they cannot afford the pomp and show. But oh, the strange twists of ‘inferiority complex’! They want to appear more prosperous than they are. Their trend of thought: “What will ‘the people’ say if we did not do that? The ‘name of the family’ should not be allowed to be tarnished by our poverty.” And so, to ‘save the name of the family’, the poor people spend more than they can afford reasonably.

It is just one example. This evil is not limited to the special functions only. In fact, it has become the accepted norm of life in these days. Cars are purchased on hire purchase, of Course, where a cycle would serve the same purpose: Nylon and silk is used when the cotton clothes may prove more comfortable. Watches are worn by people who have all the time in the world at their disposal. Typewriters are considered a necessity for a man who writes no more than two letters in a week. These examples are not imaginary.

And what is the result of this spending beyond limit? The first thing is that God is displeased. And his displeasure manifests itself in many ways. Usually there is no money when it is needed most: rent of the house becomes overdue, prompting the landlord to serve notice of eviction; family grocer grumbles that his bills are not paid in time, so he will not give any thing except by cash; the doctor gently reminds that his accounts must be settled without delay. And so on. But there is no money to meet these demands. It has already been over spent on ‘face saving items.’

There is only one remedy: Think twice before spending money. There is a test to decide whether the thing you intend to purchase is actually a necessity. Is your work suffering without? Are you experiencing actual difficulty without it? If so, go ahead and take it. If not, forget it.

Almighty Allah says: ‘We increase Our Blessings for those who are grateful.’ We know this to be a divine statement and it is a pity if we go against it. Gratitude does not connote only that you utter the words, ‘My Lord! I offer a thousand thanks for the great bounties you have vouchsafed.’ Real gratitude, on the other hand is, to make use of the boons conferred by Him in accordance with what pleases Him, and not use them in a defiant way. Spend from what He has bestowed upon you to relieve the poor. Be kind and considerate towards His distressed and needy creatures in thankfulness for His Mercy. Adore Him whole heartedly and sincerely express yourself. ‘My Lord you are the real Bestower of blessing, while I am ever needful for your Grace.’

In our daily life when one obliges you it is not enough to say ‘thank you’ but you must be on the look out to do him good as much as you can do. It must be noted that one cannot repay the obligation done by doing him good many times because the one who has done good, howsoever small, has done first.

And when declared your Lord” If you be grateful I will increase (My favours) to you, and if you be ungrateful, verily my torment is indeed serves.[[84]](#footnote-84)

A tradition coming from Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) states that if a person pays a visit to a sick Muslim then he will be attended by seventy thousand Angels till the evening, if he had visited in morning, and till dawn if he had visited him at dusk. These seventy thousand Angels will recite durood (salutations) on him all that time.

A reliable tradition from Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) states that when a person is ill he should allow people to visit him as the prayers of these visitors will be heard.

A tradition from Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) states that when a person pays a visit to a sick man, he should ask the sick man to pray for him as the prayers of a sick man are equal to the prayers of the Angels.

According to Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) that man is rewarded more who pays a short visit to the sick and not a lengthy one unless the patient desires him to stay back and requests him to wait longer (and the Doctor has permitted so).

## Avoid Evil Company

None can deny the harm that springs from evil company. Knowledge, experience and observation all testify that evil company is virulent poison for man. Its evil effects get soaked into the heart and the brain without a man’s knowing it, and soaked in a manner as if it is the best of all. Can evil action then be ever given up, whatever the amount of admonition may be from you or us? The very association with evil company is a sign of Divine wrath. How else can a sensible man possessing reason and foresight become so foolish as not to realize his gain and loss?

And when hear they any vain talk, they withdraw from it, and say they: ‘For us shall be our deeds, and for you shall be your deeds, peace be on you, we desire not the (society of the) ignorant.’[[85]](#footnote-85)

The great heavenly boon of the tongue is meant for the expression of thought:

But in expressing one’s thoughts one should be governed by set principles of speech, whether one is a child, a young man or an old man.

Every word should be meaningful and it should be calculated to convey correct ideas and rouse proper feelings. It should not give offence and create hatred.

One should not talk too much in an assembly nor should one cut short the speech of another. Even though one may know the story or narration, which another man may be relating, one should not interfere therein. If a question is asked of another person, one should not make the reply unless referred to. If a question is addressed to a whole group wherein he, too, is included, he should not take the precedence in giving the answer. He should have patience when he knows the better answer to a question, which another man is replying to. When the man has finished, he may add any thing only if necessary, and then too without casting any aspersion on the previous speaker. One should not try to overhear when two persons are talking in secret, nor should he join in a consultation unless asked to do so. One should not talk in symbols when speaking to the elders. One should not raise his voice in speech too high nor lower too low, but be moderate. In case there happens to be a knotty point during the talk, he should elucidate by appropriate illustrations and similes. It should never be lost sight of that there should be nothing superfluous in the speech. When some one is speaking, he should not give a reply unless the other person has finished his words. Before giving a reply he should consider all the pros and cons of the matter before uttering a word, for as the saying goes, ‘the arrow which is shot and the word that is uttered cannot be retrieved’.

As the poet says: ‘Do not blow out words without deliberation. If you delay but say nicely, there is no harm. Think well before you utter anything; stop before you are required to stop.’

## Adopt Soft Tones in Talking

The Holy Quran has itself taught Muslims the mode of talking. It says:

And you shall speak to men good words[[86]](#footnote-86)

In explaining this verse Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Talk with a soft and sweet tone with every one, be he a faithful or an opponent: and with the faithful behave with patience so that they may be pleased and with the opponents (of Islam) talk with due courtesy, so that they may be inclined towards the faith, and if there is no hope in this then at least there will be this much of gain that you will be able to save yourself and faithful’s from their evil designs.

## Hilarious Talks

In social life that kind of hilarious talks and (vulgar) jokes (which injure feelings and therefore) which are the cause of quarrels and frictions, are strictly forbidden. According to the saying of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) there is permission for smiling.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) even has learned to the sayings of outsiders (non-Muslim) if these evoke laughter. He (a.s.) said:

In your discourse do not let things of laughter crop up, though you take these as others sayings and you are only copying them.

## Etiquette and Polite Talk

The Verse revealed in this respect pertain to occasion when someone through ignorance behaved in an uncivilised manner towards the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) or in his presence It was also, however, the Divine will to make it known that such behaviour is against etiquette on other similar occasions, as well as ill-advised for the Muslims.

It is wonderful sometimes as to the lessons, which appear new to us now, which were taught to the world by Muslims and which the far-off sensible notions of the world took to heart. We neither know our own principles of life nor care to seek them. One wonder with what force was this message revealed by Almighty Allah and with what zeal was the same driven home to us by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

O you who believe! Raise you not your voices above the voice of the Prophet and speak you, not loud to him as speak aloud some of you to the others, lest (all) your (good) deeds become null while you perceive not.[[87]](#footnote-87)

Verily those who lower their voices in the presence of the Prophet of Allah, they are those whose hearts Allah has proved for their guarding (themselves against evil): for them shall be forgiveness and a great compense.[[88]](#footnote-88)

O you who believe! When it is said to you, Make you room in (your) assemblies! Then make you room, Allah will make room for you; and when it is said to you, ‘Rise you up! Then rise you up, Allah will exalt (you in) ranks (to Him), those who believe among you, and those who have been granted knowledge; and Allah is All-Aware of whatsoever you do.[[89]](#footnote-89)

## Debate Etiquette

Debate implies a scrutiny of their Ideas. Man is so constituted by nature that he becomes haughty when he deems someone else intends to criticise him. He puts on at once a hostile attitude and every effort in this behalf gets awry. ‘Once fallen from the roof, it is difficult to be reseated.’

It is for this reason that Allah Almighty commands us to be take ourselves to ingenuity and nice counsel to bring people to the path of righteousness – to discuss matters intelligently and very politely, so much so that not a single word should escape our tongue likely to disagree with the addressed. He may be displaced otherwise and become adamant to all argument. Here is the Quranic commandment.

And disputed not with the people of the Book save what is best.[[90]](#footnote-90)

And call you to the way of your Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation and dispute with them in the manner which is the best; Verify your Lord knows better of him who has gone astray from His Path; and He knows best of those guided aright![[91]](#footnote-91)

## Do Not Abuse Anyone, nor Use Vile Words for Others

A man loses his worth by uttering vile words or abusing anyone, and he is lowered in the eyes of the listener. The man who is abused or condemned suffers no harm at all, one’s own tongue, however, becomes an outlet for vain talk. Add to this an impression of vulgarity and indecency.

And abuse you not those whom they invoke beside Allah, lest they abuse Allah in transgression without knowledge; Thus have We made fair seeming to every people their deeds, then to their Lord is their return, so He will inform them of what they did.[[92]](#footnote-92)

And those who, from what is vain, keep (themselves) aloof[[93]](#footnote-93)

According to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) Heaven is prohibited to that shameless man who abuses others and is abused by others, but does not take it seriously. If the knowledge is acquired about this person, it will be found that he had no right father or that the devil shared his conception.

# Bhooli Hui Baaten

## Do Not Adjudge a Piece of Information without Due Investigation nor Act in Accordance Therewith

It is a great source of penitence and fearful error to begin action or conjecture on hearing something without due investigation. Allah forbids: that we become as credulous as to take such a step in haste, as may be the cause of ruin of ourselves or some other innocent fellows, because of some information without ascertaining as to who has given the information, and whether it is really worthy of credence. We may have to repent for our unreasonable haste or anger when the same may be of no use. Common sense and precaution demand that the matter should be sifted before undertaking any action.

O you who believe! If comes to you a wicked man with a news, ascertain carefully, lest you harm a people in ignorance, and then repent you for what you have done.[[94]](#footnote-94)

## Islamic Mode of Walking

While walking on the road it is prohibited to run, except – in important matters, fast walking is not liked – rather there is in the Hadiths of Imam Moosa Kazim (a.s.) that: Fast walking destroys the faithful’s good attributes. To keep on talking on the road too is not correct. One should keep a dignified appearance of being in deep thought, and take lessons from the wonders of Allah (s.w.t.)’s creations. One should not eat anything while walking, is loathsome.

These who are in a better condition than him, should take the initiative in wishing (salutation), and he should salute those first who are in an inferior position than him; and one who starts talking without first exchanging salutations, should not be replied to, and this will make him conscious that the law of civilised behaviour has been ignored. On the way whoever becomes a fellow traveller, on parting one should, out of courtesy accompany him to some distance, when Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) had announced his going to Kufa (from Medina), one companion of his journey, who was an infidel, wanted to part. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) accompanied him to some distance, so he said: ‘This is not your way (to kufa)’. Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said:

It is the last stage of keeping company that a man should accompany his companion up to some distance, when they are about to part.

He said in surprise, ‘Is it so?’ Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) said: ‘Yes!’ He replied: ‘Then I make you witness that (now) I am accepting your religion’ – and he embraced Islam.

## Avoid Bribery and Usury

Usury and bribery are such heinous offences which estrange the offender from Allah. The consequences thereof are so far reaching that all kinds of moral lapses can spring therefrom. The ego gets on degrading day by day. Such people are the inveterate enemies of the public; they throw dust into the eyes of men for their own benefit. No one knows the number of innocent people whose blood they suck. It goes without saying that usury drags down a man into the abysms of disgrace. The illegal extortion is in the same class.

And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means neither seek to gain access thereby to authorities that you may swallow up a portion of the property of men wrongfully while you know.[[95]](#footnote-95)

Those who swallow interest will not (be able to) stand (in resurrection) except as stands one whom Satan has confounded with his touch.[[96]](#footnote-96)

## Keep Correct Measures

Besides other matters, correct measures are insisted on by all as an important part of human morale. Not once but eight times has the relevant commandment been repeated in the Holy Qur’an. It implies that fraud even in the most insignificant details is regarded as a great evil.

So give you full measure and weight, and diminish you not to men their things, and make you no mischief in the earth, after its reform; this is better for you, if you be believers.[[97]](#footnote-97)

Give you just measure and be not of those who lessen (to deceive).[[98]](#footnote-98)

And weight with balances correct, upright.[[99]](#footnote-99)

Defraud not people in their (due) goods, and work not evil in the earth making mischief.[[100]](#footnote-100)

Indeed sent We Our Prophets with clear proofs, and sent We down with them the Book and the scale that people may establish themselves in justice.[[101]](#footnote-101)

Woe to the defrauders in measuring![[102]](#footnote-102)

Who, when they take the measure (of their dues) from men take it fully.[[103]](#footnote-103)

But when they measure out to others or weigh out for them, they are deficient.[[104]](#footnote-104)

What! Think they not that they shall be raised.[[105]](#footnote-105)

For a Mighty Day.[[106]](#footnote-106)

## Buying and Selling

Islam has laid great emphasis on commerce, and the Muslims were well-versed in the art. They, however, got deprived of this art side by side with other points of merits as a result of age-old indulgence in sensual pursuits with consequent penury and want. Would that the Muslims once again remembered their forgotten arts and they set out to impress the world with their flourishing commerce. A note of caution, however, must be sounded to the effect that profiteering, fraudulent dealings, and dishonesty ruin the trader’s mind side by side with his trade. Unless the Muslims give up such vices their trade cannot flourish:

O you believers! Devour not each others’ property among yourselves unlawfully save that by trading by mutual consent; and kill not your (own) selves; Verily, Allah is Merciful to you.

It is also prohibited to interfere when a Momin is selling something and saying that one’s thing is better than that being offered by the other Momin. Also if a Momin is buying something, no other Momin should become a customer by offering a better price.

One should not make the labourer start a work without fixing his wages with him.

It is stated that if a person keeps back the wages of a labourer cruelly and does not give the labourer his wages then God will deprive him of the rewards of his good deeds and will make the perfume of Paradise non-permissible to him.

Whosoever cheats a Muslim in buying and selling is not from the group of the Holy Prophet’s followers and on the Day of Judgement he will be judged with the Jews.

## How to Rule Over the People

Surely the (true) Religion with Allah is Islam.[[107]](#footnote-107)

Islam has given mankind a perfect code of conduct. Men from every walk of life have been clearly instructed how to perform their duties, how to behave. Islamic law is based on Justice; Islamic ethics, on love and grace.

The strictest rules have been laid down for those who enter the public life, like judges, governors etc. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) once sent a man as a Qazi to Southern Arabia. When he came back, he brought many gifts given to him during his stay there. When the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) came to know about it, he demanded that all the gifts be brought to him to be distributed among poor. The ex-judge protested that it was his personal Property, as it was given as gifts. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Had you gone there in your private capacity without any official credential, these gifts would have been your private property. But as long as you were my Qazi, the things presented to you were not ‘gift’; it was ‘bribe’ to please you so that they might benefit from you.” The man had to return all his ‘gifts’.

This clear cut rule is worth following by all public leaders. Then they would not have to I worry how much a Member of Parliament may accept from his ‘clients’; or how much ‘expenses’ can be spent on pleasure trips.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was informed of a dinner attended by the Governor of Basra. He at once wrote him a long letter, some sentences of which are sufficient to show how Islam expects its officers to behave.

I have been told that a young man of Basra invited you to a dinner and you hurried to it. Fine dishes were brought out for you; luxurious plates were served. I never thought that you would accept a dinner to which only rich were invited, and from which poor were excluded… See that I, your Imam, am satisfied from this world with two old clothes and two loaves of bread daily I know that you cannot do as I am doing, but at least you should try to help me with your efforts, your fear of God and your behaviour; because, by God, I did not collect from this world of yours any gold, nor did I amass any riches…

Should I remain content that people call me ‘Ameerul Momineen’ (leader of the faithful) without sharing with them their hardships, without setting for them a model to be followed…..

Many of his letters to governors and officers show this trend when he exhorts them to live as ordinary men, without erecting barriers between them and the people; to behave in such a way ‘that big people cannot use you to oppress poor ones, and poor are not discouraged from obtaining justice even against the richest and biggest man.’

## Exhorting Towards Virtue and Forbidding From Vice (Amr Bil Maroof and Nahy Anil Munkar)

And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and these it is that shall be successful.[[108]](#footnote-108)

Exhorting others to be virtuous is one of the most important duties of a Muslim. A society can progress in right direction only so long as there are people in it who know the right path and who are willing to show it to others. Otherwise the whole caravan may perish in a beastly jungle of anarchy and infidelity.

But before enjoining others to do well and resist from evil, one should himself adhere to the tenets of religion faithfully. Otherwise, Holy Qur’an will ask: ‘Why do you speak of a thing which you yourself do it not.’ So this duty of inviting others to righteousness compels a man to be righteous himself.

And how that exhortation is to be carried out, Almighty Allah says in Holy Quran:

Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and kind preaching; and argue with them in the best manner.[[109]](#footnote-109)

This was the method used by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his true followers to spread the message of Islam and to teach people the real significance of religion.

An interesting story is told of an old man in Medina who was engaged in ablution (Wuzoo) for his prayer. Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husain (a.s.) (the grandsons of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and of tender age at that time) realised that the man does not know the correct method of ablution. They wanted to correct him; but at the same time did not like to offend his feelings. So they approached him and said. ‘We are two brothers and we want you to be the judge between us as whose ablution is correct.’ When the old man agreed, the children proceeded to perform their ablution, in the most perfect way. The old man was watching them intently, as he was to be the judge. Soon it dawned upon him that the children, in their kind and gentle manner, were teaching him. He exclaimed: ‘You both are correct; it was I who was wrong.’

The old man learnt his lesson. But this episode will continue to show the preachers also how to preach.

## The Rights of Neighbours

And (be good) to the neighbour who is your relative and to the neighbour who is not a relative…

Islam has great respect for the mutual rights and duties of the neighbours. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

Angel Jibraeel always used to advise me to be generous with the neighbours, till I thought that Allah was going to include the neighbours among the heirs of a Muslim.

The rights of neighbourhood are not meant for Muslim neighbours only. Of course, a Muslim neighbour has one more claim upon us – that of Islamic brotherhood; but as far as the rights of neighbourhood are concerned, all are equal. Explaining it, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

Neighbours are of three kinds: (1) that one who has one right upon you, (2) that who has got two rights upon you; and (3) that one who has got three rights upon you.

The neighbour having three rights upon you is the one who is also a Muslim and a relative.

The neighbour having two rights is the one who is either a non-Muslim relative or a non-relative Muslim.

The neighbour having one right is the one who is neither a Muslim nor a relative; still he has got all the claims of neighbourhood – rights upon you.

Here are some more traditions which show the Islamic love towards the neighbours: –

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

That man is not from me who sleeps contentedly while his neighbour sleeps hungry.

Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) has said:

These are your duties towards your neighbour: Protect his interests when he is absent; show him respect when he is present; help him when he is inflicted with any injustice. Do not remain on look-out to detect his faults; and if, by any chance, you happen to know any undesirable thing about him, hide it from others; and, at the same time try to desist him from improper habits, if there is any chance that he will listen to you. Never leave him alone at any calamity. Forgive him, if he has done any wrong, in short live with him a noble life, based on the highest Islamic ethical code.

Now, let us ask ourself a very significant question; Are we good neighbour?

Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) has expressed displeasure on that person who eats to his fill while his brother neighbour remains hungry.

It was told to the Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.a.) that a woman keeps fasts, and during the nights she stands up and prays to Almighty Allah, but is bad of behaviour, and wounds the feelings of her neighbours with her tongue. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

She is going to get nothing good from her worship; she deserves to go to hell.[[110]](#footnote-110)

## Separation and Reconciliation

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to Abuzar (r.a.):

O Abuzar! The deeds of the people of the World for a period between one Friday and the next are submitted on Sundays and Thursdays before the Almighty Allah. The Almighty Allah pardons the sins of every one except in the case of the person who harbours enmity towards his brother. In their case the command goes that the deeds of both should be kept pending till such time as they get together in compromise and the enmity between them is washed off.

O Abuzar! Avoid separation from your brothers; verily no deed is acceptable in the case of separation.

O Abuzar! I forbid you to get separated. In case separation is forced one, let it not stay beyond three days. The person who continues separation from his believing brother for more than three days merits to be thrown into the Hell-fire if he dies during that period.

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

Shall I tell you about the worst person?

The companions requested to be enlightened in the matter. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) proceeded:

The worst man is he who is hostile to other people and the people are hostile to him.

It is narrated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) advised his sons:

Avoid enmity towards others. There are two kinds of men. There are the intelligent men who overpower their enemies by dint of their manoeuvring. There are others who are dullards. They get ready to quarrel with others on trifles, because of their stupidity.

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

There are four things which counts much even in small quantity: Fire, sleep, disease and enmity.

On the basis of reliable authority it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as having said;

The person who is much worried is generally sick and the person of low moral calibre is always tormented. The person, who is ever quarrelling with others has very little manliness, His honour and prestige go to the winds.

He (s.a.w.a.) added:

Angel Jibraeel (a.s.) has always been forbidding me from quarrelling, just as he has been doing against drinking and idol worship.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The person who sows the seed of enmity in the hearts of others reaps what he sows.

According to another tradition, he narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said that Angel Jibraeel (a.s.) said as follows:

Never quarrel, with others. This leads to exposure of one’s faults. One loses honour in the bargain.

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

The enmity and suspicion between two friends should not exceed three days.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Two persons do not separate from each other on the ground of mutual enmity but that one of them, as a matter of course, is entitled to curses and deprivation of the Divine Grace Sometimes, they both merit the same.

Someone made the submission as to how the aggrieved party gets entitled to divine curses. To this His (a.s.) reply was:

It is because he does not conciliate his believing brother by his own magnanimity and good-will towards him. He sticks to the unpleasant words of the other.

He (a.s.) added as having heard from his revered father:

When two persons quarrel together with an aggression on the part of them it behoves the aggrieved one to get softened and humble. He should ask the aggressor to forgive him from any transgression on his part. He should ask him to give up anger. That will wash off the enmity between them. The Almighty Allah is just. He shall avenge the aggression.

In another tradition, he is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The two Muslims who do not get reconciled together, for a period exceeding three days are expelled from the fold of Islam. The link between them is broken. One, who takes the initiative in the reconciliation, shall enter Paradise, before the other.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Satan rejoices as long as there is friction between two Muslims His knees get broken and his organs are dismembered when they get reconciled. He cries out that the situation has created heavy distress for him.

On the basis of reliable authority, it is narrated that Imam Ja’far-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The virtue which is held dear by Almighty Allah, very much is that one should bring about reconciliation between two friends, who have got estranged and when one brings together two persons who have separated.

In another tradition, He (a.s.) is reported to have said:

In my eyes, it is far superior to bring about reconciliation between two persons than to give two gold coins as charity, for the sake of Almighty Allah.

## Friendship and Friends

One should regard the status of a friend as ones own, wishing for him the good that one wishes for one’s own person, and disallowing the evil for him which one shuns for himself. One should make his friends share the good one cherishes and prevent the incidence of the evil of to them. The friends should occupy a status in his eyes higher to that of the acquaintances that one should endeavour to enlist among one’s friends so as to benefit them with the good one can do, and be benefited by the good they can do to him.

Some one asked Alexander as to how he got into the possession of such vast territories. He replied that the sole technique in this behalf adopted by him was that he perfected his friendships with them, never allowing them to turn his enemies while transforming the enemies into friends by acts of benevolence and grace. How beautifully has the poet (Hafiz of Sheeraz) put: ‘The blissfulness of the two worlds is expressed in the two-fold maxim be good to your friends, be considerate towards the enemies.’

It is a symbol of good breeding and virtuous conducts to have many sincere friends. The one who can claim a number of friends is lucky and he is entitled to achieve all round perfection. The fewer the friends one may have the more probable is it that he lacks magnanimity. It may be that he does not discriminate between good and evil, being careless about the observance of the demands of love and friendship. Those who would be friends with him may be grumbling about his carelessness towards the dictates and responsibilities of human brotherhood. He is oblivious to the conditions of lasting gain and loss. He is ignorant of the benefits of knowledge and discernment. He is likely to evade occasions which lead to excellence and perfection. He may be engrossed in his own self and the desires of flesh and bone, to an extent that he forgets the evil consequences of such actions. He declines to listen to the voice of reason which would awaken him to the responsibilities of life and love. If he has friends, they would be of a calibre which strengthens him ever more in his ignorance and self-indulgence. A person of this nature falls into a number of psychological disorders, which he may not ever become aware of, for instance, worry, chagrin and fear. He is a prey to contrary emotions at the same time, for instance lustful-ness and loftiness. Seeing that the latter cannot be attained without refraining from the former, he suffers chagrin on failing to attain loftiness.

To effect a change in habit implies a change of temperament, which he dreads to do. In short such a person loses the sense of discriminating between his own propensities, in as such as he cannot give attention to his own conditions, because of his pre-occupation with the desires of the flesh, and the company he keeps is ever eager to grind their own axes of self seeking advantage by inciting him to go deeper into his errant ways and to earn the odium of loss of this world as well as of the Hereafter. Such a man, though, apparently indulging in his desires is his own enemy. Had he been his own friend, he would have tried for the betterment of the self. How can such a fellow be a friend of other men, seeing that he is not a friend even to himself? Under these circumstances of his being no friend of anybody, how can he expect others to be his friends? In fact even his own ego is not his friend. The end of such person can be better imagined then described. In short an overflowing sentiment of love for humanity and the abundance of friends do make such excellent character traits that numerous books on this subject have been written. Such people derive advantages for themselves as also they do well to others. Even the strangers are desirous of cultivating their friendship and reciprocating to them in terms of their love and friendship, thereby contributing to the orderliness of the world, such persons are always gracious and benevolent, by intention as well as un-intentionally, inasmuch as their sentiments of excellence and goodness give birth to activities which are cherished by the wise. Such persons become endeared to all and sundry. The whole world is their well-wisher because of their praiseworthy qualities.

His graciousness extends far and wide a graciousness that knows no ending. He may undergo death but his good deeds endure even after him. Such graciousness is far above the acts of goodness which comprise some aim at gain or pleasure, which are always fleeting.

It is enough for the purpose of a test that one’s friend should be mindful of his obligation to him. A clean mind is ever conscious of any debt of gratitude he may owe to anyone. He shall not bear to hear anything ill spoken against his benefactor. The ungrateful man shall have no consideration for his benefactor such a fellow can never be expected to value the gift of a friend. There is no vice more reprehensible than ingratitude. In the same way there is no virtue more becoming than gratitude, so much so that notwithstanding the fact that Almighty Allah is above any need for gratitude from his creatures. He approves of this attitude in the Holy Quran: ‘If you are grateful, I shall increase the favours surely, while if you are ungrateful my torment is severe.’ It follows that this attitude is very essential as a basis for friendship. It should then be ascertained as to what attitude he brings to bear towards the pleasures and incitements of this world. If he is enamoured of sensual pleasures and lustfulness, he shall hardly be fit for fulfilling the conditions of friendship which may entail the burdens of hardships. He shall be unable to forsake his pleasures and comforts for the sake of friendship. His love for such pleasures shall attract him to the love of wealth at all costs, for which purpose; most of his time shall be spent. There shall be found among men, those who profess friendship in season and out of season, but who are found to be incapable of making any financial sacrifice for them with whom they profess the friendship.

## Scissors for Friendship

Loan has been called the scissors for friendship, because of the love of some people for money to an abnormal extent. People whose loves for money to the exclusion of the finer sentiments of love and fellow feeling have to be compared to the dogs’ throttling each other over mere bones. The Holy tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) also is in the same context when it says that the world is a carcase, while the seekers thereof are like dogs (fighting among themselves against fine sentiments). We often come across scenes of disorderliness on the score of a few coins, even among real brothers. The case of a landlord illustrates the sad outcome of mutual enmity on the score of a little monetary loss involved in a dispute with a neighbour. He owned two hundred villages as his Jagir, with the other paraphernalia of a Raees, like elephants, a retinue of attendants two hundred strong. The dispute led to bloody affairs, which had to be faced in law courts. The Jagir was sold off, leaving the Raees pauper, to work for his family’s living by selling grass cut from the jungle. He was unable to do anything else except grass cutting and selling being quite illiterate and unskilled. He was tired of life but even death declined to have mercy on him. Hundreds of such illustrative cases can be quoted where a little money loss gave to the winds all feelings of fellowship, friendship and neighbourly forbearance.

A person who was such inordinate love of money as to be oblivious to human fellow feelings does not deserve to be taken into one’s circle of friendship. The next point to be investigated as to the fitness of a person for one’s friendship is to see if the man is not obsessed with grandiose ideas about himself. In case he is so, it shall be well-nigh impossible for him to treat his friends on a footing of equality. A person of such a disposition can not be expected to do justice to the demands of friendship, being under a mental stress to place himself and his own interest above those of any other person. He is prone to insult and disgrace his friends a condition which contradicts all sentiments of sincerity and friendship. Next should one find out whether the person under reference has a weakness for dancers, singers and buffoons? One’s habits in this respect have a great bearing on the affairs of friendship. Such a one can hardly be expected to meet the conditions of friendship which demand a great deal of self-restraint in all modes of habits.

Over and above the conditions mentioned above we may add the following:

(i) Stupidity contradicts friendship.

(ii) A short temper ill befits a friend.

(iii) Fickle-minded persons are undependable.

(iv) Suspicious people too need to be avoided.

(v) The credulous follows are also waverers.

(vi) A friend should have robust self-respect.

(vii) He should also be free from indolence.

(viii) Carelessness about religious obligations whatever one’s creed may be is also to be dreaded.

(ix) Absence of decorum and solid temperament do not go with sincerity.

(x) Lowly and dishonourable profession do not fit in with fine sentiments.

(xi) Habitual criminals and police suspects should not be made friends.

(xii) Physical and mental disorders also make friendship untenable, because of the apprehension of contagion.

Once that a man of each qualification has been got lot of, one should do one’s best to treat him with the utmost consideration. He should never be negligent about his welfare and no right of his however trivial, should be ignored. One should be ever prepared to come to the friend’s help in any emergency that may call for his help.

One should always feel happy on meeting the friend and express his joy with good manners and civility openly.

One should not overdo the encomiums in favour of the friend, so as to give an appearance of flattery, nor should one be too charry giving due praise when deservedly won. Flattery implies falsehood, underserved praise and is a form of hypocrisy, while charriness in giving due credit is conceitedness.

One should always be mindful of the obligations of friendship, never giving way to any neglect. In case of good fellow feelings, others are also lured to join the circle of friends. The situation is likened to the pigeons, which swarm about a house where they get good welcome and feeding. They bring along new visitors with them to the spot.

In case one is blessed with a piece of good luck from Almighty Allah, one should not forget to share the happiness with his friends.

In case any thing untoward has befallen a friend, one should want to be duly apprised of this fact. Rather one should gauge the trouble from the general demeanour of the friend and sympathetically come to his help, which he may be able to render, for a friend in need is a friend indeed, in case any misdemeanour is experienced from the side of a friend, one should not hesitate to probe the cause therefore and not to give way to any misunderstanding on that score. If the cause is not resolved, the misunderstanding may deepen and so vitiate the relationship. Frank admission of the misunderstanding and necessary amends will constitute the most reasonable course of action. A philosopher has said that there is no intercession as effective as frank admission or frank expression of a grievance. In case one does not have the heart for open talk, one should try to forget it in view of the sincerity of friendship that he has been witnessing all along the course of relationship.

## The Enemies

As for the enemies, they may be open enemies or secret ones. Those whose malice is known are to be regarded as open enemies. Those, whose enmity is not manifested, are to be counted among secret enemies. An enemy deserves to be avoided, whatever his type may be open or secret, weak and strong. It needs a great deal of tact to turn a potential enemy into a friend or at least neutral person, so that he casts off all malice and ill-will. It should be kept in mind that it is part of righteousness to return good for evil done by others. To return evil with evil constitutes yet another evil. Even though the enemy is not possessed of much intelligence, one should beware of his machinations, for even the insane have the moments and occasions of activities, which may be harmful to one’s interests. Time does not wear off the edge of an enemy’s malice. Smouldering fires are likely to get ablaze at anytime, and the enmity of a foe may come into action at anytime. It is, therefore, in the interests of prudence not to allow the enemy to harbour his malice but one should endeavour to remove the cause thereof as early as possible.

As to the causes of the enmity, they may be grounded in:

(i) The contention for the possession of some assets or estates, of high or low worth – a cause that is not easily negotiated.

(ii) A conflict over some sort of preferment or promotions to a covetable position.

(iii) A friction over the success of a plan for an identical objective, one person failing, the other being successful, thereby arousing feelings of enmity.

(iv) It may be that the cause lies in some animal urge, the outcome of which is the dishonour and disgrace of one.

(v) Differences of opinion may arise over certain problems, leading to mutual enmity.

The remedy for all such situations lies in a clear understanding of the causes and the appropriate efforts to remove the same. Upright conduct on one’s own part is the best safeguard against the machinations of the enemies. Honesty is the best policy is a maxim that has held its own ever since man came upon the scene of this earth. It does not fail except where some misplanning is at fault. One should not allow anything to be manifested in action that would be construed as inimical by the other fellow. One’s own conduct should be fair and above board, never allowing any suspicions to be entertained about one’s noble intentions. No injury to the life, honour and property of the enemy should be caused as it is likely to offend the enemy.

In regard to the enemies whose enmity is restricted to an attitude of envy, there is no better technique than to try to excel in the particular object of envy, so that the envious will have himself burned to destruction with his envy. There is, however, no justification for anyone to adopt any underhand means in regard to such enemies.

## Behaviour with the Neutral, the Foolish and the Proud

As for one’s behaviour towards persons of a neutral sort, one should keep in mind their status in life, for example these of them who are engaged in instruction and sermonization should receive due deference and attention, weighing their words on the touchstone of common sense and reason, A sound piece of advice should be followed irrespective of the source, even if it be from some common man. One should look to the worth of the words and not to the person who speaks, It is a part of the mental make up of the men of discernment, that they can discriminate between the good and evil aspects of what is said. It is on this account that the words of the Infallible ones (a.s.) are to be accepted without let or hindrance, because their immaculateness is first established by reason. If any contradiction is felt in any of their statements, one should rather hold one’s own intellect at fault. One should therefore pay due deference to the guidance given by them in the interests of the general humanity. No regard should be paid to any manner of aspertion when truth is at stake. The words of the foolish ones should not be taken seriously, nor should such words be retorted in a similar strain. Such people are rather to be shunned and pitied than considered worthy of any offence, particularly those who add conceitedness to folly. It is part of good breeding to behave with a hunter towards the proud persons. Such behaviour in a way is like treating the disorder on the principle of similia sensililus curante. Humility towards such people is the cause of one’s own disgrace, which should not be tolerated. They expect others to offer them undeserved humility. The most becoming attitude on the part of the persons of exalted status is that they should behave towards others with humility in the words of the Poet of Shiraz:

‘Humility is becoming on the part of the exalted ones, while if a beggar practises humility, it is part of his very nature.’

## Company of Different Types of People

One should endeavour to court the company of the righteous people, as a means to acquire their virtues and excellence. One would do well to follow in their foot steps. One should try to do good to one’s neighbours, the person following the same profession as oneself, as well as those who work out their problems on the same pattern. In case one comes across anything untoward in their character make up, one should not burst out in condemnation, but should rather use patience and forbearance, it is part of the characteristics of a liberal mind to be self controlled, while the lowly minded person is wedded to animal urges of the mind. So one’s behaviour to the rest of the creation should be oriented in a spirit of reformation and good breading with those who are in a subordinate capacity, ones behaviour should be prompted by the requirements of each case with students who are desirous of learning. One should be prepared to help them in their goal if they aim righteousness, and to work for their reformation in case their goal is inappropriate. In brief, one should undertake to furnish the material best suited to the individual case. In regard to persons engaged in industry, one should aid them in the acquirement of the necessary facilities for their particular needs, trying to dissuade them from following unwholesome profession. Even in persons who beg, one should make discrimination between those who are given too much to begging and those who are not so inclined, being more sympathetic to the latter. In any case the avaricious and the needy should receive their respective due, while the able bodied among them should be encouraged to follow some useful line of craftsmanship.

## Clothes and Dress

The matter is mainly outside the domain of Ethics, and as such it can be touched upon only briefly in these discussions. People of different lands, cultures and creeds have varied types of dresses. The seeker after moral perfection should select a type of dress that suits the generality of the people of his own status and profession, and which should also answer the demands of enlightened common sense. Whoever the man, he has to adopt some type of dress and to maintain his prestige therewith.

As for the dress manners, one should clean tidy clothes. Dirty, untidy clothes, besides being unwholesome give an impression of carelessness and torpor. The clothes need not be costly, yet even ordinary clothes can be kept clean and free from all sorts of dirt and pollution. One should keep away from activities which soil or tear clothes. If obliged by the demands of one’s profession, the clothes for working hours may be separately kept; while the clothing for social activities may be set apart. Those who can afford should keep different kinds of dress for different occasions, for example, the night dress of a loose get up, the official dress of a more formal type, the dress of a journey of a colour that does not fade easily, the dress in gatherings of mourning which bespeaks the wearer’s sorrow on the occasion. The dress should not offend against one’s own cultural patterns. Each season also demands its own peculiar form of dress-warm woollen clothing in winter and light cotton clothing in summer. The general dress for wear should be coarse. Fine cloth is productive of ailment and ill manners. The colour of cloth should not be gaudy, but just the one approved by people of sedate temper. Perfume will impact additional merit to the dress. The clothes should fit the body and should not be hindrance in any activity one has to perform, especially in sitting and moving about, without giving an appearance of formality. Men’s clothing is inappropriate for women and so is women’s clothing inappropriate for men. One should avoid both extremes in the matter of dress extravagance and stinginess. A man is often recognised for his worth by the dress he wears.

## Axioms of Wisdoms

The author of the book ‘Kitaabul Fazaael’ (The Book of Excellence) deems it a fitting ending of the book to give some of the axioms of wisdom which Plato had given to his celebrated pupil Aristotle by way of his parting will.

(1) Try to cognise your Sovereign Lord and to do homage to Him.

(2) Devote your time to study and teaching.

(3) Give preference to the acquirement of Knowledge and perfection above every other matter.

(4) Do not weigh the people of learning by the amount of their knowledge, but evaluate them by their capacity to avoid mischief and vice.

(5) Do not ask of the Almighty Allah a boon which is transient.

(6) Have the conviction that whatever the blessings, they all precede from Allah.

(7) The blessing of the Almighty Allah is all enduring and they will not leave you.

(8) Beware of mischief always, for there are so many sources there of.

(9) One must never desire the undesirable.

(10) The Divine vengeance is not by way of anger and chagrin, but by way of admonition and correction.

(11) Do not seek for life which is liable to termination by death.

(12) Give no weight to life and death; only regard them as a means to earn righteousness.

(13) Do not move on to rest, unless you have called your own ego to account on three points (a) Have you done no wrong that day ? (b) Have you done any good deed? (c) Have you shown any negligence in any task assigned to you?

(14) Keep in mind what you have been in your origin and what you will be after death.

(15) Do not do damage to anybody, for everything in this world is subject to change.

(16) Most unfortunate is he who becomes negligent of the Hereafter.

(17) He is unlucky who does not recover from a slip.

(18) Do not have your stock in trade in things external to you.

(19) Do not wait for a supplication on the part of the needy in doing a good deed.

(20) Try to supply a needy one’s want before he speaks.

(21) Do not look upon a person as wise-man, who is enamoured of the pleasures of this world.

(22) Do not regard anyone as wise, who gets worried on account of the troubles of this world.

(23) Keep in mind the hour of death and learn a lesson from the dead ones.

(24) One is disgraced by a meaningless talk.

(25) You should know the worth of the man who speaks without being asked.

(26) The person who contemplates the mischief of another has an evil mind in himself.

(27) One should deliberate twice before one speaks.

(28) Old order changes giving place to ever new situations.

(29) Be friendly to every one.

(30) Do not give way to anger in a hurry, lest the habit of getting angry be engendered.

(31) Do not put off to the morrow the good you can do today, for who knows what may happen on the morrow.

(32) Help the one who may be in a fix.

(33) Do not go near man who is suffering the consequences of his actions.

(34) Do not give your decision in any matter, unless you have understood it.

(35) Do not pose to be wise by mere talking your actions and professions should both be in consonance with reason.

(36) The wisdom of the tongue tarries in this world, while the wisdom of action profits in the Hereafter.

(37) The inconvenience under taken in respect of good deeds passes away, while the good deeds are lasting.

(38) The pleasure of sin does not last, while the retribution there of is lasting.

(39) Bear in mind the day when you will hear the call but fail to respond.

(40) One goes from this world to a place where there no distinction between friend and foe.

(41) Do not harm any body, lest you be harmed.

(42) You have to go to a place where the master and the servant are equal, to each other. Wherefore this conceit then.

(43) Have the provision for the journey ready who knows when the hour of departure may arrive.

(44) There is no boon as valuable among the blessings of Almighty Allah as that of discerning reason.

(45) He alone is really wise who holds a balance between his thought and talk.

(46) Do good, avoid evil.

(47) Listen and remember.

(48) Know what you have to do.

(49) Be mindful of your own state of mind.

(50) Do not be worried in any worldly affair.

(51) Never give way to indolence or to hurry in any affair.

(52) Do not overstep the golden mean doing good.

(53) Never be inclined towards evil.

(54) Do not mix good with evil.

(55) Do not leave off an important affair for the sake of a little pleasure.

(56) Do not earn eternal trouble for the sake of a little pleasure.

(57) Be friendly towards discernment, and listen to the talk of the wise ones.

(58) Give up the sensual urges of the mind but do not forsake good manners.

(59) Do not do anything before due time.

(60) Do every thing you may have to do after due deliberation.

(61) Do not be conceited with wealth.

(62) Do not get frustrated by troubles.

(63) Behave towards your friends in a way that you do not have to resort to official intervention.

(64) Behave towards the enemies in a way that makes you triumphant over them.

(65) Never behave foolishly towards anyone.

(66) Meet every body with humility.

(67) Do not regard anyone as lowly on account of his humility.

(68) Do not blame anyone for a thing you are yourself unable to do.

(69) Never be satisfied with untruths.

(70) Do not rely on fate.

(71) Do not be sorry for doing good.

(72) Do not be please for doing bad.

(73) Do not do any thing by way of making a display.

(74) Be bound by the dictates of justice

(75) Get into the habit of doing good.

(76) Avoid the society of the evil-doers.

(77) Your children are born for another age, which has its educational requirements, different from your own.

(78) Do not hurry in any affair, for what is gauged is the quality of the work done and not the haste in which it has been executed.

(79) Do not look down upon the one inferior to you. May be he is superior to you.

(80) The charity of the Scholar is tantamount to Divine beneficence, for it is never wasted.

(81) A peculiar excellence of knowledge is that no one can render any real aid to its seeker.

(82) No one can rob knowledge. Everything else may be robbed.

(83) Doing good to the righteous is to express a desire for righteousness. Doing good to the evil doer is habituating him to begging.

(84) When a man has found a place higher than he deserves his mind may get deranged.

(85) The evil minded appreciate the evildoers, just as the flies settle on the decaying meat.

(86) The wise one should not lose sight of the bitterness of the medicinal pill, while enjoying the sweetness of the luxurious.

(87) The rulers should more properly keep aloof from the common run of people, lest they too acquire the same characteristics.

(88) The malicious minds desire each others disgrace. They never honour anyone.

(89) The generous ones should be honoured, on being tested for generosity.

(90) A distinctive characteristic of the ignoble one is that he behaves inimically even towards the reasonable attitude.

(91) The rulers should not get intoxicated, lest they become dependent on others in such state of unawareness.

(92) The really free is he who is more tolerant to the lowly people than to those of a higher status.

(93) The noble really is he who helps the weak more than the strong ones.

(94) The mind is better subdued in four situations (a) when anger is controlled (b) when one is in poverty (c) when one admonishes the fools (d) when one is ridiculed in discussion.

(95) He is worthy of friendship who holds one back from three things (a) luxurious living (b) fraudulent and conceited behaviour (c) frustration and meanness.

(96) What is the use of applause for a man who does not discriminate between the noble and the ignoble?

(97) The executive officers should be inclined sympathetically towards the offenders. But for them they would not be occupying their Chairs of authority.

(98) The opinion of a friend for you is superior in worth, than your own opinion, being devoid of your own personal interest.

(99) The wise one who is under the official thumb of an ignoramus is ill-fated indeed. So is the strong man’s fate pitiable that is under the authority of a week one, as also is that magnanimous man unfortunate indeed who is in dependence upon an ignoble person.

## Tit Bits For Practical Observance

### Enthusiasm Can Do Wonders For You

When you cast out pessimism and gloominess and cultivate the attitude of optimism and enthusiasm, amazing results will be demonstrated in your life. Even if your ability, training, and experience are less than others, you can compensate for almost any lack by dynamic enthusiasm.

### How to Conquer Your Frustrations and Be Creative

There are levels of the mental life to which no exasperation or frustration can succeed. And peaceful thinking brings you to that mental level where nothing can bother you unduly.

### Kill worry and live longer

The basic secret of overcoming worry is the substitution of faith for fear as your dominant mental attitude. Two great forces in this world are more powerful than all others. One is fear and the other is faith; and faith is stronger than fear.

### You can have power over your difficulties

When you get into storm, use the panaroma philosophy, the big view. Then you will know it will not last for ever. With faith in your heart you can ride it out.

### You can have life if you want it

When your interest and appreciation are widened to include the whole great world, life becomes even more fascinating. Interest, projected outside yourself, has the power to force even hardship, suffering and pain into the background. The more vital your interest in others and in the world, the more certainly you can live triumphantly over your own difficulties.

### Stop Being Tired-Live Energetically

A constant flow of energy develops when you hold such thoughts as hopefulness, confidence, costiveness, and good will, when your mind is dominated by thoughts of this character, a high level of vigour results.

### Learn from mistakes – and make fewer

It has been said that history turns on small things. So do peoples’ lives. Over a period of time you make series of decisions, each seemingly of little consequence. Yet, the total of these decisions finally determines the outcome of your life. A successful life depends upon developing a higher percentage of wisdom than error.

### Why be tense? How to adjust to stress

If you are to maintain power to meet your responsibilities and to continue effectively over the long pull, you must give as much consideration to that delicate, yet powerful mechanism known as your personality as engineers give to their engines. You can purchase another engine, but the ‘engine’ known as yourself cannot be reproduced if it fails, and stress is a major cause for that failure.

### Your life can be full of joy

In exact proportion as you give joy you will receive joy. It is a law of exact reciprocity. Joy increases as you give it, and diminishes as you try to keep it for yourself. Actually, unless you give it you will ultimately lose it. In giving it will accumulate a deposit of joy greater than you ever believed possible.

### Lift your depression and live vitally

Any person can change from depression to power, if; first, he wants the change to take place with all of the concentrated desire of which he is capable of; second, if he will go out to get it; third, if he will practise belief with all of the mental ability that he possesses; and fourth, if he will put himself in the way of having a deep and profound spiritual experience.

### How to Feel Well and Have Vibrant Health

Even as aeroplane engines must be turned up before taking off, so must a human being have a tunning up process. The body has many miles of blood vessels and nerves to stimulate, if you want to travel in high gear. And your mental and spiritual elements also require constant attunement to keep them functioning at full potential.

### Peace of mind your source of power and energy

We do not fully comprehend what we can do with our emotions. When we control them we have power. When they control us the results are often disastrous.

### Self-confidence and dynamic achievement

Many people, perhaps most people, never utilise the potential strength within their own responsibilities. There is resident in you an immense reservoir of force; the power of the subconscious mind. Faith releases this power. Then, mental, emotional, and spiritual strength emerges which is more than enough to override your defeats.

### Living above pain and suffering

We live in a world full of wonders. Indeed, we have seen so many marvels that scarcely anything new excites our incredulity. Can we, therefore, believe that wonders may not also occur in the area of spirit? Can they be as exactly governed by law as phenomena in the materialistic realm? The fact that we do not completely understand these laws not indicates that such laws do not exist. Spiritual healings do not always occur; but they do occur, and one may always have the hope that he may be granted this great blessing by God.

### Live forever

Current scientific investigation seems to lend support to our intuitions and faith.

Recently an eminent scientist expressed his personal feelings that the soul theory has been proved according to the minimum standards of science. His studies indicate that the soul survives the barriers of time and space.[[111]](#footnote-111)

1. It is against the will of God to eat delicate food hastily, to pass gorgeous views hurriedly, to express deep sentiments superciliously, and to pass a beautiful day steeped in food and drinks, your wealth steeped in luxuries.

2. What pretty, golden fields against a hill, Newcomers harvest crops that others till, rejoice not, O Newcomer, at your harvest, one waits behind a new Newcomer still.[[112]](#footnote-112)

And seek, by means of what God has given you, the abode in hereafter, and forget not your share in this world, and be good to others even as God has been good to you and seek you not to mischief in the earth, Verily, God loves not the mischief-makers.[[113]](#footnote-113)

### Commentary

This is the fundamental principle on which everyone should base and modify his life. The aim of life should be the comfort of the hereafter but one should not give up his worldly enjoyment totally. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The good among you is not those who give up the life here for the life hereafter nor the one who gives up the life hereafter for the life here, but of you the good one is he who tries through his moderation and harmonises both the lives and on this basis Islam condemned asceticism and celibacy.

1. Holy Quran 28:77 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Holy Quran 64:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Holy Quran 3:101 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Holy Quran 49:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Holy Quran 5:30 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Holy Quran 2:177 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Holy Quran 42:39 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Holy Quran 42:40 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Holy Quran 3:102 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Holy Quran 5:27 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Holy Quran 3:102 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Holy Quran 1:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Emerson [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The late justice Cardoze of the United States Supreme Court [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Holy Quran 65:2-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Holy Quran 44:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Holy Quran 65: 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Holy Quran 4:65 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Holy Quran 22:32 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Holy Quran 33:53 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Holy Quran 9:67 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Holy Quran 1:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Holy Quran 26:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Holy Quran 3:61 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Holy Quran 9:119 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Holy Quran 9:119 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Holy Quran 5:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Holy Quran 6:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Holy Quran 4:135 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Holy Quran 4:58 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Holy Quran 3.75 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Holy Quran 30.41 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Holy Quran 61:2-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Holy Quran 5:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Holy Quran 63: 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Holy Quran 9:95 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Holy Quran 3:75 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Holy Quran 4:58 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Holy Quran 11:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Holy Quran 96:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Holy Quran 42:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Holy Quran 93:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Holy Quran 58:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Holy Quran 2:44 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Holy Quran 2:191 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Holy Quran 2:190 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Holy Quran 4:148 [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Holy Quran 49:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Holy Quran 49:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Holy Quran 24:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Holy Quran 17:37-38 [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Holy Quran 2:34 [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Holy Quran 38:71-76 [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Holy Quran 2:156 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Holy Quran 42:40 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Holy Quran 7:199 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Holy Quran 3:133 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Holy Quran 68:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Holy Quran 93:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Holy Quran 3:134 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Holy Quran 3:135 [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Holy Quran 3:135 [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Holy Quran 28:55 [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Holy Quran 7:119 [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Holy Quran 18:28 [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Holy Quran 9:108 [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Holy Quran 74:4-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Holy Quran 8:46 [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Holy Quran 66:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Holy Quran 4:86 [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Holy Quran 6:54 [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Holy Quran 24:61 [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Holy Quran 2:173 [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Holy Quran 16:90 [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Taken from Gujarati daily – Millat of 25/1/76; Written by Mehrunnisa Tejani. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Holy Quran 16:90 [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Holy Quran 25:63 [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Holy Quran 28:55 [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Holy Quran 28:83 [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Holy Quran 4:54 [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Holy Quran 3:92 [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Holy Quran 28: 77 [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Holy Quran 7:31 [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Holy Quran 14:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Holy Quran 28:55 [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Holy Quran 2: 83 [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Holy Quran 49:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Holy Quran 49: 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Holy Quran 58: 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Holy Quran 29:46 [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Holy Quran 16:125 [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Holy Quran 6:108 [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Holy Quran 23:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Holy Quran 49:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Holy Quran 2:188 [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Holy Quran 2: 275 [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Holy Quran 7:85 [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Holy Quran 26:181 [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Holy Quran 26:182 [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Holy Quran 26: 183 [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Holy Quran 57:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Holy Quran 83:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Holy Quran 83:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Holy Quran 83:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Holy Quran 83:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Holy Quran 83:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Holy Quran 3:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Holy Quran 3: 104 [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Holy Quran 16:125 [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Majmoo-e-Varraam, Syed Ibne Taoos (a.r.) [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. These are the extracts reproduced from the book ‘Stay Alive All Your Life’ written by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale of U.S.A. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. These are extracts from the book ‘The importance of Living’ by Lin Yutang. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Holy Quran 28: 77 [↑](#footnote-ref-113)