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Greater Sins Volume 3

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Ayatullah Dastghaib has exhaustively explained the phenomenon of sin, the classification of sins, and the necessity of avoiding them. He has also described fifty different types of Greater Sins. See also part II of this book. About sins and particularly the greater sins (Gunah-e-Kabira). Covers sins such as association with God (Shirk), fornication, drinking alcohol, and gambling. Volume I: http://www.al-islam.org/greater-sins-volume-1-ayatullah-sayyid-abd-al-hu... [3] Volume II: http://www.al-islam.org/greater-sins-volume-2-ayatullah-sayyid-abd-al-hu... [4]

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Dedication

Our sins strike him like arrows.
When he examines the scrolls of our deeds,
He weeps at our sins.
We dedicate the book
To this same Infallible Personality.
May Allah hasten his Reappearance.

Translator’s Preface

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds and benedictions upon the Messenger of Allah and his Purified Progeny (a.s.)

By the Grace of the Almighty, the first volume of “Greater Sins” has been completed in English.

The significance of Moral Science and Ethics is evident from the words of the Messenger of Allah (S) when he has described the aim of his advent. He said, “I have been sent for perfecting the morals.”

The learned Ālim, Ayatullah Dastghaib was one of the greatest Muallim-ul-akhlaq (Teacher of Moral Science). Some of his important books are Gunahane Kabira, Qalbe Salīm, Mā’ad, Barzakh etc. His books cover various moral and ethical issues.

The book Gunahane Kabira deals with Greater Sins. Ayatullah Dastghaib has exhaustively explained the phenomenon of sin, the classification of sins, and the necessity of avoiding them. He has also described fifty different types of Greater Sins.

Although the English translation is based on the Urdu Edition, I have relied upon the original Arabic text while translating traditions and Qur’anic verses.

Since the English equivalents of Islamic terminology do not convey the exact meaning, I have used the Arabic terms. However those who are not conversant with Arabic words may refer to the Glossary of Islamic Terms.

Wassalam.

Sayyid Athar Husain S.H.Rizvi.

A Short Biography of Ayatullah Dastaghaib Shirazi

Martyr Ayatullah Abul-Husayn Dastghaib Shirazi was a nobleman from a highly religious family that was known for its intellectual heritage going back to 800 years. Due to religious

and spiritual atmosphere, resulting from such a sound Islamic background he had a natural and spontaneous tendency towards acquiring knowledge. After obtaining elmentary education in his hometown, he moved towards Najaf al-Ashraf (Iraq) in pursuit of higher knowledge.

In the town of the abode of the Chief of the believers, ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), he continued his studies associating with the various scholars and teachers. Soon his knowledge reached a stage such that, he was granted permission by the Maraja of that time to practise Ijtehad. He then returned to his native town of Shiraz.

In Shiraz he spent thousands of tumans for the construction of the Jame Masjid Ateq which was in a highly dilapidated condition. There, he began to lecture on the exegesis of the Qur’an and ethics. His persistent efforts raised the standard of education of the Hauz al-Ilmia of Shiraz in the various fields of Fiqh, Beliefs and Moral science. The irreligious and tyrannical Shah imposed restrictions upon him and he was arrested many times. He was also put under house arrest by the autocratic ruler. After the success of the Islamic revolution, he was elected a representative at the Majlis (Iranian Parliament).

At the instance of the people of Shiraz he was designated as the representative of Imam Khomeini. The post of Imam of Jame Masjid of Shiraz was also bestowed upon him.

Martyr Dastghaib has left behind innumerable works. The most remarkable of these are: Gunahāne Kabīra (Greater Sins), Qalb al-Salīm, Salatal Khashaīn, Ma’ad, at-Tawba, Zindagani al-Hazrat Zahra and Zainab al-Kubra.

Apart from these he has penned dozens of books on the improvement of morals, Fiqh and the exegesis of Qur’an. Hence, he was an excellent model of spirituality with a lofty character and a loving nature.

On that fateful day (in the year 1984) as he was proceeding to lead the Friday congregation, he was brutally killed in a bomb explosion by the hypocrites (the Capitalist agents).

Preface

In the Name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful

By the Grace of the Almighty, alhamdolillaah, Islamic Study Circle is pleased to announce the publication of the third and the final volume of the English Translation of Ayatullah Dastghaib’s Greater Sins (Gunahane Kabira).

The delay in bringing out this last volume was mainly due to our emphasis on perfection, especially in the language of the book. This not only enhances the value of a book but the English reader also feels at home when he reads an English translation of a book that was originally written in one of the oriental langauges.

All the credit for lucid and flawless language goes to Sister Zainab Muljiani who spent hours rewriting many portions that did not satisfy her. She also went out of her way to confirm and check any point that seemed doubtful or unclear. May the Almighty shower His choicest blessings on this noble lady. We can only thank her for all this but the actual

rewards for these labours is with the Lord of the Worlds.

Our readers had been impatiently waiting for the last volume and we are sure they would find it as useful and as informative as the previous volumes.

Islamic Study Circle
Mumbai
India
January 2004

Thirty-third Greater Sin: Pride or Arrogance

The thirty-third greater sin is Pride; as mentioned in the tradition of Imam Riďa (a.s.) narrated by Fazl ibn Shazān. Shaykh Ansari has also verified the authenticity of this tradition in Makasib. A similar tradition from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) is quoted by Amash to have said,

"Arrogance and tyranny is a greater sin."

According to the Holy Qur'an, pride is a sin that will most certainly be severely punished.

The Almighty Allah says in Surah az-Zumar (Verse 60)

"Is there not in Hell an abode for the proud?" (Surah az-Zumar 39:60)

He also says:

"It shall be said: Enter the gates of hell to abide therein; so evil is the abode of the proud." (Surah az-Zumar 39:72)

In Surah Ghafīr (Verse 35) Almighty remarks,

"Thus does Allah set a seal over the heart of every proud, haughty one." (Surah Ghafīr 40: 35)

The one who considers himself to be the best wants others to know that he is the best. There are numerous Qur'anic verses against pride and haughtiness but we shall mention only the one that talks of the haughtiness of Shaitan; as the result of which he became the accursed one:

"He refused and he was proud, and he was one of the Unbelievers." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:34)

Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) says in one of his sermons:

"*You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Shaitan; namely He nullified his great acts and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, although Shaitan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years - whether by the reckoning of this world or of the*

next world is not known. Who now can remain safe from Allah after Shaitan by committing a similar disobedience? None at all. Allah, the Glorified, cannot let a human being enter Paradise if he does the same thing for which Allah turned out from it an angel. His command for the inhabitants in the sky and of the earth is the same. There is no friendship between Allah and any individual out of His creation so as to give him licence for an undesirable thing which He has held unlawful for all the worlds." (That is pride and arrogance).[1]

After a few sentences 'Ali (a.s.) says about Qabīl:

"Do not be like him who feigned superiority over the son of his mother without any distinction given to him by Allah. It was only the feeling of enmity which created a feeling of greatness in him and the fire of anger that vanity kindled in his heart. Satan blew into him his own vanity, after which Allah made him responsible for the sins of all killers upto the Day of Judgement since he had initiated the crime of killing."[2]

Thus Qabīl was doomed to eternal perdition due to pride that caused him to murder his righteous brother.

'Ali (a.s.) continues:

"Take instruction from how the (Shaitan) brought Allah's wrath, calamities, chastisement and punishment on those who were vain among the past people. Take admonition from their lying on their cheeks and falling on their sides, and seek Allah's protection from the dangers of vanity, as you seek His protection from calamities."[3]

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

"Allah will not speak to Three kinds of people on the Day of Qiyāma; and they will not be looked upon kindly by Him; and there is a severe punishment for them: An aged adulterer, a tyrant ruler and a proud beggar."[4]

From the above hadith we can conclude that the punishment for a youthful adulterer, a ruler who does not oppress and a proud person who is not a beggar will be less severe. An old man committing adultery is far more despicable because unlike a young man he is not fired by an intense sexual urge, and in spite of this he disobeys the Divine command and brings upon himself added punishment. The same applies to a ruler whom Almighty has bestowed a kingdom, wealth and power; and the ruler instead of being thankful and grateful to Allah (S.w.T.) for His bounties misuses them to oppress Allah (S.w.T.)'s creatures.

Not only is such a ruler accountable for his oppressive deeds but he incurs the intense wrath of Allah (S.w.T.) because of his ingratitude and denial of Allah (S.w.T.)'s blessings. A proud beggar is miserable creature; he incurs the intense displeasure of Allah (S.w.T.) because he is vain in spite of the fact that he has nothing that can be the cause of his vanity.

A man enquired from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.):

"What is the lower level of disbelief?"

Imam (a.s.) said, "It is pride."

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says:

“Stateliness and superiority, and the expression of a pride are like two exclusive garments of Allah (S.w.T.). (No one can share it with Him). Hence if anyone dares to acquire these qualities he will be thrown headlong into hell by Allah.”[5]

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) is also recorded to have remarked:

“Pride and superiority are like two exclusive garments of Allah. So one who acts proud has made war on Allah.”[6]

A proud person is mentioned as having made war on Allah (S.w.T.) because such a person loses all awareness of the reality that he is an insignificant creature whose very existence and all that he possesses is only because of Allah (S.w.T.)’s favour on him. He regards himself as someone very special, in full control of his life, which no other power can influence. His arrogance can reach a stage where he can even claim divinity in open defiance of the Almighty, as it happened with Fir’on. While a man can develop qualities like mercy, kindness etc. which are also divine qualities, and developing these qualities will in fact help a person to gain nearness to Allah (S.w.T.), but man, a creature of Allah (S.w.T.) has no right whatsoever to associate pride and superiority with himself. These are exclusive for Allah (S.w.T.). The Almighty says in the Qur’an:

“And to Him belongs greatness in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.” (Surah Jathiyah 45:37)

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says:

“There is a special section for the arrogant people in the hell. It is called Saqr. Saqr complained to Allah (S.w.T.) for the intensity of its heat and sought permission to breathe. It breathed and scorched hell.”[7]

Imam (a.s.) also remarked,

“Certainly the haughty people will be raised as peanuts (on the Day of Qiyāma) and till the accounting of the people is complete they would be trampled upon.” (by others).[8]

Allamah Majlisi explains the above tradition: “This hadith proves that it is possible that some people may be raised in diminutive form, possessing some or all of the physical characteristics. (It is also possible) that other additional characteristics may be added to their bodies and hence be the cause of additional pain. It can also be said that the arrogant sinner will be raised in such a disgraceful condition that it would be as if he is utterly small in size. Whatever may be the form, it is certain that they will be trampled under the feet of other people.

Pride and its Types

Arrogance is the practical expression of pride which develops in a person who thinks himself to be better than others. Arrogance can be categorized as:

(1) Arrogance against Allah (S.w.T.)

(2) Arrogance against the Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams (a.s.)

(3) Arrogance towards people.

Arrogance towards the Almighty is expressed in different ways. There are arrogant people seized by the feeling of being all powerful. They attribute all their achievements and acquisitions to their own capabilities and are oblivious of the supremacy and might of the Almighty. The feeling of self importance is expressed by them in their actions and speech with words like “I have done this,” and “I will do that”.

On the basis of his strength and property he refuses to recognise the supremacy and might of Allah (S.w.T.), with the result that the darkness of disbelief shrouds his heart. The Holy Qur’an says:

“...there is naught in their breasts but (a desire) to become great which they shall never attain to...” (Surah Ghafīr 40:56)

These are people who will not achieve greatness either in this world nor the Hereafter. The Almighty Allah says at another place,

“...so (as for) those who do not believe in the hereafter, their hearts are ignorant and they are proud.” (Surah an-Nahl 16:22)

As mentioned earlier, sometimes, the haughtiness assumes such high proportions that the man apart from crediting his own self for everything also dares to declare his Godhood and supremacy over other people. He claims that he has absolute control over a section of people and that they are subservient to him. Like the foolish Fir’on who alleged:

“Then he said: I am your lord, the most high.” (Surah An-Nāzi’āt 79:24)

He tries to prove his claim by saying:

“...is not the Kingdom of Egypt mine? And these rivers flow beneath me;..” (Surah Az-Zukhruf 43:51)

And,

“...I do not know of any god for you besides myself.” (Surah al-Qaŝaŝ 28:38)

In the same way Namrūd also considered himself the controller of life and death:

“he said: I give life and cause death...” (Surah al-Baqarah 2:258)

Namrūd ordered that two of his prisoners may be presented before him. And in order to prove that he had control over life and death, ordered one prisoner to be killed and released the other one!

Then there are individuals who do not deny the existence of Allah (S.w.T.) but they show their arrogance against Allah (S.w.T.) by not worshipping Allah (S.w.T.) and by disobeying Allah (S.w.T.)’s orders regarding obligatory and prohibited acts. Allah (S.w.T.) the Almighty says:

“The Messiah does by no means disdains that he should be a servant of Allah, nor do the angels who are near to Him, and whoever disdains His service and is proud, He will gather them all together to Himself.

Then as for those who believe and do good, He will pay them fully their rewards and give them more out of His grace, and as for those who disdain and are proud, He will chastise them with a painful chastisement." (Surah an-Nisā' 4:172-173)

Wilful disobedience to Allah (S.w.T.)'s command is insolence and defiance against Allah (S.w.T.) and sins so committed are unforgivable. Such a person considers himself so superior that he feels there is no need to obey Allah (S.w.T.). This attitude amounts to disbelief in Allah (S.w.T.). The sins committed by a person who believes in the supremacy of the Almighty are not of the above category. These sins are committed due to evil desires and foolishness and not due to Kufr. Imam Zainul Ābedīn (a.s.) says in Du'a of Abu Hamza Thumali:

"O my Allah! When I committed a sin I was not a disbeliever in You (at that time) and neither did I consider Your commands unimportant. And I did not take lightly Your threats of chastisement. Neither I had any objection against Your punishment. Actually the sin that I had committed was due to the instigation of my own self which defrauded me and my carnal desire overcame me."[9]

The disbelief of Iblīs was proved in the same way when he refused to prostrate before Hazrat Adam (a.s.).

"He said: I am not such that I should make obeisance to a mortal who Thou has created of the essence of black mud fashioned in shape." (Surah al-Hijr 15:33)

The Almighty Allah replied,

"...then get forth from this (state), for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein. Go forth, therefore, surely you are of the abject ones." (Surah al-Ar'āf 7:13)

The High and Almighty Allah has also said,

"...and he was proud, and he was one of the unbelievers." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:34)

"Arrogance overcame Izazīl (Satan), made him liable to be cursed."[10]

To Give up Du'a due to Arrogance is Kufr

"And your Lord says, Call upon Me, I will answer you, surely those who are too proud for My service shall soon enter hell abased." (Surah Ghafīr 40:60)

In the above ayat Allah (S.w.T.) has assured that whoever seeks His help will receive immediate response. According to Tafsīr Kashaf Du'a means to ask, that is to seek something. Thus the actual purpose of Du'a is to beg the Almighty with utmost humility and sincerity. This is true obedience and worship of one God. So whoever does not supplicate is arrogant. He considers himself self sufficient and independent of Allah (S.w.T.) and does not consider Allah (S.w.T.) deserving of obeisance; such a person has committed Kufr and will remain forever in Hell.

Imam Zainul Ābedīn (a.s.) says:

“(O Allah (S.w.T.)) you have named Du’a towards You to be Your worship and its omission to be arrogance which earns Hell.”[11]

“The best of Your servants are those who are not arrogant, and who do not repeat sins insolently, and make repentance their habit and I avoid to be the one who becomes arrogant and does not call You.”[12]

Arrogance by Sacrilege

One of the types of arrogance with regard to the Almighty is to behave arrogantly towards whatever is associated with Allah (S.w.T.)’s name. For example the orders and prohibitions of Allah (S.w.T.), specially the sacred month of Ramadhan, the Holy Ka’ba, the Holy tombs; and even an ordinary mosque because Allah (S.w.T.) has said,

“And (all) the mosques are for Allah.” (Surah al-Jinn 72:18)

So if one acts arrogantly with relation to any of the above it means that he is arrogant towards Allah (S.w.T.). For He (S.w.T.) says,

“O You who believe! Do not violate the signs appointed by Allah...” (Surah al-Mā’ida 5:2)

It means that one should not insult or disregard anything that is related to the Almighty.

Arrogance causes degradation in this world as well as the Hereafter

Arrogance with relation to the Almighty or otherwise brings degradation and insults in this life as also in the life after death. On the other hand humility and the expression of lowliness before Allah (S.w.T.) earns the respect of this world as well as success in the hereafter. The stations of such a person are raised. The Holy Prophet (S) says,

“One who humbles before Allah is raised by Him in status; and the one who is arrogant will be degraded by Allah.”[13]

Umar ibn Shaiba says in the Sharh of Sahīfa that, “I was at the sacred Mecca, between Safa and Marwah when I saw a stranger on a camel. His slaves were preventing the people from coming near him. After sometime I happened to be in Baghdad. There I saw a man in a dishevelled condition with his hair awry. I stared at him in surprise. He asked as to why I was staring at him. I said that I find a great resemblance between him and an arrogant person whom I had seen at Mecca between Safa and Marwah. At that time he behaved very arrogantly. The man said, “I am the same person! I had behaved arrogantly at a place where people exhibit humility, that’s why the Almighty has made me lowly in Baghdad where people achieve great honours. And thus these people behave arrogantly towards me.”

Arrogance toward the Holy Prophet (S) and Imams (a.s.)

To consider oneself as equal to or better than divine personalities is an act of arrogance.

Also to refuse to obey their commands amounts to being arrogant towards them. This is like the behaviour of the supporters of Fir'on who considered themselves superior to Hazrat Mūsa (a.s.) and Harūn (a.s.). They used to say:

"What! shall we believe in two mortals like ourselves...? (Surah Al-Mum'inūn 23:47)

Similarly some of the disbelievers used to tell the Holy Prophet (S): "Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or (why) do we not see our Lord?" These people considered their status to be on par with that of the Holy Prophet (S) and wondered why the revelation had not descended on them.

The Holy Qur'an remarks:

"Now certainly they are too proud of themselves and have revolted in great revolt."

(Surah al-Furqān 25:21)

The following words of Hazrat Nuh (a.s.) are recorded in the Holy Qur'an:

"But my call has only made them flee the more:

"And whenever I have called them that Thou mayest forgive them, they put their fingers in their ears, cover themselves with their garments, and persist and are puffed up with pride." (Surah Nuh 71:6-7)

The Meccans were similarly puffed with pride whenever they were told to believe in Islam:

"And they say: why was not this Qur'an revealed to a man of importance in the two towns?" (Mecca and Taif) (Surah Az-Zukhruf 43:31)

It was unacceptable to the infidels that a mere orphan who had not much wealth either had been selected for the exalted position of Prophethood. They would have preferred the Qur'an to have been revealed upon some influential people like Walid bin Mughaira and Masud Thaqafi etc.

Arrogance towards the Prophet (S) and Imams (a.s.) is actually arrogance towards the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.). Disobeying the commands of the Prophet (S) and the Imams (a.s.), the representatives of Allah (S.w.T.) is an act of arrogance towards the Almighty Himself. Similarly the pious Mujtahids and the jurists are representatives of Imam az-Zaman (a.s.). One who considers oneself superior to them, or insults them and is insolent towards them by disobeying their rulings is guilty of arrogance towards the Imam (a.s.) himself, and the Prophet (S). Also, according to Imam Sadiq (a.s.) such arrogance is a kind of polytheism.

Arrogance with an Ālim is arrogance towards the Holy Prophet (S)

The Messenger of Allah said:

"Beware! Do not falsify the words of an Ālim. Do not reject his statements and do not bear enmity towards him. Be cordial with them, because friendship with the learned is a sign of

good morals. And enmity with them is hypocrisy. Beware! Whoever insults an Ālim insults me and whoever insults me insults Allah; and whoever insults Allah; his abode is Hell. And (remember), whoever honours an Ālim, honours me and whoever honours me honours Allah and whoever honours Allah; his abode shall be Paradise.”[14]

The Arrogants are the inmates of Hell

We must remember that all the Qur’anic verses that mention eternal punishment for the proud people are concerned with two types of pride. The first is with respect to Allah (S.w.T.) and also the Prophet (S) and the Imams (a.s.). As we stated before, arrogance of these types is a result of disbelief in the creator of the Universe; and the one who dies without belief in Allah (S.w.T.) will abide forever in Hell.

Al-Shahīd Al-Awwal Faqih Al-Sarbidaran mentions in *Qawaid* the fact that pride and arrogance are Greater sins and numerous traditions testify to this. The Holy Prophet (S) says:

“One who has even an iota of pride will not enter Paradise.”[15]

Then he says that the pride referred to in the tradition is one that reaches the level of disbelief, it is the arrogance towards Allah (S.w.T.), and the Prophet (S) and Imams (a.s.). However if it applies to arrogance towards people the tradition is construed to mean that those who have even a bit of pride will not enter Paradise with the humble believers. They will have to undergo punishment in Hell and only then allowed to enter Paradise.

The interpretation is in accordance with the narration of Muhammad Ibn Muslim who quotes Imam Sadiq (a.s.) to have said:

“Even one who has pride equal to a mustard seed in his heart will not be able to enter Paradise.”

Muhammad Ibn Muslim says, “I said. Certainly we belong to Allah (S.w.T.) and to Him we shall return.” Imam (a.s.) asked him the reason for reciting the verse of return. He replied that it was in response to the Imam’s statement. “It is not what you have understood,”

Imam (a.s.) told him, “Know that I meant disbelief and refusal by it.”

(The arrogance which prevents one to enter Paradise is arrogance based on the rejection of truth and on the rejection of Allah (S.w.T.), the Prophet (S) and the Holy Imams (a.s.). But if a person is a believer and is arrogant; he will not have eternal punishment in Hell).

Behaving arrogantly with the people

The third type of arrogance is with respect to the fellow-beings. To consider oneself superior and better than others and to consider others lowly. To behave in a proud manner with them, and walk ahead of them. To try to find the best seat in a gathering. To expect others to salute and show humility. To hate one who offers good advice and to refuse the advice offered. To feel angry if someone points out one’s mistake. Not to behave with kindness and benevolence towards those whom one teaches. To act as if one has done a great favour and expect servitude in return. In brief, arrogance is the act of considering and believing oneself to be the most superior person. Just like we consider ourselves superior to the animals.

The proud people who are rich prefer not to stand besides the ordinary people during congregational prayers or mix with them in religious gatherings. In reality an arrogant person has made himself a partner with the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) by trying to acquire the Divine attribute of Pride that belongs exclusively to Him. It is as if the slave takes away the king's crown and puts it on his own head and seats himself on the throne. Such a slave is liable for the worst punishment. It is wise to avoid such behaviour.

Allah (S.w.T.) is the Creator of all human beings, therefore it is not proper for one man to behave arrogantly with another and to consider himself superior and exclusive. The one who behaves proudly has actually become Allah (S.w.T.)'s rival, because Pride is a quality reserved for Allah (S.w.T.) alone.

Some of the traditions related to Pride and the proud people have already been mentioned above in the beginning of the discussion. Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says:

"*Pride is considering other people lowly and considering the truth as foolishness*."[16]

Allamah Majlisi explains that it denotes making fun of truth, rejecting it, considering it lowly, and not understanding its importance.

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

"The worst kind of Pride is considering the creatures lowly and considering the truth foolishness."[17]

Umar bin Yazid says, I asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.): "I eat well and wear a good perfume and ride the best horse. I am also accompanied by my slaves. Is it arrogance on my part? I want to know it so that I may abstain from such a behaviour."

Imam (a.s.) bowed his head and then said,

"Remember! The accursed and arrogant is the one who considers other people lowly and ignores the truth."

Umar said, "I understand what truth is but what is the meaning of 'ignoring the Truth'?

Imam (a.s.) said: "One who considers other people inferior and shows his superiority over them is arrogant."[18]

We shall refer to some types of pride and arrogance with people because the Holy Qur'an has mentioned them in different ayats.

The Qur'anic view of arrogance with people

In Surah al-Baqarah we come across the following ayat:

"And when it is said to him, guard against (the punishment of) Allah; pride carries him off to sin; therefore hell is sufficient for him; and certainly it is an evil resting place." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:206)

According to Abdullah Ibn Masūd the greatest sin is when one is told to 'Fear Allah' and he replies, "Mind your own business."

When someone warns a person of Divine retribution and advises him to forgo some sins and instead of accepting his advice with humility he says, ‘It is none of your business. First reform yourself!’, or instead of giving up a sin the person repeats it with insolence; these are the types of people who are condemned to Hell according to the above ayat.

The arrogance and pride of such people are obstacles in their moral development and instead of accepting the truth they try to justify their actions.

In the same way during a debate a person is confronted with a fact which his pride hinders him from accepting. He sticks to his stand in obstinacy. This behaviour is a speciality of the hypocrites.

The Almighty Allah says:

“And those who disbelieve say do not listen to this Qur’an and make noise therein, perhaps you may overcome.” (Surah Fuŝŝilat 41:26)

And in Surah Luqmān the Qur’an says:

“And do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exulting overmuch; surely Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster.” (Surah Luqmān 31:18)

Similarly another verse says:

“O you who believe! Let not (one) people laugh at (another) people perchance they may be better than they, nor let women laugh at (other) women, perchance they may be better than they; and do not find fault with your own people nor call one another by nick names; evil is a bad name after faith, and whoever does not turn, these it is that are the unjust.” (Surah al-Hujurāt 49:11)

The unjust are those who have made themselves liable for Divine anger and chastisement.

Anyone who looks down upon the Muslims and considers himself superior to them is like Iblīs who refused to prostrate before Hazrat Adam (a.s.) because he considered himself superior. He said:

“I am better than he; Thou hast created me of fine, and him Thou didst create of dust.” (Surah Sād 38:76)

The Almighty replied:

“That I will most certainly fill hell with you and with those among them who follows you, all” (Surah Sād 38:85)

Show of wealth is also an act of pride

Flaunting ones riches and wealth before the less privileged people is an act of arrogance and pride. The Almighty says regarding this:

“Surely Qarūn was of the people of Mūsa, but he rebelled against them, and We had given him of the treasures, so much so that his hoards of wealth would certainly weigh down a company of men possessed of great strength. When his

people said to him: Do not exult, surely Allah does not love the exultant...He said: I have been given this only on account of the knowledge I have...So he went forth to his people in his finery... Thus We made the earth to swallow up him and his abode; so he had no body of helpers to assist him against Allah, nor was he of those who can defend themselves." (Surah al-Qaŝaŝ 28:76-81)

It is recorded in Bihār al-Anwār that the Holy Prophet (S) prohibited the people to walk and dress in a proud manner. He said,

"One who wears a nice dress and feels proud of it, will be taken to a lowest level of Hell and made a companion of Qarūn. Because Qarūn was the first proud. Due to this the Almighty had caused his house to be swallowed by the earth. So one who competes in the greatness of the Almighty has waged war against Him."

The Prophet (S) also said,

"One who frowns upon a needy person, oppresses him or looks down upon him, will be raised (in Qiyāma) in the form of an ant. And he will be assigned to Hell."[19]

The Proud people are insane

It is also narrated in Bihār al-Anwār that one day the messenger of Allah (S) was passing by a group of people intent on watching something. When he (S) enquired about this they said that they were watching a mad man perform funny antics. The Prophet (S) said that the man is not mad, rather he was suffering from a nervous disorder.

Then the Holy Prophet (S) asked the people if they would like to know who is a mad man. His companions expressed their willingness. The Prophet (S) said:

"The insane is the one who walks in a proud manner and looks right and left in exultation; moving his shoulders and sides in a vain fashion; and at the same time he expects the Almighty to grant him Paradise. Whereas he is busy in disobeying Allah and people are not safe from his mischief and neither do they expect any goodness from him. This is the (real) mad man."[20]

To show oneself to be absolutely purified is an act of pride too

To consider oneself the purest and deserving of honour and respect and to make a show of one's sanctity is also a kind of haughtiness. The verse of Surah an-Najm prohibits such behaviour.

"...Therefore do not attribute purity to your souls; He knows him best who guards (against evil)."
(Surah an-Najm 53:32)

And in the same way the Almighty Allah has remarked in the following words:

"Have you not considered those who attribute purity to themselves? Nay, Allah purifies whom He pleases; and they shall not be wronged the husk of a date stone. See how they forge the lie against Allah, (like the Jew who claim to be the

chosen people) and this is sufficient as a manifest sin." (Surah an-Nisā' 4:49-50)

A show of one's knowledge and the claim of having met such and such a scholar is also an act of pride. Or to say, "I have toiled a lot to master a particular subject." Or to flaunt one's piety. For example to say that "for years I prayed during the nights and fasted during the day." To say, "That person is wealthier than me but I have performed hajj and Ziarat many times." All these claims are a show of vainglory.

Even to hint at ones greatness is not allowed. Like to allege that, "So and so person had oppressed me and thus died an untimely death, or he is afflicted with a dreadful disease, or has became a destitute." Because such statements are an effort to show off ones extraordinary powers. Similarly to claim that one's prayers were instantly answered by the Almighty.

Signs of Pride

1) When we speak to a person having same social status as us, regarding a fact, which is difficult for him to accept and he does not express any pleasure it denotes that he is proud.

2) If in gatherings and social events he finds it difficult to sit in place which is below his dignity or he dislikes to walk behind, then this person is proud.

3) If he finds it difficult to salute a person lower than him in social status, he is proud.

4) If it is difficult for him to accept the invitation of poor people or to sit with beggars it is a sign of pride.

5) If he feels it is below his dignity to purchase household items and to carry them home, he is proud. But considering his social status and the prevailing circumstances if such an action would be the cause of criticism and backbiting among the people there is no blame on him.

6) If a person is averse to wearing clothes of inferior quality and desires to wear good clothes considering them to be a sign of greatness, he is proud. Except, as already mentioned, when inferior dress may be a cause of disrespect to him.

7) If one does not like to sit together with a servant or the student, it is a sign of pride.

Remedy for Pride in Theory and Practice

The practical remedy for the disease of pride is that man should contemplate upon his original creation. He must keep it in mind that he is born from a despicable drop of semen, which is considered dirty by everyone. It is clearly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

"So let man consider of what he is created: He is created of water pouring forth:" (Surah Tariq 86: 5-6)

He should not forget that he was born weak and helpless and whatever strength he has developed is given by the Almighty. Besides his strength and power is limited. Allah (S.w.T.) has made him susceptible to hunger, thirst and sleep. He is needful of clothing, dwelling, and several other requirements without which he would perish. He is prone to diseases, calamities and disasters, over which he has no control.

Man carries inside his body dirty substances like urine and stool; and if the Almighty had not hidden them, their terrible stench would have made life difficult for him.

It is written in the book “Adadus sin” that when Ayaz became a close confidante of the king, his detractors began to try to pull him down from this position. And one day two of the ministers came to the sultan and said, “Ayaz has stolen a lot of ornaments and treasure and he has kept all of them in a room which he has locked. Every morning he visits that room and does not allow anyone else. Thereupon hearing this, the sultan fell into doubt and said when Ayaz comes to me tomorrow you people go there, open the door and bring here whatever he has stored in that room.

The next morning these people took tools and broke the lock of the door and stepped into the room of Ayaz. They, however, did not find anything except a cotton sheet and a pair of leather slippers. They thought that the treasure must be buried underground otherwise what was the need for him to visit this room everyday if it contained only a torn sheet and old slippers. They dug the floor of the room but did not find anything.

They informed the ruler and he asked Ayaz that except for a sheet and a pair of slippers there was nothing else in the room. So, why did he keep the room locked and pay a private visit everyday? Ayaz said, “Before I became your slave I had worn that particular garb. But after joining your service I got everything. Since man is prone to disobedience and pride, I frequently visit the room and see my old dress so that I may not fall into vanity. I should always remember that whatever I have is due to the favour of the king and it is all given to me as a loan. After that I begin my job of the day.

Indeed, there are countless weaknesses of man that do not allow him to reach his desires. Just as man desires to have knowledge about a lot of things, but it is not possible for him. He wants to remember something but he forgets it. He prefers to forget a particular sin but he could not do so. He tries to concentrate on something and to get rid of worries and doubts, but he does not succeed. And he is attracted towards those things in which there is destruction for him, and dislikes those things which are beneficial to him.

Apart from this he is in constant dread of losing something which is dear and precious to him, like wealth or children or his physical powers.

The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says:

“And they control not for themselves any harm or profit, and they control not death nor life, nor raising (the dead) to life.” (Surah al-Furqān 25: 3)

In brief, man is a mortal who has no control over his capabilities or susceptibilities. It is a fact that he is always in fear of death and there is none that can save him from death.

After death, What?

The challenges a man faces during his life do not come to an end with death. After death, he will have to face divine justice. He would be interrogated regarding all his major and minor acts. The details of this questioning are mentioned in the Holy Qur’an and traditions.

It is very likely that the people who occupy a high position from the worldly aspect will be degraded and lowly there, and the powerful people of this world will be utterly insignificant in the hereafter. Numerous beautiful faces will appear horrid in appearance. They will be so

terrible that, dogs and pigs will be better than them.

No individual knows about the Hereafter and the kind of end there is in store for him; whether he shall be from the evil ones or the righteous, whether he would be honourable or degraded, whether his face will be black or shinning bright. Whatever has been described about the circumstances of the people at that time are applicable equally to all, whatever their areas of activity or circumstances on earth. If a person ponders over these facts he will be convinced that it does not befit a human being to commit sins and be proud and arrogant. How can a man claim greatness and importance when he is surrounded by all kinds of uncertainties and susceptibilities? Can there be a bigger farce than the claim of ones own greatness?

We should keep in view those who are greater than us

Some elders have given detailed cures for pride. They say that Pride is a condition which is created when one keeps in sight those who are lower and ignores those who are higher than us. A person who has a slave is in a higher position than the slave. He is in command of the situation and the slave cannot disobey him. The slave has to carry out the commands given to him. If such a person only thinks of his own superiority over the slave, he will become proud.

But if the person realizes that with respect to Allah (S.w.T.), his own position is like that of his slave; Allah (S.w.T.) is the creator and he is the created. Allah (S.w.T.) has full control over him; in fact absolute control, which he can never have over his slave. He has to be subservient to Allah (S.w.T.) and carry out His commands. With this idea firmly in mind a person is bound to become modest and humble towards the creatures of Allah (S.w.T.), very much like a person who in a fit of anger, not only speaks harshly to the person who has caused him consternation, but also with those who are not responsible for it.

No one is justified in being proud. Allah (S.w.T.) is Supreme. All Might and Power is with Allah (S.w.T.). Allah (S.w.T.) is not subservient or indebted to anyone, except for Allah (S.w.T.) it does not befit anyone to be proud for any reason whatsoever even if they are the carriers of Arsh like Isra'īl and Israel.

It is also said that one who feels he is having the slightest worth before Allah (S.w.T.), is actually considering himself superior. The Almighty Allah says:

"And that do not exalt yourselves against Allah." (Surah Ad-Dukhān 44: 19)

Humility of the Prophet (S)

Some special characteristics of the Holy Prophet (S): He never got angry with anyone for personal reasons. He sat on the ground and ate on the ground. It often happened that a maid would come to fetch him for help needed by anyone anywhere. Whenever he came home he helped his family members.[21]

The basic causes of Pride must be removed

The causes of pride can be the possession of knowledge, wealth, goodness, beauty, physical power, position, status and lineage.

Any discerning person will realize that being proud of beauty or physical strength is

foolishness, because these can be easily lost with age, accident or disease. It is wisdom for a person to keep in mind his final fate, which is death and consider of what use his beauty, physical strength and elegance will eventually be to him.

Pride over ones lineage is equally senseless. If it is worldly, it has no significance for the hereafter and if it is truly spiritual, the ancestors could not have attained that superiority but for being humble towards Allah (S.w.T.) and His creatures. The progeny that wishes to associate itself with the superiority of these ancestors can only do so by being humble to Allah (S.w.T.) and His creatures as exemplified by their elders; there is no question of being proud of this lineage whatsoever.

A person of knowledge, whether worldly or religious, who is proud of his knowledge, is a person without merit. He has not realized the most important fact, that his knowledge should have taught the limitation of his knowledge, and how insignificant is what he does know as compared to what is left to be known. Isaac Newton a famous scientist who formulated several laws of physics and discovered the force of gravity said this of himself: “I am like a child collecting pebbles on the sand, while vast ocean of truth lies undiscovered before me.”

A person with knowledge of religion and the hereafter, in fact will be extremely humble, because he will realize his own loneliness, he will know that the accountability of his actions has increased seventy fold as compared to the actions of a person without knowledge. He will have the added burden of the responsibility to spread his knowledge and benefit the ignorant. He will therefore be in awesome fear of Allah (S.w.T.). The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says:

“Those of His servants only who are possessed of knowledge fear Allah; surely Allah is Mighty, Forgiving.” (Surah Fāt’ir 35:28)

If instead a person with religious knowledge is proud of it, then he has failed to grasp the essence of the knowledge and the Almighty Allah says of him:

“Is as the likeness of the ass bearing books.” (Sura al-Jumu’a 62: 5)

Balam Baūr who was a non-practising scholar is compared to a dog. If a scholar ponders and contemplates, indeed the argument of Allah (S.w.T.) has been exhausted on him and there is mighty responsibility on his shoulders. That is seventy sins of an ignorant person will be forgiven while a single sin of a scholar will be accounted from him. Thus there should be increase in humility and modesty if his knowledge increases. And not that he should be a prey for pride and vanity.

What applies to knowledge is also applicable to goodness

A deed performed with sincerity and humility is the essence of obedience and of great value and significance. If it is performed with pride, it is like a lifeless face, which is not worth anything. A good deed is beneficial only if the Almighty accepts it. No one knows whether his good deed has been accepted by Allah (S.w.T.) or it has been rejected due to lack of sincerity or piety. Therefore, like knowledge, a good deed must also be a cause for humility instead of pride and vanity. Regarding the qualities of the believers, the Almighty Allah says:

"And those who give what they give (in alms) while their hearts are full of fear that to their Lord they must return." (Surah Al-Mum'inūn 23: 60)

Pride on ones wealth is foolishness

It is equally stupid to be proud of wealth and position. Like other worldly acquirements these are also transitory and can be easily lost overnight. Besides Allah (S.w.T.) may give wealth and position to a person in order to test him. It is possible that these worldly bounties given by Allah (S.w.T.) makes the person proud, oblivious of the needs of the poor and harsh and disrespectful towards others.

It is also possible that such a person in lure of wealth will not care for his religious obligations. He may earn wealth unlawfully and spend it unlawfully in wasteful and luxurious ways. All such people have failed the test to which they were subjected by Allah (S.w.T.). They have incurred the displeasure of Allah (S.w.T.) and will face severe chastisement. So wealth is actually a calamity for these people and certainly not a thing to be proud of. Worldly possessions are a bounty only for those who realize that these are a trust with them to be utilized in a manner to gain the pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.). The Almighty says:

"Do they think that by what We aid them with of wealth and children, We are hastening to them of good things? Nay, they do not perceive." (Surah Al-Mum'inūn 23: 55 – 56)

"And know that your property and your children are a temptation." (Surah al-Anfāl 8: 28)

Post, title and status are all Temporal

There are many incidents of the past people illustrating the unreliability of all these worldly glamour. And an incident is recorded in the book Habibus Sayr. That when Umrū bin Laith with 70,000 trained warriors came to confront Amir Ismail Sasanid with his 10,000 soldiers and when the war cries and the bugle etc. were raised the horse of Umrū bolted and took him into the rows of the enemies. In this way Amir Ismail became victorious without fighting. He confined Umrū in a tent. It is said that Umrū perchance saw one of his past students. Umrū called him and said that he was very hungry.

The student at once brought for him a piece of meat. Since there was no vessel he put the meat in the pail of the horse and lit a fire below it. Then he went away on some errand. By chance a dog passed by. When it put its head in the pail the steam of stew made its mouth hot. When he tried to quickly remove its head the handle of the vessel was caught in its neck and it ran away with all the things together. When Umrū began to laugh at this scene a sentry asked him why he was amused? Umrū said that once my commander had complained that your kitchenware could hardly be carried on 300 horses. And today I am seeing that a dog is easily carrying it away.

An identical incident is related about Marwan Himar the last of the Bani Umayyah rulers. In 132 A.H when he came face to face with Saffah at Ābezāb, the battle lines were already drawn. He got down from his horse to ease himself and the horse bolted and went to his army. His men thought that Marwan was killed and his horse had returned. They became fearful and dispersed from there. Marwan was finally killed and it was said: His power went out through his urine."

Apart from this, it is famous about the Abbasid Caliph who used to beg in the Jame Masjid of Baghdad say: O people! Have mercy on the one who was ruling over you till yesterday and today he is begging from you.

Superiority of Humility

The importance and significance of humility as a human characteristic can be judged by the fact that the Almighty Allah has commanded His Messenger to practice humility:

"And make yourself gentle to the believers." (Surah al-Hijr 15:88)

And He praised His servants who have imbibed this quality in the following words.

"And the servants of the Beneficent God are they who walk on the earth in humbleness…" (Surah al-Furqān 25: 63)

In the Shiite traditions the Imam has to be superior in every quality, including humility. Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) says:

"If it has befitted Allah to allow some of His creatures to be proud he would have permitted it for His special servants, the saints and the prophets." But the Being of the Almighty is pure from all bad qualities. He made pride detestable for them and liked humility for them. Thus they kept their chests near the ground, their foreheads smeared with dust they continued to bow down before the believers in humility and remained in a weak condition on the Earth."

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

"The best person near me on the day of Qiyāma and the most proximate to me will be only one who has the best behaviour and is most humble."22

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says:

"There are two angels in the heavens who are appointed on the people so that one who is humble may be exalted in status by them and one who is proud and arrogant may be degraded and humiliated by them".23

Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) says,

"Pride is that from which Allah has protected His believing servants through Prayer, Zakat and fasts on the appointed days. So that their organs and body parts may have peace, the glance is cast down by a feeling of helplessness, humiliates the self, making the hearts humble it removes ego from them. Because the delicate parts of the body are smeared with dust during the as-Sajda. And the seven special parts fall on the earth and express their lowliness. And in fasting the stomach touches the back in obedience to His command."24

Worship destroys Pride

The primary aim of worship is to create humility and destroy pride in us. Acts of worship are therefore to be performed in the prescribed manner to be acceptable to Allah (S.w.T.). Worship which is accompanied by Pride is never accepted by Allah (S.w.T.). Worship denotes obedience and submission to Allah (S.w.T.). It is not meant to show oneself to be great and superior.

The Meaning of Humility and its kinds

Humility is a condition of the mind wherein one fully realizes ones own insignificance and the fact that one is utterly lowly and worthless.

There are three areas of humility: Humility and lowliness towards the Almighty Allah, humility and lowliness towards the Prophet and the Imams (a.s.), and humility with people.

Humility with the Almighty Allah

Humility with the Almighty is the realization that our very existence and everything associated with it is from Allah (S.w.T.). All the unlimited bounties that Allah (S.w.T.) has bestowed on us are through His grace and kindness and not because we deserve them or have any right on them. This realization creates a feeling of humility and lowliness towards Allah (S.w.T.) which is to be expressed by continually seeking Allah (S.w.T.)'s pleasure through sincere obedience, worship and good actions. To be aware that we are not really able to worship Allah (S.w.T.) as He deserves to be worshipped and to be aware of our severe limitations in fulfilling our duties towards the Almighty because of our ignorance and lapses. Our humility is also expressed by an intense feeling of gratitude towards our creator, for the many favours He has bestowed upon us and to be continually thankful to the Almighty.

It is recommended that whenever we are reminded of the past bounties we should perform prostration of thankfulness. Divine favours should be regarded as honourable and sacred, as, they are bestowed on us from our Lord and Creator. Traditions of our Ma'sūmīn (a.s.) emphasise the utmost respect we should have for the sustenance that we get from our Lord. When you sit you must sit with humility like a slave and eat like a slave. The Holy Prophet (S), when eating used to sit in a position of Tashahhud during prayer. The etiquette according to Ma'sūmīn (a.s.) to be observed while eating, is, that we do not eat at the table, instead we remove our shoes and sit with respect on the ground. We pay special respect to bread. All the members of the household, both men and women and servants should sit at the same dinner spread (dastarkhan). It is not advisable that anyone should be served separately. We start to eat with Bismillah and end with Alhamdolillah, and more important, to be aware and attentive towards the One Who is the Provider.

The respect we accord to food is such, that even if some food does not suit somebody's health, one should not say that the 'food is harmful' or 'the food has made me sick'. He should rather say 'My health was not suitable for this food' or that 'I consumed it at an inappropriate time'.

Humility before the Almighty is to show respect and honour for all things connected with the Almighty. The names of Allah (S.w.T.) are not to be touched without Wuzu, nor any disrespect shown to them by being thrown or trampled upon, nor should one sit with the legs stretched towards them.

Mosques are sacred places of veneration. We should feel the utmost respect for them and express it in every way possible. As Allah (S.w.T.) Himself says:

"Indeed the mosques are for Allah…" (Surah al-Jinn 72:18)

Accordingly to spit in the mosques or to enter with foul odour, to speak loudly and to speak

of worldly matters in a mosque are all against the norms of a respectful attitude.

Humility before the Prophet (S) and the Imam (a.s.)

The most eloquent expression of humility and helplessness before Allah (S.w.T.) is humility and a feeling of lowliness before the Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams (a.s.). They are the great signs of Allah (S.w.T.), Allah (S.w.T.)'s representatives and Caliphs on the earth. We should feel the utmost respect for them and express it in every way possible. Humility before them is humility and helplessness before Allah (S.w.T.). We must not touch their blessed names without ritual purity. We must not pray Salāt facing their graves. We must utter their names respectfully and recite blessings and salāms on them. Some scholars did not even utter the names of the fourteen Infallibles (Ma'sūmīn) (a.s.) without being with Wuzu.

It is narrated that when Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) spoke the name of Hazrat Muhammad (S), he used to bow so much that his face used to reach to the thighs. In the same way respect and honour to the scholars and Sadāt is humility to the Imams and the Prophet (a.s.).

Humility with the People

All the human beings are equal with respect to their creation. All are creatures of Allah (S.w.T.), and Allah (S.w.T.) is the One Who sustains and nurtures us all. All of us are under His protection, His vigilance and His jurisdiction. So it does not befit any human being both by logic and rules of Shariah to consider himself superior to any other, and to feel proud about it. Nor does he have a right to expect anybody to be humble and submissive to him.

The only superiority that one human being has over another is on the basis of piety. But some people are superior because of their position and we have been commanded to show respect and humility towards them. The most outstanding example is that of parents. Honouring our parents and being humble before them is honouring Allah (S.w.T.) and being humble towards Him. Besides parents one has to give due respect to a believer. A believer has a special dignified position as he has a special link with the Almighty. Honouring a believer and being humble towards him is also equivalent to honour and humility for Allah (S.w.T.). Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says,

"The honour of a believer in the view of Allah (S.w.T.) is greater than the honour of the Ka'ba."

The respect and honour for all signs connected with the Almighty like mosque etc. have already been discussed. In the same way one should show respect and humility towards scholars, teachers, elders of the community and guests.

It is not correct to be humble before a disbeliever or a transgressor

It is not advisable to be respectful and humble towards non-believers. One should not deal with them at a level of equality or superiority. A disbeliever is not deserving of respect because he does not acknowledge Allah (S.w.T.), the Supreme Being and in effect has degraded himself to a despicable position of those who openly defy Allah (S.w.T.); like the

disbeliever who proclaims his disbelief with impunity, and the sinner and transgressor who sins openly and brazenly, the oppressor, and the one who insults the signs of Allah (S.w.T.); these are the people whom we should treat with anger and harshness, for the sake of Allah (S.w.T.).

Thus we must be humble and lowly before the believer and high and arrogant before the disbeliever. If any believer accords respect to a disbeliever, it is, as if he has preferred disbelief to faith in the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.). That is he has acted in a contrary manner. Because honour is for Allah (S.w.T.), the prophet and the believers. (Surah Munafiqūn).

‘Ali (a.s.) says,

“The Messenger of Allah (S) has commanded us to behave with sinners in an acerbic way.”25

It is also improper to be humble towards an arrogant person

Doubtlessly we must never be humble towards an arrogant person who considers everyone else degraded. Because first of all it is a kind of insult to behave humbly towards a conceited person and it is a despicable act according to reason and religious law, secondly, humility towards an arrogant person will increase his conceit. It is possible that if we are arrogant and break off relation with a conceited person, avoid business dealings with him he may reform himself and give up his arrogant behaviour. We would then have executed successfully the dictates of Nahy Anil Munkar. Our behaviour towards arrogant people should be as directed by the Holy Prophet (S) in this hadith: *“Whenever you meet humble people from my Ummah you must meet them with humility and you must behave arrogantly with the arrogant people. Because your arrogance towards them will be a cause of their disrespect.*

It is entirely reasonable and understandable that one would not want to be humble towards an arrogant person, one would in fact be inclined to reciprocate with arrogance. Such reciprocal arrogance is permissible by our religious laws, as is evident from the hadith quoted.

There is a difference between not being humble and being Proud

In the present discussion we are commanded by our religious laws to be arrogant and harsh towards disbelievers, transgressors and conceited people and not to show any humility or respect to them.

A subtle point of great significance has to be emphasized here. It must be entirely clear to us that the anger and arrogance that we exhibit is entirely in obedience to the commands of our religion according to which we have to be enemies with those who are enemies of Allah (S.w.T.). In no way do these commands imply that we should really believe ourselves to be superior to the sinners. At no stage should a personal feeling of pride and superiority over the sinner ever enter our hearts. At every stage we have to be aware that both they and we are helpless at the mercy of Allah (S.w.T.). Salvation is for whomsoever Allah (S.w.T.) may choose to give Tawfīq. It is possible that Allah (S.w.T.) may give Tawfīq to the

sinners to do Tawba; and they are redeemed. So it must be amply clear that the arrogance and anger we have to exhibit is only in obedience to what our religion expects of us and not because of any real feeling of pride and superiority.

To clarify that there is no difference between being angry and not being proud we present an example below. Whenever the king orders one of his servants: “Whenever my son misbehaves you must express displeasure and beat him.” Thus if the servant finds the son misbehaving it is his duty to beat him and express his displeasure. If he doesn’t he has not obeyed the king’s command. Though the servant does not have pride and does not consider himself greater than the Prince. Rather he knows that the son is having a higher status and is closer to the king. And if anger and pride comes together, we must know that it is not for the pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.). It is due to the selfish desires.

Pride and obedience are not compatible

Our aim should be to impress upon them the greatness and supremacy of Allah (S.w.T.), of which they are oblivious, and to make them realize that arrogance befits the Almighty only to Whom we are all subservient. Our arrogance, is then an act of worship and a means to get nearness to Allah (S.w.T.). But beware, if a slightest element of self importance and pride gets into our hearts, this very act is directed by Shaitan. Such is the significant difference between an act performed for Allah (S.w.T.) and the very same act performed for self.

Another point of caution

Sometimes it happens that in the process of preventing evil, the person himself gets involved in perpetrating evil, either due to selfishness or an imbalanced approach.

To honour a wealthy person for his wealth is a path to destruction

To show humility towards the rich people because of their wealth and property is severely prohibited in the Qur’an and traditions. The Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur’an:

“And do not stretch your eyes after that with which We have provided different classes of them, (of) the splendour of this world’s life, that We may thereby try them…” (Surah Tā Hā 20:131)

Any person who respects the rich for his riches and belittles himself before him, considers wealth to be of consequence and is heedless of the supremacy of Allah (S.w.T.). Hazrat ‘Ali (a.s.) says,

“One who goes to a rich man and behaves with him with humility, the Almighty Allah destroys two third of his faith”.[26]

Faith has Three aspects: Faith in the heart, faith expressed verbally by confession of testimonies, faith demonstrated by actions, by fulfilling obligatory acts and avoiding prohibited ones. In the same way humility before wealthy people is sometimes with heart and sometimes otherwise, like with the tongue etc.; and sometimes it is by physical obescience. Greedy people are more humble to the rich and speak sweet words to them and show themselves to be inferior. Their two third faith is wasted. If they express humility

by physical obescience, like kissing their hands and feet etc., their whole faith is destroyed. Because he has done everything he could do for a human being and has not left anything for Allah (S.w.T.).

1. Sermon No.192 Nahjul Balagha
2. Nahjul Balagha
3. Nahjul Balagha
4. al-Kāfi
5. al-Kāfi
6. al-Kāfi
7. al-Kāfi
8. al-Kāfi
9. Du'a of Abu Hamza Thumali
10. A Persian Couplet
11. Sahīfa Sajjadiyah
12. Sahīfa Sajjadiyah
13. Bihār al-Anwār
14. Layali al-Akhbār
15. Qawaid
16. al-Kāfi
17. al-Kāfi
18. al-Kāfi
19. Bihār al-Anwār vol. 16
20. Bihār al-Anwār vol. 73
21. Bihār al-Anwār Vol. 6 page no. 204
22. Bihār al-Anwār
23. al-Kāfi Vol. 2, Chapter of Pride
24. Nahjul Balagha, Khutba Qasiya, 92
25. Wasa'il ul-Shia, Kitab Amr bil Ma'rūf
26. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 15

The Humility of the Rich and the Pride of the Beggar for the pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.)

Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) says:

It is good for the rich to show humility before the poor to seek reward from Allah, but better than that is the haughtiness of the poor towards the rich with trust in Allah.1

The poor can behave with arrogance towards the rich not because he considers himself superior or due to any feeling of pride but because of their trusts and faith in Allah (S.w.T.), and on the basis of this conviction that they are needless of other people and their total reliance is on Allah (S.w.T.) Who is the owner of the treasures of earth and heavens.

It is mentioned in the book Layalil Akhbar that one day a rich man came to the Holy Prophet (S) dressed in expensive clothes and sat down in the assembly. After that a beggar dressed in tattered clothes arrived and sat next to the rich man. The rich man pulled away his dress and moved away a little bit. The Holy Prophet (S) asked if he was worried that his poverty may reach him. The rich man said, "No"! The Prophet (S) asked him if he feared that his wealth will decrease and reach that beggar? 'No', he said. The Prophet (S) asked him if he

had moved away fearing your clothes will become dirty?" Again he replied in the negative.

"Then why did you behave like that?" asked the Messenger of Allah (S). He said, "My natural tendency is to regard every good deed as bad and every evil deed as good but now I reform myself. I wish to give half my wealth to this poor person.' The Holy Prophet asked the pauper if he would accept it. The pauper refused saying that he feared he might also fall into pride like the rich man. It must be borne in mind that arrogance towards the rich is only with respect to riches. As far as faith is concerned, we have to be just as humble to a believing beggar as to a believing rich man.

Humility shown differs from Person to Person

In general we have to have a balanced approach in all our actions and dealings with no excess in either direction. The same applies to humility. Humility also should be within limits. Excessive humility is degrading, and a believer should not do anything to compromise his honour and dignity. The degree of humility we show also depends upon the person concerned. For example it would be ridiculous to show the same degree of humility to strangers that we show to our parents and relatives. Similarly respect for scholars who practice what they preach and Sadāt etc must be more than respect for other people. The leaders of the community must be paid more respect than commoners. Actions which are appropriate with the parents and scholars etc, like kissing of their hands, are not to be practiced with other people.

It is narrated in Safinat'ul-Bihār from Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) that one day a religious person from among his companions visited Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) with his son. 'Ali (a.s.) stood up and accorded great respect to him and ordered Qamber to arrange for dinner for them. They ate together, then Qamber brought a pot of water and a towel to wash their hands. 'Ali (a.s.) picked up the water pot and wanted to wash the hands of the guest when he protested. How is it possible for a slave to allow his master to serve him? 'Ali (a.s.) asked,

"What if by washing hands my Lord and master will be pleased with me? You wash your hands as if Qambar is pouring out water for you."

These words compelled the companion to have his hands washed and 'Ali (a.s.) poured out water for him. After this 'Ali (a.s.) gave the water pot to his son Muhammad bin Hanafiyya and told him to pour out water for the son, so that the status of the father and the son is not made equal. He (a.s.) said:

"If the father had not come with the son I myself would have poured water on his hands. But could not do so in the presence of the father."

If Amir ul-Mu'minīn (a.s.) had washed the hands of the son himself, the status of the father and son would have been equal. But 'Ali (a.s.) upheld the dignity of the father by not washing the hands of his son after he had washed the hands of the father.

Signs of Humility

A humble person will not mind sitting behind everyone in a gathering. He will be the one to initiate salutations. He will give up arguments and squabbles even if he is in the right. He will not like to be praised for his piety.[2]

Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) says in his bequest:

"It is necessary that you make humility a habit because it is one of the greatest worship acts."[3]

It is mentioned in Safinat'ul-Bihār that after every ritual prayer, Mūsa Ibn Imran used to touch both his cheeks on the ground with utmost humility before the Almighty Allah. Due to this the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) gave him the status of Kalimullah (One with whom Allah spoke).

Imam 'Ali ar-Riďa (a.s.) says:

Humility is that you give to the people what they like so that they may also give to you.

Hasan bin Jaham asked Imam 'Ali Riďa (a.s.) what was the standard of humility and what was its nature?

Imam (a.s.) replied:

There are some grades for humility one of them is that a person should understand his value and do everything according to that. Rather he should come down a little bit with perfect consciousness. He should like for others only those things that he likes for himself. If someone is bad to him he reciprocates with goodness and he must swallow his anger and forgive the people. Allah (S.w.T.) certainly like those who do good.

Our Imams (a.s.) were having utmost Humility

It is recorded in Safinat'ul-Bihār that Imam Mūsa Ibn Ja'far (a.s) said Salām to a black Sudanese as he passed by him. Then he went near him and spoke with him for sometime. After that he said: Tell me if there is anything I can do for you. People said: O son of the Messenger! You go towards such a person and ask about his needs while he is more needful than you? Imam (a.s.) said:

He is a servant of Allah (S.w.T.) too and our brother in faith. Both of us have got the best father, Hazrat Adam, the father of humanity and both of us are bestowed with Islam, the best religion. May be time would render us more needful than him so why should we feel proud of ourselves?

Pride must be completely rooted out

Muhammad bin Muslim was one of the rich nobles of Kufa and was a companion of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s). One day Imam Baqir (a.s.) said:

O Muhammad! Be humble!

When he returned to Kufa from Medina he took a container of dates and a balance and sat outside the mosque. He called that whosoever wanted dates could purchase them from him. (He was doing this to destroy his pride). His relatives came and said that by acting in this manner he was causing insult to the family honour. He said that his master had ordered him to do this and he could not disobey his command, and he would not move from the place till he has sold out the stock. His relatives said that if he indeed wanted to buy and sell he should go to the place where wheat is ground into flour. He agreed to it and

procured a camel and a mill stone and started the flour mill so that by this occupation his pride would be destroyed and that he would see himself as a common person.4

1. Nahjul Balagha saying 406
2. Safinat'ul-Bihār
3. Safinat'ul-Bihār
4. Safinat'ul-Bihār quoted from Ikatisā

Thirty-fourth Greater Sin: To War against Muslims

The thirty fourth greater sin is to fight against the friends of Allah (S.w.T.) (Muslims).

Amash narrates from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) and Fazl ibn Shazān who narrated from Imam 'Ali Riďa (a.s.) that Qur'an has clearly mentioned chastisement for this sin and indicated the Shari punishment in Surah al-Mā'ida 33-34:

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His apostle and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be murdered or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be exiled; this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement,Except those who repent before you have them in your power; so know that Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (Surah al-Mā'ida 5:33-34)

In *Minhaj* it is written that in the 6th year of Hijrah a group from Awniyah and Akal came to Holy Prophet (S) and accepted Islam and stayed on with him (S). But when the climate of Medina did not suit them, they fell sick. The Holy Prophet (S) was informed about their condition and he gave them permission to reside on the outskirts of Medina where camel milk was available in plenty at a place called "Jabalul Eier." In this way they may stay there for some time and drink the milk and urine of camel to cure their disease and become healthy once more.

They left for the valley and stayed for some time and regained health. One day they hatched a conspiracy and stole 15 camels of the Holy Prophet (S) and returned to their tribe as *Murtad* (renegades). When the news reached Medina, Yasar, a servant of Holy Prophet (S) chased them with a few people and caught up with them. The two groups fought with each other. Yasar was captured, his hands and legs amputed, and eyes and tongue were pierced with thorns. At last he achieved martyrdom. When the Holy Prophet (S) came to know of this he sent Karbaz bin Jabir after them. He captured all of them and tied their hands and legs and brought them to the Holy Prophet (S). So Allah, the Most High, revealed His words: "The punishment of those who wage war…" (Surah al-Maidah, 5:33)

There are various other traditions of Imams (a.s.) on this topic with slight differences.

Who is an attacker?

According to the jurists an attacker *(Muharib)* is one who carries weapons; like sword,

spear, dagger, gun, wood, stone etc. to frighten the Muslims and rob them of their wealth or shed their blood. It is immaterial whether he does it alone or with a group of people or whether he succeeds in his aim or not. That is, whether people get frightened or not, or whether he takes their wealth or not, whether he kills them or not, if he carries a weapon he is an attacker. And it makes no difference whether he is on the seas or land, in a city and a crowded place, or in a desert like a wanderer; or whether he carries the weapon during day or at night and whether he enters the Muslims' houses forcefully and attacks them, in all cases he is a *Muharib* (attacker)

It is in *Kāfi* that Surat bin Kalīb asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) regarding a person who comes out of his house for mosque or any other place and suddenly someone catches him from behind and beats him and snatches his clothes. Imam (a.s.) said such a person is *Muharib* (attacker) and the verse is applicable to him.

There is no difference if the attacker is a Muslim or a non-Muslim, a man or a woman, is in an Islamic city or non-Islamic area. We should note that 'attacker' doesn't mean that he only fights a war against Muslims. Creating mischief in the land and disturbing peace or spreading fear or using weapons to kill or threaten people makes one an attacker.

In short a *Muharib* is one who attacks the life and property of Muslims using weapons and one who destroys peace and harmony.

To war against Allah (S.w.T.) and Prophet (S)

In the Qur'anic verses it is said that fighting against Muslim means fighting a war against Allah and Prophet (S). This is due to the respect and high status accorded to Muslims. In fact any dealings with them are like dealings with Allah (S.w.T.) and Prophet (S). This is because they are connected with Allah (S.w.T.). It is also possible that it is so because Muslims are closely linked with Allah (S.w.T.) through the Prophet and to cause harm to Muslims or to take away their property or shed their blood is prohibited by Allah (S.w.T.) and His Prophet (S). Whoever acts against the divine command is an attacker (who has fought against Allah (S.w.T.) and Prophet).

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"Allah (S.w.T.) says: One who hurts My believing servant has declared war against Me, and one who respects a believer has secured himself from My wrath."[1]

He also said:

"Whoever humiliates my friend has openly waged war against me."[2]

Punishment for a Muharib

As mentioned in the above verse one of the following four punishments may be accorded: to kill, to crucify, to cut off hands and legs, or to exile the attacker/s from the city.

In *Burhan Qur'an* page. 188 it is mentioned that according to religious terminology 'attacker' refers to a person who frightens people, creates inconvenience in a city or desert, whether he is weak or strong, a man or a woman. In all cases such a person is a *Muharib* (attacker) and when the attack is directed against Muslims according to Qur'an it is equivalent to waging war against Allah (S.w.T.) and Prophet (S) and Qur'an says regarding

it,

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be murdered or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be imprisoned; this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement (Surah al-Maidah 5:33)

After this verse the above book says: Respected readers! At this juncture let us examine the false allegation of the modernized liberal people who say that the penal code of Islam is barbarous. Why is it that these people have reserved their sympathy and emotional feelings for murderers and robbers. Why is it that they do not sympathise with the victims of these cruel people? In most cases the victims are women and children, who are targeted by these beasts. Is there any difference in exterminating such elements to preserve peace and harmony with the destruction of germs to guard the society from deadly diseases? Would any sane person criticise a doctor for being cruel if he kills the disease germs with an injection? There is no doubt that every fair person would consider this a mercy for the society and an act of justice. It is also necessary to mention that the Merciful Maker of Islamic Law has not overlooked mercy and beneficence even with regard to a criminal offence.

In *Tafsīr Majmaul Bayan* under the explanation of the concerned verse is a narration from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) that the punishment of an attacker is according to the seriousness of his crime. If he has committed a murder he is put to death, and if in addition to murder he has plundered wealth, he is first executed and then crucified. If only wealth is plundered without killing anyone, his punishment is severing of hands and legs. If his crime was to spread unrest, or to waylay people, his punishment is exile. This tradition clearly states that the law of Islam has prescribed punishment of an attacker according to the enormity of his sin and this itself shows mercy to a criminal. Moreover Islam has not restricted itself to this beneficence but also stipulated that if the attacker repents before being caught, he is exempted from punishment. He is only responsible for the property he has stolen. And Surah al-Mā'ida verse-34 proves this.

On page 185 it is mentioned that the aim of heavenly law for human society is that the five basic and important things like life, faith, wealth, lineage and honour of people should be protected from any attack. An attack on these five basics can result in war and bloodshed. There is no doubt that such discipline cannot be accomplished with orders and prohibitions *(Amr* and *Nahy)* alone. The only effective deterrent is the fear of punishment.

The great Muslim philosopher, Abu Raihān Biruni in the book *Tahqīq Ma Lil hind* writes that according to Hindu and Christian beliefs, violence of any kind should be avoided and criminals should be dealt with lenient methods. According to them the philosophy of offering the other cheek, and praying for the forgiveness of the evil doers is more effective in reforming them. But practical experience shows that not everyone is impressed with this philosophical attitude and most criminals can only be compelled to avoid evil through fear of strict punishment. The following verse gives the Islamic thoughts regarding retaliation:

And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation, O men of understanding, that you may guard yourselves.(Surah al-Baqarah 2:179)

This verse is addressed to the men of intellects who are concerned about the hereafter and who are aware of the value of this life. The verse says that human life and society is related

to law of retaliation. Knowing the precise nature of punishment prescribed for a particular crime acts as a deterrent for committing it. Islam has specified penalties for serious crimes like murder, adultery, stealing, fighting, drinking, apostasy which are responsible for the decadence and destruction of civilisations. Whereas there is no prescribed punishment for minor crimes and it is left at the discretion of the judge (Hākim al-sharā). He bases his judgement according to the circumstances and other factors related to the criminal. (End of quotation from *Burhān al-Qur'an*)

The philosophy of retaliation is further explained as follows: Life is balanced by discrimination between good and evil and Allah (S.w.T.)'s law of balance has to be observed and enforced. Therefore the guilty should be punished and the people against whom the crime has been committed should know what punishment has been given and how it is carried out. In this way the boundaries of transgression are clearly marked and made known.

The details regarding the penal code are mentioned in the traditions. Regarding this there is a tradition in *al-Kāfi* narrated from Umrū bin Uthman Madayani that Imam 'Ali Riďa (a.s.) was asked regarding the 33-34 verses of Surah al-Mā'ida as to which crimes make one liable for above-mentioned four penalties. Imam (a.s.) said that when one wars against Allah (S.w.T.) and His Prophet (S), spreads mischief in the land, kills someone and plunders his wealth, he is to be killed and crucified. If he robs people without killing his right hand and left leg or left hand and right leg should be cut off. If he takes up weapons to war against Allah (S.w.T.) and His Prophet and try to spread mischief in the land but doesn't kill anybody nor plunders any wealth he should be exiled.

Imam (a.s.) was asked how such people can be exiled he (a.s.) said: He shall be expelled from the city where he has committed the crime and sent to another town and the people of that city should be informed that this is an exiled person. They must not associate with him or have any dealings with him, nor should they eat or drink with him. This should continue for a year.

As in our age these penalties are not implemented, it is not necessary to dwell into the details and narrate more traditions on this topic.

When a *Muharib* (attacker) repents sincerely before being arrested the above-mentioned penalties are not applicable for him. If he is in possession of plundered wealth it should be returned to its rightful owner. If he has committed a murder, the law of retaliation should be applied, except in the case where the victim of the crime himself pardons him.

Defending from robbers

An armed robber is the same as an attacker *(Muharib)* and the owner of wealth has the right to defend himself. If in this engagement the robber is killed no compensation is payable. If protecting some property is *Wajib* or if the robber attacks the honour then it is *Wajib* to defend to ones utmost capacity except if there is risk of losing ones life. If the thief has the intention of killing it is Wajib for the owner of the property to defend himself. If it is not possible he should flee or hide himself or use any other way so that his life is protected and if it is the case of a thief without weapon then too the thief is a *Muharib* (attacker). So whatever rule is prescribed for armed robber will also apply to him except that the penalty of *Muharib* is not applicable to him. If all the conditions of an attacker are found in the thief then the full penalty will be accorded to him, and if all conditions are not found, then only

exemplary punishment should be given to discipline him. Such a robber is “Mustalib” (one who openly loots people and runs away) or “Mukhtalis” (One who steals quietly). The religious jurist (Hakim al-Shara) is authorized to award whatever punishment he considers suitable. The thief could be beaten or imprisoned.

A man snatched an earring from the ear of a girl and ran away. He was presented before ‘Ali (a.s.). ‘Ali (a.s.) said: His stealing and robbery is apparent and not hidden from people, therefore the penalty for stealing, that is cutting of hand, cannot be applied to him; rather he should be beaten and given exemplary punishment. Therefore he was beaten and imprisoned. The third kind is “mukhtāl” means one who betrays and in a tricky manner takes away the wealth of someone. Like faking certificates to trick people into parting with their wealth. It is necessary that all such people be punished with exemplary punishment.

1. Kāfi vol. 2, page. 350
2. Kāfi vol. 2, page. 352

Thirty-fifth Greater Sin: Eating of Carrion, Pork and Blood

The thirty-fifth of Greater sins is consuming carrion, pork and blood and all those things on which Allah (S.w.T.)’s name has not been invoked during its slaughter as reported by Amash from Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) and Fazl ibn Shazān from Imam ‘Ali Riďa (a.s.). This fact is also mentioned in the Qur’an in Surah al-Baqarah Verse 173, Surah al-An’ām Verse 145 and Surah an-Nahl Verse 116.

In Surah al-Mā’ida Verse 3 Allah (S.w.T.) says,

“Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allah has been invoked, and the strangled (animal) and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall and that killed by being smitten with the horn, and that which wild beast have eaten, except what you slaughter, and what is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols) and that you divide by the arrows; that is a transgression.” (***Surah al-Mā’ida 5:3)***

Carrion

Every animal that dies without the proper religious procedure is Carrion and eating of it is prohibited. If it has warm blood then it would also be *Najis* (ritually impure), but if it is properly slaughtered it is pure and clean (except dog and pig which will be always *Najis* and never considered clean and pure).

In a compilation of Anjuman al-Tablighāt Islami it is mentioned that Islamic Jurisprudence has specified and discussed in detail and prescribed the animals whose flesh is allowed. Only an expert in Life science could fully appreciate justification on which these laws are based.

Islam has prohibited the flesh of all carnivorous animals because there is dirt in the stomachs of such animals. The flesh is dirty and smelly and its consumption causes illness.

On the other hand herbivorous animals are mostly considered permissible. Animals having claws are considered *Harām* and hoofed animals are mostly considered *Halāl* though some are considered as *Makruh* (unpleasant) such as Horse, Ass etc. Birds that flap their wings more and glide less while flying are *Halāl* and those who glide more and flap their wings less are *Harām*. Islam has also prescribed rules for hunting. Hunting is permissible for hunters who hunt to feed their family or for their sustenance. Hunting is not allowed for fun and entertainment. One who goes for hunting just for fun and play has to recite full prayers (it is not considered Qasr) he should also observe fast because this journey of his is unIslamic. (End of quotation from the compilation of Anjuman Tablighat al-Islami)

Animals are of Three types: Terrestrial, aquatic and flying. Terrestrial animals are of two kinds, domestic and wild.

Terrestrial Animals

Among the domestic animals only goats, sheep, cow and camel are *Halāl*, while flesh of horse, donkey and mule is detestable (Makruh), other than these six animals all domestic animals are *Harām*, like cat etc.

None of the wild animals are *Halāl* except deers and its kinds like the mountain goats, (12 horns), wild Cow, wild donkey and mule. Flesh of all carnivorous animals is *Harām* whether they are strong and powerful like lions, leopard and jackals etc. or weak like the fox; and in the same way the flesh of rabbit which is not from wild animals is also *Harām*.

Reptiles like snakes and rats etc., whether domesticated or wild. Insects and worms and porcupines and lice etc. are also *Harām*.

Birds

Birds like pigeon and all its kind are *Halāl*. For example, ringdove, partridge, wild duck, ducks and its kinds. Also birds and its kinds like Bulbul (nightingale), Chandol (name of a bird). Surad (bird with broad head with a peak half-black and half-white who hunts other birds). Swan (Greyish with long head, which mostly lives on a date tree) Shagrāq - Greenish beautiful bird similar to pigeon, it has a red, green and black lining on its black feather.

Bat, peacocks who have webbed feet or birds strong enough which can tear apart animal; or hunting birds, like Charkh (one kind of bird) Eagle, Shahīn, Bāshiq (which is also called as Bāhsā) or a weak bird like Vulture or crow and its kind should be avoided, also Zāgh (crow which inhabits cultivated soil, and Baga whose colour is black and white, those fat and black crows which eat Carrion; all such birds should not be used for food.

Whatever has been said is available in traditions in explicit terms. Regarding birds about where there is no express command these can be considered *Halāl* by applying the criteria mentioned in the beginning of the chapter: Birds that flap their wings more and glide less during flight are *Halāl*. Besides they should have Three additional characteristics: an additional finger below the thigh, crop (craw) and gizzard.

The egg of a bird has the same order as its flesh. The egg of a *Halāl* bird is *Halāl* and the egg of *Harām* bird is *Harām*. In order to determine whether an egg of unknown origin belongs to a *Halāl* bird or *Harām* we must see its shape. If one end is pointed and the other is rounded, like the egg of hen or pigeon, it is *Halāl*. If it is exactly round, or oval having the

same shape at both ends it is to be considered *Harām*.

We should also remember that a permissible animal becomes *Harām* on account of two things:

1) By eating Najasat

2) By having been sexually assaulted by a man. The details of laws concerning the same are available in Tauzihul Masael and books of jurisprudence.

Aquatic Animals

As regards aquatic animals, only those fishes are *Halāl* which have scales even though they might have fallen off, like the scales of Kan-at (a kind of fish) (Qoba fish). This is a very naughty fish and it bangs itself on everything and loses its scale and only the scales of its tail remain.

Purification of Animals

Warm-blooded animals can be fit for consumption by using any of the two ways prescribed by Islamic law for its killing; hunting or slaughter. There are two methods of hunting, one is to hunt by a trained dog who is obedient; it must move when ordered and stop when commanded. It should not have the habit of eating its prey. Also the person who releases the dog on a prey must be a Muslim and he must utter the name of Allah (S.w.T.) at the time of releasing the dog, and throughout the hunt the dog must not go out of the sight of the hunter.

The second method of hunting is by pointed iron weapons like sword, spear or bullet etc. This should pierce the animal's body. Whether this weapon is of a ferrous metal or made from some other mineral, it makes the prey *Halāl* upon condition that the archer should be a Muslim and at the time of releasing the arrow he must utter 'Bismillah'. If all such conditions are fulfilled and the animal is killed during this process, the flesh of the hunted animal is fit for consumption (*Halāl*). However, if the hunter finds the animal alive he must slaughter it according to the prescribed rules of slaughter.

Animals caught in all kinds of traps could only be *Halāl* if the trapper finds them alive and slaughters them in the prescribed manner.

Apart from this all the *Halāl* flesh animals can be consumed only if they are capable of running away or flying away. If one shoots at the young one of a deer incapable of running or the young one of a partridge that cannot yet fly, their flesh is not *Halāl*. They should be first caught and then slaughtered with a knife etc.

A Discussion regarding Non-vegetarianism

In *Tafsīr al-Mizan* under the exegesis of the 3rd verse of Surah al-Mā'ida is a Three-part discussion which we present below.

Different beliefs regarding Non-vegetarianism

Man also possesses a digestive system like other animals therefore theoretically he can eat anything that he is capable of digesting and whatever can be absorbed into his body. It is possible for man to eat anything that he could chew and swallow. But he is selective and would never consume anything that he feels would harm him or that which is poisonous. Similarly he also avoids eating things that he considers harmful for his soul. That is food prohibited according to the religion that he follows.

Detestable things – If a person considers something Najis he refrains from consuming it, e.g. a person doesn't eat his own excreta because he considers it as dirty and filthy and sometimes he considers it Najis due to his religious belief. For example Muslims consider Pork Najis but Christians consider it permissible. Non-Muslims eat frogs, crabs and mice while Muslims consider them dirty.

Thus it becomes clear that different people have different views regarding the consumption of meat. Buddhism considers all types of meat prohibited. This rule was promulgated to put a stop to the practice of all types of meat eating. The African people and other wild tribes used to eat every kind of meat even going as far as Cannibalism. The Arabs used to consume the meat of all kinds of quadrupeds and even animals like rats and lizards, whether they died of their own or were suffocated to death. They used to say that you people kill the animal by your hands but we eat those who are killed by Allah (S.w.T.) (that is the animals who die a natural death and have not been purified by the prescribed method of slaughter).

As mentioned in authentic writings the idol worshipping Chinese eat every type of animals like dogs, cats, insects, snakes, frogs, oysters etc. But Islam has prescribed the middle path. That is, it has permitted only that meat which man considers naturally beneficial. The details of this will be presented below.

Islam has designated as Halāl the quadrupeds like sheep, goat, cow, camel etc. Some of the quadrupeds like horse, donkey etc is makrūh (Detestable) according to Islam. Birds, excluding the birds of prey are permitted if they possess a gizzard, flap their wings during flight and do not possess claws like that of pigeons. Islam has also permitted some marine animals. The details of all such animals are given in the books of jurisprudence. Also prohibited are the blood of animals, carrion and all those animals that are slaughtered, without reciting upon them the name of Allah (S.w.T.). The aim of promulgating such rules was to enlighten man regarding the regulations of meat eating and to permit only that meat which is considered naturally healthy and beneficial for man and refrain him from all that could prone harmful for him or that which is distasteful and dirty.

2. Is Killing a living thing against Mercy?

One could claim that animals also possess soul and like humans find death painful. Then how is it possible that we deprive them of the sweetness of life and force upon them the bitter taste of death? While Allah (S.w.T.) Almighty is Beneficent and Merciful. How is it possible for such a God to order the slaughter of animals so that men can enjoy their meat? While the soul and feelings of both human and animals are same. The reply to this question is that whatever has been said against meat eating is because of sentiments and feelings overpowering reality. (Remember) Shari'a and legislation is subservient to wisdom and not prone to sentimentality and emotions.

This could be explained by saying that the material world is a world of changes. The rule prevalent in the world of matter is that of “the eater and the eaten one”. The dwellers of the earth feed on the earth and shape themselves with it. (Like the human beings, animals and birds etc.). After this the earth eats them up a second time. Earth changes into vegetation and vegetation is transformed into earth in a continuous cycle. Moreover, the living things derive benefit from plants and water and some animals feed on other animals. For example animals of prey hunt other animals and consume their flesh. Their natural system is such that they cannot eat anything else. Like the clawed birds that catch birds like pigeons and other birds and devour them. The smaller birds feed on grains, grainy substances and insects like flies, fleas and mosquitoes etc.

Blood sucking insects benefit from the blood of humans and animals and finally the earth devours all of them. On the basis of this it is proved that the natural food cycle that is existing on the earth is based on natural laws without any hindrance. Everything is subservient to this natural law. The creator of nature has permitted consumption of flesh by some creatures and has designed their organs to accomplish the task. He has created man in such a way that he could consume vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian food. He is not like a sheep who can neither cut with its eenth nor pick up something with them. Neither does man resemble carnivorous animals that can neither chew or soften their food. In addition to these abilities man is equipped with the capacity to taste. He enjoys the taste of meat. And apart from this the natural make up of man throws light on the types of foods that his organs could digest and those that are beneficial for him. Since Islam is the religion of nature it has permitted all such things that are compatible with the natural makeup of man.

Also, it has prescribed some other rules formed by the creator of Nature. That is, all that flesh that could prove harmful to the body or spirit, all those things that one finds detestable and dirty are to be compulsorily avoided. In brief all those things that prove harmful to the body or soul or against the well being of human society like gambling and distributing of meat through drawing of lots. All such things are prohibited by Islam. Also banned are filthy things that normally people find to be disgusting.

Other objections against animal slaughter that are apparently based on mercy can be answered as follows: Indeed, mercy is a natural and created feeling that is found in the psychology of human beings and in a large number of animals. But it does not mean that this mercy has to be absolute. If it had been such, there wouldn’t have been any kind of diseases, sorrows and difficulties. Apart from this, mercy and kindness are not like human justice which is from an accomplished moral quality encompassing every aspect of life. (That is one must be merciful under every circumstance). If it had been it would not be correct to arrest the unjust people and punish the criminals, or to hate the enemies. If we act upon such type of absolute mercy, the earth and its inhabitants would be destroyed by corruption and transgression.

Therefore, commonly it is commanded that mercy and kindness be practiced. That is, animals must not be slaughtered in a cruel and painful manner. And we must not sever any part of the slaughtered animal, before its completely dead nor skin it.

Animal that is choked to death or that which is beaten to death is not allowed. Islamic law also prohibits the slaughtering of an animal before another beast. The same chapter prescribes watering the animal before it is led to slaughter. As far as possible we must be kind to the animal that is about to be slaughtered. Detailed laws regarding slaughter are present in the books of jurisprudence.

As far as the divine mercy and beneficence is concerned. Divine mercy does not imply the satisfaction of heart and the perceived effect. It denotes bestowing benefits to a deserving one to the extent that he deserves. Therefore, sometimes we consider something harmful and punishing whereas it is a divine mercy and goodness for one, and similarly the other way around. Then it is not appropriate for the divine wisdom that at the time of framing laws our false feelings belie a divine command and give a decision against established reality. From the above discussion it is established that Islam has allowed meat and the rules that make it permissible for us are promulgated in keeping with the law of nature.

"The nature made by Allah in which he has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion…" (Surah ar-Rūm 30: 30)

3. Why has Islam prescribed slaughter?

Second objection: We accept that nature and creation permits the consumption of meat. Then on the basis of mercy why are we not satisfied with the meat of animals that have died a natural death?

The reply to this question can be found in the second part of the above discussion. Because to ascribe such a meaning to mercy leads to the nullification of the very laws that Islam has prescribed. And Islam has framed laws in order to keep this feeling of mercy in the make up of man.

Moreover if only dead animals had been permitted instead of being beneficial in any way it would be harmful to men as eating carrion causes numerous diseases of the body and is also a bane for human soul. This would itself be against divine mercy as this would have caused untold problems to human beings and people would always be waiting for animals to die so that they may enjoy their meat. (Quoted from Tafhīme al-Mīzan)

Remember! Slaughtering of an animal to consume its flesh is not cruelty. In fact it is the completion of the purpose for which it was created. Because before the slaughter the animal is dumb, unintelligent and senseless. It does not understand anything. But after it is slaughtered and consumed by man, it is transformed into a part of human body that has the power of speech, understanding and reason. For example, no kind of merit or perfection can emerge from the tongue of a sheep. But when it becomes a part of human body it unravels realities and chants the praise of Allah (S.w.T.). In the same way other good actions are performed by other parts of the human body.

Purification through the Prescribed method of Slaughter

The main reason for slaughter is to purify the animal. The procedure is to completely cut off the four big veins of the neck below the bulge of the Adam's apple. (These four pipes are: wind pipe, food pipe and two big veins near the windpipe). The five additional conditions for purification are:

1. The person who slaughters must be a Muslim whether man or woman. Even a child can do it if he is old enough to distinguish good and bad.

2. The neck of the animal must be cut with a sharp iron weapon. But if an iron weapon is not available and if the animal would die soon if not slaughtered immediately, then a

weapon of any other material is allowed. For example glass or sharp edged stone.

3. At the time of slaughter the face, all four legs and the stomach of the animal must face the direction of Qibla. But it does not matter if one forgets or if one does not know the direction of Qibla or if it is not possible to lay the animal in that direction.

4. At the time of slaughter one must recite the name of Allah (S.w.T.) and it is sufficient to say 'Bismillah' (In the name of Allah (S.w.T.)). However, it doesn't matter if one forgets to do so.

5. After being slaughtered the animal must move somewhat. It is sufficient if it even moves its eyeballs, or tail or thrash its legs. It is also a necessary precaution that as much blood must gush from the animal as it normally does.

In case of camel slaughter in addition to the above five conditions it is necessary to pierce it with a sharp weapon at a depression between the neck and the chest. If the animal becomes uncontrollable or it gets into a situation where it is impossible to slaughter it in the proper way; for example if it falls into a well and is about to drown, then one can pierce or wound it with a weapon at any part of its body that would kill it. It would become permissible. It is not even necessary that it should face the Qibla. However, the other conditions are applicable.

The purification of fish is that it should be removed alive from the water. Therefore if a fish with scales is caught alive from the water and dies out of water, it is tahir (pure) and it is permitted to eat it. If it dies in water it is nevertheless tahir (pure) because it does not have warm blood, but it is not permitted to eat it. Also, it is not necessary that the person who catches fish be a Muslim. Hence it is allowed to eat fish caught by a non-Muslim. But one must have the knowledge that the fish has died after coming out of water.

The purification of locust is that it must be caught alive by hand or other means. And it becomes Halāl to eat after it dies. It is not necessary that the person catching locust be a Muslim or that the name of Allah (S.w.T.) be recited upon it. Eating the locust that has not yet developed wings and is not capable of flying is Harām.

If after hunting or slaughtering an animal one finds a young one in its belly it is tahir only if its limbs have developed or it has hair or fur on its body. It is allowed to eat this young one because its mother too was a Halāl meat animal.

Purification affected by slaughter

Whatever has been discussed so far shows that except for dog and pig all other Harām animals if slaughtered in Islamic way are considered tahir, although eating them is not permitted. And if it has not been correctly slaughtered, its dead body is najis (impure). But if it doesn't have warm blood it cannot be considered najis even if it dies without purification; its eating is obviously Harām. For example, snake, insects etc. And every Halāl flesh animal, which dies without purification becomes najis (impure) and its eating is Harām. If it does not possess warm blood, eating it is Harām but it is not najis (impure). For example fish that dies in water. Carrion whose eating is Harām is an animal that dies without slaughter prescribed by the Shariah. Whether it dies of some disease or a natural death, or due to external factors, whether it dies suddenly or a slow death. As animal do not usually die a sudden death it is possible that people think this kind of death does not make it a carrion. The Qur'anic verse (Surah al-Mā'ida 5:3) has specially mentioned it among the

five kinds of carrion.

1. Munkhafta, animal that dies due to strangulation whether accidental or intentional, whether it is strangulated with an instrument like a rope etc, or by pressing its neck between two sticks. Such and many other types of methods were prevalent during the period of Jahiliyya (Pre-Islamic).

2. Mangooza, an animal that is beaten till it dies.

3. Mutaraddiya, animal that falls from a great height or that which falls into a well.

4. Tatahayya, animal that dies after being wounded by the horns of some other beast.

5. Mā Akala Bassao, an animal that was hunted by a beast and part of it was eaten up.

The phrase “and what is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols)…” prohibits the method of slaughter practiced in Jahiliyya. In the pre-Islamic era the polytheists used to install stones around the Ka’aba and consider them sacred. They used to worship these stones and sacrifice animals upon them. And the phrase, “and that you divide by the arrows…”, prohibits the consumption of the meat of animal that is slaughtered and its meat divided into the participants by drawing arrows. This is also a kind of gambling and it has been explained in detail in the chapter on gambling.

Why is Carrion Harām?

Mufaddal Ibn Umar is quoted in the books al-Kāfi and *Amali* to have asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.) why Allah (S.w.T.) has prohibited Carrion, blood and pork? Imam (a.s.) replied,

“Allah has not prohibited anything for men to take it Himself (we seek refuge in Allah (S.w.T.)). And He has not permitted things that He Himself didn’t like. (In other words Allah (S.w.T.) has not framed the rules of Harām and Halāl on the basis of His personal whims and fancies. The truth is that when Allah (S.w.T.) is Creator of everything, He alone knows what is good and necessary for the human body. Therefore he made it permissible due to His grace. He Alone knows what is harmful for the human body and, therefore prohibited it and made it Harām. But one who is helpless and there is no other way for survival is allowed to eat the same (prohibited) things. However, he must eat only as much as is necessary to save one’s life.”

After that he said, “Eating carrion makes ones body weak and thin. It destroys ones physical prowess and cuts off his generations. One who eats carrion dies a sudden death.”

It appears therefore that in the process of slaughtering, the blood gushes out and the meat is free of the impure blood with its toxic substances which flow in the veins. When an animal dies naturally or by any process where the blood remains in the body, the meat is contaminated with toxic substances, the consumption of which is injurious to health.

A heretic asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.) why Allah (S.w.T.) had prohibited carrion?

Imam (a.s.) said,

“Carrion is made Harām so that there should be difference between it and an animal upon which the name of Allah is recited. Also, the blood of a dead animal is not expelled from its body. It returns to its organs and makes its meat heavy and distasteful. Its meat is eaten

with its blood.”

The heretic said, “Then the flesh of fish must also be carrion and Harām because blood is not expelled from it.”

Imam (a.s.) told him,

“The purification of fish is just that it should be removed from water and left outside to die by itself. It is not necessary to slaughter it because it does not possess (warm) blood. The same applies to locust.”

In the fourth volume of Bihār al-Anwār it is mentioned that the Imam also said that it is not necessary to slaughter fish because it doesn’t have much blood. And the blood that remains in its body is like the blood that remains in the body of an animal after it is slaughtered, which is harmless and Halāl.

Blood

Blood is of two kinds, Najis (impure) and tahir (Pure). The blood of man and all warm-blooded animals is Najis. It is a characteristic feature of warm-blooded creatures that when the main vein is severed the blood gushes out with force. If blood is found while milking a cow or buffalo, however little it may be, it is Najis and the milk is also Najis due to it. To consume this milk is Harām. On the basis of precaution (Ehtiyat) one must also refrain from consuming the minute particles of blood in an egg.

However, two types of blood are tahir (pure). One is the blood of all cold-blooded animals, like fish and mosquito etc. Secondly, the blood left over in a slaughtered animal. Hence if an animal is slaughtered according to the prescribed Islamic manner and some blood flows out, the blood remaining in its body is tahir. But if due to breathing or due to its head being placed on a raised spot the blood that has gushed out again flows back into the body, the remaining blood will not be tahir.

Apart from this it is absolutely Harām to consume blood whether it is tahir or Najis. However, that tahir blood which is a part of a fish or a slaughtered animal, and which can be considered as a part of its flesh; can be consumed. But if it is considered as blood its consumption is Harām.

Why is blood Harām?

In Tafsir of al-Ayyashi Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) is quoted to have said,

“Drinking blood causes diseases of the dryness of throat and madness and also makes one stone-hearted and merciless. One who drinks blood can anytime murder his own parents, relatives or a friend. “

Then Imam (a.s.) said,

“Drinking blood cause production of yellow water in ones body.” (al-Kāfi) It makes human body to stink and makes a person bad-character. His descendants inherit a kind of madness and it makes the heart merciless.”[1]

The heretic asked Imam Ja’far-as-Sadiq (a.s.) the reason for prohibiting the consumption of

blood.

Imam (a.s.) said,

“Drinking blood causes the hardness of heart and mercilessness. It causes ones body to stink and changes ones complexion, and mostly causes leprosy.”2

According to Imam Riďa (a.s.),

“Drinking of blood causes plague, wounds and boils that ultimately lead to death.”

Pork

Pig and dog are two such Najis animals that every part of their body is Najis. Even those bloodless parts like hair and claws or hooves are Najis. To slaughter a pig or dog is a useless act. That is, these animals cannot be purified in any way. To consume their flesh is Harām and a greater sin.

Imam Riďa (a.s.) mentions regarding the prohibition of pork,

“The Almighty Allah has prohibited (made Harām) Pork. Because it is a horrible and dreadful animal that Allah has created for men to derive lessons from. People should also refrain from sensuality and shameless deeds that cause such a terrible appearance. And that they fear from being transformed into pigs by Almighty Allah. (in the description of past nations it is mentioned that people who committed sexual promiscuity are changed into pigs in Barzakh and they shall be raised as pigs in Qiyāma.) Also, pigs were allowed to exist so that they are a reminder of the conversion (Maskh) of previous nations into pigs. The second reason for prohibiting pork is that the staple diet of pigs consists of extremely Najis and filthy things, and its blood contains innumerable harmful germs.”3

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said,

“The Almighty Allah converted many nations into animals. Among them are pigs, monkeys and bears etc. After this these animals were prohibited from being eaten, so that people derive lessons from them and do not consider the sin minor.”4

It is mentioned in the book *Islam wa Ilme Imroz* of Anjuman Tablighat Islami that pig is an animal that is classified by specialists among the thick-skinned animals. The rhinoceros wild pig and hippopotamus are all classified in this family. Pork is very harmful for the body but we mention below only some of its harmful effects.

Details Regarding some harmful effects of Pork

Spiritual and Moral harms

Pig is known for its shameless and wanton behaviour and for its sexual perversion. It does not honour its own females and invites other males to have sexual contact with it, and enjoys it. In addition it is awfully filthy, it thrives on excreta and has no hesitation in eating its own. Consumption of pork therefore leads to moral degradation and spiritual bankruptcy.

It is unbelievable that such a loathsome creature can eventually end up on the dinner table,

where its meat is savoured and eaten with relish and this in spite of the fact that those who consume it are fully aware of its filthy and despicable characteristics. In fact many of these people when they want to abuse somebody in the most vile and insulting terms, they call him a pig, but pig it is, that they seem to relish and enjoy the most. The same surprising attitude is shown by Christians. Whenever Christians depict Satan in religious anecdotes they present him in the form of a pig. The Gospel of Barnabas mentions that Pig is Satan personified and that the pig's body has the spirit of Satan. The present Bible among the Christians (Matthew 8-32 Marks 5-13, Luke 8: 28-39) describes how Jesus thrust the soul of Satan inside the herd of swines and sent them towards the river. In spite of the satanic nature attributed to the pig by their own religion, the Christians continue to eat it.

Physical Harms

Pork is harmful to the body in many ways, but two serious diseases caused by its consumption are Trichinosis and Dysentery.

Trichinosis. This disease is caused by the Trichina worm which breeds in the flesh of pig. In a period of one month the female lays 10 to 15 thousand eggs. The worms enter the human system only through consumption of pork. If the individual succumbs to the infection, the worms attack the walls of the stomach and the walls are weakened.

Three weeks after entering the stomach they enter the blood stream and spread to the entire body. They multiply at lightning speed in the host body.

The first symptom is giddiness and a strange kind of fever. This fever is connected with the digestive system and soon the person is afflicted with Diarrhoea. Initially there is mild fever which gets severe day by day. Other symptoms that follow are: Stiffness of the limbs, itch in the body, tiredness, weakness, pain in various parts of the body.

It is most apparent in the abnormal way of chewing, swallowing and breathing of the patient. The mild sickness assumes enormous proportions and finally kills the patient in seven weeks.

A kilogram of pork can harbour as many as 400 million Trichina worms.

Dysentery. One of the dreadful diseases that afflict those who eat pork is dysentery. This dysentery is solely caused by the organism 'Karam Kadoo'. This worm has a head that has two chains around the head and four branches with which it attaches itself to the walls of the stomach. The outer portion of the worm that produces eggs gets separated from the main body and is expelled along with stool. The eggs that are expelled with the stools are eaten up by pigs and in this way the eggs enter the stomach of the pig. These eggs again initiate the reproductive cycle. If the flesh of this pig is eaten by man there is every possibility that the germs which enter the stomach of man, will rise to infection. It has been proved beyond any doubt that these particular worms are only associated with the consumption of pork and the only way to be safe from them is by avoiding pork.

This infection is rampant in countries where pork is consumed in large quantities.

Besides being a source of infection, pork is heavy for digestion and causes great stress on the digestive system.

Islam prohibited pork 1400 years ago before anyone knew anything about its harmful

effects. It is a pity that 1400 years hence, when the wisdom of this prohibition has been clearly defined, people still continue to consume it.

Similarly, Islam has designated dog to be absolutely Najis (Najisul A'in), and advised against keeping it in the house. Since then scientific developments have proved that various diseases are transferred to man from dogs. For example, rashes, baldness and other skin diseases caused by germs, and diseases caused by lice which breed in the fur of dog. Rabies, the most dreadful of all diseases that a human can contract, is transferred to man from dog.

All these diseases are explained in detail in the above-mentioned book. It is also mentioned that a utensil licked by a dog cannot be purified except by scrubbing it with mud.

1. Wasa'il ul-Shia
2. Ihtijaj. Vol. 4, Bihār al-Anwār page 250
3. Uyun al-Akhbar ar-Riďa, Wasa'il chap. 1
4. Tafsir Ayyashi, Book of Food and Drink of Wasa'il chapter one page 248

Thirty-sixth Greater Sin: Omitting Prayer Intentionally

The thirty-sixth greater sin is to omit prayer intentionally. The traditions of Imam Taqi (a.s.), Imam Riďa (a.s.) Imam Mūsa Kadhim (a.s.) and Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) (mentioned in Abdul Azīm's Sahifa) support this view. This fact is also confirmed by the tradition of Amir ul-Mu'minīn (a.s.). In Islam prayer is an obligatory duty which has to be performed without fail. Anyone who does not offer prayer considering it non-obligatory is an infidel and outside the pale of Islam. To deny prayer is to deny the Holy Prophet (S) and to deny the Holy Qur'an and such a person is an unbeliever. Many traditions have been recorded in this connection1

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

A person came to the Holy Prophet (S) and begged him for a moral lesson. The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "Do not omit prayer intentionally because whoever leaves prayer voluntarily has exited from the pale of Islam.2

The Messenger of Allah (S) says:

"The thing that turns a Muslim into Kafir is to omit prayer intentionally or to offer prayer considering it insignificant and unimportant."3

The Holy Prophet (S) also says,

"There is no difference between faith and infidelity except the omitting of prayer4

Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) writes in the commentary of al-Kāfi that some of these traditions emphasise that to omit all or some obligatory acts is infidelity. This itself is one of the connotations of 'Kufr' as recorded in ayats and traditions. It is mentioned, 'One who intentionally omits prayer is a Kafir, one who doesn't pay Zakat is a Kafir one who omits

Hajj is a Kafir.’

In the traditions omitting obligatory acts is not separately mentioned as a greater sin. This is perhaps so, because when a person commits an act which is Harām, he is under some compulsion, either emotional or physical or social or of some other need which he seeks to fulfil. For example a person may commit fornication due to a physical urge; or under the influence of anger he may use foul language or may even commit murder and do injustice to others in many other ways. But in the case of omitting obligatory acts and particular prayers, there are no such compulsions. Obligatory acts are avoided by those who consider religious commands insignificant and attach no importance to them; and this amounts to denial of the Almighty.

In the tradition which equates omitting prayers to infidelity it may be argued that a person may avoid Hajj and Zakat for being a miser, or he may not fast out of concern for his health or because the idea of hunger and thirst deters him. But as far as prayer is concerned, there is not a single factor that can come in the way of a person offering prayer to the Creator, except that he considers religion insignificant and takes prayers lightly.

Sadūq (r.a.) quotes a tradition from Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) wherein it was asked from the Imam (a.s.) why adulterers and drunkards are not called Kafirs while one who omits prayer is labelled so? Imam (a.s.) said, “Adultery etc. are committed when a person is subdued with sensuality but prayer is not omitted except that it was considered insignificant because one who commits adultery, does so to derive pleasure but one who leaves prayer does not get any pleasure.”

The above hadith proves that if one leaves an obligatory duty considering religion unimportant one is a kafir. The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“One who considers prayers light (insignificant) is not from us.” Another hadith mentions that such a person will not get the intercession of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.). “And one who consumes intoxicants is not from us and by Allah one who drinks wine will not be able to arrive at the Pool of Kawthar.”[5]

In his last moments, Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) has been recorded to have said,

“Our intercession will not reach those who consider prayer light (insignificant).”[6]

It may be mentioned that a person who accepts that prayer has been prescribed by the Almighty and he believes in the prophethood and in the message of the Seal of the prophets (S), but fails to offer prayers due to sheer laziness, is not considered an unbeliever, but a transgressor.

Misunderstanding of some stupid people

When those who do not pray are warned and exhorted to pray and asked why they do not pray, they say that the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) is not in need of their prayer. These thoughts are inspired by Shaitan. The fact is that these people believe that they are not in need of Allah (S.w.T.). They do not realize that they owe their very existence to Allah (S.w.T.)’s mercy and they function because they are always surrounded by divine favours. This attitude prompts them to give up all acts of thankfulness and service to their Benefactor. Their refusal to pray is due to hard heartedness, stubbornness and injustice. Accordingly Allah (S.w.T.) will also give them the destination they deserve (hell) and reward the

obedient in the abode of peace.

Promise of chastisement in the Qur’an

There are numerous Qur’anic Verses that emphasise the importance of Prayer and the certainty of Divine chastisement for neglect. A few of these ayats are given below:

“In gardens, they shall ask each other. About the guilty: What has brought you into hell? They shall say: We were not of those who prayed; And we used not to feed the poor; And we used to enter into vain discourse with those who entered into vain discourses. And we used to call the day of judgment a lie.” (Surah al-Muddaththir 74:40-46)

“So he did not accept the truth, nor did he pray, But called the truth a lie and turned back, Then he went to his followers, walking away in haughtiness.” (Surah al-Qiyāma 75:31-33)

“Nearer to you (is destruction) and nearer, Again (consider how) nearer to you and nearer.” (Surah al-Qiyāma 75:34-35)

Some commentators of Qur’an explain that ‘destruction’ is ‘wael’ (a place in hell). And the repetition of word ‘nearer’ four times is for emphasis. Or the four repetitions may signify four stages of destruction: Once in this world, second the punishment of grave, terror in Qiyāma and fourth the everlasting stay in Hell.

In Surah al-Mā’ūn, the Almighty remarks,

“And wael (woe) to the praying ones, who are unmindful of their prayers, who do (good) to be seen.” (Surah al-Mā’ūn 107: 4–6)

‘Waelun’ (terrible punishment) is for those who are unmindful about prayers; prayer which is a pillar of faith and the dividing line between belief and disbelief. ‘Waelun’ is one of the sections of Hell, or a well situated in Hell. It is also used as a word denoting terrible punishment the ‘Un’ which is added at the end makes it a superlative.

The Almighty Lord says in Surah Maryam,

“But there came after them an evil generation, who neglected prayers and followed sensual desires, so they will meet perdition.” (Surah Maryam 19: 59)

The word ‘gayya’ which is translated as ‘perdition’ above is a valley in Hell where the punishment is far more severe than other areas. Even the inmates of Hell seek Allah (S.w.T.)’s refuge from this punishment. Ibn Abbas has related that, ‘There is a serpent in this valley which is sixty day’s journey long and thirty day’s journey wide. Since the day it was created it has opened it’s mouth only to swallow those who neglect prayer and those who drink.” Allah (S.w.T.) the Almighty remarks in Surah ar-Rūm,

“…And keep up prayer and be not of the polytheists…” (Surah ar-Rūm 30: 31)

This verse implies that a person who neglects prayer is at par with the idol worshippers and polytheists.

Fifteen terrible Consequences in the life and the Hereafter for those who neglect prayer

The Messenger of Allah (S) says that a person who neglects prayer and is lazy in its fulfilment is punished with fifteen calamities by Allah. Of these, six are related to this life, Three are with regard to the time of death, Three occur in the grave and Three calamities strike him in Qiyāma. That is when he will emerge from his grave (for the final accounting). The six calamites with regard to this life are:

1. The Almighty Allah reduces his life span.

2. And He terminates his sustenance.

3. He makes the signs of righteousness to disappear from his face.

4. None of his good deeds will be accepted and he will not be rewarded for them.

5. His invocations will not be accepted.

6. The supplications of righteous people will not benefit him.

The Three calamities to befall him at the time of death are:

1. He will die a death of degradation and disgrace.

2. He will die in hunger

3. He will die in a state of such a terrible thirst that even if he were to drink all the streams of the earth his thirst will not be quenched.

And the Three punishments that he will suffer in the grave are:

1. An angel will be appointed over him to give him squeeze and chastise him.

2. His grave will be made narrow.

3. His grave will be dark and horrifying.

And the Three calamities with regard to Qiyāma are as follows:

1. The angel will be dragging him for accounting in such a way that other people will be a witness to it.

2. His accounting will be very strict.

3. The Almighty Allah will not look at him with mercy, will not purify him and there is a terrible punishment for him.

The Most Important Religious Obligations

Hazrat Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“In Qiyāma the first thing that one has to account for is one’s prayer. If it is accepted, his

other good deeds will be accepted too. And if it is rejected his other good deeds will be rejected too.”7

Muawiyah Ibn Wahab asked Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.), “Which is that meritorious deed that brings one closer to his Lord?” Imam (a.s.) replied,

“After the Marefat (recognition) of Allah, the Prophet and Imam no deed is superior to Prayer. Don’t you see that the righteous slave of Almighty, Hazrat Isa (a.s.) said, ‘As far as I am alive, the Almighty Allah has commanded me to pray and pay the poor-rate’? The Holy Prophet (S) was queried regarding the Best of deeds and he replied: Of all the good deeds the best is a prayer that is offered at the earliest hour.”8

Hazrat Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says:

“Prayer is a pillar of faith, it is like the centrepole of the tent. As far as it is fulfilled, the ropes and pegs remain taut. When this centre pole does not remain straight or is broken, the other ropes and pegs also loosen from their places and the tent collapses.”9

In the same way all the good deeds and acts of worship are connected to Prayers. Such that if this (Prayer) is neglected the other good deeds will also be wasted.

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) comments on the Verse,

“…and whoever denies faith, his work indeed is of no account…” (Surah al-Mā’ida 5:5)

Imam (a.s.) says,

“This ayat denotes those who neglect prayer without any disability or problem.”10

Hazrat Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says,

“The foundation of Islam is based on five things: Upon the prayer and Zakat and Hajj and Fasting and Wilāyat.”11

Zurarah asked Imam (a.s.) which of these were the most superior. Imam (a.s.) replied,

“It is Wilāyat, Because Wilāyat of Āle Muhammad (a.s.) is the key to other things. And after Wilāyat the most superior is Prayer. Because the Messenger of Allah (S) has said, ‘The Prayer is the Pillar of your religion.”

The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

“When the day of Judgement is established a serpent of the species of scorpion will emerge from Hell. Its head will be on the seventh heaven and its tail will reach lower than the earth. Its mouth will be wide open from the west to the east. He will say, ‘Where are those who warred against Allah and his Messenger?’ Then Jibrīl the trustworthy will descend and ask him as to what people he wanted. The serpent will reply, “I want five groups of people. Those who neglected prayer, those who didn’t pay Zakat, those who took usury, the drunkards and those who talk of worldly things in the Masjids. (Meaning Harām conversation. For example the backbiting of Muslims and falsely accusing them, or to start an illegal practice, praising an oppressor or praising a person who doesn’t deserve this praise, or criticising a person who is free from blame.)12

The Messenger of Allah (S) also said,

“There is a valley in Hell and the inmates of Hell scream 70000 times daily due to the severity of its punishment. There is a house of fire therein and this house has a well of fire. In this well is a casket which houses a thousand headed snake. Each of the head has a thousand mouths and each mouth has a thousand fangs and each of the fangs is one thousand metres long.”

Anas said, “O Messenger of Allah (S), for whom is this punishment reserved?” The Prophet (S) replied,

“For those who imbibe wine and those who omit Prayers.”

Numerous traditions have reached us describing the severity of the punishment for neglecting Prayer but we think the above mentioned ones shall suffice for our purpose.

Helping those who omit Prayer

Many traditional reports mention terrible consequences for those who help and assist the people who neglect prayer. As mentioned by the Messenger of Allah (S),

“One who helps the neglecter of Prayer by giving him food or cloth acts as if he has murdered 70 prophets, the first of whom being Adam (a.s.) and the last Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (S).”[13]

He (S) also said,

“One who gives a draught of water to the neglecter of prayer, acts as if he has made war against me and battled with all the prophets.”[14]

The Holy Prophet is also reported to have stated,

“One who laughs with the neglecter of prayer, it is as if he has demolished the Ka’ba 70 times.”[15]

Obviously the general implication of these traditions is that if help and assistance given to a person, who neglects prayers, makes him complacent about his lapse and he continues to neglect his prayer; or if this assistance encourages him to be even more neglectful, then such help should not be given. And indeed whenever helping the sinner induces him to sin more, it is absolutely Harām. And from the point of view of Nahy Anil Munkar it is obligatory not to render such a person any help.

It may also be that helping or not helping does not have any effect on the person who neglects prayers. In this case it is not clear whether one should withhold help. There is a possibility that some assistance may in fact encourage a person to start praying or to stop sinning, in which case, needless to say, helping becomes obligatory.

Different ways of Neglecting Prayer

1. As we have already seen there are some who do not offer prayers because they refuse to believe that it is an article of faith and a religious obligation, commanded by Allah (S.w.T.). Such denial amounts to denying Allah (S.w.T.), Allah (S.w.T.)’s Prophet and Allah (S.w.T.)’s

book, the Holy Qur’an. These are the people who shall be in everlasting chastisement. There is no escape for them.

2. It has also been mentioned that there are others who do not deny Allah (S.w.T.)’s complete supremacy and accept the fact that prayers have been made obligatory, but they never pray out of sheer laziness or due to excessive involvement in worldly affairs. These are the people who are not condemned as unbelievers but they are transgressors who have committed a greater sin, for which they will have to undergo severe punishment. Even if such a person were to die a believer, he can get salvation only after he has undergone the rigours of punishment. That a person who omits prayer can die a believer is itself a highly remote possibility, because sins make a person hard hearted and destroys his faith; except that the Almighty with His kindness and mercy heeds the call for help at the time of death and because of the sinner’s love for Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) allows him to die a believer. It is possible that intercession by Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) may lighten his punishment or remove it altogether. On the other hand these divine personalities have themselves said that their intercession will not reach those who consider prayer insignificant.

3. A third category of people are those who do not omit prayers altogether but pray occasionally. These are people whose faith is weak and lacks the strength of firm conviction. Such people when they do pray may be inclined to postpone prayers after the time has set it, on the grounds that they would pray later and may not pray at the earliest hour.

Certainly this way of neglecting Prayer is different from the previous two kinds but such a person has also considered Prayers unimportant, so whatever punishment is promised for those who belittle or omit Prayers will be applicable to him also. Traditions have made a special mention of such types of people. In one narration Imam Ja’far as Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

“If one prays after the prescribed time the prayer rises up as the prayer of one who omits it and in a horrid condition. It tells the person: You have wasted me. May Allah waste you as you have wasted me.”

Imam (a.s.) also said that the first deed about which one shall be questioned in the presence of Allah on the day of Qiyāma is Prayer. If Prayer is valid the other worship acts shall be considered valid too, but if it is not correct his other deeds are also invalid.

In the same way the Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“My intercession shall not reach the person who delays prayer (even) after its time has arrived and (he delays it) till the time has expired.”[16]

He (S) also said,

“As far as one exercises caution and performs the five obligatory prayers the Shaitan is in awe of him. But if he wastes these prayers, the Shaitan gets an upper hand and lures him towards more dreadful sins.[17]

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) said,

“If one performs prayer on time keeping in mind its due importance and does not give preference to anything else, the Almighty writes for him salvation from punishment (that is

Allah (S.w.T.) will not punish him). And one who recites prayer after its time has lapsed and prefers the worldly affairs to his prayers, his consequences are in the hands of Allah (S.w.T.). He may forgive or punish him."

Emphasis on Reciting at the Earliest time

Traditions have greatly emphasized on punctuality with regard to prayer times and performing it on time. One should not delay prayer without a valid excuse. Our guides did not ever miss the best time of prayers even in the most difficult circumstances.

Thus in the book Irshad ul Quloob a narration states that one day Hazrat Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) was in the midst of fighting during the battle of Siffīn. In spite of these circumstances he often glanced at the sun between the rows of fighters. Ibn Abbas asked him why he kept glancing at the sun? Imam (a.s.) said, "I am looking towards Zawāl (decline of sun from its zenith) so that I may perform Prayer." Ibn Abbas asked him if there was opportunity to recite prayer in these trying circumstances? Imam (a.s.) replied, "Why are we fighting these people? Our aim in fighting these people itself is the establishing of Prayer."

Ibn Abbas has related that 'Ali (a.s.) never omitted the Midnight Prayer, not even during the battle of Siffīn when it was extreme winter.

It is reported that on the day of Aash-Shūrā at the time of Zawāl, Abu Thamama Saidawi came to the Chief of Martyrs, Imam Husain (a.s.) and said, "O my Master! We shall all be killed without any doubt and the time for noon prayer (Zuhr) has arrived. So you please lead us in Prayer. This shall be our last Prayer and we hope that on this great occasion we meet the Lord in the condition of having performed one of the religious obligations. Imam (a.s.) lifted his head towards the sky and said,

"You have remembered Prayer, may Allah (S.w.T.) include you among the praying ones. Yes, it is the time for Prayer."

Then he said, "Recite Azān (the call for Prayer)."

After Azān he (a.s.) called out, "O son of Sa'ad. Have you forgotten the Islamic Shari'a? Would you not halt hostilities so that we can offer Prayer?" Thus Imam (a.s.) offered the 'prayer under perilous circumstances (Salāt al-Khauf) in such a way that Zuhair Ibn Qayn and Saīd bin Abdullah Hanfi stood in front of Imam Husain (a.s.) and whenever an arrow was shot towards the Chief of Martyrs one of them acted as a shield and took the arrow upon himself. At last Saīd received thirteen arrow wounds in addition to the injuries caused by spears and swords and finally Saīd fell down and breathed his last.

Omitting an Obligatory ritual of Prayer

There are some who pray in the manner it has been commanded. They are heedless of the obligatory rituals essential for the correct fulfilment of prayers. They may not recite the Qur'anic chapters and other obligatory recitations, or they may recite them incorrectly, without making any effort to improve themselves; or they may not remain still during its recitation. Also, they may pray in clothes which are usurped or ritually impure; or they may pray at a place belonging to someone whose permission for use has not been sought or granted, or which has been usurped.

All such people who do not pay attention to the obligatory rituals of prayer come under the category of people who take prayer lightly and all that has been said regarding persons who waste their prayers also applies to these people.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says:

“One day the Messenger of Allah was sitting in the Mosque when a person entered and started praying. But he did not perform the Rukū’ and Sajdahs properly (he did not recite the Wajib formulas or did so incorrectly, or he might not have remained still or failed to maintain composure during recitation or movements) The Messenger of Allah (S) said, He (this man) touches his forehead to the ground like a crow pecks at the earth and lifts it. If he dies praying like this he would not die on my religion.”18

The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

“The greatest thief is one who steals in his Prayer.” Someone asked him, “O Messenger of Allah! How could one steal in his Prayer?” He (S) replied,

“It is not performing the Rukū’ and Sajdahs of Prayers properly.”19

He (S) also said,

“The prayer of one who does not performs Rukū’ and sajdah properly is invalid.”20

The Holy Prophet (S) also said,

“The prayer of one who performs Rukū’ and as-Sajda properly goes up in a condition of illumination and splendour. The doors of heaven open wide to accept it and the Prayer says, ‘You have protected me, may Allah (S.w.T.) protect you. The angels say, ‘Mercy and Grace of Allah be on the one who has performed this prayer. But if the prayer is not performed properly it rises up in a state of darkness and the door of heaven slams on it and the prayer says, ‘You have wasted me, may Allah waste you.’ And the Prayer is thrown at his face.”21

Allah’s Messenger (S) also stated,

“Everything has a face. (The most important part of a body). And the face of your religion is Prayer. Then none of you should deface and destroy his Prayer. (Which like the face is to the body, it is to ones religion).”22

A large number of traditional reports mention this subject. The ones quoted by us should suffice to emphasise the fact, that is one who skips even a single Wajib part of prayer is like one who has omitted the prayer as a whole.

There are other conditions for Acceptance of Prayers

One who recites Prayer in the proper manner has fulfilled his obligation. There is no punishment for him. But there are additional conditions for the acceptance of this Prayer by the Almighty and for being rewarded. The most important condition for this is to pray with concentration. One who aims for such a high status while being careful of these conditions is raised to such a degree that no other doers of good deeds can reach it. Here we shall be content to mention some of the traditions with the hope they shall benefit the readers.

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“One who performs two units (rakats) of Prayer while being conscious of what he is reciting, then after he completes the Prayer, Allah will erase all his sins.”23

Imam (a.s.) has also stated,

“The Prayers that you have offered with concentration are with you but if one is unmindful in all the Prayer or recites it omitting some rituals, it is wrapped up and tossed at ones face.”24

Hazrat Amir ul-Mu’minīn ‘Ali (a.s.) says,

“None of you should recite Prayers in sloth, laziness and sleepy condition. And neither should you think about yourself or any other thing. Because in the condition of praying he is in the presence of his lord and only that prayer of a person is acceptable which is recited with concentration.25

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“Two rakats (units) of prayers recited with concentration and consciousness of the meaning of recitation is better than standing up the whole night in worship.”26

He (S) also stated,

“The Almighty Allah does not accept the prayers of one who does not recite it with concentration.”27

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“When you stand up to pray, prepare your mind for prayers. Because whenever you step towards prayers and concentrate on it, the Almighty Allah will also turn His mercy towards you, And whenever you turn your attention from it, or are unmindful or leave one of its rituals or necessary condition, Allah will also not glance at you with mercy. That’s why, sometimes prayer is not accepted, except one third, one fourth or one sixth part that the person had recited with concentration. And one who remains absent minded in the whole prayers, will not be bestowed anything by Allah, the High and Mighty.”28

The Late Aga Naraqi (r.a) says in the book Me’rajus Sadāt: Prayer is a divine composition that is made up of various aspects, the co-ordination of which brings the prayer to perfection. An analogy is the human form with its different external and internal characteristics, the co-ordination of which makes a complete functioning human being. The most important is the soul and its relation with the heart and the mind, which decides the spiritual calibre of the person. Then there are vital organs like the heart, liver, brain, without which life is not possible; and their absence is death. Some features like limbs, eye, tongue etc. live without them, but their absence leaves a person incomplete. Then there are features like eyebrows, eyelashes, beard, ears etc. which contribute to the person’s good looks and their absence would make a person look very unpleasant. For the enhancement and perfection of physical beauty are characteristics like big eyes, dark hair and a glowing complexion. In the same way for the divine conditions to be observed for prayers; the soul is the intention, piety, sincerity and concentration. Its rituals, Takbīratul Ehram, Ruku, Sajdahs, Tashahud and Qiyām are the vital organs, omitting even one of which nullifies the prayer. Other obligatory acts like, Qirāt, Zikr, unhurried Rukū’, as-Sajda and Tashahud are such that if they are neglected intentionally the prayer will be invalid. They can be compared to the limbs and tongues of the human body. A loss of these

sometimes results in death and sometimes the person survives. The recommended rituals like Qunut, the Mustahab Takbīrs and Mustahab Zikr etc. are like the decorative features which contribute to good looks and those, whose absence destroys the perfection of physical elegance.

Therefore concentration is a necessary condition for acceptance of prayers. It is like the soul in the human body. A prayer bereft of these conditions will be like a lifeless body. The prayer of the one who recites it without any concentration is just like a lifeless body, without any human feeling or consequence. The worshipper is also deprived of the blessings and rewards of prayers. And one of the most important consequence of reciting prayer according to the Qur'an is as follows:

"Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil." (Surah al-'Ankabūt 29:45)

If a person who recites prayers is prone to sin, it implies that his prayer was soulless.

What is concentration and attention of mind?

Attention of the mind means that a person should be aware as to what he is reciting and what he is doing. He should be conscious of the greatness of the High and Mighty Allah and be in awe of Him and he should realize that Allah (S.w.T.) deserves total and complete attention. He should consider himself an accused in the fulfilment of his duty of worship and slavery of Allah (S.w.T.). He should confess his mistakes with all humility before Allah (S.w.T.) and be hopeful of His widespread Mercy and unlimited beneficence. In essence, he should balance his feelings with both fear and hope; a desperate fear of Allah (S.w.T.)'s wrath, and yet not despairing of His boundless mercy.

The degree of concentration possible, will of course vary with individuals but we must mention here, the perfection in concentration achieved by Amir ul-Mu'minīn (a.s.) and the exceptional example of Ebad bin Bushr. In the battle of Siffīn an arrow head pierced the thigh of 'Ali (a.s.). It was not possible to pull it out because of the unbearable pain it caused. When Imam Hasan (a.s.) was consulted in the matter, he told the people to just wait till 'Ali (a.s.) stands for prayer and to remove the arrow while 'Ali (a.s.) was praying. Accordingly the arrow was pulled out while 'Ali (a.s.) praying and 'Ali (a.s.) was totally oblivious of the excruciating pain. When 'Ali (a.s.) stood for prayers, the world ceased to exist for him. His entire being was totally immersed in the contact he had established with his Creator and his relationship with Him.

In *Safinat'ul-Bihār*, volume 2, Page 145 it is mentioned that on the way to a battle, the Messenger of Allah (S) encamped at a spot to spend the night. The night watch was entrusted to Ebad bin Bushr and Ammar Yasir. It was agreed that Bushr would vigil the first part of the night and, Ammar the other half. So Ammar Yasir went to sleep and Bushr was guarding the camp. The infidels decided to attack the sleeping Muslims. An attacker moved stealthily and came near the camp but he saw Bushr standing in prayers. However, Bushr was so still that the attacker could not understand whether it was a tree, an animal or man. To make sure the infidel shot an arrow towards Bushr. It pierced Bushr but he continued to recite the prayer with the same composure. The second arrow was shot but Bushr didn't show any sign of discomfort. Finally the third arrow struck and Bushr shortened his prayers and awoke Ammar. Ammar awoke to find Bushr smeared in blood. He asked why he had not woken him at the first arrow. Bushr replied, "I was reciting Surah al-Kahf in the prayers

and I didn't like to discontinue. And if there had been no risk to the life of Prophet (S) and the Muslims and fear of dereliction of the duty entrusted to me I would have continued my prayers till I were dead."

Continuing the topic of concentration it needs to be added that it is necessary for the worshipper to be in awe of Allah (S.w.T.) and to be sincere, patient and unhurried with his prayers. Every time a person offers his prayers he should pray with the intensity of the one who is offering the last prayer of his life and who will not get another chance for repentance and seeking forgiveness.

It is also important to bear in mind that the words expressed during recitation of prayer are not merely a verbal exercise. The words in fact embody the principles on which our thoughts, actions and philosophy are to be based. For example when we say: Thee alone we worship, worship does not imply only rituals; worship is a total commitment to live and die as would please the Almighty, and not as we would prefer ourselves. It is a total subjugation to His will, which we express by implicit obedience to all His commands. With this awareness of Allah (S.w.T.)'s supremacy, it is only natural that we will seek the fulfilment of our needs and wishes from Him alone with no expectation from any other source. Even while our desire remains unfulfilled we can have the comforting assurance that our appeal lies with the ultimate authority, Who is the best giver, the best supporter and Who alone knows what is best for the invoker in his interest.

The Barriers Should be Removed

It is necessary that we distance ourselves from Satanic instigations and avoid the causes that obstruct the acceptance of Prayer. Some of these are pride, thinking highly of ones own deed, considering oneself praiseworthy, showing off, especially not fulfilling the husband's rights causes the prayer of wife to remain unaccepted. Non-payment of Zakat and not fulfilling the rights of others. Similarly, jealousy, arrogance, eating Harām things and drinking wine.

"Allah only accepts from those who guard (against evil)." (Surah al-Mā'ida 5:27)

Thus the Prayer of a transgressor and sinner is not accepted. Some of the factors that decrease divine rewards for prayers are sloth, sleepiness, unmindful prayers, or praying in hurry or reciting it while restraining urine, stool or flatulence. Prayers are to be recited with due humility, sincerity with the eyes half open. During prayers are some of the practices that fetch additional divine blessings like applying perfume, wearing the most ritually pure clothes, wearing a ring of Aqīq (cornelian), combing hair and brushing eenth before Prayers.

Obligatory Prayers

Obligatory Prayers are six in number. The details of which are as follows:

1. Five daily prayers that are 17 rakats in all. Morning, two; Noon, four; Afternoon, four; Evening, Three; and Night, four.

2. Prayers of Ayāt: It is an obligatory prayer of two rakats, that has to be offered in case of a natural phenomena like lunar or solar eclipse or a natural calamity like earthquake or any other natural phenomena that causes fear in general.

3. Prayer of Tawāf (Circumambulating the Kāba): Anyone performing the Tawāf of Ka'ba is

obliged to perform two rakat prayers at the Maqām al-Ibrahīm (the standing place of Prophet Ibrahīm).

4. The Prayers that become obligatory on account of vow, oath or promise or if one accepts compensation for offering prayers of a deceased person.

5. The prayers missed by the deceased father (and also the deceased mother on the basis of precaution) are obligatory on the eldest son.

6. The Prayer of Mayyit (Burial Prayer). It is obligatory to bathe and shroud the dead body of every Muslim and to perform the burial prayer before burying him. The Prayer of Mayyit is obligatory for all deceased Muslim children aged six or above.

Qaža Prayers (Prayers that are to be offered after its time has lapsed)

It is obligatory to offer Qaža prayer of every obligatory prayer that has been missed, whether it was intentional, or inadvertent or because a person had slept through the entire prayer time. Qaža prayer is also Wajib for the prayers missed by being in a state of intoxication. Qaža is also obligatory for all those obligatory prayers that were rendered invalid due to flaws and lapses. Like prayers offered without ritual purification or forgetting a rukn (pillar) or intentionally omitting an obligatory component.

The Qaža of prayers missed due to lunacy or unconsciousness is not Wajib. Also, when a person accepts Islam, the new convert is not obliged to make up for the prayer he has missed as a non-Muslim. Ladies are not required to perform the Qaža of Prayers they miss during monthly periods or after childbirth.

Apart from the daily Prayers the Qaža of other obligatory prayers must be performed as and when they have been missed in accordance with the detailed practical law encased in the Tauzihul Masael etc.

Qaža of Invalid Prayers is very Important

It is not permitted to be negligent in the fulfilment of the Qaža of Obligatory prayers. If some Qaža prayers remain pending in a person’s account he should leave instructions that his omitted prayers be performed. It is then obligatory on the legatee of this person to use one-third of the property of the deceased to pay for the performance of these prayers and also fasts if necessary. If the person does not leave behind any property it is obligatory on his eldest son to perform the Qaža prayers or to pay for their performance by someone else. In the absence of both, instruction and son, there is no obligation on other inheritors. Yet on the basis of precaution they must perform the Qaža or each one of them should pay his share so that it can be performed on payment.

Carrying out duties, left unfulfilled by the deceased or doing good deeds on their behalf will help the dead earn divine rewards and alleviate some of the sufferings of chastisement. Authentic traditions of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) have been recorded on this subject. The dead can no longer benefit themselves, but divine mercy has left a door open, a means still available for those who die believers, to avail themselves of Allah (S.w.T.)’s blessings through the efforts of those that are alive.

Traditional reports mention the incident of a companion of the Holy Prophet (S) who had willed to give in charity all the dates stored in his store house. After the death of this person the Messenger of Allah (S) distributed as Sadaqah all the dates and at last only one date remained fallen on the ground. The Messenger (S) picked up the date and said,

“Had the deceased given away this single piece in Sadaqah with his own hands! It would have been better than me giving in Sadaqah the whole lot on behalf of this person.”

The following incident mentioned in Darus Salām of the late Agha Nūri (r.a.) proves that the deceased person benefits from the good deeds performed by the living on his behalf: The most pious and good-fearing Haji Mulla ‘Ali Tehrani narrates from his father, the late Mirza Khalīl that he said, “In a public bath of Tehran was a servant named ‘Ali Talib who never prayed or fasted. The late Mirza Khalīl says that when he was in Najaf al-Ashraf he saw ‘Ali Talib in his dream and that he had come to Wadi us-Salam, the valley of peace (a part of Barzakh). He was surprised and asked, “How did you reach this elevated position while you neither prayed nor fasted?”

The person replied, “O man! When I died I was tied in iron collar and chains and was being dragged towards punishment when Mulla Muhammad Kermanshahi (a Scholar of Tehran), May Allah (S.w.T.) bestow him a good recompense, appointed someone to perform Hajj in my place and to perform Prayers and fast on my behalf. He gave Zakat on my behalf and restored the rights of those whom I had oppressed. He did not leave out any of the duties that had to be performed on my behalf and saved me from the divine chastisement. May Allah (S.w.T.) give him a goodly reward.” Mirza Khalīl woke up from sleep, filled with terror. He was astonished at this dream. After a few days some people came from Tehran and Mirza Khalīl asked them regarding ‘Ali Talib. They confirmed that the Mulla had compensated for all the duties of ‘Ali Talib. In fact even the names of the persons appointed were identical as the Mirza had seen in his dream.

Needless to add that it would be foolish on our part to be casual about our obligatory duties, in the belief that they can be fulfilled after our death. We can obviously not be sure that those we leave behind would carry out these obligations, nor can we be sure that it would be done with the same degree of sincerity as we would do it ourselves. Besides our Wajib duties carried out by someone else may suffice to save us from the punishment but we will be deprived of the numerous special benefits reserved for those who carry out their obligations.

1. Layali al-Akhbār page 394, Salāt & Zāsail
2. Salāt, Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 3 page 29
3. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 3 page 29
4. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 3 page 29
5. Furu Kāfi, Vol. 3, page. 271
6. Furu Kāfi, Vol. 3, page. 241
7. Bihār al-Anwār Vol. 18 page 52
8. Furu al-Kāfi Vol. 3 page 264
9. Bihār al-Anwār Vol. 82 page 218
10. Bihār al-Anwār Vol. 82
11. Bihār al-Anwār Vol. 111
12. Layalul Akhbār
13. Layalul Akhbār Vol. 4 page 51
14. Layalul Akhbār page 395
15. Layalul Akhbār Page 395
16. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 3 page 81
17. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 3 page 81
18. Wasa’il ul-Shia Chapter 8

19. Wasa'il ul-Shia Chap. 8 Hadith no. 18
20. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il, Chap. 8, tradition no. 18
21. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il Chapter 8, Hadith No. 15
22. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il Chapter 6, Hadith No. 5
23. Wasa'il ul-Shia, Vol. 4, page 684
24. Wasa'il ul-Shia
25. Wasa'il ul-Shia: Vol. 4, page. 687
26. Wasa'il ul-Shia: Vol. 3, page. 54
27. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
28. Wasa'il ul-Shia and Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il

The Thirty-seventh Greater Sin: Non–Payment of Zakat

The thirty seventh Greater Sin is non-payment of Wajib Zakat. The traditions of Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.), Imam 'Ali Riďa (a.s.), Imam Mūsa Kadhim (a.s.) and Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) to this effect are mentioned by Abdul Azīm. The Holy Qur'an describes the punishment for this greater sin in the following verse:

"And (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way announce to them a painful chastisement.

On the day when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with it, this is that you hoarded up for yourselves, therefore taste what you hoarded." (Surah at-Tawba 9: 34-35)

Traditions mention that the word "Kanz" (hoard) in this ayat implies any wealth on which Zakat has not been paid and other rights have not been discharged.

The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says in Surah Āli- 'Imran,

"And let not those deem, who are niggardly in giving away that which Allah has granted them out of His grace, that it is good for them; nay it is worse for them; they shall have that whereof they were niggardly made to cleave to their necks on the resurrection day; and Allah's is the heritage of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is aware of what you do." (Surah Āli-'Imran 3: 180)

Whatever a person possesses, is due to Allah (S.w.T.)'s grace and favours. He himself has no control over gain or loss. It is therefore incumbent on him to spend the bounties he has received from Allah (S.w.T.) in a manner that Allah (S.w.T.) has commanded, failing which the punishment will be severe.

Tafsīr Minhajus Sadiqīn mentions that traditional reports testify to the fact that the wealth of those who due to their miserliness avoid paying Zakat, will be made into a serpent by Allah (S.w.T.) on the day of Qiyāma. This serpent will be extraordinarily poisonous and vicious with two spots below the eyes, which is the characteristic of the most dangerous snakes. This snake shall be put around the neck of this person like a collar and the two ends will envelop his face and chastise him saying, "I am the same wealth regarding which you prided over others in the world."

Hazrat Imam Baqir (a.s.) said,

“Whosoever does not pay Zakat on his wealth, the wealth shall assume the shape of a Python on the judgement day and will be around his neck and till his accounting is complete it (the serpent) will be chewing at his flesh.”[1]

The Imam (a.s.) has also been reported to have stated,

“If the relative of person who is bestowed wealth by Almighty comes to ask for something and the wealthy person acts like a miser, the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) takes out a python from hell which turns it tongue around its mouth so that when the person comes it will become his iron collar.”[2]

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“If a person owning gold and silver does not pay obligatory Zakat (or obligatory Khums as mentioned in Tafsīr of Qummi) on it, on the day of Qiyāma the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) will imprison him in a fertile and lighted forest and appoint for him a python which has lost its hair due to its venom and when it will move to catch this person he will try to run away. But when he would become helpless and know that he cannot escape he would take his hands near the serpent and it will begin to chew his hands like a male camel and it would wrap itself around his neck like a necklace.”

If a person owning sheep, cows and camels does not pay the Zakat due to him, Allah (S.w.T.) the High and Mighty will imprison him in an illuminated wilderness on the day of Qiyāma. And every hoofed animal will trample upon him and every animal with pointed fangs will tear him up. One who does not pay Zakat due on his date palms, grapes or his agricultural products will on the day of Qiyāma have that portion of his land around his neck like a huge iron collar.[3]

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says,

“The Almighty Allah has appointed Zakat with Prayer, and said, ‘Establish prayer and pay Zakat.’ Then one who recites prayer but does not pay Zakat (it is as if) he has not performed prayer also, because the two of them are connected.”[4]

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) remarks,

“One who does not pay the Zakat of his wealth, at the time of death he will desire to be sent back to the world once more so that he may pay Zakat.”

As Allah (S.w.T.) says:

“Until when death overtakes one of them he says: Send me back, my Lord, send me back; Haply I may do good in that which I have left.” (Surah al-Mum’inūn 23: 99-100)[5]

Thus implying that if he is sent back he will pay Zakat that was due on him and also spend his wealth in charity. He shall be told:

“By no means! It is a (mere) word that he speaks.” (Surah al-Mum’inūn 23: 100)

Furthermore Imam (a.s.) comments on the following verse of Qur’an.

"Thus will Allah show them their deeds to be intense regret to them and they shall not come forth from the fire." (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 167)

Imam (a.s.) says,

"A person who guards his wealth and acts miserly in spending it in the way of Allah (S.w.T.) dies leaving his wealth to people who either spend it in Allah (S.w.T.)'s obedience or in sinful activities. If his wealth is spent in the way of Allah (S.w.T.) the reward is written in the scroll of deeds of someone else and this person now regrets for actually it was his wealth. And if it is spent in disobedience to Allah (S.w.T.). That is the sinner's hands were strengthened with the help of his wealth, this also causes regret to him."[6]

Traditions from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) on this subject have been recorded by Ayyashi, Mufid, Sadūq and Tabarsi in their respective books:

The Holy Prophet (S) says,

"Nothing destroys Islam like miserliness. Then he says. "The way of miserliness is like the paths of ants. It is apparently invisible and it is of many types like polytheism."[7]

Hazrat Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) says,

"When people do not pay Zakat the prosperity of their agricultural lands and mines will be lifted from the earth."[8]

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

"Cure your sick ones through Sadaqah, deflect the storms of calamities through supplication and guard your wealth through Zakat."[9]

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"There are some houses on this earth that belong to Allah and they are called, 'the revengers? So when Allah bestows wealth to a person and he acts miserly in fulfilling the duties prescribed for him by Allah, the Almighty appoints one of these houses for him and destroys his wealth at this very place. And after that the person continues to reside in this house and leaves his wealth for others."[10]

Numerous traditions mention that one who acts miserly in charity will have to spend much more in corrupt ways. A great many traditions are recorded in the chapter of Zakat but these are sufficient for our discussion here.

One who does not pay Zakat is a Kafir

A person who accepts that Zakat is obligatory but does not pay due to niggardliness, is a transgressor and will face the consequences accordingly. But if he does not believe that Zakat is obligatory, he is a kafir and Najis (ritually impure). Zakat, like prayers is an article of faith. Whoever denies a single article of faith goes beyond the pale of Islam and is an infidel. Quoted below are some of the relevant traditions.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"Doubtlessly, the Almighty Allah has necessitated a portion for the destitute in the wealth

of the rich people. It is such an obligation that is praised if fulfilled by the affluent people. It is Zakat and one who pays it, his blood is Harām. (It is Harām to kill him). And those who pay it are called Muslims."[11]

It implies that those who do not pay Zakat and do not even regard it obligatory, are not Muslims; they could even be executed in an Islamic government.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"One who avoids paying Zakat equal to one carat (four grains of barley) is neither a believer nor a Muslim. He is the same whose condition at the time of death is mentioned by Allah that he shall say, "Send me back my Lord, send me back, haply I may do good in that which I left."[12]

"One who does not pay Zakat even if it is equal to one carat, he is expelled from belief and dies as a Jew or a Christian."[13]

Imam (a.s.) elaborates further,

Death penalty is permissible in Islam for two kinds of sinners. And no one will issue a decree regarding the two until the advent of the Qaem of the progeny of Mohammed (a.t.f.s.), Then Imam Mahdi (a.s.) will issue decree on the basis of divine laws. One of the two is the adulterer who fornicated despite having a wife. He shall be stoned to death . The second is the one who does not pay Zakat. He shall be beheaded."[14]

Imam (a.s.) also remarked,

"Monetary loss in desert or seas is only due to the non payment of Zakat. And when the Qaem of the progeny of Mohammed (a.t.f.s) reappears he shall arrest and execute those who do not pay Zakat,"[15]

The Almighty Allah says,

"And woe to the polytheist, (To) those who do not give poor rate and they are unbelievers in the hereafter." (Surah Fussilat 41: 6-7)

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

"By Allah in whose hands is the life of Mohammed (S), No one does Khayanat with Allah except the polytheist who does not pay any Zakat from his wealth."[16]

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

"O 'Ali! There are ten deniers of Almighty Allah in this Ummah; Tale-tellers, the magicians, the gigolos, those who have anal intercourse with non-mahram women, those who have intercourse with animals, those who commit incest, those who try to spread mischief, those who supply weapons to disbelievers (which shall be used against Muslims), those who do not pay Zakat and those who in spite of being capable do not perform Hajj and meet their death."[17]

It is clear from the above traditions that those who deny the obligations of Prayer, Hajj and Zakat are infidel. They will be deprived of the benefits of faith which saves one from Hell in Qiyāma and they will be denied the rights of Muslims in this world. They are Najis (ritually

impure), they cannot inherit Muslims and Muslims cannot marry them. However, if they do not belie the obligatory nature of these laws and they fail to perform these duties due to sloth or niggardliness, they are apparently Muslims. But actually from the internal aspects they are a kind of deniers and polytheists. Even if they depart from this world with belief they shall have to undergo the promised punishment.

Why does Zakat become Wajib?

There is hidden wisdom in making Zakat and other charities obligatory. Some of them are mentioned in traditions. For example such duties are a kind of test for wealthy people, that whether Allah (S.w.T.) is more dear to them or these temporal worldly riches; whether they have sincere faith in heavenly rewards, paradise and divine recompense. Whether they are true to their claim of being the slaves of Allah (S.w.T.), High and Mighty. The second benefit is that through this arrangement the financial problems of the poor are solved. Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says, describing the benefits of Zakat.

"Indeed, Zakat is made obligatory to test the wealthy and to fulfil the needs of poor. And certainly if everyone had paid Zakat (honestly) there would not have been a single poor or destitute among Muslims. And neither one had been in need of other. And neither had anyone remained hungry and naked. But the poor are inflicted with problems due to the sins of wealthy and their failure to fulfil their rights. In these circumstances it is incumbent on Allah (S.w.T.) to deprive them from this Mercy those who do not fulfil the monetary rights. I swear by the one who created all the creatures and increased their sustenance, indeed no loss occurs on dry land and at sea/river except for those who do not pay Zakat. The third benefit is the purification of the self from a base quality like niggardliness and the cure of this debilating and mortal disease. Thus, the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) tells His Messenger in Qur'an,

"Take alms out of their property, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby." (Surah at-Tawba 9: 103)

And in Surah al-Hashr, Allah (S.w.T.) says,

"And whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul, these it is that are the successful ones." (Surah al-Hashr 59: 9)

The cure for niggardliness is to practice charity. Charity should be given time and again till it becomes a habit. And as far as possible one should keep in mind the rules and regulations laid down for charity, observing which can cure one of the malady of miserliness.

Zakat and Sadaqah Increase Wealth

In the following Qur'anic ayats Allah (S.w.T.) promises that anything spent in Allah (S.w.T.)'s way will be amply rewarded both in this world and the hereafter,

"…and He causes Charitable deeds to prosper." (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 276)

"…and whatever thing you spend, He exceeds it in reward, and He is the best of Sustainers." (Surah Saba 34: 39)

"…and whatever you give in charity, desiring Allah's pleasure it is these

(persons) that shall get manifold." (Surah ar-Rūm 30: 39)

Paying Zakat and spending it in the prescribed manner increases one's wealth. The stingy and the niggardly believe that they will be impoverished if they spend in Allah (S.w.T.)'s ways, in direct contradiction to what Allah (S.w.T.) has promised in His holy Qur'an and the traditions of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.), some of which are mentioned below. In the sermon of Fadak, Janabe Fatimah Zahra (S) says,

"Allah has appointed faith for purifying you from polytheism and made prayer Wajib to cleanse you from pride and arrogance. Made Zakat obligatory to purify you from miserliness and parsimony. (so that man is imbued with the goodly quality of charitableness and is purified of the impurity of sinful deeds). And this is also the cause for increasing your sustenance."

It is related from Hazrat Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.):

"One who spends for a good cause is recompensed by Allah in this world and there is also an increase in his reward of the hereafter."[18]

'Ali (a.s.) also said,

"Seek the sustenance through Sadaqah"[19]

It is mentioned in the book *Oddatud Dai* that Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) asked his son,

"How much amount is there for household expenses?"

"Forty Dinars," replied the son.

Imam (a.s.) told him give in charity all the forty Dinars. The son said that there was nothing else apart from the forty Dinars. Imam (a.s.) said,

"You donate all of it in charity, the Almighty Allah will recompense it. Don't you know that there is a key to everything? And the key to sustenance is Sadaqah." His son Muhammad gave away the forty Dinars in charity, Ten days had hardly passed when Imam (a.s.) received four thousand Dinars. He told his son,

"O Son! We had given forty Dinars and Allah gave us four thousand in return."

Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) says in Nahjul Balagha that whenever poverty strikes, you must trade with Allah by giving Sadaqah.

Imam Riďa (a.s.) asked his slave,

"Have you given anything in the way of Allah today?"

"No! By Allah," replied the slave.

"Then how would Allah give us anything in return?" said Imam (a.s.).

Explaining the Qur'anic Verse,

"…and whatever thing you spend, He exceeds it in reward and He is the best of sustainers." (Surah Saba 34: 39)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said,

“Do you think Allah goes back on His word?”

“No!” replied the narrator,

“Then why do you not receive the recompense of your charity?”

“I don’t know”, said the narrator.

Imam (a.s.) said, “If one of you acquires Halāl sustenance and spends even a Dirham from it, he is certainly recompensed for it.”[20]

It means that if he is not recompensed, either the money was acquired unlawfully or it was spent in an illegal way.

There are numerous Qur’anic Verses and traditions on this subject also but we shall be content with those quoted so far. The late Agha Nūri has illustrated the importance of Sadaqah with forty incidents in his book Kalematul Tayyaba. One of the incidents mentioned therein is quoted by the great scholar, Akhund Mulla al-Fath ‘Ali from his trustworthy relative. He relates that in a particular year when prices had soared high I had sown barley on a piece of land that belonged to me. By chance my crop matured earlier than other people’s crop and soon the grain was ready for consumption. Since at that time all classes of people were facing shortage and hunger, I decided not to make any profit on my produce and went to the mosque and announced that any needy person may take barley from that farm till the other crops are ready. But even a beggar must take only as much as needed by his dependants. So people went to my farm and carried away barley according to their requirements. After the other crops had matured I ordered my agents to have a look at that farm also, in case some grain still remained in the pods. When the grain from this farm was collected I was astonished that it exceeded the sum total that I had grown on other pieces of land. In spite of the needy people taking barley from this farm there was no decrease in its crop. Ordinarily it would not have been possible to find a single stalk on this land. Subsequently all the lands that were used for barley cultivation remain barren for the rest of the year as they are only cultivable once a year. However, in the case of this land it continued to thrive even without sowing any seeds or nurturing it. At last spring arrived and it stopped snowing. The farm was still laden with crops and more fertile than other lands.

I was so astonished that I began to doubt if it is some other land. When the accounts were balanced it was found that the output of this farm was many times that of all other pieces of land.

Also related from the late gentleman is that he had a grape orchard by the roadside. When for the first time the orchard was laden with fruits the owner told the caretaker not to pluck the grapes from the trees lining the boundary wall along the road. These were left for those who passed by the orchard. Thus till the time grapes were ripe the wayfarers plucked grapes from these peripheral creepers. At the end of the grape season he ordered his farm workers to check if any grapes remained near the boundary walls. May be some were hidden behind the leaves and overlooked by passers by. However, it was found that the grapes obtained from this area exceeded the total yield of the rest of the orchard. In spite of the fact that passers by had taken grapes to their heart’s content there was no decrease in them.

The same worthy person has also narrated that every year after wheat was reaped and the grain brought to his residence, he used to calculate Zakat on it and pay to the deserving people. One year before the grain was brought home he thought delay in paying Zakat was uncalled for. And immediately distributed the prescribed share to those who were qualified to receive it. Later the remaining grain was taken home, cleaned and put in huge containers. When the quantity was computed it was found that the amount paid as Zakat had not reduced from the sum total. The quantity was the same as before Zakat was deducted.

In the same above-mentioned book it is narrated from Haji Mahdi Sultanabadi: One year after the wheat season when all the grain was cut I weighed it and paid Zakat at that very place.

After this the grain remained there for a month. Animals and even rats continued to feed upon it. Later when I weighed it again the quantity was the same as before. The quantity that I had paid as Zakat and all that the animals had consumed did not decrease the quantity.

Types of Zakat and its Quantity

Zakat is of two types, Obligatory and recommended. Obligatory Zakat is again of two types. The Zakat of wealth and the Zakat of body (Fitra). The Zakat of wealth is for nine items: Four food grains (Wheat, barley, dates and dried grapes); Three quadrupeds, (Sheep or goats, cows and camels) and two types of coins, (gold and silver).

Zakat of food grains becomes obligatory when wheat, barley, dates or resins reach a particular quantity (Nisāb). The Nisāb (taxable limit) is fixed at 40 mithqal less than 280 Tabrizi mounds approximately equal to 847 Kilograms. If the cultivation of wheat, barley, dates or resins was carried out by rain water, stream/river or from the moisture of the earth (like the lands of Egypt etc.) the Zakat payable is one-tenth of the total yield. But if it was cultivated with well-water etc. the Zakat is 1/20 (twentieth part / 5%).

Nisāb of Three types of Quadrupeds

1. Five types of Nisābs apply to Sheep/goats

First Nisāb is forty. From every forty animals one is to be given away as Zakat. No Zakat is payable if Sheep/goats are less than forty in number.

Second Nisāb is one hundred and twenty-one. If one has 121 Sheep or goats he has to give two of them in Zakat.

Third Nisāb is 201 animals. Zakat payable on them is Three sheep/goats.

Fourth Nisāb is 301 sheep/goats. Zakat payable is four animals.

Fifth Nisāb is four hundred sheep/goat or more than this. In this case one part of hundred is payable. In other words from every hundred sheep/goat one is to be given as Zakat.

2. Two Nisābs of Cows

The first Nisāb is thirty. The Zakat for this is a calf which has entered the 2nd year of its life.

There is no Zakat if one has less than thirty cows.

The second Nisāb is forty and its Zakat is a female calf which has entered the 3rd year of its life. For example, if a person has 39 Cows, he should pay Zakat on 30 Cows only. Furthermore, if he possesses more than 40 Cows but their number does not reach 60, he should pay Zakat on 40 cows only. And when their number reaches 60 which is twice as much as the first Nisāb (taxable limit), he should give as Zakat 2 calves, which have entered the 2nd year of their life. And similarly, as the number of the cows increases, he should calculate either in thirties or in forties, or from 30 and 40 and not at the rate of multiple of thirty cows as that would have a remainder of 10 cows.

3. Minimum Taxable Limit of Camels

Camels have 12 taxable limits:

(i) 5 camels, the Zakat is one sheep. As long as the number of camels does not reach five, no Zakat is payable on them.

(ii) 10 camels, the Zakat is 2 sheep.

(iii) 15 camels, the Zakat is 3 sheep.

(iv) 20 camels, the Zakat is 4 sheep.

(v) 25 camels, the Zakat is 5 sheep.

(vi) 26 camels, the Zakat is a camel which has entered the 2nd year of its life.

(vii) 36 camels, the Zakat is a camel which has entered the 3rd year of its life.

(viii) 46 camels, the Zakat is a camel which has entered the 4th year of its life.

(ix) 61 camels, the Zakat is a camel which has entered the 5th year of its life.

(x) 76 camels, the Zakat is 2 camels which has entered the 3rd year of their life.

(xi) 91 camels, the Zakat is 2 camels which has entered the 4th year of their life.

(xii) 121 camels and above. In this case, the person concerned should either calculate the camels in groups of 40 each, and give for each set of forty camels, a camel, which has entered the third year of its life; or calculate them in groups of 50 each and give as Zakat, for every 50 camels, a camel which has entered the 4th year of its life, or he may calculate them in the groups of forty and fifty. However, in every case he should calculate in such a way that there should be no balance and even if there is a balance, it should not exceed nine. For example, if he has 140 camels he should give for 100 camels, two such camels as have entered the fourth year of their life and for the remaining forty camels, he should pay one camel which has entered the third year of its life. And the camel to be give in Zakat should be female.

Nisāb (Minimum Taxable Limit) for Gold

There are two taxable limits of gold: The first limit is 20 mithqals (Sharī’), one mithqal being equal to 3.456 gms. Hence when the quantity of gold reaches 20 mithqals and other

requisite conditions are also fulfilled, one should pay1/40th part of it, which is equal to 1.728 gms, as Zakat. And if the quantity of gold does not reach this limit, it is not obligatory to pay Zakat on it. The second taxable limit of gold is applicable when gold, in addition to 20 mithqal sharī' is further increased. If an additional of 4 mithqal sharī' takes place to 20 sharī' mithqals, one should pay Zakat on the total quantity at the rate of 2.5%. and if the addition is less than 4 Sharī' mithqals, Zakat will be payable on 20 sharī' mithqals only; and it will not be obligatory to pay it on the additional quantity. The same rule applies as and when ongoing additions take place in the quantity of gold, like, if a further increase of 4 mithqals takes place, Zakat should be paid on the entire quantity, and if the increase is less than that, no Zakat will be payable.

Taxable Limit of Silver

There are two minimum taxable limits for silver: The first is 105 ordinary mithqals, equal to 483.88 gms. Therefore, when the quantity of silver reaches that limit and other necessary condition are also fulfilled one should pay 2.5% of it as Zakat. And if the quantity of silver does not reach the aforesaid limit, it is not obligatory to pay Zakat on it.

The Second limit of silver is when there is an addition of 21 mithqals, that is, if an addition of 21 mithqals takes place to 105 mithqals, the Zakat should be paid on 126 mithqals. If the addition is less than 21 mithqals he should pay Zakat on 105 mithqals only, and no Zakat is payable on the additional quantity. The same rule applies as and when ongoing additions take place in the quantity of silver, like if 21 mithqals are further added, he should pay Zakat on the entire quantity and if the addition is less than that the quantity which has been added and is less than 21 mithqals, is not liable to any Zakat. Thus, if a person gives 1/40 of all the gold or silver he possesses, he will have paid the obligatory Zakat and sometimes even more than that. For example, if a person has 110 mithqals of silver and gives 2.5% of that, he will have paid Zakat on 105 mithqals which was obligatory, and also something on 5 mithqals which was not obligatory.

These are the basic rules with regard to Zakat. Those who wish to study this in more detail may refer to the books of Jurisprudence.

Zakat of Fitra

At the time of sunset on Eid ul Fitr night (i.e. the night preceding Eid day), whoever is adult and sane and is neither unconscious, nor poor, nor the slave of another, he should give, on his own behalf as well as on behalf of all those who are his dependents, about Three kilos per head of wheat or barley or dates or raisins or rice or millet etc. It is also sufficient if he pays the price of one of these items in cash. As per obligatory precaution, he should not give from that food which is not staple in his place, even if it be wheat, barley, dates or raisins.

We must remember that the immediate benefit of Zakat of Fitra is that one shall be safe from accidental or destined death the following year. It is related from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he told his financial secretary to pay the Zakatul Fitra of all his family members and not to overlook any of them. "Because if his Zakat is not paid I would be in constant fear of his demise."

"What do you mean by 'demise'?" asked the secretary.

“Death”, replied Imam (a.s.), “And its reward is the acceptance of a month of fasting.”

Imam (a.s.) also said,

“Zakatul Fitra completes (perfects) the fasts of the month of Ramadhan.”

Zakat can be spent in eight ways as mentioned in the Holy Qur’an.

Disposal of Zakat

Holy Qur’an says:

“Alms are only for the poor and the needy and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth) and the (ransoming of) captives and those in debts and in the way of Allah and the wayfarer.” (Surah at-Tawba 9: 60)

Zakat can be spent for the following eight purposes:

(1) It may be given to a poor person, who does not posses actual or potential means to meet his own expenses, as well as that of his family for a period of one year. However, a person who has an art or possesses property or capital to meet his expenses, is not classified as poor.

(2) It may be paid to a miskin (a destitute person) who leads a harder life than a Faqir (a poor person).

(3) It can be given to a person who is a Wakil of Holy Imam (a.s.) or his representative to collect Zakat, to keep it in safe custody, to maintain its accounts and to deliver it to the Imam or his representative or to the poor.

(4) It can be given to those non-Muslims who may, as a result, be inclined to Islam, or may assist the Muslims for fighting against the enemies, or for other justified purposes. It can be given to those Muslims also whose faith in the Prophet or in the Wilāyat of Amir ul-Mu’minīn in unstable and weak, provided that, as a result of giving, their faith is reinforced.

(5) It can be spent to purchase the slaves to set them free, the details of which have been given in its relevant Chapter.

(6) It can be given to an indebted person who is unable to repay his debt.

(7) It may be spent in the way of Allah (S.w.T.) for things which have common benefit to the Muslims; for example, to construct a mosque, or a school for religious education or to keep the city clean, or to widen or build tar roads.

(8) It may be given to a stranded traveller.

(9) These are the situations in which Zakat can be spent. But in situation number 3 and 4, the owner cannot spend without the permission of Imam (a.s.) or his representative; and the same applies to the 7th situation, as per obligatory precaution.

Recommended (Mustahab) Zakat

Zakat is recommended in seven things:

1. Wealth: That is the money collected by a person to use in business transactions.

2. Rice, grams, lentil, Vetch etc. But there is no Zakat on vegetables like brinjals, cucumber, water melon or musk melon.

3. Mare

4. Jewellery and embellishment should be given to believers for temporary use.

5. Hidden or buried treasure which cannot be spent. One year's Zakat is to be paid on it, if the individual is capable of it.

6. When in order to avoid paying Zakat a person disposes off his taxable limit. In such cases it is recommended for him to pay Zakat on the balance at the beginning of next year.

7. Income from lease hold property like house, shop, orchard or public bath etc.

Other Wajib Taxes

Another important religious duty is Khums. It has been prescribed as the share of the Messenger of Allah (S) and his progeny (a.s.) as they cannot accept Zakat. Anyone who withholds a single Dirham of Khums will be included among those who had usurped the rights of Āle Muhammad (a.s.) and those who had oppressed them. Anyone who denies the obligatory nature of this duty is an unbeliever as Khums is one of the principal articles of faith. The relevant Qur'anic ayat and the traditions of Ma'sūmīn (a.s.) are given below:

"And know that whatever you gain, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the apostle and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if you believe in Allah and in that which We revealed to Our servant, or the day of distinction, the day on which the two parties met; and Allah has power over all things." (Surah al-Anfāl 8: 41)

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"Since Allah has made Sadaqah Harām on us (Ahl ul-Bayt) and prescribed Khums for us, Khums is Wajib and Hadiya (gift) is permissible for us."[21]

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says,

"It is not permitted for anyone to purchase anything from the money on which Khums has not been paid and until our right has not reached us." (Usūl al-Kāfi Vol. 1 page 545)

Imam (a.s.) also said,

"The most difficult situation on the day of Qiyāma will be when those eligible for Khums will arise and claim their rights from those who had not paid Khums."[22]

Widening of Sustenance, Purification of wealth, Savings for the future

A friend, businessmen of Imam Riďa (a.s.) wrote to him from far seeking permission to spend from the amount on which Khums had not been paid. Imam (a.s.) replied:

“Indeed, the Almighty Allah is widely merciful and kind. And the Almighty Allah has promised rewards and good recompense for those who will obey His commands. And there is penalty for those who act in contravention of these laws. Certainly only that wealth is permitted for a person that is allowed by Allah (S.w.T.). Doubtlessly, Khums is our need and a command of our religion, a channel of sustenance of our friends and it is to be spent to protect our honours. Meaning those from whose side we are at the risk of being harmed.

So, do not avoid paying Khums to us. And as far as possible do not deprive yourself from our supplications. Indeed, Khums is a saving that will benefit you on the day of affliction and helplessness (Qiyāma). A Muslim is one who fulfils all that he had vowed with regard to servitude and obedience of the Almighty. One who accepts by his tongue but denies in the heart is not a Muslim.23

Hazrat Hujjat ibnul Hasan (a.t.f.s.) sent a letter to Abul Hasan Asadi through his special representative Muhammad bin Uthman. Therein he says,

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Curse of Allah and the angels and all the people be upon the one who considers permissible for himself a single Dirham from our money (wealth).”

Abul Hasan Asadi said, “I thought that those who are cursed here are those who considered any type of Imam’s property Halāl for himself. Thus by the One who sent Muhammad as a great giver of good news. I saw that the writing of the letter had disappeared and in its place the following appeared: Curse of Allah and the Angels and all the people be upon the one who takes even a Dirham without our permission from our property (rights of Sadāt).”

When does Khums become Wajib . How is it spent?

Khums is obligatory on the following seven things:

(i) Profit or gain from earning.

(ii) Minerals.

(iii) Treasure-trove

(iv) Amalgamation of Halāl wealth with Harām.

(v) Gems obtained from diving into sea.

(vi) Spoils of war.

(vii) A land which a Zimmi Kafir purchases from a Muslim.

The detailed laws for each of the above have been discussed in Tauzihul Masael. Khums should be divided into two parts. One part is for the Sadāts which should be given to a

sayyid who is poor, or orphan or who has become penniless during journey. The other portion of Khums is for Imam az-Zaman (a.s.) which should be paid to his qualified representative during Ghaibat or it should be spent in the way permitted by the representative who is fully qualified.

The book *Kalematul Tayyabah* has forty incidents that illustrate the benefits of helping the Sadāt and the merits of being kind to them. We shall be content to narrate one of those incidents here. The incident has been recorded in books like *Arbaīn, Muntakhabul Dīn, Fazael al-Shazān, Tohfatul Ahzār* and Wasīlatul Māl. It is narrated through authentic chain of narrators that Ibrahīm bin Mehran said:

In Kufa I had a good-natured neighbour by the name of Abu Ja'far. Whenever a Sayyid came to him asking for something he would give it to him. If he paid for it Abu Ja'far accepted the payment, if he didn't, however, Abu Ja'far instructed his assistants to record it in the ledger of debts under the name of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.). This continued for quite some time and when his financial conditions worsened and he became poverty stricken he took out the ledgers and tried to recover his debts. If the debtors were alive he sent his servants for recovery of debt but if the person was no more or had nothing to repay, Abu Ja'far would strike out the name from his register. One day he was sitting near the entrance of his house poring over the ledgers and a Nasibi (one who is inimical to 'Ali (a.s.) passed by and taunted Abu Ja'far. "How about your greatest debtor – 'Ali? Did he repay your debts?" Abu Ja'far was hurt at this taunt and the same night he dreamt that the Holy Prophet (S) was sitting with Imam Hasan and Imam Husain (a.s.). The Messenger of Allah (S) asked, "Where is your father?" Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) replied from behind. The Prophet (S) asked him why he had not restored the debt of Abu Ja'far. 'Ali (a.s.) said, "I have brought this for repayment." So saying he took out a white woollen bag and gave it to Abu Ja'far. The Holy Prophet (S) told him to take it and whenever their descendants came to ask him for something he should not spurn them and added that after this there shall be no problem for him.

Abu Ja'far awoke and saw that he was holding the same bag that 'Ali (a.s.) had given him. He shook his sleeping wife and told her to put on the light. When the bag was opened it was found to contain one thousand Ashrafis (Gold Coins). The wife said, "O Allah's slave! Fear Allah, I hope the difficult times have not compelled you to obtain this money by cheating other traders." "Certainly not!", said Abu Ja'far and narrated the whole incident. Then he got out his ledger and calculated the total amount in 'Ali Ibn 'Ali Talib's account. He found it to be exactly 1000 Ashrafis. Neither less nor more.

Dependant Members of the Family whose expenses are obligatory on us

The obligatory expenses that one has to bear are those of one's permanent wife who is obedient, ones children and grandchildren and so on. If they are in need it is Wajib to spend on them. Similarly the parents, grandparents and so on. If they are in need it is Wajib to spend on them provided one is capable of bearing the expenses. That is if he does not do so it shall be considered an act of Qat'a ar-Rahm which is discussed in the first volume of Greater Sins under the particular topic.

1. Recommended Charity

Charitable expenditure has been highly recommended in the Qur'anic verses and Mutawatir (frequently related) traditions with emphasis on particular occasions like Friday, day of Arafat, month of Ramadhan and for special people like ones neighbours, relatives etc. Sadaqah is the cure for maladies, a deflector of calamities, the cause of sustenance. It increases wealth and protects one from sudden calamities like, accidental death, burning, drowning and madness. It is reported to avert seventy calamities. The result is better depending upon the amount given in Sadaqah. There is no minimum limit either. Even a date can be given as Sadaqah.

2. Hadiya (Gift)

It is a gift which a person gives out of goodwill to increase the bonds of friendship. It can be given either to a poor or a rich believing brother. If one gives it with the sincerity of intention of seeking the nearness of Allah (S.w.T.) it is one of the best forms of worship. Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) has been reported to have said,

"If I give something as a gift to my believing brother, I consider it preferable than giving it in Sadaqah."[24]

3. Hosting treats for Believers

Numerous traditions speak of the merits of having believers as guests and of treating them to food and drink etc. It is one of the characteristics of the Prophets (a.s.). Narrations state that seven days had passed and Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) did not have a single guest. He says, amidst sobs, that, *"I fear lest the Lord has removed this mercy from me."*

4. Known rights and the rights of those who are deprived

It is an amount that person has fixed for himself which he will spend on the needy and his relatives. It can be every day, every week or every month. Thus, the Almighty says in Qur'an:

"And those in whose wealth there is a fixed portion. For him who begs and for him who is denied (good)." (Surah Ma'ārij 70: 24-25)

It is narrated from Imam Mūsa Ibn Ja'far (a.s.) that Bani Israel was a righteous man who had a kind hearted wife. One night this man dreamt that he was told that the Almighty had fixed a particular life span for him. Half of it was to be in prosperity and other half in difficulties. He had the choice of whichever life he desired first and whichever condition he desires to have in the later life. The man requested for some time as he wanted to consult his wife as he had always sought her counsel in important matters. Next day he related the dream to his wife who told him to ask for a prosperous life first. She said, "And hurry up to obtain it. May be Allah (S.w.T.) desires to grant us with His bounties."

The next night when he was asked in his dream he said that he wished for prosperity in the earlier part of life. He was told that his wish shall be fulfilled. Thus he began to receive all types of bounties and comforts. His wealth and property increased. Then his wife said, "O slave of Allah! Now you help your relatives and other deprived people. Do good to them. Give that particular thing to that neighbour and something to that friend of yours."

This man followed the advice of his wife and was not stingy in giving his wealth in charity. In this way half the life passed. Again he dreamt of the same person and he was saying, “You were not stingy in charity, therefore the Almighty had decided to grant you prosperity in the later half of your life also.”

5. Haqq al-Hisad

It is the distribution of handful of food grains at the time of harvest before paying Zakat. It is given to passers by. The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says,

“…and pay the due of it on the day of its reaping.”

(Surah al-’An’ām 6: 141)

Since these two types of Sadaqahs have been greatly emphasized in Qur’an and traditions we have mentioned them separately.

6. A Goodly Loan, Qard ul-Hasan

It is a loan given to a needy Muslim. Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“It is written on the door of Paradise that there are ten virtues of giving sadaqah and eighteen for giving Qard ul-Hasan.”[25]

Imam (a.s.) also said,

“When a believer gives a loan to a believer for the sake of Allah (S.w.T.)’s pleasure, Allah (S.w.T.) considers this loan as Sadaqah till the time it is returned.”[26]

For every moment that he gives respite to the debtor he gets the rewards of the loan as though it were Sadaqah. Because in spite of having the right to demand his money he gives respite. It is as if he had given that amount in Sadaqah, again. Thus he becomes eligible of other recompense of this amount, that is the reward of giving it in Sadaqah.

Apart from this the same Imam (a.s.) has mentioned that “Māūn”(household items) whose neglect is promised punishment by Allah (S.w.T.) in Qur’an is not Zakat. It denotes giving loans to the needy people and giving items of daily use to people for temporary use.

Abu Basīr told Imam (a.s.), “Whenever our neighbours borrow something from us they return it broken and in damaged condition. Would we be sinners if we were to refuse them?”

“If they are such, there is no sin on you,” replied Imam (a.s.).

7. Giving Respite to the Debtor or Condoning the Debt

Regarding those who are unable to repay the debt, Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“One who desires the shade of Allah (S.w.T.) on the day when there shall be no other shade should give respite to his debtors or condone him the debt.”

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“One who gives respite to the helpless debtor is given the reward by Allah equivalent to the Sadaqah of the whole amount for each day till the debt is repaid to him.”

Hazrat Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) was informed about a person, Abdur Rahmān Ibn Sababa who was claiming his debt from a deceased person. Even though people told him to condone the amount he was not prepared to do so.

Imam (a.s.) said,

“Woe be upon him. Doesn’t he know that if he condones it, for each Dirham Allah (S.w.T.) will bestow ten Dirhams and if he does not do so he will get only one for each Dirham claimed.”

8. Donating clothes and Shelter to the Needy

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“One who clothes his believing brother in a winter or summer dress he has the right upon Allah (S.w.T.) that He clothe him in the raiment of Paradise and grant him safety from the painful experience at the time of death, and when he emerges from his grave in Qiyāma he meets the angels with pleasure.”[27]

In the same strain the holy Imam stated,

“One who clothes a Muslim beggar to cover his nudity or helps him with something (Shelter, money etc), the Almighty Allah appoints seventy thousand angels that continue to seek forgiveness of each of his sins till Qiyāma.”[28]

9. Protecting the honour and Self Respect

It is the amount given away to protect ones honour and respect. Traditions mention that it is the best form of charity.

10. Continuing Charity

Works of charity like constructing Mosques, madrassas, bridges, sarais, baths or the digging of water springs, publication of religious books are such charitable acts that continue to earn rewards for ages. The person who has performed these acts continues to benefit from them.

The Late Haji Nūri (r.a.) has written in *Darus Salām* an incident related by the great religious scholar, Shaykh Abdul Husain Teherani. He says that Mirza Nabi Khan a confidant of Muhammad Shah Qajar died. He was well-known for his sinful and wanton deeds.

“One day I dreamt that I was roaming in Paradise with a companion who showed me each and every garden and edifice. He stopped at a place and said, “This is the palace of Mirza Nabi Khan. If you want to see him, he is sitting there.” Saying this he pointed in one direction. I looked with intent and saw that he was sitting alone in a huge hall. When he saw me he gestured me to come up. When I reached him he arose, saluted me and seated me at the head of the assembly. He himself returned to the posture that he had maintained in his life. I was astounded at his position and status. He looked at me and said,

“You must be surprised at my condition. Yes I had committed such evil deeds that deserved punishment but I had a salt mine in Talipān. Every year I used to send the income to Najaf al-Ashraf for arranging a Majlis of the Chief of the martyrs (Imam Husain a.s.). The Almighty Allah has rewarded me with this palace.”

The Shaykh says, “I awoke from this mysterious dream and later when I related it in my class, a descendant of Mulla Muti Talipāni testified that it was a true dream. The man indeed owned a salt mine in Talipān and the income which was approximately a 100 Tuman was sent by him to Najaf and utilized for Majlis by father of the person who had testified that the dream was a true dream.” The late Shaykh says, “So far I was unaware that he had any connection with Talipān or paid for majlis in Najaf.”

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“Nothing benefits a man after death except the three: A charity that he had performed in the world and it continues after his death, a meritorious practice that he has initiated and people act on it even after his death and a righteous son who supplicates and repents on his behalf (and performs good deeds in his place, as mentioned in other traditions.”29

1. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 6 page 11
2. Tafsīr Minhajus Sadiqīn
3. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 6, page 11, al-Kāfi
4. Wasa’il ul-Shia
5. Wasa’il ul-Shia vol. 6 page 14
6. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 6 page 21
7. Wasa’il ul-Shia vol. 6 page 21
8. Safinat’ul-Bihār
9. Wasa’il ul-Shia
10. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 6 page 63
11. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 6 page 18
12. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 6 pg18
13. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 6 page 18
14. Wasa’il ul-Shia vol.6 page 19, al-Kāfi
15. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol.6, page.20
16. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il
17. Khisāl of Sadūq, Chapter Ten
18. al-Kāfi
19. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 6 page 259
20. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 595
21. Man la Yahzarul Faqih Vol. 2 page 41
22. al-Kāfi Vol. 1 page 546
23. Wafi – Kāfi – Tahzīb
24. al-Kāfi Vol. 5 page 144
25. al-Kāfi
26. Wafi
27. al-Kāfi, Vol. 2 page 204
28. al-Kāfi vol. 2 page 205
29. Wafi, al-Kāfi and Tahzīb

The Thirty-eighth Greater Sin: Not Giving Importance to Hajj

The thirty-eighth of the Greater sins is to consider Hajj insignificant and not to give it due

importance. This has been recorded in the tradition of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) by Amash and in the tradition of Imam Riďa (a.s.) by Fazl Ibn Shazān. Since Hajj is also an obligatory article of faith, what is true of avoiding prayers and zakat also applies to Hajj, viz. a person who refuses to acknowledge it as an obligatory duty is a Kafir and the one who does not fulfill this duty, due to laziness, carelessness or excessive involvement in worldly affairs has committed a great sin. Hajj is highly emphasised as a religious duty of tremendous importance. Indifference towards it is sacrilege.

Delay from the year of Capability is Harām

Hajj is from those obligatory duties that must be performed immediately, if it is possible to do so. Not only is failure to perform Hajj a greater sin, but postponing it, is also a greater sin, even if it be for a year. Hajj has to be performed the very year, in which one is capable of doing so.

Muhaqiq says in *Shariatul Islam* that delay from the year of capability is a deadly (Great) sin. Shahīd Thani (the second Martyr) says in *Masālik*, "There is no difference of opinion among the Shia Scholars regarding this matter and there are sufficient proofs from the Qur'an and traditions that delay from the year of capability is a Greater Sin." It is therefore clear that any delay in performing Hajj amounts to not giving it the importance which is due to it.

Qur'anic ayats and traditions of Ma'sūmīn (a.s.) equate failure to perform Hajj with infidelity. It is a denial of Allah (S.w.T.) and a sort of polytheism. The Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an,

"…and pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon men for the sake of Allah, (upon) everyone who is able to undertake the journey to it and whoever disbelieves, then surely Allah is self-sufficient, above any need of the worlds." (Surah Āli- 'Imran 3: 97)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"By the words 'whoever disbelieves' is meant the one who does not perform it."

'Ali Ibn Ja'far records in his *Sahih* that, "My brother Imam Mūsa Ibn Ja'far (a.s.) says,

'Indeed, the Almighty Allah has made Hajj incumbent on those who are capable. That is if they do not perform Hajj in the year of capability the omitted Hajj will become incumbent on them every year till the end of their lives.'"

For further explanation of this statement the book *Urwathul Wuthqa* can be referred.

'Ali Ibn Ja'far says: I asked Imam (a.s.) whether those of us who did not perform Hajj would become infidels? Imam (a.s.) said,

"No, but the one who denies Hajj and does not give it due importance. He shall be a Kafir."

Zarih Muharibi writes in his Sahih a tradition from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.):

"If a person dies without performing the obligatory Hajj while there was nothing that prevented him from doing so, that is, he was not having any need or problem and neither was he sick and nor any strong person stood in his way, then Allah shall raise him in

Qiyāma with the Christians or Jews."[1]

Imam (a.s.) also said,

"A person who delays Hajj intentionally till such a time that he dies, will be raised by Almighty Allah on the day of Qiyāma in the form of a Jew or a Christian."[2]

Muhaddith Faiz says in the book Wafi regarding above tradition that "need" means a necessity that impoverishes or that which will impoverish him in the future. Also, Imam (a.s.) has said that a person who fails to perform Hajj without a valid excuse will die as a Christian or a Jew. This implies that he has no faith in this important Islamic tenet. Otherwise in the absence of any obstruction he would have performed it immediately, considering the possibility that he may not be alive the next year.

Ishaq Ibn Ammar narrates from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he said,

"One who dies (without performing Hajj) while he was healthy and wealthy is like the one regarding whom Allah says that, 'We shall raise him blind in Qiyāma.'"

Ishaq was surprised and he asked Imam (a.s.) whether that person will be actually blind in Qiyāma? Imam (a.s.) said,

"Yes! Allah will blind him from seeing the path to Paradise."[3]

Muhammad Ibn Fuzail says that he asked Imam Mūsa Ibn Ja'far (a.s.) regarding the ayat,

"And whoever is blind in this, he shall (also) be blind in the hereafter and more erring from the way." (Surah al-'Isrā', 17: 72)

Imam (a.s.) said,

"It is the one who delays Hajj even in the event of his being financially capable. He keeps saying he would perform Hajj the coming year till he dies without performing Hajj."[4]

Ayats that Imply the ones who Neglect Hajj

The Almighty Allah says in Surah Munafiqūn,

"And spend out of what We have given you before death comes to one of you, so that he should say: My Lord! Why didst Thou not respite me to a near term, so that I should have given alms and been of the doers of good deeds?

And Allah does not respite a soul when its appointed term has come and Allah is Aware of what you do." (Surah al-Munāfiqūn 63: 10-11)

After this Imam Mūsa bin Ja'far (a.s.) said,

"I should have given alms", indicates Sadaqah and "good deeds", implies Hajj."[5]

Also the following Ayat says,

"Say: Shall we inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds?

(These are) they whose labour is lost in this world's life and they think that they are well-versed in skill of the hands." (Surah al-Kahf 18: 103-104)

Imam (a.s.) explains,

"It implies those who neglect Hajj and continue to postpone it saying they'll go next year."

There are many traditions that say neglecting Hajj is a Greater Sin, however the ones quoted above should suffice our purpose.

Worldly Consequences of Postponing Hajj

One of the worldly consequences of postponing Hajj is failure in the affairs for which Hajj is postponed.

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says that if a person postpones Hajj in order to acquire or complete some worldly affair he will see that other people have gone and come back from Hajj while neither his aim is achieved nor his work complete.

Neglecting Hajj causes poverty

The Messenger of Allah (S) says in the Sermon of Ghadīr:

"O gathering of People! Perform the Hajj of the Holy House. Those families who perform Hajj become wealthy and those who neglect Hajj will be reduced to penury."

"O gathering of People! The Haji is helped by Allah and whatever they spent (on Hajj) is restored to them in this world. And Allah does not waste the recompense of the doers of good (in hereafter)."[6]

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says,

"Three things are such whose reward is in this life in addition to that of the Hereafter: Hajj that removes poverty, Sadaqah that removes calamities and doing good (to others) which increases the life span."[7]

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"If people neglect Hajj there will be no delay in the descent of punishment upon them."[8]

Samah says that, "Imam Sadiq (a.s.) asked me why I did not go for Hajj this year? I said I have entered into a deal with some people and there were other activities also. I hope that those matters for which I couldn't go for Hajj will be beneficial for me. Imam (a.s.) said,

I swear by Allah! Allah has not reposed benefit in any matter that acts as an obstruction to your Hajj. Every person remains deprived of Hajj due to the sins that he has committed."[9]

Ishaq bin Ammar told Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) that, "A person had sought my advice regarding his intention for going for Hajj because he was weak (physically and financially), so I urged him not to go for Hajj."

Imam (a.s.) said,

“For preventing the person from Hajj you have made yourself eligible for being involved in some malady for the whole year.”

Ishaq says that as the Imam (a.s.) had predicted, I was sick throughout the following year. It follows that we must not restrain anyone from good deeds, especially Hajj. If we do so, we close the way of Allah (S.w.T.). Our aim should be to motivate others to do good deeds and encourage them to hasten towards them. Similarly we should never advise people to give up a good action they wish to perform and substitute it with another good one of our choice. Because it is possible that he may not do the latter and even skip the former. Thus, if we do this we will have performed the divine obligation of Amr bil Ma’rūf.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“Beware of discouraging your believing brother from Hajj. If one does this he shall face worldly calamities in addition to the punishment of Hereafter.”10

Virtues of Hajj

Just as neglecting Hajj is severely punished its fulfillment is greatly rewarded with numerous benefits for this life as well as hereafter. Traditions mention a great number of benefits some of which are presented below.

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“People who perform Hajj are of Three kinds. The first kind are those who have greater position than others, and all their past and future sins are forgiven, and Allah shall protect them from the chastisement of the grave. The second group is that whose only past misdeeds are condoned and the third group is such that their wealth and children will remain safe till they return from Hajj.”11

Another tradition speaks of a group who go for Hajj but do not fulfill all the conditions. Their hajj is not accepted and they do not qualify for any rewards in the hereafter but till the time they return their families will remain safe.

A person asked Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) in the Masjidul Harām as to who is the greatest sinner? Imam (a.s.) replied,

“One who stands at mawquf (Between Arafat and Muzdalifah), walks between Safa and Marwa and prays at Maqam al- Ibrahīm and even after this he thinks Allah has not forgiven him. He is the greatest sinner.” (Because he has despaired of Allah’s Mercy) and as we have stated before despairing of Allah’s Mercy is a greater sin).

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) relates from his forefathers that a Bedouin came to the Holy Prophet (S) and said, “O Messenger of Allah (S)! I started for hajj but could not reach it though I am wealthy. So tell me how much I should spend to obtain the Tawāb equal to it?”

The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

“Look at Mt. Abu Qubais, If the whole of it turns to gold and comes to your possession and you spend all of it in the way of Allah you would still not be able to reach the status of one who has performed Hajj.”

Then he (S) said,

“When a person decides to go for Hajj, after this for every item that he pick up and puts down he is rewarded ten times and he is raised ten degrees. When he mounts the camel each of its step is just as stated before. When he performs the tawaf of Kaba he is purified of all sins. After he has finished running between Safa and Marwah he is again cleansed from sins. Again when he stays at Arafat his sins are washed. When he stays at Masharil Harām he is purified of bad deeds. When he stones the satans he is again forgiven the sins.”

In this way the Messenger of Allah (S) mentioned each stage and continued saying that the person is purified of sins. Then he (S) told the Bedouin,

“How can you reach the level of one who performs Hajj?”

After this Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“His sins are not recorded for four months and if he does not commit a greater sin, only good deeds are recorded during this period.”12

Muhaddith Faiz commenting on the above tradition of the Holy Prophet (S) says that, there are different classes of sins, based on their terrible consequences, their blackening of the heart, their magnitude, etc. and what the tradition probably implies is that man is purified of particular kinds of sins at the different stages of Hajj till he is cleansed of every kind of sin. There are traditions which mention that there are some sins which are only forgiven when the Haji camps at Arafat on the day of Arafah.

Another tradition says,

“People who come for Hajj and Umrah are guests of Allah. If they ask Allah for anything He grants it to them, if they call Him He replies. If they recommend for others He accepts it. If they remain quiet He gives without their asking and for each Dirham they spend on it, He shall give them a thousand.”

The different types of sins are material, mental or physical in nature. Physical sins may verbal or practical. Of the practical sins, there are as many sins as can be associated with the different parts of the body. These sins are of different magnitude. Some invite calamities, some nullify supplications, some prevent rains, some obstruct sustenance and others cause sudden death as mentioned in the supplication of Kumayl. So each of the Hajj rituals is prescribed for a particular kind of sin. The effect of some sins is not known to anyone except Allah. The sins which are forgiven in Arafat are probably hard-heartedness, neglect or staying at the place of sin, etc.13

The narration continues,

“When the pilgrim reaches Makkah, Allah appoints two guardian angels for him who protect him during Tawaf, Prayer and Say’y. When on the day of Arafah he camps, they slap his shoulders and say that Allah has forgiven all his previous sins, now he should worry about his future.”

When does Hajj become Wajib?

The first condition necessary for Hajj is maturity. If a person performs Hajj, even before reaching maturity, it cannot substitute for obligatory hajj, even though it may have been

correctly performed and is Mustahab like any other act of worship. After reaching maturity, the person is obliged to perform Hajj again, provided all the other necessary conditions apply to him. The second condition is that he should be of a sound mind, the third that he should be independent (not a slave), the fourth condition is that by going for Hajj he must not be compelled to do a Harām act, or to forgo a Wajib act. (For the latter situation some scholars are of the opinion that, that Wajib act should be carried out, which is considered more important according to the priorities laid down by the tenets of our religion, and the fifth condition is that he should be capable of performing Hajj.

Conditions that make one capable

Capability is based on the factors mentioned below.

1) He should have the money to cover the expenses to and fro from Hajj. Should have means of transportation.

2) He should have sufficient physical strength to go for hajj and return.

3) There should be no obstacles that prevent him from travelling for Hajj. If he is apprehensive about the safety of his life, property and honour on the way to Hajj, he is not obliged to go for it.

4) He must have the time to complete the Hajj.

5) He must have sufficient funds to cover the expenses of his household till he returns. His household constitutes all those who are dependant on him. Whether their expenses are Wajib on him; like the wife and children or those whose expenses are not Wajib; like younger or elder brother who is himself poor and is sustained by him. Also the orphans that he has undertaken to maintain and the servants who are under his care.

6) He should not face difficulties regarding his livelihood upon returning from Hajj. He should have some income or profits from estates through which it would be possible for him to maintain his household expenses and not to bear hardships.

If one has missed Hajj due to carelessness he must perform it the next year, even if he does not have financial capability or has to bear hardships and problems. If in the subsequent years he is financially capable but suffers from a malady and there is no hope for its cure, he must send someone to perform Hajj on his behalf. He should fix a payment for the substitute and must also bear the expenses of his proxy. Even if he has not appointed a proxy and dies before it, his successors are obliged to send someone as a proxy and perform the Hajj of deceased. Special provision must be made in the property of the departed person even if he had not made a bequest in this regard. This provision should be made whether there remains any amount to be distributed among his inheritors or not and even if his successor is his child. This should be done, because to pay for the proxy Hajj of the deceased is as important as paying his debts. It is the foremost duty on the successor. After that if any amount remains it can be shared among the survivors.

In case the deceased had made a bequest for proxy Hajj the expense of the same must be deducted from the one-third portion of his wealth (Regarding which he is allowed to make bequest).

It should be noted that only one Hajj is obligatory in one’s life. After a person has performed

the obligatory Hajj, it is Mustahab (recommended) for him to perform it every year, if he is capable of doing so. If all the above six conditions are fulfilled it is obligatory for the person to perform Hajj the same year. As already mentioned, postponing a Wajib Hajj for the next year is Harām and a Greater sin.

It is Mustahab to appoint Proxies for living and Deceased Persons

It is Mustahab to appoint proxies to perform the Mustahab Hajj of living or deceased people. As mentioned in the tradition of Wasa'il ul-Shia narrated from Muhammad bin Isa that Imam Riďa (a.s.) sent him some money and instructed him to perform Hajj as the proxy of Imam (a.s.); along with his brother Mūsa and Yūnus bin Abdur Rahmān.

Abdullah Ibn Sinan says that I was with Imam Sadiq (a.s.) when a person came to him and Imam (a.s.) gave him 30 Dinars so that he should perform the Proxy Hajj and umrah of his deceased son, Ismail. After that, Imam (a.s.) said,

"If you do so, Ismail will get the reward of a mustahab Hajj because it is paid from his property and you will get the reward of nine Hajjs because you shall bear the difficulties and hardships of Hajj."[14]

The Proxy of Imam should be Pious

It is mentioned in Wasa'il ul-Shia that Abu Muhammad Alji had two sons, one was pious and the other evil. Some Shias had paid him a sum to appoint a proxy for performing Hajj on behalf of Imam Hujjat Ibnul Hasan (a.s.). It was one of the acts of worship that Shias used to perform. So Abu Mahmūd gave the amount to his evil son and performed the Hajj with him. Abu Muhammad says that on the day of Arafah I saw a wheat-complexioned, well-dressed and handsome youth. He was engrossed in supplications and seeking forgiveness more than other people. When it was time for the people to move from Arafat to Mashar he came to me and said, "O Shaykh! Aren't you ashamed of Allah?"

"Why?" I asked.

He said, "You are told to appoint a proxy for a person you knew well for performing Hajj, and you have entrusted it to a man who drinks and spends on evil deeds."

Then he pointed to one of my eye and said,

"Do you not fear becoming blind in the eye?"

I was ashamed and when I recovered from the shock I tried to look for the youth but he had disappeared from the plains of Arafat. Forty days had not passed when the eye towards which he had pointed, become infected and I became blind.

The book al-Kāfi contains a tradition related by Mūsa bin Qasim from Imam Jawad (a.s.) that he said to Imam (a.s.), "I wish to perform Tawaf on your behalf and on the behalf of your ancestors. But some people have told me that it is not allowed." Imam (a.s.) said,

"Perform as many circumambulations as you can. This is certainly permitted."

The narrator says, "After Three years I again went to Imam (a.s.) and said, "A few years ago

I had sought your permission to perform tawaf on behalf of your respected self and your honoured ancestors. So, I performed this deed as much as Allah gave me Tawfīq (divine opportunity). I performed tawaf on behalf of the Holy Prophet (S), Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) and so on till the end when I did it on your behalf. And these personalities are so dear to me that I consider their love a part of my faith."

Imam (a.s.) said,

"Then you have followed a religion, besides which there is no other acceptable faith in view of Almighty Allah."

Imam (a.s.) said,

"You may perform this deed as much as you can. It is the best of deeds that you perform."

Reasons why Hajj is made Obligatory

The traditions of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) mention the reasons for making Hajj obligatory. The traditions also explain the significance and wisdom underlying each of the rituals.

In Wasa'il ul-Shia is a tradition by Imam Riďa (a.s.), in which the Imam (a.s.) says that Hajj is made incumbent so that people may derive the spiritual and material benefits inherent in it. Some benefits of Hajj are as follows:

Hajj is a unique occasion, to present yourself humbly before the Almighty and devote yourself entirely to Him in order to gain His pleasure and seek nearness to Him. It is an occasion for you to set aside all your worldly cares and concerns and immerse yourself entirely in worshipping your creator and carrying out His commands. For this you deny yourself worldly pleasures and comfort, face hardships and the vagaries of nature. Your sincere efforts in fulfilling the obligations of Hajj are rewarded with Allah (S.w.T.)'s pleasure and nearness to Him; untold bounties for this world as well as the hereafter; your repentance is accepted and your sins forgiven; your supplications are granted, this is a special divine favour for individuals who are part of a large gathering at a single place.

Besides Hajj is a unique opportunity for Muslims in general, from all over the world. It provides a common ground for interaction between Muslims of different countries at various levels. Individuals benefit financially be they traders, suppliers, retailers or hirers or beggars and destitute who receive alms.

People of one country get first hand information of the situations prevailing in other Muslim countries. Such interaction brings awareness of the problems and difficulties faced by your brother Muslim and perhaps open avenues for extending help.

Servitude of Allah (S.w.T.) and Comparison with Angels

Amir ul-Mu'minīn (a.s.) says in a sermon of Nahjul Balagha:

Allah (S.w.T.) has made obligatory upon you the pilgrimage (hajj) to His sacred House which is the turning point for the people who go to it as beasts or pigeons go towards spring water. Allah (S.w.T.) the glorified made it a sign of their supplication before His Greatness

and their acknowledgement of His Dignity. He selected from among His creation those who on listening to His call responded to it and testified His word. They stood in the position of His Prophets and resembled His angels who surround the Divine Throne securing all the benefits of performing His worship and hastening towards His promised forgiveness. Allah (S.w.T.) the glorified made it (His sacred House) an emblem for Islam and an object of respect for those who turn to it. He made obligatory its pilgrimage and laid down its claim for which He held you responsible to discharge it. Thus, Allah (S.w.T.) the glorified said:

"…And (purely) for Allah, is incumbent upon mankind, the pilgrimage to the House, for those who can afford to journey thither. And whoever denieth, then verily, Allah is Self sufficiently independent of the worlds" (Surah Āli- 'Imran 3: 97)

Allamah Narāqi has described the spiritual and material benefits of Hajj in eloquent words in his book Me'rajus Sadat. Some of his comments:

The main purpose for which Allah (S.w.T.) has created man is that he should recognize his Creator, be devoted to Him and remain attached to Him. [This depends upon the purity of his inner self, which in turn depends on his control over his sensual desires and his aversion to evil]. Throughout his life he has to continually remember Allah (S.w.T.) and direct his efforts in thought and action towards dedication to Allah (S.w.T.). At all times his priorities are to be clear; that nothing pertaining to the material world is to have precedence over the pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.). As a means of attaining this objective the Almighty desires to be worshipped. The compassionate Allah (S.w.T.) has ordained that by worshipping Him and supplicating Him man would have fulfilled the very purpose of his creation and his existence. In His wisdom and mercy He has made some acts of worship obligatory so that man is compelled to benefit himself.

Zakat and Khums are compulsory deeds of worship. Acting upon them a person will be obliged to spend from his wealth in the way of Allah (S.w.T.). This practice will gradually develop in him a detachment towards material world. Fasting as an obligatory worship inculcates a spirit of self-control over desires and self-denial of worldly pleasures. Prayers encourage us to give our full attention to Allah (S.w.T.), both with our senses and our bodily movements.

Hajj is such an excellent act of worship that it embraces the significance and virtues of all other forms of worship. Not only does it include spending in the way of Allah (S.w.T.), leaving our homeland, denying ourselves comfort and pleasures; spending time in prayers and supplications and several other rituals like Tawaf, recanting the oath we have taken for Allah (S.w.T.). We also have to perform some ritual like running between Safa and Marwah, which display an extreme form of humility and helplessness and the stoning of satans which we cannot fully comprehend. Some rituals can be understood through reason, but there are some others that defy our intellect and try as we may we cannot fathom the depths of their significance.

However, keeping their benefits aside we must consider them a form of service to Almighty and a fulfillment of one of His commands. Indeed, total submission and true devotion is displayed only through such types of rituals. Because submission implies that we do whatever we have been commanded solely for Allah (S.w.T.)'s pleasure. That is why the Messenger of Allah (S) said regarding Hajj.

"I have heeded your call by performing Hajj by sincere servitude and obedience."

He (S) did not utter such words regarding any other act of worship. Indeed the act of worship the wisdom of which we cannot fathom is the best form of worship. Those who are surprised at the unusual rituals of Hajj have not understood the secret of devotion and servitude. One of the special characteristic of Hajj is to perform all rituals even without necessarily comprehending the rationale behind them.

Every ritual of Hajj has a significance that relates it to the events of the hereafter. Besides, it is a necessary requirement of Hajj that all the people gather at a place which was frequented by the Angels who brought divine revelation to the Holy Prophet (S). Before the Messenger of Allah (S), the friend of Allah (Khalīlullah) Hazrat Ibrahīm (a.s.) stood at this place and it was at that very spot the Angels descended for him. It is such a purified land that from Adam (a.s.) to the seal of the Prophets the greatest messengers of Allah have camped here. It is here that divine revelation and angels have descended through the ages. It is the birth place of the chief of Prophets (S) and the ground oft trodden by him and the other prophets (a.s.). The Almighty Allah has addressed it as “My House” and made it a place of worship for men. He appointed the surroundings of this House as a Sanctuary. He chose the plain of Arafat near His House as a place of forgiveness. In order to maintain the dignity of His House, He prohibited the killing of any living creature or uprooting of vegetation. He bestowed a special status to this place, for people to gather from far off places and humble themselves before the Lord of the House and confess verbally that He is higher and beyond place and time.

No doubt, gathering at such a place increases love and brotherhood. We get a chance to meet righteous believers from around the world thus forming ties of friendship, which results in early acceptance of the invocations of the people. We are also reminded of the struggles and difficulties borne by the Messenger of Allah (S) in the establishment and dissemination of religion. All these factors purify the souls of those present in Hajj and fill them with tenderness. It is a display of the magnificence of Islam and the greatness of the founders of Islam.

Last, the high status of the House of Allah was further enhanced by Him by making it the birth place of Amir ul-Mu’minīn ‘Ali (a.s.), without allegiance to whom, no act of worship is acceptable to Allah (S.w.T.).

1. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 8 page 20
2. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 8 page 21
3. Wasa’il ul-Shia
4. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 8 page 18
5. Faqih Vol. 2 page 220
6. Ihtijaj of Tabarsi
7. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il
8. al-Kāfi Vol. 4 page 271
9. al-Kāfi
10. Wafi
11. al-Kāfi
12. Tahzīb, Vol. 5, page. 19
13. Wafi
14. al-Kāfi Vol. 4 page 248

The Thirty-ninth Greater Sin: To Neglect

any Obligatory Act

The thirty-ninth Greater Sin is to omit or not to perform any single obligatory religious duty which has been made obligatory. It is mentioned in the Sahifa of Abdul Azīm which quotes traditions from Imam Jawad, Imam Riďa, Imam Kadhim and Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that to forgo any act which is made incumbent upon us by Allah (S.w.T.) is a greater sin.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

“One who omits Prayer intentionally has indeed gone out of the refuge (beyond the pale) of Allah (S.w.T.) and His Messenger (S)”.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says that neglecting a divine command is infidelity as mentioned in the following words of the Almighty,

“Do you then believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other? What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world and on the day of resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous chastisement and Allah is not at all heedless of what you do.” (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 85)

Imam (a.s.) said,

“Allah has considered as infidels those who neglect His commands. He refers to them as believers but does not accept their belief and did not consider it beneficial for them. Rather He says that their recompense in this world is disgrace and in the Hereafter is a terrible punishment.”

In addition to this Imam (a.s.) also said,

“The Almighty shall not cast a glance of Mercy upon one who leaves a Wajib duty or commits a greater sin. And He shall not cleanse him of his sins.”

The narrator asked in surprise, “Does Allah (really) not look at this person with mercy?”

Imam (a.s.) replied,

“This is because he has become a polytheist assigning a partner.”

“Did he (really) become a polytheists?” asked the narrator in astonishment.

Imam (a.s.) continued,

“This is because Allah has issued a command and Shaitan had issued another (that is Shaitan Commanded not to do what Allah had ordered). This person neglected Allah’s command and accepted the order of Shaitan (that is he left a Wajib and performed a Harām act)

Thus this person shall abide in the seventh layer where abide the hypocrites of Hell with Shaitan because he had obeyed the latter.”[1]

The words of Imam (a.s.) imply that polytheism here denotes polytheism in obedience as

mentioned previously in the discussion of Polytheism.

Corruption and a Terrible chastisement

The Qur'anic ayats that have warned against opposition to Divine commands and decreed punishment for the same includes the ayat of Surah an-Nūr:

"…therefore let those beware who go against His order lest a trial afflict them or there befall them a painful chastisement." (Surah an-Nūr 24: 63)

According to commentators of Qur'an the word, "trial" denotes worldly afflictions and "painful chastisement" as associated with the Hereafter. It is also possible that both of them signify both types of afflictions, worldly as well as in the Hereafter. Many traditions emphasize the absolute necessity of fulfilling obligatory religious duties. One such tradition is as follows:

The Messenger of Allah (S) states,

"On the night of Miraj Allah the Almighty said,

"No slave can gain proximity to Me without fulfilling the duties that I made incumbent on him?"[2]

The Holy Prophet (S) also says,

"Act upon the obligatory acts so that you become the most pious among men."[3]

What are Wajibāt (Obligatory Acts)?

Any action that is commanded by Allah (S.w.T.), the performance of which carries rewards and its neglect is assured punishment is a Wajib. There are many Wajibāt of the Almighty but the most important of them on which is based the foundation of Islam are five: Prayer, Fast, Hajj, Zakat and Wilāyat, Some traditions refer to these as the pillars of faith and the codes of Islam. The compiler of Wasa'il ul-Shia has mentioned some of these traditions and then remarked, "Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar is a form of Jihad and Jihad comes under Wilāyat."

As indicated in the traditions since Khums is the substitute for the rights of Sadat, it is a part of Wilāyat too. In this way the pillars of faith or the branches of religion number ten:

1. Prayer

2. Fast

3. Hajj

4. Zakat

5. Khums

6. Jihad

7. Amr bil Ma'rūf

8. Nahy Anil Munkar

9. Tawalla

10. Tabarra.

Fasting in the Month of Ramadhan

Accepting the obligatory nature of fasting during the month of Ramadhan is one of necessities of faith. One who denies this is a renegade liable for capital punishment. If one neglects its knowingly and intentionally without any valid excuse though he does not deny its obligatory nature, he should be punished with 25 lashes or as prescribed by the religious law. If he repeats the crime he should be punished again. The third time he should be executed.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“One who eats during day of Ramadhan (without any excuse) the spirit of faith exits from him.”[4]

It is recorded in the *Mausiqa* of Sama that a man broke his fast in Ramadhan without a valid excuse. He did this Three times. When he was brought to the Imam (a.s.) the third time, the Imam (a.s.) ordered that he should be executed.

Jihad in the way of Allah (S.w.T.)

Jihad is also considered a part of faith like Prayer and Fasting as clearly mentioned in traditions. Numerous ayats and traditions extol its virtues and warn about the chastisement in case one neglects it. Jihad can be of various kinds.

First Type: To fight the infidels in propagation of Islam. There are many conditions for this type of Jihad, one of them being the permission of Imam (a.s.) or that of his special representative. Since in our period the Imam (a.s.) is in Ghaibat (Occultation) and there is no special representative also, we are exempted from the first type of Jihad.

Second Type: To fight the infidels who have attacked Muslims in order to destroy Islam and its relics. The permission of Imam or his representative is not necessary in this case. It is a Wajib al-Kifai, obligatory on everyone, but if performed by some people the others are exempted. Everyone who is capable of fighting, even women must do Jihad to defend the boundaries of Muslim areas and to dispel the mischief of infidels.

Third Type: To fight the infidels who have attacked Muslims in order to slay them or rob them of their property. It is immaterial whether they intend to convert to their faith or not, or to destroy Islam or not. For this situation also the permission of Imam or his representative is not required. Jihad in defence of ones life, property or honour is Wajib upon every Muslim. One should of course have the capability of fighting the intruders and should be reasonably safe from perils in doing so. While protecting himself and others he must be steadfast in fulfilling all conditions of Jihad. Detailed laws regarding this subject are given in the books of Islamic Laws.

The Late Kashiful Ghita says in his book, The Shiah origin and faith, that, “Jihad is one of the most important foundations of Islam and the real pillars of its edifice. It is Jihad which has

erected the palace of Islam and made it lofty. Had it not been for Jihad, Islam would have not been the source of salvation and the means of grace and blessings that it is (page 160).

Jihad is the well-being of life and preservation of property and a way to sacrifice oneself for Allah (S.w.T.). Through this is achieved superiority over the enemies. It honours Islam and clears the earth of injustice and destruction.

Besides Jihad against the enemies of Islam, there is another Jihad known as Jihad al-Akbar, which is Jihad against ones own self. This Jihad is directed against the maladies of the soul like ignorance, injustice, oppression, pride and arrogance, vanity, jealousy, niggardliness etc. In this struggle a person has to overcome his ignorance and fight against his own feelings of injustice to curb these evils or overcome them altogether. This is not at all easy. These undesirable traits are second nature to the person, and form an inherent part of his mental make up. It takes a tremendous effort, just to control these feelings, let alone getting rid of them. Therefore fighting against ones own weaknesses, failings and shortcomings has been termed Jihad al-Akbar by the Messenger of Allah (S). A statement says,

“Your greatest enemy is your self which is between your two sides.”

Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar

Amr bil Ma’rūf denotes urging others to perform good deeds and Nahy Anil Munkar implies restraining them from sins. Like the previous obligations these are also an article of faith and an important duty incumbent on Muslims. They are components of Jihad. Its practice is greatly emphasized in many ayats and traditions and its neglect is severely criticised. Some of the ayats are mentioned below.

“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.” (Surah Āli-‘Imran 3: 104)

In this ayat Allah (S.w.T.) has informed us the obligatory nature of Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar with emphasis. At another place in the same chapter the Lord Almighty remarks,

“You are the best of the nations raised up for (the benefit of) men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and believe in Allah;” (Surah Āli- ‘Imran 3:110)

Those who neglect Nahy Anil Munkar have been severely criticised in the following verse of Surah al-Mā’ida,

“Why do not the learned men and the doctors of law prohibit them from their speaking of what is sinful and their eating of what is unlawfully acquired? Certainly evil is that which they work.” (Surah al-Mā’ida 5:63)

In the story of the People of Sabt, Allah the High and Mighty says,

“And ask them about the town which stood by the sea; when they exceeded the limits of the Sabbath, when their fish came to them on the day of their Sabbath, appearing on the surface of the water, and on the day on which they did not keep the Sabbath they did not come to them; thus did We try them because they

transgressed. And when a party of them said: Why do you admonish a people whom Allah would destroy or whom He would chastise with a severe chastisement? They said: To be free from blame before your Lord, and that haply they may guard (against evil). So when they neglected what they had been reminded of, We delivered those who forbade evil and We overtook those who were unjust with an evil chastisement because they transgressed. Therefore when they revoltingly persisted in what they had been forbidden, We said to them: Be (as) apes, despised and hated." (Surah al-Ar'āf 7:163-166)

It is clear from these ayats that Amr Bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar are obligatory duties which if not fulfilled, invite divine chastisement. Those who neglect Nahy Anil Munkar are as guilty as those who commit sins and deserve equal punishment.

"Those who disbelieved from among the children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of Dawūd and Isa, son of Marium, this was because they disobeyed and used to exceed the limit. They used not to forbid each other the hateful things (which) they did; certainly evil was that which they did." (Surah al-Mā'ida 5: 78-79)

This ayat has severely criticized those who neglect Nahy Anil Munkar. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says that the people who earned the curse of Allah's messengers because they did not forbid evil and who were subsequently transformed into apes were those who never befriended the wrong doers or attend their assemblies, but when met those people they were friendly and affectionate towards them.5

Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar in Traditions

Imam Riďa (a.s.) said,

"You must practice Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar because if you do not, you will be ruled upon by evil people and after that if the righteous ones among you will supplicate, their supplications shall not be granted."6

The Late Ayatullah Kashiful Ghita has explained in his book the Shiah Origin and Faith:

"Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar are a part of the most important and sublime commands of Islam about whose necessity reason as well as religion are unanimous.

These two great functions are considered to be the most fundamental bases of Islam. They range from the best prayers and worship to one of the different kinds of Jihad. If any nation ignores these two fundamentals, Almighty Allah certainly subjects them to degradation and misfortunes. Such communities readily fall a prey to the human looking rapacious animals and tyrants and unjust men."

It is for this reason that the Prophet of Islam and our infallible Imams have been quoted to have spoken in moving words regarding the necessity of discharging these two great duties and the mischief and harm caused to human society by their abandonment, the very thought of which makes one shiver.

Unfortunately, today we see openly with our own eyes the mischief and harm which originate from laziness in the performance of these two functions. However, we wish that this process should have ended here and we might have remained content with the

abandonment of these two functions and things should not have come to such a pass that permissible should have become impermissible and vice versa so much so that those who invite others to truth and excellence should themselves recalcitrate against truth and those who prohibit others from doing bad deeds should themselves be involved in various kinds of unlawful matters. This is an onerous and unbearable calamity. As a result of bad deeds of the people, mischief has become patent everywhere. And all this is in spite of the fact that we have been told: “Accursed are those who invite others to goodness and forsake it themselves and also those who prohibit others from committing sins but commit sins themselves!”

Truly, Islam deserves to be praised for its laws as well as for the extent and comprehensiveness of its commands, because it foresaw all that, which is necessary for the spiritual and material life of man as well as the source of his advancement and prosperity.

On the one hand, it has formulated comprehensive and potent laws for mankind and this in fact amounts to authority for legislation. As is evident, authority for legislation cannot bring the desired results without the necessary power to enforce it. Hence in the first instance all Muslims have been made responsible to guarantee its enforcement and it has been declared that it is the duty of every individual to enjoin others to do good things and to forbid them from doing bad things so that everyone of them may become the enforcing authority for the relevant rules and regulations. All should supervise the actions of one another and all should be answerable to one another. However, as it is possible that in certain circumstances this guarantee for enforcement may not suffice and some person may hold back from putting the laws in action, extensive powers have been given in the second stage to the Islamic State and its ruler and the person absolutely responsible for the affairs of Muslim society, viz. the Imam or person nominated by him for the purpose.

Islamic regime is responsible to enforce the penal laws of Islam, punish the offenders, campaign against corruption, injustice and mischief and make efforts to safeguard the independence of Muslims and strengthen the frontiers of the country.

In short the benefits and vital effects of these two great Islamic Commands (to enjoin others to do good and to refrain from evil) are too numerous to be narrated. Is it possible to find such sublime social policies in any other religion of the world? Is there any school of thought or philosophy more profound than this wherein all individuals supervise the conduct of others in Three things viz. (i) to learn and act upon it; (ii) to educate others and (iii) to persuade others to learn and act, should be compulsory for every one?

The Messenger of Allah (S) also says,

“Indeed Allah is furious with the weak believer who has no religion.”

Some inquired who that weak believer was? He (S) replied,

“The feeble one who sees evil but does not try to prevent it.”[7]

The Prophet of Allah (S) says,

“When my Ummah neglects Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar it should expect divine chastisement to befall them.”[8]

Imam Baqir (a.s.) said,

“The Almighty Allah revealed on Shuaib (a.s.):

‘I shall destroy a hundred thousand people from your nation. Forty thousand of whom are sinners and sixty thousand righteous.’

‘O my Lord! The sinners are liable for punishment but why the righteous ones?’ asked Shuaib (a.s.). Allah replied, ‘Because they used to socialize with the sinners and in spite of My dislike they never disliked the sinners. They never restrained them from sins.”[9]

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says:

“Wael (Hell/terrible punishment) is for the people who neglect Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar.”[10]

Amir ul-Mu’minīn ‘Ali (a.s.) says,

“Indeed the Almighty has cursed those who came before you for neglecting Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar. Thus there is curse upon the ignorant sinners and the intelligent people who neglect Nahy Anil Munkar.”

(Nahjul Balagha)

Rules Regarding Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar

Under the following four conditions, Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar is obligatory.

(1) Knowledge of Good and Evil: One who is supposed to command others for a particular act must himself be certain that it is Wajib. That is, it should be an article of faith or a matter upon which there is unanimity among scholars. It is not Wajib to order something regarding which there is difference of opinion, because it is possible that the Mujtahid whom the person is following may not have made it Wajib. Similarly when it is possible that the person who is not observing a Wajib may have some valid (legal or rational) excuse, it is not Wajib to enjoin upon him. In the same way the thing that one intends to prohibit must be absolutely Harām. For example if one sees a Muslim back-biting but surmises that it was permissible in that particular circumstance, he is not obliged to prohibit it. Also if doing so could cause him disgrace he must not venture ahead. In short, one must have certainty regarding the ‘goodness’ of something one intends to enjoin and the certainty regarding the ‘evil’ of something one intends to forbid. In both the cases he must also be aware of the special circumstances at the time of putting the commands into practice.

(2) There should be a strong possibility that if he acts on Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar it would prove beneficial. If he feels it is not going to make any difference he is not obliged to act upon them. Musada says that I inquired from Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) regarding the Prophetic saying which stated that the greatest Jihad is to speak up against the unjust ruler. Imam (a.s.) said, “This is possible when the ruler is aware of his ruling being wrong and is prepared to heed your advice, or else leave it”

(3) Hazrat Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says that Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar should be for a believer who is prepared to accept the advice and benefit from it. Or it should be for the uninformed person who is eager to learn about it. It is not necessary to enjoin good or forbid evil to a person who is powerful and can hurt or harm you. It is not necessary to enjoin good and forbid evil to a person who has been sinful, continually neglecting *Wajib*

acts and repeated performing *Harām* acts, but who has repented and given up his sinful ways. Some scholars say that it is not necessary to enjoin good or forbid evil to a person who has shown regret for his sinful ways, even if one is unaware of his intentions to give up *Harām* acts and perform the *Wajib* acts.

Practicing Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar is not necessary if it can lead to any harm or loss. If there is risk to one's life or the life, honour or property of a Muslim, the duty is no longer valid.

However, the tradition which says that, "The greatest martyr is one who speaks the truth before an unjust person and he kills him," is about the circumstance when initially there was no danger or harm or mischief. But when a person says the truth he is slain.

One should not worry about minor discomfort and must not act on doubt

There are some traditions that criticize those who forgo Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar at the slightest possibility of harm. In a detailed tradition from Imam Baqir (a.s.) Jabir mentions the characteristics of stupid and riyakar (those who show off) people who will not consider Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar Wajib except when they are absolutely safe from harm. They will present various excuses to exempt themselves from the duties of Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar.[11]

Imam (a.s.) further said,

"They will practice Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar only for the deeds that do not cause them monetary or physical harm, like Prayer, and Fasting, and if there is a chance of harm from this also they will give it up." Thus they neglect an important divine obligation if there is a possibility of harm to themselves.

Such traditions probably refer to those people who expect to be harmed without having any good reason for thinking so, or to situations where the disadvantage that may be caused is so insignificant that it can be ignored or to situations where some benefits are lost. In all such cases people who avoid Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar have neglected a divine obligation due to the weakness of their faith and are denounced in the traditions.

As mentioned earlier, one is exempted from this obligation only if it can result in serious harm.

Priorities in Practising Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar

If fulfilling these duties is beneficial to the other person and harmful to oneself, one should use ones discretion. We shall judge the degree of benefit against the harm caused to ourselves and act accordingly.

Grades of Nahy Anil Munkar

There are Three grades of Nahy Anil Munkar: Forbidding evil by heart, tongue and hands. These Three are further divided into different grades and it is Wajib to take them into

consideration. When an easy method will suffice it is not permitted to use severe means.

1.Forbidding by ones heart (Dislike)

Faith (Imān) requires that we should despise every prohibited (Harām) thing. Whenever we witness a Harām act we should express our dislike. We should turn away our face and be angry with the one who has performed it. We should stop speaking to him. If we are compelled to speak, we must speak with our face turned away from him. Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) says,

"The Messenger of Allah (S) ordered us to meet the sinful people frowning."12

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"The Almighty Allah sent some angels to destroy the people of a particular town. When the angels reached there, they found a worshiper engrossed in worship. The angels said, "O our Lord! Your particular slave is busy in worship, how can we send punishment on this town? The reply came, 'Do not care about this man because he has never been angry for Our sake and never behaved curtly with the sinners.'13

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) reprimanded some of his followers for neglecting Nahy Anil Munkar. They said, "Though we try to restrain them, they do not pay heed."

Imam (a.s.) told them that the Messenger of Allah (S) has said,

"Avoid their company and do not participate in their assemblies."14

Imam (a.s.) has also said,

"Tell the evil doers and sinners: Either keep away from us or stop doing evil. If he does not obey, avoid him and keep away from him."

If the first stage is effective we must not act on the next stage. Even in the first stage if a lenient method is effective we must not employ strict methods. For example we must prefer frowning over turning the face, and turning the face over social boycott. The method to be adopted may also differ from person to person. Some may respond better to soft criticism than to severe criticism. So the method most suitable for a particular case should be employed.

2.Refraining by Tongue

In this grade also it is advisable to employ kind words or mild criticism rather than resort to scathing denouncement. The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) told Hazrat Mūsa (a.s.):

"Then speak to him a gentle word haply he may mind or fear." (Surah Tā Hā 20: 44)

The softness or severity of the tone must be considered too.

3.Refraining by Hand (Force)

When refraining by tongue is also not effective we must employ force, either by fighting or by punishment. If a little beating is not enough there is no harm in giving a severe beating.

If one is sure that the person is committing a great sin (like adultery or sodomy) and by giving him a severe beating he will be injured and mend his ways, it is Wajib to mete out this punishment.

Finally when none of the methods prove effective we are exempted from the duty of Nahy Anil Munkar.

A Corpse among the Living

Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) says:

Some believers perform Nahy Anil Munkar with heart, tongue and hands. These people possess good qualities from every aspect. While some do Nahy Anil Munkar with heart and tongue. They have two good qualities and lack the third one. Others perform Nahy Anil Munkar only with their hearts and have only one good quality. They are deprived of the two higher qualities. But the person who has none of these Three qualities is like a corpse amongst the living. In comparison to Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar other good deeds and Jihad in the way of Allah is like a drop of water in comparison to the sea. By performing Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar someone's death does not come near and neither is there any reduction in sustenance.[15]

Tawalla and Tabarra

It is obligatory on us to cultivate the love of Allah (S.w.T.) and affection for those who love Allah (S.w.T.) (or whom Allah (S.w.T.) loves). At the head of this list are our fourteen Ma'sūmīn (a.s.), then come their Shias and those who love them, their righteous children and due to their relationships the Sadāts and Sayyids. Their love and affection is the recompense for the Messengership of the Holy Prophet (S) according to the Holy Qur'an:

"Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives…" (Surah Ash-Shūrā 42: 23)

Tabarra or Barāt means to consider the enemies of Allah (S.w.T.) and the friends of the enemies of Allah (S.w.T.) as our enemies. The persons heading this list are those have usurped the rights of Āli Muhammad (a.s.), and those who had oppressed and troubled them. It denotes harbouring enmity towards all those whom Allah (S.w.T.) and the Holy Prophet (S) consider enemies. A large number of ayats and traditions mention the significance of these two duties and they are among the necessities of faith. A few of these are presented below.

"The foundation of Islam rests on five things: Prayer, Fast, Zakat, Hajj and Wilāyat. Among them none have been emphasized more than Wilāyat."[16]

In another tradition it is mentioned,

"Love for Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.), enmity towards their enemies, Obedience of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) and following their guidance is included among the foundations of religion."[17]

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says that the Messenger of Allah (S) asked his companions about the strongest relationship of belief (that will bring salvation and good consequences for the one who acts upon it)?" "Allah and His Messenger (S) know better," replied the companions. Some of them said, 'Prayer', some 'Fast', some guessed 'Zakat' a few thought

it was Hajj and Umrah and some even thought it was Jihad. The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

“All the things mentioned by you are virtuous but they are not reliable channels of intercession (wasila). The best and the strongest channel is to have friendship for the sake of Allah and to harbour enmity for the pleasure of Allah. Loving the friends of Allah and expressing dislike for the enemies of Allah.”18

Imam Riďa (a.s.) writes in a letter about the commandments of Islam and says, “Dissociation with those who have oppressed the Progeny of the Prophet (S) is Wajib. It is also obligatory against those who confronted ‘Ali (a.s.) in the battles of Jamal, Siffīn and Nahrawan, and those who deny his mastership (Wilāyat). It is Wajib to despise them all from the first to the last.”

Obligatory (for you) is the love of ‘Ali (a.s.) and those who followed him like, Salman, Abu Zar, Miqdad, Ammar, Abul Haytham, Sahal bin Hunaif, Ubadah bin al-Samit, Abu Ayyub Ansari, Khuzayma bin Thabit, Abu Saīd Khudri etc. And also obligatory is the love of those who were like them.”19

One who desires to meet Allah (S.w.T.) with correct belief, must love Allah (S.w.T.), the Messenger of Allah and the believers (foremost among them being the twelve Imams), and he must harbour enmity with their opponents.”20

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says:

“By Allah! Even if a stone befriends us, Allah will raise it with us (in Qiyāma). Is religion anything except friendship and hatred?”21

Denying the Rights of the Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.)

In Wasa’il ul-Shia, in the Chapter of ‘Taīn’ we find a tradition of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) which mentions that denying the rights of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) is also a Greater sin. In another hadith Imam (a.s.) says,

“Denying whatever Allah has revealed.”

Rights of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) clearly means the Wilāyat of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.). Thus denying whatever Allah (S.w.T.) has revealed means denying the Wilāyat and rights of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.). According to some scholars it implies “warring against the friends of Allah (S.w.T.),” which is a Greater sin according to other traditions. This also means opposing the Āle Muhammad (a.s.) and being hostile to them.

In other words, the traditions mentioned earlier are speaking of Wilāyat.

Further research indicates that Wilāyat of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) means to consider them ‘Ūli’ l-’Amr’ (holders of authority). Belief in Imamat is a confirmed article of faith. One who denies it goes beyond the pale of belief. In the same way walayat (with an ‘a’ as the second letter) denotes love and help of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.). It is one of the necessities of religion. One who denies it, is like the Nasibis, outside the pale of Islam and ritually dirty (Najis).

“Whatever Allah has revealed”, clearly means all those things that the Almighty has sent down to us and whatever Allah (S.w.T.) has revealed must be accepted. If a person denies even a single thing he would be committing a greater sin. Since the most important thing

sent by Allah (S.w.T.) and the most emphasized article of faith is Wilāyat, its denial is the most serious of greater sins. As already mentioned, some of its forms (like bearing enmity to Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) absolutely makes one a Kafir.

As far as fighting the friends of Allah (S.w.T.) is concerned, anyone who bears enmity to them knowing that they are the loved ones of Allah (S.w.T.), has committed a greater sin. Since Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) are the foremost among friends of Allah (S.w.T.), their enmity and opposition and fighting them is the most serious form of infidelity. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“On the day of Qiyāma the announcer will announce: Where are those who opposed and confronted our friends? Some people without flesh on their faces will stand up. It will be said: They are the ones who pained the believers, opposed them, were inimical to them and harmed their religion. Command will be issued to cast them into Hell.”22

The Almighty Allah said to the Holy Prophet (S) in Miraj:

“O Muhammad (S)! Whoever insults one of My friends has certainly launched an attack on Me. And whoever makes war on Me, I make war with him.”

The Holy Prophet (S) said,

“My Lord! Who is Your friend? Although I have understood that You will fight those who fight You.”

The Almighty said,

“Those from whom I have taken the covenant of Wilāyat for you, and for your wasi (‘Ali a.s.), and your progeny (and that of ‘Ali (a.s.).”23

1. Wasa’il ul-Shia, Vol. 1 page 25
2. al-Kāfi Vol. 2, page 82
3. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 83
4. Faqih Vol. 2 page 118
5. Wasa’il ul-Shia
6. Wasa’il ul-Shia
7. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 393
8. Wasa’il ul-Shia
9. Wasa’il ul-Shia
10. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 11, page 397
11. al-Kāfi Vol. 5 page 55
12. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 413
13. Wasa’il ul-Shia
14. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 415
15. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 404
16. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 18
17. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 18
18. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 125
19. Uyun al-Akhbar ar-Riďa page 268
20. Rawdatul Kāfi
21. Bihār al-Anwār
22. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 351
23. al-Kāfi. Vol. 2 page 353

The Fortieth Greater Sin: Persistence in Minor Sins

The fortieth Greater Sin according to Qur'an and the traditions of Ma'sūmīn (a.s.) is committing a lesser (minor) sin repeatedly. Amash relates from Imam Sadiq (a.s.): "And consistency upon the smaller sins" is a greater sin. In the same way Sadūq has narrated that Imam Riďa (a.s.) considered, "And consistency on sins" a part of greater sin. Similarly we have a tradition of Imam Sadiq (a.s.),

"A smaller sin which is committed again and again is a greater one. And a greater sin for which one repents doesn't remain greater."[1]

That is, if one commits a Greater sin and repents sincerely there is no punishment for it. But if one does a smaller sin again and again, it assumes the form of greater sin.

Abu Basīr says that I heard Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) saying:

"By Allah! As far as a person continues to sin, Allah does not accept any of his worship acts."[2]

"If you shun the great sins which you are forbidden, We will do away with your small sins and cause you to enter an honourable place of entering." (Surah an-Nisā' 4: 31)

This ayat is speaking about those minor sins, which are forgiven in lieu of avoiding greater sins and performing all *Wajib* duties. These minor sins can therefore become a barrier in the acceptance of worship and supplication, only when they are repeated often as a result of which they assume the magnitude of a greater sin; the consequence of which is that the other acts of worship are not accepted. There is a tradition from the Messenger of Allah (S) in *al-Kāfi* that says:

"One of the signs of wretchedness is repeating a sin."

One of the conditions of forgiveness is that the sin should not be repeated again and again

One of the proofs that repetition of smaller sins turns them into greater sins is, that Allah (S.w.T.) has made the giving up of sin its forgiveness and a condition for entering Paradise. The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says,

"And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults and who forgives the faults but Allah and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done." (Surah Āli- 'Imran 3: 135)

According to *Tafsīrul Mizan* the word *'Fahesha'* implies an evil deed and is usually used to connote adultery. Therefore if in this ayat it is used to mean adultery then the word *'Zulm'* should definitely mean a particular smaller sin. And the words "remembrance of Allah" would then imply that forgiveness and repentance can be achieved only if the sinner

remembers Allah (S.w.T.) and turns his attention towards Him with a sincere heart. Merely chanting *'Istighfar'* in a mechanical way will not avail him. The phrase, "and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done," clearly indicates that forgiveness is only for those who do not repeat the sins.

The consequences of committing a sin repeatedly is that the sinner develops a disregard for Divine commandments and gradually reaches a stage when he thinks them to be unimportant. Under these conditions he has no desire to submit himself to the will and pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.) and remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.) does not affect him. However, this occurs only when one persists in sins intentionally. That's why the word 'knowingly' is used.

The Greatest Sin

Hazrat Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) says,

"Beware of persistence on sins, for it is the greatest of the greater sins and a serious crime."[3]

Imam (a.s.) has also said,

"The greatest sin is one that the doer repeats again and again."[4]

He (a.s.) also says,

"Persistence in sins is the Greatest sin."

Muhaqqiq Khwansari (a.r.) explains the above statement of Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) in the following words:

It is clear from these that the magnitude of a sin increases until its repetition and persistence in sin is a greater sin than all the greater sins. Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) has also quoted the following tradition:

"I swear by Allah! Worship and obedience of one who persists in sin is not accepted."

What does Persistence Mean?

There is unanimity among scholars that persistently committing a smaller sin makes it a greater sin. A widely accepted view is that persistence is that a person commits a sin, is not repentant, and continues to indulge in it. For example wearing gold or silver (which is *Harām* for men but is not a confirmed greater sin in Islam) or to look at Non-mahram or to enter another's house without permission. The Martyr writes in *Qawaid* that, persistence is not restricted to committing one particular sin repeatedly but it also includes committing different types of lesser sins like a person may wear gold or silk; look at Non-mahram or shake hands with her or embrace her, and not be repentant for any of these acts.

According to some scholars committing a lesser sin with the intention of repeating it again makes it a greater sin. Also, the mere intention of committing a smaller sin twice renders it greater. Shahīd has termed it Isrār al-Hukmi (Implied persistence) in his book, *Qawaid.*

A group of scholars maintain that not being repentant for a sin and not seeking forgiveness

for it is persistence, even if there is no intention to do it again. However, according to my research the last two cases are very unlikely because they do not conform to any of the several meanings of the word, 'Persistence'.

Two traditional reports in this connection are given. One of them is related by Jabir from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) in which he is explaining the word "persist" as mentioned in the ayat of Surah Āli- 'Imran. Imam (a.s.) says,

"Persistence means that a person commits a sin, does not seek forgiveness for it and has no intention to discontinue it."[5]

So, it is possible that in this ayat Imam (a.s.) has explained the meaning of 'persistence' as mentioned in this ayat and not the persistence that is considered a Greater sin.

The second tradition is narrated by Ibn Umair from Imam Baqir (a.s.) and a part of it is presented below to illustrate our view.

"Every believer shall receive the punishment for the sin that he has committed except that he repents for it. And when he is repentant and discontinues the sin he will be eligible for intercession. And one who is not repentant for his sin is one who is persistent on it and one who is persistent is not eligible for salvation. Because actually he has no faith in that which Allah has promised. If at all he had believed in Allah's promise he would have been repentant."[6]

In this tradition, like in the tradition of Jabir, Imam (a.s.) has considered the unrepentant attitude and failure to seek repentance as persistence.

Since the subject of Imam's discussion is greater it is possible that not seeking forgiveness for greater sin amounts to persistence. But repeating a smaller sin is also a greater sin. Besides Imam (a.s.) is speaking about the case where not seeking forgiveness is due to carelessness, heedlessness of Divine commands and feeling safe from Divine anger. And it is clear that if a person does not fear the wrath of Allah he does not seek forgiveness, which is a greater sin.

It is also possible that his failure to repent and seek forgiveness is 'persistence' is metaphorical. Thus there is a saying from Imam Baqir (a.s.),

"Indeed, persistence in sins is the consequence of heedlessness of Divine chastisement and only those people are the losers who are heedless (of Divine chastisement)"[7]

To consider a sin small

According to some jurists, repeating a smaller sin makes it a greater one. But there are some other factors that also render the smaller sin into a bigger one. The very fact that a person who commits a smaller sin, considers it small and insignificant, and thinks that he is not liable to be punished for such a trivial sin, itself makes his sin a greater one and brings down the wrath of Allah (S.w.T.) upon him. His thinking reveals that he does not give importance to the prohibitions laid down by the Almighty and is not in total submission to the will and pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.). According to traditions such a sin is unpardonable.

Scholastic theology maintains that forgiveness of smaller sins for those who abstain from greater ones is due to Divine mercy and grace. Otherwise according to reason every

disobedience of Allah (S.w.T.), whether small or great makes one deserving of punishment. It is clear that Divine grace is only for those who do not leave the path of His obedience and servitude. One who is vain and proud and does not realize his insignificance and magnificence of Allah (S.w.T.) can never receive Allah (S.w.T.)'s Grace, instead he would be disgraced and humiliated.

Allah (S.w.T.) will remit the smaller sins of those who abstain from greater sins and do not consider their smaller sins, small.

Hazrat 'Ali (a.s.) says,

"The greatest sin is one, the doer of which considers it little."[8]

Hazrat Imam Baqir (a.s.) states,

"Among the unpardonable sins is the saying of a person, "I wish that except for this sin which I have committed other sins had not been accountable." [He considered this sin insignificant.][9]

Beware of the sin that are considered small and insignificant. Indeed, they are ones that shall be questioned by Allah and these (small sins) will be heaped upon the person till it (becomes a great sin and) destroys him.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"Seek (Allah's) refuge and save yourself from the sins that are considered small and insignificant."

The narrator asked, "Which of the sins are small?"

Imam (a.s.) said,

"A person commits a sin and then says: How lucky would I have been if I had not any sin except this one. (Because) this sin is small and insignificant."

Being Pleased with a Sinful Act

One of the things that magnify a sin (make the smaller sin great) is that one feels good and is pleased after committing it. A necessary condition of faith in Allah (S.w.T.) and Qiyāma is repenting for ones sin, even though it may be small. As the Messenger of Allah, (S) says,

"One, whose good deeds please him and sins make him aggrieved is a believer."[10]

Allah is High and Mighty, and disobedience to His commands and prohibitions is a great sin. It is related from Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) that at the time of sinning do not consider the smallness of your sin but consider the greatness and Might of Allah Whose (law) command you are breaking."[11]

Just as regret and repentance erase the sin and cleanse the sinner in the same way feeling happy after committing a sin reinforces it.

The Messenger of Allah (S) says:

“One who is laughing (happy) while committing a sin will enter Hell weeping.”12

He (S) also said,

“Four things regarding sins are more severe than the sin itself: considering the sin small, being proud of it, being happy about it, being persistent in it.”13

Making it Public

Informing others of one’s sins and relating about them to other people is a greater sin. Also announcing a sin is an insult to Allah (S.w.T.)’s command. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said,

“One who performs a good deed and keeps it a secret will be rewarded seventy times (than if he has announced it). And one who commits a sin and makes it public (due to shamelessness or ignorance of religious law) will be disgraced by Allah. (That is, he will not get the Tawfīq of repentance and he will remain deprived of Allah’s kindness and Mercy) but if he keeps it secret (due to shame) he will be forgiven.”14

Making a sin public is not harmful in two cases: One when it is necessary to do so, for example, its admission before a doctor for treatment or to a religious scholar for learning about an Islamic law.

Secondly when it is an expression of servitude and helplessness before Allah (S.w.T.) and confession of one’s sins. For example, a person can make a general statement: “O Allah! I am your sinful slave! I am a disgraced one! I am drowned in the sea of evils. I have committed mortal sins! Please forgive me.” However, it is appropriate to mention the particular sin. Like ‘I have imbibed wine,’ etc. Confessing ones sins before Allah (S.w.T.) and imploring forgiveness is the best act of worship and is very beneficial for the acceptance of repentance, illumination of one’s heart by the light of faith and raising of one’s status.

In other words, a general confession of sins and acceptance of ones mistakes is the opposite of pride and arrogance. It is the favourite habit of our religious leaders. So much so, that even in their letters and books they mention themselves as disobedient, sinners, lowly, wrong doers, the most lowly slaves etc.

Sin and Social position

According to our religious tenets, a person with knowledge, piety and purity is to be highly honoured and respected. When such a person, who is held in high esteem by the people, commits a small sin the very foundation of their faith and belief may be shaken. Just as a higher status is accorded to religious personalities by religion, so also their smaller sins are considered equivalent to greater sins of ignorant people.

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“Seventy sins of ignorant one will be forgiven before one sin of an Ālim.”15

Misdeed of an Ālim corrupts many worlds

Muhaqqiq Khwansari comments on the above statement made by Amir ul-Mu’minīn ‘Ali (a.s.) in the following way. Misdeed of an Ālim could be the sin he commits himself or the

mistake that he commits in the discharge of his duty as a jurisprudent. Both these mistakes are not restricted to the scholar himself but have far-reaching consequences involving a large number of people and several spheres of activity, spreading corruption and disorder. When people see a knowledgeable person committing a sin, the severity and evil of the sin is lost on them, they think it to be insignificant and begin to indulge in it. If he makes a mistake in promulgating a law of *Shari'a*, many people can be adversely affected by a law which is defective. Also the validity of many acts may be dependant upon this faulty command.

Therefore the responsibilities of an Ālim are tremendous and he has to be cautious and vigilant in refraining from sins and mistakes.

In the same strain is the following statement:

"The sin of an Ālim is like the wrecking of ship. That takes others with it (when it sinks)."[16]

Persistence is really a greater sin

As we have already seen, lesser sins assume the proportions of greater ones under the following conditions:

1) When they are committed due to heedlessness.

2) When they are considered insignificant and not punishable.

3) When the person who commits them is pleased and happy with himself.

4) To commit them again and again without feeling any remorse and repenting for them.

5) Being aware of the fact that doing them again and again makes them a greater sin.

Another point of contention is that when an Ālim commits smaller sins which take the magnitude of greater sins, is his reliability as an Ālim maintained? The answer is not clear, but apparently his reliability is maintained.

Persistence is established by common parlance

As we have already explained before, persistence implies committing a particular sin again and again or different types of sins, without regretting it or seeking forgiveness for it. Or to commit different types of sins together. But the number of times a person must commit the sin that makes it 'persistent' depends upon how it is generally considered. So, there is no fixed standard because of the wide variations in smaller sins and their proximity to greater sins. Some smaller sins become great only by committing them thrice and some more than Three times and some in less than that. It all depends upon what is generally accepted.

An Important Point

The forty greater sins discussed so far are those which have been clearly named in authentic traditions.

There are two traditions in *Wasa'il ul-Shia* in the chapter of Taīnul Kabair. These two traditions are without chains of narrators and they have been taken from the book of Jihad.

One of them is considering the property permissible for ourselves, which shall be discussed later.

Here we shall study the second one in brief. This is, depriving ones lawful heirs of their rights. By this we desire to ensure that all greater sins that are clearly mentioned in traditions have been discussed by us.

Depriving in will

It is an injustice not to include in the will some or all the heirs such that they stand to lose their lawful share. The Tafsīr of Qummi explains the verse,

"Whoever then alters it after he has heard it, the sin of it then is only upon those who alter it; Surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing." (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 181)

Regarding this ayat Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"'Haif' in will is that one bestows more on some heirs and deprives others and 'Ithm' (sin) denotes preparing place of worship or to give order to prepare intoxicant (meaning will for unlawful activities)."

In the above two cases the legatee should disregard the instructions.

The poor heir must be kept in mind

If the heir is self-sufficient the maker of the will can bequeath one third of his property in the way he desires and he can also exceed this limit if the heir permits. If the heirs are poor or extremely pious the will-maker can give them some share even from this one third part to ensure that he is not giving more than the share of heirs which shall be derived from the two-third portion.

If the heir is poor it is better not to make a will (for the 1/3 part), or to bequeath only 1/6, 1/5 or 1/4 of ones property, because one of the best utilization of this wealth is in fulfilling the needs of a poor heir. This would constitute an act of *Silet ar-Rahm*, especially when the heir is yet to reach puberty.

Hazrat Imam 'Ali (a.s.) says,

"I prefer a bequest for one-fifth over that of one-fourth and the bequest of one-fourth over that of one-third. And one who makes a bequest for (full) one-third is as if he has not left behind anything." That is, he has fully exercised his right to bequeath one-third and in this way deprived the poor heirs who might have benefited if it had been to the contrary.[17]

Imam Riďa (a.s.) said,

"It is Mustahab to bequeath some share to those relatives who are not ones heirs and if one does not make such a will his action will end in Allah's disobedience"[18]

Such a person is regarded as sinful because he has not taken care of the rights of relatives, which is one of the obligatory religious duties. Particularly, if a rich man disregards his very poor relatives who are not his heirs and does not bequeath them anything, it amounts to Qat al-Raham, which is *Harām* and a greater sin.

The Heir Precedes others

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says that a man from Ansar died leaving many young children. He left no property except six slaves. At the time of death he be had freed all of them. When the Messenger of Allah (S) was informed of this, he asked,

"What have you done with him?"

"We have buried him", replied the people

The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

"If I had known it, I would not have allowed him to be interred with Muslims because this man has compelled his children to beg from the people."

Division of legacy according to Shariah

It is not permitted for a person to bequeath more than a third of his property. If he does so the executor of the will is not obliged to act upon it but he should give the heir to use his discretion in the matter.

Moreover, making a will for unlawful purposes is not allowed and the executor of the will is obliged to disregard it. He should, instead, utilize the funds in lawful ways. It is also not allowed to deprive any of the heirs of their share. And the executor of will must give the share of those who are eligible for it. (Please refer to books of jurisprudences, *Tauzihul Masael* for more information about making bequests).

If the heirs of the first level (ones children or parents) are present but the heirs of the second level (Paternal and Maternal Uncles and Aunts) are poor the rich will-maker should make some provision for them. If he does not make such a will it would generally be regarded as an act of *Qat'a ar-Rahm*, which is a greater sin.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) had willed that seventy Ashrafis (gold coins) be given to Hasan al-Aqtas, the son of his paternal uncle. Imam (a.s.) had also made similar bequests for a number of his relatives. Someone expressed surprise and said, "O Master! You have made a bequest for a person who has attacked you and wanted to slay you with a knife? Imam (a.s.) said,

"Do you not want me to be included among those who are praised by the Almighty for their Sil al-Raham in the following words?"

"And those who join that which Allah has bidden to be joined and have awe of their Lord and fear the evil reckoning." (Surah ar-Ra'd 13:21)

The full text of this tradition has passed in the chapter of *Qat'a ar-Rahm*.

Part Two: Greater sins regarding whom there is no clear 'nass'

Greater sins regarding whom there is no clear 'nass' (ayat or tradition).

As stated in the introduction of this book, a sin is considered a greater sin under four conditions:

(1) There is clear mention of it in ayat or tradition of Ma'sūmīn (a.s.).

(2) Its punishment is mentioned to be damnation in Hell in Qur'an or an authentic tradition, whether in unequivocal words or indication.

(3) It is mentioned to be greater than one of the great sins proved by other Three methods.

(4) The sin, which is considered great by a group of religious people.

The greater sins which come under condition

(1) have received full treatment in part one. The remaining Three shall be discussed in Three sections in part two. Before we start listing the sins that are promised divine punishment i.e. condition

(2) we must know that this condition itself is clearly mentioned in a number of traditions. Some of them are given below. A hadith recorded in the Sahih of Ibn Abi Yafur from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"The Adalat (reliability) of some people can be understood from their neglect of sins that are promised Hell."[19]

This tradition clearly indicates that sins for which Hell is destined are indeed greater sins. In Sahih of 'Ali Ibn Ja'far it is mentioned that he asked his brother Imam Mūsa Ibn Ja'far (a.s.) regarding the sins which are denounced in Qur'an.

Imam (a.s.) said,

"Those sins are great for which Allah has made Hell incumbent."[20]

A tradition is recorded from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in *al-Kāfi.* Abu Basīr says that when Imam (a.s.) was queried regarding this matter he (a.s.) recited the following ayat:

"…and whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good and none but men of understanding mind." (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 269)

Imam (a.s.) explains the meaning of wisdom:

"Marefat (recognition) of Imam, abstinence from Greater sins (those who fail in this) Allah has made Hell as their abode."[21]

Muhammad Ibn Muslim relates from the same Imam (a.s.):

"Of whichever sin Allah has prescribed Hell is a Greater Sin."

According to some traditions, specially, the one mentioned in the Sahih of Abdul Azīm, every sin which is specially promised Hell fire in Qur'an or Sunnah (traditions) of the Holy Prophet (S) and Imams (a.s.) is a greater sin, whether it is unequivocal like that for the one who does not pray:

"But there came after them an evil generation, who neglected prayers and

followed sensual desires, so they will meet perdition." (Surah Maryam 19: 59)

Or the sinner is described as an inmate of Hell. For example in the tradition, *"The one who leaves prayers is a polytheist*,

***"and the abode of polytheists is Hell."**, **So be steadfast in prayers and do not be of the polytheist,"**(30:31)*

Similarly Qur'an says,

"So woe (Hell) to the praying ones, who are unmindful of their prayers…" (Surah Ma'ūn 107: 4-5)

Or as mentioned in the tradition of the Holy Prophet (S),

"One who leaves prayers wilfully will go out of the refuge of Allah and the Messenger of Allah (S)."22

According to Ibn Abbas the number of sins that are mentioned in ayats and authentic traditions are very many. If all of them are enumerated they will exceed seven hundred. This would be a very time consuming job. So we shall discuss only some of the most common sins that people are prone to commit.

1. al-Kāfi Vol. 4 page 288
2. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 288
3. Ghurarul Hikam Vol. 1 page 151
4. Ghurarul Hikam Vol. 1 page 203
5. al-Kāfi Vol. 1 page 288
6. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 266
7. Tohafful Uqūl
8. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 246
9. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 247
10. Wasa'il ul-Shia, Vol. 11 page 266
11. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 247
12. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 240
13. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
14. al-Kāfi Vol. 1, page 428
15. al-Kāfi Vol. 1 page 48
16. Amali Vol. 4 page 109
17. Beharul Anwar Vol. 23 page 46
18. Bihār al-Anwār Vol. 103 page 199
19. Wasa'il ul-Shia
20. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 276
21. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 284
22. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 3 page 29

The Forty-first Greater Sin: Backbiting

The foremost great sin for which Qur'an and hadith have promised chastisement is back-biting. As mentioned by Allah (S.w.T.) in Qur'an,

"Surely (as for) those who love that scandal should circulate respecting those who believe, they shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and the

hereafter." (Surah an-Nūr 24: 19)

Ibn Abi Umayr narrates from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.),

"One who reports about a believer, everything he has himself seen and heard is from those about whom Allah (S.w.T.) says, "There is grievous chastisement for those who like undesirable things regarding the believers becoming public."[1]

According to this tradition, *Ghiība* (backbiting) is included in the ayat where clear punishment is mentioned. Therefore, the Qur'an states,

"…nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it…" (Surah al-Hujurāt 49: 12)

The above ayat describes the condition of the backbiter in the hereafter. He will be raised in a condition similar to the person who eats dead meat. A tradition of the Messenger of Allah (S) says,

"On the night of Miraj (ascension) I saw some people in Hell who were eating dead meat. I asked Jibrīl (a.s.) who those people were. He replied. 'They used to eat human flesh in their worldly life (that is, they used to backbite about other people)."[2]

It appears therefore that one who backbites about a person deserves the punishment he would have had if he had eaten the same person's flesh.

Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) says,

"Know that! Ghiība of your believing brother, who is the Shia of Āli Muhammad is worst than eating dead meat, regarding which Allah (S.w.T.) says, 'do not back-bite for each other."

Allah (S.w.T.) says in Surah al-Humaza,

"Wael (Hell) is for every Slanderer, defamer," (Surah al-Humaza 104: 1)

According to Tafsīr Majmaul Bayan this Divine statement is a decree of punishment for every back-biter and slanderer who causes separation between friends. Some others have stated that, it is slander when uttered in the presence of the person and defaming when speaking in his absence.

Wael is one of the compartments of Hell. There is a well in it which is a symbol of terrible punishment. *Ghiība* is a sin that is promised penalty at a number of places in the Qur'an.

Traditions on Ghiība

There are a large number of traditions that speak of *Ghiība* as a sin, which is promised divine punishment. We quote a tradition of Makasib where Shaykh Ansari has recorded a tradition of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S):

"Ghiība is worse than fornication because if a fornicator repents, Allah (S.w.T.) forgives him but He does not forgive the back-biter till the person about whom he has back-bited forgives."[3]

One day the Messenger of Allah (S) describing the evil aspects of usury said that taking a Dirham as usury was worst than committing adultery thirty six times. Then he said that the worst kind usury is revealing the defects of a Muslim and insulting him.4

In the light of the above traditions *Ghiība* is proved to be a greater sin also because it is worse than Adultery and Usury and we have already proved in the earlier chapters that Adultery and Usury are greater sins. The Holy Prophet (S) also said,

“Allah will not keep a person who reveals the fault of a Mu’min, along with him in Paradise, and if he accuses him of faults the Mu’min does not have, the pure relationship of their faith will be destroyed and the back biter will forever dwell in Hell, which is a dreadful place.”5

The below tradition is sufficient for a person with insight.

“One who thinks that he is legitimately born is wrong, because by doing Ghiība of people he is consuming their flesh. Beware of Ghiība because it is the diet of the dogs of Hell.”6

“One who moves from his place with the intention of back-biting about his brother in faith, you should know that he has taken the first step towards Hell.”7

“Even if the back-biter repents he will be the last to enter Paradise, and one who dies without repenting will be first in Hell.”8

The Second Martyr (Shahīd al-Thani) narrates from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) and the Messenger of Allah (S) that the thing nearest to infidelity is that a person listens to a word from a person and remembers it for using it later to insult him by telling it to others. Such people can never make a gain in the hereafter.9

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“Ghiība affects the religion of a person faster than leprosy spreads in human body.”10

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“Ghiība is Harām for all Muslims and there is no doubt that Ghiība destroys good deeds like fire destroys wood.”11

The Shaykh says, “*Ghiība* eats good deeds”, means that *Ghiība* invalidates all the good actions that one has performed or that the sin of *Ghiība* exceeds the rewards he has accumulated from the past good deeds, or that the deeds of back-biter are transferred to the scroll of deeds of the one about whom he has back-bited. These points are mentioned in a number of traditions. The Messenger of Allah (S) is reported saying that a person will be brought for accounting in Qiyāma and handed his scroll of deeds. When he sees the good deeds performed by him missing from his record he would say, ‘O Allah! This is not my record because I cannot find the good deeds performed by me in it.’ He will be told, ‘Your Lord does not err or forget, your good deeds have disappeared due to backbiting about the people.’ Then another person will be brought and given his record of deeds. When he finds therein good deeds that he had never performed he shall say, ‘O Allah! This is not my scroll of deeds. Because I find recorded therein such good deeds as I had never performed’. So he shall be informed, “These are the good deeds of that certain person who back-bited about you and as a recompense his good deeds have been given to you.”

The Shaykh concludes that *Ghiība* is indeed a greater sin, and in fact it is more serious than

some greater sins like Adultery and Usury.

Moreover, Khayanat discussed in the earlier chapters is confirmed to be a greater sin, and *Ghiība* can be considered a form of Khayanat; which Khayanat can surpass the action of betraying the confidential things of a believing brother? One proceeds to gobble the flesh of ones brother in faith while the latter is completely unaware.

Please take note, that *Ghiība* is *Harām* only in the case of believers. That is, the believers in all the tenets of faith the foremost of which is the belief in the Imamat of the twelve Imams (a.s.). Therefore, *Ghiība* of those who opposes this belief is not *Harām*.

However by way of precaution, we must not backbite any person belonging to any of the sects of Islam. Especially those who are not the enemies of truth and are just deficient in knowledge. We should also know that *Ghiība* is *Harām* not only when told to adults, it is not permitted to speak words of back biting even to a child who is old enough to understand them and be affected by them. Some scholars have stated that *Ghiība* is not allowed even to children who have not yet reached the age of understanding.

Meaning and Occasions of Ghiība

The Messenger of Allah (S) explains *Ghiība* in the following words,

“Ghiība is remembering your brother in a way he dislikes.”12

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“Ghiība is exposing that aspect of your brother which Allah had concealed.”13

Imam Mūsa Ibn Ja’far (a.s.) says,

“If one speaks of a person in his absence about those of his traits which are actually present in him and people are also aware of it, it is not Ghiība. But if he mentions something which is present in the person but people are unaware of it, it would be Ghiība. Moreover if what he is says is not present in the man, it is allegation (Bukhtān).”

On the basis of these two traditions mentioning the defects of a person which are well-known to those who are being told and also other people is not *Ghiība*, even if it could be construed as criticism, scolding, causing hurt and insult, which is also *Harām* as will be discussed later.

After taking into account the meaning of word *Ghiība* by dictionary experts and the different implications of *Ghiība* according to traditional reports the Shaykh concludes that *Ghiība* is of Three types: Absolute *Ghiība*, Apparent *Ghiība* and Implied *Ghiība*.

In the first instance it is backbiting for sure. The defect be according to *Shari’a* or according to what is generally accepted as defect in a person and also that if it is mentioned in the absence of the person and were he to know about it he would not like it. Besides, one who indulges in this *Ghiība* should be doing it with the intention of exposing him or in trying to find defects in him. In short if one exposes the defect of a believer with a clear intention of defaming, it would be *Ghiība*.

In the second category is *Ghiība* which is not done for exposing a person but for some other purpose. For example in jest or to prove ones point, or for expressing ones concern, or to

cite it as an example. In all such cases also if one is revealing the hidden defect of a believer it is *Ghiība* and *Harām* according to *Shari'a*.

The third kind is to mention the defects to a person who is already aware of it. Regarding this some traditions say it is not *Ghiība* but other traditions have included it among backbiting, particularly when the person is scolding with vehemence and insult. Such a *Ghiība* is absolutely *Harām* even though it is doubtful whether it is *Ghiība* in the real sense, since this will cause grief to a believer and humiliation. Also if a person uses nicknames that will invite criticism, saying: he is a son of a Jew, or 'His mother was of loose character'. All such things are *Harām* as mentioned in the verse of Surah al-Hujurāt.

"…nor call one another by nicknames; evil is a bad name after faith…" (Surah al-Hujurāt 49: 11)

Types of Ghiība

According to clear traditions and opinion of religious scholars it makes no difference whether the defect mentioned is of a physical nature, pertains to ones descent, a trait of ones character or with regard to ones speech or actions, or whether it is with regard to religion or worldly aspects. Special mention is made of defects pertaining to ones dress, house, vehicle etc. Examples are cited for each of these. A physical defect is mentioned that, such and such is cockeyed, one-eyed, bald, short, tall, dark complexioned, yellow skinned etc.

If these characteristics are mentioned in a manner that he will be unhappy if he heard about it, it is *Ghiība*. *Ghiība* of ones family origin is saying, 'His father was a sinner, evil, miser, libertine, weaver, low caste etc. *Ghiība* of character is saying such and such is bad-character, miser, arrogant, coward, weak, hypocrite, thief or an oppressor. *Ghiība* with regard to religious matters is saying that a person is a liar, a drunkard, he neglects prayers, he is bad mannered, ungrateful, he doesn't realize his low position, he's talkative, a glutton, an excessive sleeper. *Ghiība* in relation to dress is saying his dress is dirty, torn, old, long or short. If these are mentioned in a manner that a person wouldn't like to hear about himself, it is *Ghiība*.

It should be clear that it makes no difference whether the defect is mentioned verbally or expressed in action or gestures. Even if one makes an allusion and it is understood in the sense he intends, it is *Ghiība*. Sometimes allusion is worse than *Ghiība*. For example, saying, 'Alhamdolillah (Praise to be Allah), Allah has not made us covet rulership, or made us supporters of oppressors or did not make us greedy of wealth. Or if one says, we seek refuge of Allah from jealousy, niggardliness or shamelessness, May Allah protect us from the mischief of Shaitan; and by saying all this he desires to indicate the person who has these traits.

Often times when someone intends to do *Ghiība* of a person, he initially heaps praises upon him. For example saying: He is so nice! It's a pity he's caught in Satan's trap and became such and such. Another example is to be aggrieved in a hypocritical way: I am really aggrieved and my heart has burnt in the sorrow for such and such person. This is not true because if he were really sincere and a true friend he would not have criticized him and exposed his defects.

Ghiība of Specified Persons and Ghiība of General People

It is *Ghiība* only if it is with respect to a particular person. If there is no mention of name or special traits of a person it is not termed *Ghiība*. For example, one says, 'I saw a person in such and such way.' This would not be *Ghiība*. But if at the same time he indicates a distinguishing feature of this person, it is *Ghiība*. Like for example saying that the person has such and such type of son or daughter. It is *Harām* because in this way he has caused grief to all the concerned people. If one mentions the genre like he says. 'A person from Isfahan or Shiraz has done that. This is allowed. It is also allowed to say some people of Isfahan are such and such.' But saying that all the people of Isfahan or Shiraz are like that, is *Harām* without any doubt. This is because it would amount to be the *Ghiība* of all the people of these cites. If one says that majority of the people of that city are like that, it is against precaution. In fact there is a strong indication of its illegality.

Expiation and Repentance for Ghiība

As *Ghiība* is a greater sin anyone falling into it, is obliged to feel remorse for having disobeyed Allah (S.w.T.). After sincere repentance he must seek forgiveness, with the intention of never repeating it in the future. As mentioned in some of the traditions, if possible one must apologize to the person whose *Ghiība* he had done. He must beg him for forgiveness and somehow obtain his satisfaction. Also he must make up for it by speaking well of the person in proportion to the *Ghiība* he has committed with regard to this person.

This is more appropriate when the person is already dead and it is not possible to contact him. Or there is a good chance, the person will be more angry and would distance himself further. For example when he is ignorant of what was said about him and by hearing about the *Ghiība* he would be infuriated. The aim of seeking his forgiveness would not be achieved. In such cases we should ask Allah (S.w.T.)'s forgiveness for him and beseech Allah (S.w.T.) to make this person happy, as mentioned in the 39th Du'a of Sahifa Sajjadiya. It is also mentioned in the supplication of Monday.

Occasions when Ghiība is Permitted

Scholars permit *Ghiība* in some cases. We shall mention the opinion of Shaykh in this matter as given in his book Makasib Muhrima.

(1) *Ghiība* of a person whose defect is not hidden. It is known to all. Like the one who roams the streets with a bottle of wine on his lips.

"One who sins openly is not worthy of respect and his Ghība is not Harām.[14]

A tradition also says,

"(The Ghiība of) one who has thrown away the robe of shame (and commits sins openly) is not Ghiība.[15]

It should be noted that, *Ghiība* is allowed only for those sins that are committed openly. There is no proof of the legality of *Ghiība* for the sins committed secretly, though according to the Shaykh, if his visible sins are more severe than his concealed defects, there is no harm in relating them. However, one should abstain from it as a matter of precaution.

Ghiība is allowed only in the case of a person who has himself announced his sins openly. But if he presents an excuse for this action, his *Ghiība* is not allowed. For example, he says, 'I drink wine for medicinal purpose and I am in Taqlid of a person who allows it.' Or one who eats during daytime in the month of Ramadhan says that he is sick or on a journey, or he may be having other acceptable reason. Similarly in the case of one who oppresses or cooperates with the oppressors, and then justifies his act. However, it should not be a blatant act. As a matter of precaution, *Ghiība* should not be done about a person who commits sins openly but in an alien town or locality.

(2) If an oppressed person complains about the oppressor and mentions his acts of injustice, it is not *Ghiība*. As the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says,

"And whoever defends himself after his being oppressed these it is against whom there is no way (to blame). The way (to blame) is only against those who oppress into and revolt in the earth unjustly, these shall have a painful punishment." (Surah Ash-Shūrā 42: 41-42)

In Surah an-Nisā', the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) Says,

"Allah does not love the public utterance of hurtful speech unless (it be) by one to whom injustice has been done." (Surah an-Nisā' 4: 148)

Precaution demands that we must complain of injustice to someone who is capable of redressing it. It is not permitted to complain to someone who is not capable of getting justice for you.

(3) Advice to those who ask for it. When a Muslim approaches for advice in a particular deal that he intends to enter with a person and the person approached knows about a defect of that person which, if he does not reveal the person who enters into contract will suffer loss and have problems; in this case there is no harm in passing such information.

One must pay attention to two things in this case: The defect should be mentioned only if there is harm in not informing about it. If the defamation or insult caused by revealing the defect is more serious than the loss caused to the other person, one should abstain from *Ghiība*. Secondly, *Ghiība* is allowed only if by doing so the person is warned. If he can be cautioned without doing *Ghiība*, *Ghiība* is not allowed. For example he says, "I don't see benefit in this matter" and the person who sought advice obeys him. Then one should stop at this.

(4) *Ghiība* is allowed with the intention of Nahy Anil Munkar. For example you see a Muslim prone to an evil way and think that by doing *Ghiība* he'll give it up. *Ghiība* is allowed in this case provided one is sure that it will have the desired effect. If there is doubt that the person has already given it up his *Ghiība* is not permitted. As in the previous case, we should take into consideration the harm of doing his *Ghiība* in comparison to the harm caused by his bad deed. That is, if the exposure of this Muslim is more serious than the sin he his committing, his *Ghiība* is not allowed, even if we are sure that by doing his *Ghiība* he would give up the act.

Conclusive remarks from the foregone discussions

When one sees a Muslim doing something wrong one must study all its aspects. If the person has already given up the sin his *Ghiība* is *Harām*. By the same token he must not be

scolded or criticised because Nahy Anil Munkar is to wean him away from sin; if he himself has given it up there is no sense in reprimanding him. If he has not discontinued it and he does it secretly then his sin comes in the ambit of secret sins and it is *Harām* to mention them to others. What is required in this case is to do Nahy Anil Munkar with all necessary conditions and if in spite of this he does not reform himself and we know that he will forgo it only if it is made public, we can do his *Ghība*. But we must be sure that his sin is more serious than his *Ghiība*.

Therefore *Ghiība* for the purpose of Nahy Anil Munkar is allowed only when the person is persistent in his sin, and refuses to heed admonitions, when the evil of his sin is greater than exposing him; and we must be sure that he will forgo it if he is exposed. However, if any one of the four conditions are missing his *Ghiība* is *Harām*.

(5) *Ghiība* of a person is allowed if in addition to committing the sin himself he is instrumental in instigating others to follow him. For example he introduces an innovation in Allah (S.w.T.)'s religion. In order to warn the people of his deceit his *Ghiība* is permitted.

(6) *Ghiība* is allowed in connection with a person who narrates a false hadith or gives a false testimony. It should be to ensure that people are not misled by his falsehood.

(7) It is allowed to mention the defect of a person by which he is well-known. For example blind, cock-eyed, lame etc. Our intention must not be to point out his defect but by way of indication. Also one must bear in mind that the person himself not feel irked by these titles. Only in such circumstances is it allowed, otherwise we must use some other means to indicate towards him.

(8) One is allowed to expose the false claims of a person's lineage, because the harm caused by this exposure is less than the harm to families and clans if he relates himself to them.

(9) If two people are eyewitness to a sin. Later one of them mentions it to others. There is no harm in it because the one who is spoken to is not hearing something unknown to him, Shahīd Thani says it is better to refrain from mentioning something which the other person has forgotten or when there is a risk of scandal.

(10) According to Shaykh Ansari the discussion between two people who are eyewitnesses is allowed, if they do not do it with the intention of criticizing or denouncing the person. In all cases, *Ghiība* is allowed when the harm it causes is less serious than the insult or defamation incurred by the person.

Listening to Ghiība is also Harām

Lending ear to *Ghiība* is *Harām* just as uttering *Ghiība* is *Harām*. The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

"The one who listens to Ghiība is one of those who do Ghiība."[16]

He (S) also says,

"One who lends ear to back-biting is one of the back-biters."[17]

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“Ghiība is equal to infidelity (One who does it is Kafir) and listening to and being pleased with it is like polytheism.”[18]

Traditions that describe the respect due to believers, indicate that the honour of a Mu’min is more than the respect of Kaba. His dishonour is same as his murder. His exposure will bring upon the guilty severe chastisement. It is obvious that the main pillar of *Ghība* is the one who listens to backbiting. Because if the listener is not there or he refuses to listen to it, there is no *Ghiība*.

Therefore all Muslims are obliged not to hear the *Ghiība* of a believer. They must restrain the back biter so that the honour of the Mu’min is preserved. They should help the Mu’min in saving his honour.

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“If the Ghiība of ones believing brother is being done in ones presence and it is possible to defend him, one must defend him and Allah will help such a person in Hereafter. If in spite of being able he does not defend him, Allah will leave him on his own in the Hereafter and He shall not help him.”

(Al-Majalis)

He (S) has also said,

“If one defends his believer brother’s honour while back-biting is done about him in a way that he proves him faultless, Allah shall remove from him thousands of mischiefs from the world and the hereafter. But if he does not dispel them in spite of being able to do so, his sin shall be seventy times that of the back-biter.”

After quoting the above tradition, the Shaykh says that the sin of the listener is more than that of the back-biter because, but for him the back-biter would not have dared to back-bite. And listening to *Ghiība* mutely implies support of the back biter.

So if it is a worldly defect that is pointed out, he must say there is nothing of the sort. Faults are those which are described as faults by Allah (S.w.T.) and those that Allah (S.w.T.) has prohibited. So if you say anything that is not a fault in Allah (S.w.T.)’s view, it is not a *Ghiība*. The real mistake is the mention of this imaginary fault.

If the defect mentioned is according to religious law, one should try to absolve the Mu’min in whatever way possible. One can present a valid excuse for his actions or if this is not possible, one should draw the attention of the criticizer that after all a Mu’min is not infallible; if a Mu’min falls into sin we should pray for his forgiveness, instead of exposing and defaming him. We should also make him realize that his revelation can be more serious sin than the one committed by the Mu’min.

As a corollary to the discussion on what constitutes *Ghiība* according to the condition described, it is not obligatory to restrain the backbiter. At times it may happen that one may not be sure whether the criticism is of the permissible kind or not. In this case one should weigh the pros and cons of the situation. It is possible that the criticism is of the permissible type and by restraining the backbiter or by refuting his statements, we may do more harm, either to an individual or to a cause.

Hell and the two Tongues

Upon the conclusion of his discussion on *Ghiība* Shaykh Ansari writes in Makasib: If a person back-bites about a person but heaps excessive praises on him in his presence, the sin of his backbiting is double. In religious language he is termed 'Zul lisānīn', one having two tongues. It is absolutely *Harām* and according to traditions, "The man with two tongues will be brought on the day of Qiyāma in such a way that two tongues of fire shall be there for him."19

1. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 357
2. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
3. Makasibe Muhrima Vol. 3 page 310
4. Makasibul Muharima
5. Makasibul Muharima
6. Makasibul Muharima
7. Makasibul Muharima
8. Makasibul Muharima
9. Kashful Rabi of Shahīd al-Thani
10. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 357
11. al-Kāfi
12. Makasib Muhrima
13. Makasib, al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 358
14. Makasib Muhrima page 27, Vol. 4
15. Makasib Muhrima page 27 Vol. 4
16. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
17. Kashful Rabi
18. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
19. (Makasib Muhrima)

The Forty-second Greater Sin: Tale Telling

The second greater sin described as such due to the mention of its punishment in Qur'an and hadith is *Namīma* or Tale-telling. Shahīd Thani in Kashful Rabi and Shaykh Ansari in Makasibul Muhrima have clearly defined it to be a greater sin, and have presented many Qur'anic ayats to support their view. For example:

"And those who break asunder the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut asunder that which Allah has ordered to be joined and make mischief in the land; (as for) those, upon them shall be curse and they shall have the evil (issue) of the abode." (Surah Ra'd 13: 25)

The tale-teller listens to a thing from a person and goes to tell it to someone else. By this he has broken that which Allah (S.w.T.) had ordered to join. Instead of promoting love and unity among the believers, he creates hatred, separation and enmity. Then the curse of Allah (S.w.T.) is upon him and the punishment in the hereafter.

In Surah al-Baqarah it is mentioned that,

"…and mischief is more severe than slaughter." (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 191)

and also,

"…and mischief is greater than slaughter." (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 217)

• Evidently the tale-teller spreads mischief. In *Surah al-Qalam* Allah (S.w.T.) mentions the signs of disbelievers who become eligible for Hell in the words,

"going about in Slander."(Surah al-Qalam 68: 11)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) mentions after describing the different kinds of magic,

"Indeed the worst type of magic is tale-telling that creates separation between friends. It creates enmity among clean and pure people who were of similar views. Tale-telling leads to bloodshed, homes are destroyed and secrets are exposed. The worst creature to walk the earth is the tale-teller."1

We have already proved that magic is a greater sin. Since tale-telling is the worst form of magic, it is also a greater sin. The Prophet of Allah (S) says,

"Shall I not inform you of the most evil person among you?"

"Certainly, O Messenger of Allah", said the people.

"The worst are those who go out for tell tales, cause separation between friends and search for defects in righteous people."2

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says,

"Paradise is not allowed for those who go out to perpetrate scandals."3

The Holy Prophet (S) says,

"One who goes here there tale-telling between two people, will be sent fire by Allah in his grave which will scorch him. When he comes out from the grave a black serpent will be appointed on him which will continue to chew his flesh till he is made to enter Hell."4

He (S) also says,

"When I was on Me'raj (ascension) I saw a woman whose face was that of a pig and body of a donkey and she was being subjected to thousands of punishments."

Someone asked the Prophet (S) what her crime was. The Prophet (S) replied,

"She was tale-teller, a liar."

Wasa'il ul-Shia has recorded twelve traditions that prove tale-telling is *Harām*. All these traditions state that Paradise is forbidden for the tale-tellers.

In Surah Humaza, Allah (S.w.T.) says,

"Wael (Hell) is for every Slanderer (Humaza), defamer (Lumaza)" (Surah al-Humaza 104: 1)

Wael is a level of Hell, it can also be a well situated in Hell. It denotes most severe

punishment. Humaza means tale-telling or slander as clearly mentioned by Shahīd Thani in his book Kashful Rabi. Some scholars have also narrated the tradition that states that a tale-teller is illegitimately born.

There is no rain due to Tale-telling

When there was drought in Bani Israel, Prophet Mūsa (a.s.) prayed for rain. It was revealed to him: I shall not accept the prayers of your companions and you because there is a tale-teller amongst you who does not abstain from tale-telling. Mūsa (a.s.) beseeched Allah to tell him the name of that person so that he could be removed from the society. Allah said, "I Myself prohibit tale-telling how can I expose the tale-teller?"

On hearing this all of them repented together and the tale-teller also repented with them and finally it rained.[5]

What is Tale-Telling?

Shaykh Ansari (r.a.) has written in Makasibul Muhrima that tale-telling is *Harām* in the light of Qur'an, hadith, Ijma and Aql. It is reporting a thing a person had said about another. The person who is spoken to, goes on to the one it concerns. The Shaykh also says that till the time the concerned person is prepared to allow the information to be passed on to others, it is Tale-telling as well as *Ghiība*. The tale-teller would also suffer the punishment for *Ghiība*. And his punishment will be in proportion to the damage caused by his tale-telling.

Shahīd Thani writes in Kashful Rabi: Tale-telling is exposing the secret of the person who is bad in the eyes of one who utters it or the repetition of it, to whom it was told to another, who further repeats it to still another. They are all equally guilty. Tale-telling can be verbal or in writing or by gestures, or by action. Whether it concerns a defect or a fault or not, tale-telling is exposing confidential matters. Since it reveals secrets it can lead to undesirable or evil consequences. One should mention it only to the extent that benefits the Muslim or that which corrects his errors. For example one sees a person squandering the wealth of another. If he is called upon as a witness he must not hide the fact. But if he sees that a person has hidden his treasure in a particular place and he informs another person about it, it is tale-telling and exposing secrets. If the secret concerns personal defects of the Muslim it is also *Ghiība*.

Shahid Thani also says that there are many reasons for tale-telling. First of all to speak evil of the person and cause harm to him. Secondly to pretend loyalty and support with the one to whom he speaks. Thirdly, to exhibit humour and talkativeness.

The person to whom secrets are being told has six responsibilities. Shahīd Thani says if someone says to you, "Such and such person has mentioned such and such thing about you", or "he has criticized you, he is about to spoil your affairs and destroy you"; you have to follow six steps: First of all do not believe the story and do not accept it as true because the tale-teller is an evil-doer and the Almighty Allah says,

"If an evil-doer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it." (Surah al-Hujurāt 49: 6)

Secondly, restrain him from tale-telling and advise him against it according to Allah (S.w.T.)'s command,

“and enjoin the good and forbid the evil.” (Surah Luqmān 31:17)

Thirdly, for the pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.) we must consider him an enemy because Allah (S.w.T.) Himself considers him an enemy and enmity with the enemy of Allah (S.w.T.) is *Wajib*.

Fourthly, do not harbour misunderstanding against your believer brother due to this tale-telling because the Almighty says,

“Avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin.” (Surah al-Hujurāt 49: 12)

Fifthly, do not take any action as soon as you hear the tale-teller and start investigation against the person about whom he has spoken because Allah (S.w.T.) says. “And do not spy.” That is, do not start spying on people on the basis of suspicion.

Sixthly, do not consider tale-telling as something good for you and do not fall into this habit yourself. You should also not pass on these things to others because you shall also become a tale-teller and a back-biter. The Shahīd has quoted an incident in Kashful Rabi: There was a scholar who had a friend, who had come to meet him after a long time. During the conversation the friend mentioned an unpleasant remark a person had passed about this scholar. When the scholar heard this he said, “You have come to me after such a long time but you have brought Three types of ‘mistrusts’. First of all you have driven a wedge between me and that person, secondly you have involved me in useless thoughts that I was hitherto free from. Thirdly you have proved yourself a betrayer of trust.

The Shahīd has said that there is a very high possibility that a person who tells tales to you about someone would also tell tales regarding you. So do not consider him trustworthy. How beautifully a poet has worded the following couplet: “One who tells you the defects of others will surely take your defects to him as gifts.”

The Shahīd has quoted another incident: A man was selling a slave and saying that he had no defects except that he is a tale-teller. The buyer agreed to purchase him and took him home. The slave told the man’s wife. “Your husband loves you no more and he is planning to get a slave-girl so when he goes to sleep you cut off some hair from his beard with a sword that I may use them in a magic potion so that he will again be attached towards you.”

On the other hand he told his master that his wife was having an illicit affair with another man and was planning to kill him while he was asleep. So he should pretend to be asleep and see what she does.

The master agreed and pretended to be asleep. After a while the wife approached with a sword and got hold of his whiskers. The man was convinced that she has come to cut his throat. He jumped up and with that same sword killed the wife. The wife’s relatives revenged her murder by killing her husband. Later the relatives of the husband engaged in the massacre of the wife’s kin. Thus there was untold bloodshed. All as a consequence of tale telling.

1. Ihtijaj Vol. 2 page 82
2. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 369
3. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 369
4. Sawābul A’māl page 335

5. Wasa'il ul-Shia

The Forty-third Greater Sin: Insulting a Believer

The forty-third sin promised Divine Chastisement is insulting a believer, degrading him, defaming him, abusing or taunting him. Insulting a believer in any manner is *Harām* whether it is in jest or by way of abuse or criticism, or in relation with his defects; or by scolding or reprimanding him or considering him lowly and debasing him, denouncing him, taunting him or hurting his feelings in any way.

A Believer is Deserving of Honour and Respect

In the ayats and traditions recorded on the subject of a believer's honour, Allah (S.w.T.) has made a special mention of utmost honour and respect that a believer deserves and which has to be accorded to him.

His dishonour is equated with murder. Allah (S.w.T.) has given a high status to the believer by associating him with Himself as seen from the following ayats.

"Allah is the guardian of those who believe." (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 257)

"That is because Allah is the Protector of those who believe." (Surah Muhammad 47: 11)

"and helping the believers is ever incumbent on Us." (Surah ar-Rūm 30: 47)

Allah (S.w.T.) has exalted the honour of the believer by mentioning him with His honourable Prophet (S),

"and to Allah belongs the might and to His Apostle and to the believers." (Surah al-Munāfiqūn 63: 8)

Allah (S.w.T.) has considered a believer the best of men,

"(As for) those who believe and do good, surely they are the-best of men." (Surah al-Bayyina 98: 7)

The chief of the Messengers (S) is commanded to deal with them with respect,

"And be kind to him who follows you of the believers." (Surah Ash-Shūrā 26: 215)

Allah (S.w.T.) has also commanded the Prophet (S),

"And when those who believe in Our communications come to you, say: Peace be on you" (Surah al-An'ām 6: 54)

Allah (S.w.T.) has made His mercy incumbent for the believers,

"Your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself," (Surah al-An'ām 6: 54)

Allah (S.w.T.) has mentioned Himself to be the buyer of the life and property of believers,

"Surely Allah has bought of the believers their persons and their property." (Surah at-Tawba 9: 111)

Allah (S.w.T.) has called a believer His friend,

"He shall love them and they shall love Him." (Surah al-Mā'ida 5: 54)

"and those who believe are stronger in love for Allah." (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 165)

Since Allah (S.w.T.) associates Himself with a believer, anyone who insults a believer has shown disrespect to Allah (S.w.T.). According to Tafsīr it means not only to love Allah (S.w.T.), but also to love what Allah (S.w.T.) loves and to hate what Allah (S.w.T.) hates, for the sake of Allah (S.w.T.) and in the cause of Allah (S.w.T.).

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

"Indeed Allah has made the believer an example of His Greatness and Power. So one who taunts a believer or rejects his request, he has actually rejected the command of Allah."[1]

Imam Mūsa al-Kadhim (a.s.) stood before the Ka'ba and said,

"O Ka'ba! How great is your right. By Allah the right of a believer exceeds yours."[2]

This shows how serious a crime it is to insult a believer. Given below are some ayats and traditions on this subject.

Making Fun

It is a serious sin to make fun of a believer's actions, traits or habits in a manner that people find it funny and laugh. Whether it is done verbally or by actions or gestures, there is no doubt that such a behaviour will be severely punished.

Allah (S.w.T.) says in Surah at-*Tawba*,

"They who taunt those of the faithful who give their alms freely, and those who give to the extent of their earnings and scoff at them; Allah will pay them back their scoffings and they shall have a painful chastisement." (Surah at-Tawba 9: 79)

According to traditions the circumstances of revelation (Shān al-Nuzūl) of this ayat are as follows: During the Battle of Tabuk the Holy Prophet (S) announced that people should donate as much as they can to cover the cost of this Battle. The affluent people donated large amounts and the poor gave whatever little they could. A companion by the name of Abu Aqīl Ansari brought 1.75 sīr of dates and said, "I have laboured from last night till morning and received 3.5 sīr of dates. Half I left for my family and the other half for Allah." The hypocrites began to make fun of both the types of people and began to find faults with them. For those who donated more, they said that they have given such large amounts to show off their wealth and for those who could contribute little, they said: They want to be included among the philanthropist, or they wanted people to consider them at the time of

giving charity.

Those who have made fun of believers in this world will be laughed at in the hereafter and their abode will be hell. After the accounting all the believers will be bestowed their places in paradise and the unbelievers will be lying in Hell. Then a door will open towards Paradise and the unbelievers and hypocrites will rush towards it and see the believers in luxurious surroundings. They shall try to enter but the door would slam abruptly and the believers will burst out laughing. This is their recompense for making fun of the believers in the world.

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“Those who make fun will be brought on the day of Qiyāma and a door will be opened towards Paradise. He would be told to enter it fast. Full of grief and misery, as soon as he tries to enter it the door will slam shut and another door will open on the other side. He would be told enter quickly, but as soon as he reaches it they will shut that door also. He will continue in this struggle but he would not be able to enter any of the doors. At last he would lose all hope and now when he is called, he shall decline.”[3]

The Almighty Allah says,

“Surely they who are guilty used to laugh at those who believe.

And when they passed by them, they winked at one another. And when they returned to their own followers they returned exulting. And when they saw them, they said: Most surely these are in error; And they were not sent to be keepers over them. So today those who believe shall laugh at the unbelievers.” (Surah al-Mutaffifin 83: 29-34)

“O you who believe! Let not (one) people laugh at (another) people perchance they may be better than they, nor let women (laugh) at (other) women, perchance they may be better than they; and do not find fault with your own people nor call one another by nick names.” (Surah al-Hujurāt 49: 11)

It is quoted in *Tafsīr Majmaul Bayan* that whenever Thabit bin Qays came to the Holy Prophet’s assembly people used to make way for him and allow him to sit nearest to the Prophet (a.s.) because he was hard of hearing. One day in morning payers he managed to get a place only in the last row. After the prayers he got up and stepping over other people went towards the Messenger of Allah (S) when there remained only one person between him and the Prophet, he said, “Let me go, so that I can sit near the Messenger (S).” The man in between told him to sit where he was. Thabit was angry but he sat down and when it was light he saw the man’s face he asked him who he was. When the man told him his name Thabit said, “So and so, son of so and so’ and mentioned the name of his mother who was notorious for her loose morals before the advent of Islam.

The person was very much ashamed at this and he lowered his head in disgrace. It was then that the above verse was revealed.

Regarding women, the verse was revealed because Ayesha used to make fun of Umm Salama who had a loose cummerbund which dragged behind as she walked saying, “the loose end is like the dog rolling out his tongue”. Also the women used to taunt the wife of the Holy Prophet (S), Safiya, daughter of Huyy Ibn Akhtab calling her “daughter of a Jew.”

Abuse and Taunt

The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

“Abusing a believer is like throwing oneself into destruction.”4

Abusing is associating evil things with the believers and using inappropriate language with respect to them. In legal terminology accusing someone falsely of adultery or illegitimacy is Qažaf, which has been dealt with in the previous part. Other evil allegations like calling him usurer, drunkard, accursed, betrayer of trust, donkey, dog, pig, transgressor, evil doer etc. with the intention of disgracing him, is abuse.

The Prophet (S) also said,

“Abusing a believer is transgression. Fighting him is infidelity and devouring his flesh (doing his Ghiība) is a sin and his wealth has the sanctity like his blood.”5

This hadith indicates that the sin of abusing a Mu’min is more serious than *Ghiība*. This is so because abuse is more hurtful than *Ghiība*. *Ghiība* is done behind a person’s back but abuse in his presence shows contempt and humiliates him.

The Worst Death

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says,

“One who taunts a believer on his face will die the most terrible death. And he has moved in such a direction from where there is no return to goodness.”6

Allamah Majlisi explains that the worst death could be with regard to this world, like death by drowning, by fire or getting killed in house collapse, or being devoured by wild animals etc. With respect to the Hereafter it could be dying as an infidel, or to die without repenting for ones sins. According to Allamah Majlisi the word “goodness” in the tradition indicates the act of seeking forgiveness or doing good deeds while one is a believer.

Sometimes the Oppressed one Becomes an Oppressor

Two people were abusing each other. Imam Mūsa Ibn Ja’far (a.s.) said,

“The one who initiates abuse is the greater oppressor, carrying the sin of himself and the other person around his neck, till the time the oppressed does not exceed the limit. If he exceeds the first abuser in replying to his abusing he would himself be responsible for the sin.”7

Explaining this tradition, Allamah Majlisi says that the sin of both the persons is carried by the one who initiates abusing, because he was the first one to commit the sin which led to the other person also follow his footsteps. If he had not initiated it in the first place the other person would have remained silent. Abusing in retaliation is a sin, but the guilt is borne by the first person, if the second one does not exceed the limit. If he does so, he becomes as much a sinner as the first one.

Exceeding the Limit in abusing

Exceeding the limit may be uttering the bad word twice. For example the first person says, O, Dog! And the others says ‘O Dog! O Dog!’ Sometimes excess is reached by using a more serious abuse. For Example, in reply to ‘O Donkey’ he say, ‘O Dog!’ Both sins are upon the first person only when the second one retaliates with the same or similar type of abuse. It is not unlikely that it could be with regard to the case when a person abuses with words like O Adulterer! Or O thief! Now when the person uttering abuse first of all is not a thief, naturally he cannot be called as such in reply. Thus, in abusing the other person should limit himself to words like ‘Stupid, ‘ignorant’, ‘unjust’ and ‘misguided’ etc.

Paradise is not Allowed for the Sharp-tongued

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“Indeed Allah has not permitted Paradise for any shameless abuser who has no qualms about saying anything or what is being said to him, because if investigation is conducted he shall be found to be illegitimately born or Satan was involved in his origin”.

People asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah, how can Shaitan get a share in their birth?”

He (S) replied,

“Have you not read the words of Allah,

‘(O Satan!) Share with them in wealth and children.” (Surah al-‘Isrā’, 17: 64)

Allamah Majlisi has related from Shaykh Bahai that it implies that for a time Paradise is prohibited for him or a particular Paradise is prohibited for him, a Paradise which is denied to him but available for those believers who do not abuse. The following traditions are also narrated on this subject.

Sama says that he came to Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq who began the conversation, *“O Sama!” what is it that I have heard between you and your camel driver? See that you do not become an abuser and curser.”*

Sama replied, “Yes! What you have heard is correct. He had been unjust on me.”

Imam (a.s.) said,

“If he has oppressed you, you have also become his equal and you oppressed more. Indeed this action is not from my behaviour and neither do I advise my Shias to do like that. Ask your Lord for forgiveness and do not repeat this act.”[8]

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“If one taunts a Muslim even with a single word, Allah prohibits the fragrance of Paradise for him. Though the fragrance of Paradise is perceived even at a distance of 500 years travel.”[9]

It is necessary to mention a couple of points here. One is that when a person curses a believer and hurts his feelings, in addition to the punishment he would receive in the

hereafter, the Mu'min can complain about him to the religious judge who would punish him at his discretion for the abuse he had uttered against the Mu'min. As mentioned in the discussion of Qažaf if the abuser pleads to the one he had abused to forgive him and makes him happy, there is no penal action against him. Secondly, if he regrets his deed and begs for Divine forgiveness the punishment of the Hereafter shall be condoned for him.

Abusing Anyone

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"Cursing and abusing is from cruelty and cruelty is punishable by hell."10

The Late Muhaqqiq Muhammad Taqi Shirazi (r.a.) writes on the margins of Makasib: According to traditions obscene abuse is *Harām*. No matter to whom it is addressed. Whether to a Muslim and Mu'min or to a Kafir and a Sinner, whether young or old. Even if he is a child unable to understand. In fact, some traditions prohibit cursing and abusing the beasts of burden also.

Prohibition of Retaliating to an Abuse with Abuse

It is explained in Tafsīrul Mizan, that we should show respect for the sacred objects and personalities of other religions. If we vilify the idols of the polytheists, they will retaliate by insulting the holy aspects of Islam. In such a case the Mu'min who had initiated the abuse will be responsible for the disrespect shown to Islam and Allah (S.w.T.).

Also it is *Harām* to abuse a non-Shia or Kafir, because he may respond by abusing and cursing you, or any other believer.

This is clearly prohibited in Qur'an,

"And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance." (Surah al-An'ām 6: 108)

Insulting and Degrading a Believer

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"One who considers a Mu'min lowly due to his poverty and destitution will be degraded before the people by Allah on the day of Qiyāma."11

The Imam (a.s.) also said,

"One who belittles a Mu'min, whether poor or rich, will be considered disgraceful and an enemy by Allah till he does not refrain from it."

(al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 351)

Imam (a.s.) has also mentioned that on the day of Qiyāma an announcer will call out: where are those who turned away their faces from My friend? Upon this, some people will stand up, who would not have flesh on their faces. It will be said: They are the ones who troubled the believers and opposed them, they bore enmity to them and because of their faith they oppressed them. After this they shall be ordered to be tossed into Hell.12

Another tradition says,

“Allah indeed says that one who insults a friend of Mine has raised a standard of revolt against Me and I am the most efficient in helping My friends.”13

Abu Harūn says that I was sitting in the assembly of Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) when Imam (a.s.) asked the people sitting there, *“Why do you insult me?”* A man from Khorasan stood up and said, “We seek Allah’s refuge from this! That we insult your respected self or anything connected with you.” Imam (a.s.) said,

“Yes! Indeed, you are one of those who have insulted me.”

“Refuge of Allah! I have never insulted your respected self.”

Imam (a.s.) continued,

“I pity you. Is it not true that when we were near Juhfa a man had approached you and requested you to carry him on your animal for some distance because he was dead tired and unable to walk anymore? And you did not even raise your head to look at him and neither did you pay any heed! You considered him lowly and one who considers a believer lowly has insulted me and has not accorded respect to the Almighty.”14

Criticising and Exposing a Believer

Imam Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Sadiq (a.s.) have said,

“The deed that brings one very close to infidelity is that a person considers someone his brother in faith but he keeps track of his defects and misdeeds so that one day he can use them to criticise the believer.”15

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“O those people! Who have accepted Islam (become Muslims) by tongue but sincere belief (Imān) has not entered your hearts. Do not criticise the Muslims and do not search for their faults, because Allah will search for the faults of those who search for defects in the believers. And whoever’s faults He searches, will be degraded by Him, even if he had committed the bad deed in his house.”

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) remarked,

“Allah will denounce and degrade one who denounces and degrades a believer.”16

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“One who exposes an indecency is like the one who has committed it and one who curses and criticises a believer for a bad deed will himself fall into the same sin before he leaves this world.”17

It should be clear that prohibition on criticism and Nahy Anil Munkar are not contradictory. Nahy Anil Munkar is constructive criticism which is actually good advice given to a believer in faith, out of concern for him, and in order to help him get rid of his bad traits. Whereas malicious criticism only serves to degrade and expose the believer.

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“One who relates something about a believer to expose his defects and insults him so that he falls in the estimation of people will be deprived of Allah’s friendship and guardianship. Allah will push him under the guardianship of Shaitan but Shaitan will also refuse to accept him.”[18]

Commenting on this tradition Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) says that it may be relating an incident which proves the lack of intelligence or weakness of judgement of the believer, or Shaitan’s refusal to accept him, means that Shaitan is no longer interested in this person. Shaitan’s aim is to deviate the people, so that they lose the guardianship (love and friendship) of Allah (S.w.T.). Since this purpose is already accomplished, Shaitan has no further interest.

Muhammad Ibn Fuzail says that he asked Imam Mūsa Ibn Ja’far (a.s.), “May I be sacrificed for you, I hear a thing about my believing brother that is unpleasant. After this I ask my brother that I heard such and such thing regarding him, if it was true, and he denies it. Whereas a very reliable person had informed me about it?”

Imam (a.s.) said,

“Belie your eyes and your ears with regard to your brother, that is ignore it by saying: My eyes and ears have fooled me, even if fifty people report something about your brother and he denies it. You must accept his veracity and belie them. That is, say, ‘They may be mistaken’, and do not say anything that will expose his defects and degrade him. Because if you do so, you shall be included among the people about whom the Qur’an says: “Those who like scandal to spread among the believers. There is severe chastisement for them in the world and the Hereafter.”[19]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

“One who moves out to expose the defects of his brother has taken the first step towards Hell. And Allah will expose his hidden defects on the day of Qiyāma.”[20]

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“Allah will keep in a place of Hell where there is blood and puss a person who relates an anecdote regarding his believing brother which exposes his faults and degrades him.”

(It is the place in Hell where blood and puss from the organs of fornication collect.)[21]

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“If one is aware of a sinful act of a believer and instead of concealing it, he reveals it to the people and does not pray for the believer’s forgiveness, he shall be in the view of Allah same as one who has himself committed that sin and is eligible for its punishment. The actual sinner will receive salvation because the worldly degradation was enough as an expiation of his sin and he will not suffer humiliation in the hereafter because Allah is very kind, He does not punish twice for the same sin, and neither can he humiliate someone twice.”[22]

In effect the punishment of the hereafter will be transferred to the account of those who expose this evil act. Many more traditions are quoted in this connection but the above mentioned should suffice.

Insulting a Mu’min in Prose or Poetry

Shaykh Ansari says that insulting a believer is *Harām* in the light of Qur’an, hadith, Ijma and Aql (reason), because in it are included exposure of defects, taunts, *Ghība*, criticism and betraying of secrets; and each of them is a mortal sin. Therefore the evils of all those deeds are included in it. If one mentions something bad that is not present in the believer it is also ‘*Bukhtān*’ (allegation).

It does not matter whether the believer is sinful or sinless, it is *Harām* to criticise a believer. The traditions which are narrated regarding the criticism of the transgressors apply to unbelievers or those who commit indecencies openly. Criticising a defect of the one who introduces an innovation with the intention, that this should serve as a warning to people not to be fooled by him, is allowed.

Hurting the Feelings of a Believer

Allah (S.w.T.) says in Surah al-Ahzāb,

“And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly, bear (on themselves) a calumny and a glaring sin.” (Surah al-Ahzāb 33: 58)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) remarks that Allah (S.w.T.) says,

“One who hurts My believing slave has actually declared war against Me and one who honours My believing servant remains safe from My anger.” (al-Kāfi)

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“One who annoys a believer annoys me and one who annoys me annoys Allah and one who annoys Allah is accursed according to Taurat, Injīl, Zabūr and Qur’an.” And according to another tradition, “He is cursed by Allah, the Angels and all the people.”[23]

He (S) also says,

“One who aggrieves a believer but later desires to atone for it by offering the whole world it will not compensate for the hurt he had caused and the donor will also not be rewarded.”

Also mentioned by the Prophet (S) is,

“One who hurts a Mu’min for no fault of his, it is as if he has demolished the Holy Ka’ba and Baitul Ma’mūr ten times and slaughter Allah’s 1000 proximate angels.”[24]

This hadith indicates that the honour of a believer is ten times that of the Ka’ba and Baitul Ma’mūr and a thousand times that of the Angels.

Terrible Punishment for Annoying the Neighbours

Another group of people, hurting whom is most sinful are neighbours. Annoying them is *Harām* and deserving of chastisement in the world and the hereafter.

An Ansar (emigrant) came to the Holy Prophet (S) and said that he has recently purchased a house in a particular area and that his nearest person was such that he had no hope of

any goodness from him and that he felt unsafe from his mischief. The Messenger of Allah (S) told ‘Ali (a.s.), Salman, Abu Zar and Miqdad to go to the Mosque and announce: “He is not a believer whose neighbour is unsafe from his mischief.” They announced it thrice and then the Messenger of Allah (S) pointed towards forty doors to his right and forty to the left indicating that forty houses in every direction constitute ones neighbourhood. One is obliged to observe their rights.25

The following tradition is mentioned in the Mushaf of Fatemah Zahra (S):

“One who believes in Allah and the last day will not hurt his neighbour, he honours the guest and either he speaks good or remains silent.”26

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“One who does not behave well with his neighbours is not one of us.”27

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“Allah will deprive from the fragrance of Paradise one who hurts his neighbour. His abode shall be Hell and what terrible abode it is! And one who fails to fulfill the rights of a neighbour is not one of us. Jibrīl has emphasized so often on the rights of the neighbours that I thought they shall be included among one’s inheritors.”28

The Holy Prophet (S) has also said that one who annoys his neighbour and whose neighbour is not safe from his mischief will not be able to enter Paradise. The Prophet (S) said during the expedition of Tabuk,

“Those who cause harm to their neighbours should not accompany us.”29

One day the companions told the Messenger of Allah (S) that such and such woman fasts during the day and prays during the night, gives alms but hurts her neighbour by her sharp tongue. The Holy Prophet (S) said,

“There is no virtue in this woman. She is from the inmates of Hell.”

Then the people said, “Such and such woman just prays the *Wajib* prayers and fasts during the month of Ramadhan but she never troubles her neighbours.” The Prophet (S) said,

“She is among those who deserve Paradise.”

The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

“There are Three categories of neighbours. First: one who has Three rights upon you. This is the one who is a Muslim and also a relative. Second: One who has two rights. A Muslim neighbour and third: The Kafir neighbour who has only the rights of a neighbour.”30

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“Accursed! Accursed is the one who hurts his neighbour.”31

Imam (a.s.) also says that when Benjamin went away from Hazrat Yaqūb (a.s.) he said to Allah (S.w.T.): O Allah! You have not dealt with Mercy! That you have taken away my son and rendered me visually impaired. Allah revealed to him: If I have killed him I make alive once more and unite him to you. But you also recall the sheep that you had roasted for

dinner while your neighbour had fasted and was in hunger. You did not give him anything.32

Another tradition says that after this it was the practice of Yaqūb (a.s.) to announce every morning through a caller within a radius of Three miles around his house that whosoever wanted breakfast can have it from his house and similarly in the evening it was announced that whosoever wanted dinner could have it from the house of Yaqūb (a.s.).

There are many more traditions dealing with this topic, but traditions already mentioned clearly indicate the extreme significance of the rights that neighbours have over us.

Rights of Neighbours

We must behave with them with kindness. Do not delay doing a good deed towards him. Do not be miserly in fulfilling his needs. Consider him a partner in your wealth. Say salām to him. Do not pry into his secrets. Visit him when he is sick. Comfort him in calamities and share his sorrow. Wish him on auspicious occasions. If you learn of any of his defects, keep it confidential. Forgive him his mistakes. Do not object if he wants to do something on the partition wall. If he wants to lay some pipe or drain through the neighbouring field, do not restrain him. Do not fall short in giving him anything for the household needs. Do not eye the spouse and family of your neighbour.

Do not neglect his house in his absence. Be kind to his children. Guide them by teaching the good things of the life and the hereafter. Help if he requests for help. Lend him money if he needs it. Do not raise the height of your house without his permission, due to which the airy atmosphere of his house will suffer. You must send him something from the delicacies purchased by you for your own family. If you cannot give them, consume it secretly so that the neighbour's children do not become aware of it and desire it.

Troubling the spouse

The Messenger of Allah (S) says that Allah (S.w.T.) does not accept the Prayers and good deeds of a wife who troubles her husband, till the time she fulfils the rights of her husband and makes him happy. Even if she fasts everyday, frees slaves and donates millions in charity she will be the first one to enter Hell. After this he (S) said the same will be the fate of the husband who troubles his wife. A husband who bears the bad behaviour of his wife and seeks Allah (S.w.T.)'s help in bearing it is rewarded with the reward of Ayyub's (a.s.) patience, every time he is patient with his wife. As regards the wife she would be accumulating sins equal to the particles of sand in a desert, every twenty four hours. If she dies without making up with her husband and earning his satisfaction, she would be thrown headlong into the lowest level of Hell with the hypocrites. A wife who does not agree with her husband, is not content with the expenses he gives her, pressurizes him and forces him for something he is not capable of, the Almighty will not accept even her deeds which can save her from the fire of Hell. Allah (S.w.T.) will continue to be wrathful with her till she reforms herself.33

Annoying a Beggar

The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says in Surah al-Baqarah,

"O you who believe! Do not make your charity worthless by reproach and injury."

(Surah al-Baqarah 2: 264)

Allah (S.w.T.) also says,

"Kind speech and forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury." (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 263)

Like hurting the person by turning ones face away or behaving curtly, or in return for the alms, to force a person to do some labour; or make the charity public and cause him humiliation. Tradition says,

"Those who boast of favours after they have done kindness will not enter Paradise."34

In another tradition it is mentioned that,

"Those who boast for being kind on deprived people are cursed in the world and the hereafter. One who does good to his siblings and parents and thinks it as a favour and mentions it, is far from the mercy of Allah (S.w.T.) and His angels and he is near Hell-fire. His supplications are not accepted. His desires are not fulfilled and Allah (S.w.T.) does not look at him with mercy in the life and the hereafter."

1. Wasa'il ul-Shia, vol. 8 page 612
2. Safinatun Behar Vol. 1 page 290
3. Muhajjatul Baiza Vol. 5 page 326
4. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 359
5. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 360
6. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 360
7. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 359
8. al-Kāfi
9. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
10. al-Kāfi
11. al-Kāfi
12. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 352
13. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 351
14. Wasa'il ul-Shia
15. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 354
16. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 356
17. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 356
18. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 359
19. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 7 page 609
20. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 7. page 602
21. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
22. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
23. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
24. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
25. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 666
26. al-Kāfi Vol. 6 page 667
27. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 668
28. Wasa'il ul-Shia vol. 8 page 488
29. Wasa'il ul-Shia
30. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
31. al-Kāfi
32. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
33. Wasa'il ul-Shia
34. Layali al-Akhbar

The Forty-fourth Greater Sin: Intrigue, Deception and Breaking Covenants

The forty-fourth sin which will be punished by damnation in Hell is intrigue, deception and failure to observe covenants etc. In the book al-Kāfi, Book of Imān and Kufr, six traditions are mentioned under the chapter, 'Intrigue, Deception and Breaking covenants.' Here we shall quote two of them.

Hazrat Amir ul-Mu'minīn (a.s.) says,

"If the punishment for intrigue and deception had not been Hell, I would have been the greatest plotter (of intrigue) among the people." 1

He (a.s.) also said,

"Indeed, breaking covenants, sinfulness, misappropriation; all of them are punished by Hell."2

Wasa'il ul-Shia records a prophetic tradition saying that we must never cheat or deceive Muslims. According to Jibrīl (a.s.) a cheater and deceiver belongs to Hell. Then the Messenger of Allah (S) says,

"One who cheats a Muslim or misappropriates his property is not from us."

Other traditions on the topic are also mentioned in the books, *Wasa'il ul-Shia* and *Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il*. When people suggested to Amir ul-Mu'minīn (a.s.) that he should allow Muawiyah the post of governor till he ('Ali) was Caliph so that there would be no danger from Muawiyah, 'Ali (a.s.) said,

"Those who deceive, cheat and break covenants; all of them belong to Hell."3

Meanings of Intrigue, Cheating and Breaking Covenant

Breaking Covenants has been dealt with in detail in the chapter of the Twenty-first Greater Sin. Intrigue and cheating both mean to do some evil to a person in such a way that he is not able to understand. That is a person apparently does good to another but in reality works to his detriment. Or the person pretends to love and have regard for another but in reality bears enmity and malice for him in his heart. Or the person acts as if he has nothing to do with another but as soon as he gets the chance he causes harm. Cheating and deception are hypocritical, two-coloured, double crossing acts, with an outward show of goodness but concealed evil. Cheating and deception can be practised with regard to Allah (S.w.T.), His Messenger (S) and the Imam (a.s.) and secondly, with respect to the people.

Cheating and Tricking with Allah (S.w.T.)

The worst type of cheating is that which the hypocrites do against Allah (S.w.T.). These people make an outward appearance of accepting Islam and having Imān but inwardly they

conceal their kufr. Allah (S.w.T.) says about them,

"They desire to deceive Allah and those who believe, and they deceive only themselves and they do not perceive." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:9)

Obviously no one can deceive Allah (S.w.T.), as He is aware of all things. Deceiving Allah (S.w.T.) means, deceiving the Holy Prophet (S) and the believers, is equivalent to deceiving Allah (S.w.T.). Or it may be said that the hypocrites think that they can fool Allah (S.w.T.) by merely repeating the formula of faith, verbally, while they carry Kufr in their hearts. By doing so they are not harming the Holy Prophet (S) or the believers, but depriving themselves of righteousness and salvation. They invite upon themselves disgrace in this life and chastisement in the hereafter. Another way by which the hypocrites think they can fool Allah (S.w.T.) is by praying to show off. This subject has been discussed in detail in the chapter on 'Shirk'.

False Claims of Spiritual Status

Included in cheating Allah (S.w.T.) is the false claim of having special spiritual powers and a high religious status, whereas in reality they do not even have, for example, Patience, thankfulness, reliance, love, satisfaction, submission, sincerity. For example a person says that he only worships Allah (S.w.T.), his creator, whereas he follows the path of Shaitan, or he says 'Allah is the Greatest', while at the same time considering wealth and worldly position more important. If he is told to give up a sin for the sake of Allah (S.w.T.) or to pay the obligatory taxes for the sake of Allah (S.w.T.), he will not be ready but he will give it up if he finds that it comes in the way of his worldly attainment. Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"When you recite the Takbir (Allahu Akbar) for prayers you should consider all the things between Tharā and Tharya small in comparison to Allah's greatness."

When a person says Allah is the Greatest and Allah sees that what he is saying is not true He says, "O Liar! Are you trying to fool Me? By My Might and Majesty I shall deprive you of the sweetness of My remembrance and the taste of My nearness and invocation."[4]

Cheating the Holy Personalities

A person claims to have love and respect for Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) and claims that he is a friend with their friends and enemies towards their enemy, but in reality there is no sincerity in his claim, because he does not follow in their footsteps and goes against their teachings.

Tricking the People

Cheating, cunning, fraud and deception are different types of qualities common in those people who are not worried about the hereafter. All of them are Harām and Greater Sins. The more harmful they are, the more is the severity of these crimes and the more severe the punishment. The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says in Surah Fāt'ir,

"and the evil plans shall not beset any save the authors of it." (Surah Fāt'ir 35: 43)

Whenever a person plans evil for other, evil befalls him and he himself will face problems if

he desires problems for others. Every kind of trickery and cheating causes disgrace to the cheater and trickster. The cheater has to suffer in the lowermost level of Hell due to this crime and the one whom he cheated receives great rewards for having undergone hardships and is granted a high position in this world and the hereafter. Thus we usually see that the cheat is disgraced in the world and he himself suffers the damage caused by this deed. According to Tafsīrul Mizan the following saying was common among the Arabs: One who digs a hole for his brother; Allah (S.w.T.) throws him headlong into it. A similar proverb is present in Persian also: Do not do evil to anyone the same evil will turn towards you.

Double Crossing and Treason

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“One who meets the Muslims with a double face and double tongue will come in Qiyāma in such a way that there will be two tongues of fire for him.”5

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says,

“How evil is the person who is hypocritical and two-faced. He praises his brother on the face but maligns him behind his back and eats his flesh (Does his Ghiība). If his brother is bestowed some bounty he is jealous, if he is in some calamity he deserts him and does not help him.”6

The Messenger of Allah (S) says that the double – faced person will come in Qiyāma in such a way that he would be hanging out his tongue and a flame of fire protruding from them will be scorching his body. It is said: This the one who was double faced and double-tongued in the world and he shall be recognized due to the chastisement that he has to bear. Similarly the Holy Prophet (S) said that the hypocrite who has two faces and two tongues in the world will be having two faces and two tongues in the hereafter.

Bluffing

There is an interesting incident in Tafsīr Minhajus Sadiqīn to illustrate a person who tries to be a blatant cheat. Two friends had collected some money. They decided to hide it below a tree lest it is stolen from them. When night fell one of the two came to the tree and took away the money. The next morning when both came together and found the money missing the one who had stolen it caught the collar of the other and said: You must have stolen it because no one else had seen us hiding it. The poor fellow swore he was innocent but the thief took him to court.

The judge asked him if he could provide a witness. He said the tree will testify for him. That night the thief told his brother to hide in the hollow of the tree and when the judge comes in the morning he should blame the other person for having taken the money. So when the judge came in the morning and asked the tree to testify, the thief’s brother shouted from inside blaming the other person for stealing the money. The judge sensed foul play for trees do not usually speak. He ordered that it should be set afire so that it will not be a cause for mischief. It was set on fire. The thief was worried but kept quiet. When it was unbearable he began to scream and shout. The people pulled out the thief’s brother half-dead from the hollow trunk. When the judge asked him he confessed the truth. The judge took away the money and gave it to the falsely accused and the thief was given a tough sentence.

Muhaddith Jazaeri writes in his book Zahra Rabi an interesting anecdote. There was a man in Isfahan who used to beat his wife but unfortunately she succumbed to his beating though he had not intended to kill her. But when she was dead he became fearful of her relatives. In a state of anxiety he came out of his house and met an acquaintance to whom he posed his problem. The friend told him to invite a young man to his house and behead him and put the severed head next to his wife's corpse. Then he could tell the wife's relatives that he had found them together in bed and was not able to control his ire and slew them both. The man liked the idea and sat at the doorway in anticipation of a young man. After some time a handsome youth passed by his house. He invited him inside and beheaded him. Then he summoned the wife's relatives and told them the concocted story. They were satisfied but the person who had devised this plan had a teenaged son who did not reach home that day. The man was worried and when the son failed to turn up he came to the house of the one whom he had offered evil advice and asked him if he carried out the plan suggested by him. 'Yes', said he and took him near the dead bodies. He was shocked when he saw that the youth he had killed was his own son. His evil advice caused the death of his own son. The moral of this story is that one who digs a pit for others falls into it himself. History is replete with such incidents.

A similar incident is mentioned in the book Mujjatul Baiza. It concerns jealousy as well as trickery and we have mentioned it in the chapter of jealousy.

What is the Meaning of Two tongued and Two faced?

There are many types of hypocrites.

a) It is a person who says two opposite things. He is always on the look-out for worldly benefits and he makes contradictory statements. For example after accepting something he rejects it. Or after testifying to something he changes his testimony. Or he praises someone in his presence but maligns him behind his back.

b) Double faced and double tongued is the one who meets two opposing parties and expresses his solidarity with both of them.

c) A person who tells two enemies who speak against one another, what each has said against another. It is worse than tale-telling, because tale-telling is one-way. But the one who does this is a two-tongued person.

d) A person who meets two people who are hostile to each other, and to each he praises his foe. This is also double tongued behaviour.

e) To promise help and assistance to two opposing parties.

All the above examples are of hypocrites but if one meets two opposing parties and is friendly to both of them and praises both of them without conveying what each had said about the other, it is not hypocrisy.

Adulteration is also a type of fraud

One type of fraud is to resort to adulteration. Adulteration is mixing two things such that it is not detectable. For example, mixing water in milk, or to mix the same thing of two different qualities (e.g. fine rice with coarse rice) and to sell it saying it all of higher quality.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says that one day the Messenger of Allah (S) was passing through the market. He saw a grain seller selling food grains (wheat or barley). He said it was of a good quality. But revelation descended on him and he put his hand deep inside the sack and drew out grain of low quality. The man had topped the sack with high quality grain to fool the customers. The Holy Prophet (S) was angry and he said,

“You have done Khayanat with Muslims and practiced adulteration.”7

He (S) also said,

“One who resorts to adulteration in his dealings with Muslims is not a Muslim. He shall be raised with the Jews on the day of Judgement. Because the Jews are the most common adulterators with Muslims.”8

The Prophet of Allah (S) says that one who sleeps with the intention of practicing adulteration with his brother (the next day), sleeps with the displeasure of Allah (S.w.T.). He begins his day while Allah (S.w.T.) is angry with him. Allah (S.w.T.) continues to be wrathful with him till he does not repent and give up adulteration. If he dies without repenting he dies a death of a non-Muslim. After this he (S) said thrice,

“Know that! One who adulterates with Muslims is not of Muslim. And Allah removes barakat from the sustenance of one who adulterates with his Muslim brother. Allah stops his sustenance and leaves him to Himself.9

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) told a flour seller to keep aloof from adulteration because one who practiced adulteration will himself be a victim of adulteration. If he has no wealth to be adulterated there will be adulteration with his family.

(Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 12 page 210)

There are many traditions on this subject some of which have been described by us in the chapter of cheating in business.

Selling at Exorbitant Rates is Also Fraud

Like adulteration, selling at a much higher rate to a person who is ignorant of its actual value, is also a type of fraud.

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“To cheat a person who is unaware of the actual value of goods is soht.”10

As we have seen “Soht” is described in the Twenty-fifth greater sin. Imam (a.s.) also says,

“Cheating the Muslims is Harām.”

and in another tradition he (a.s.) says,

“Do not cheat one who trusts you because it is not allowed to cheat him.”11

Adulteration is indeed Harām in dealings but a proper deal with this man is valid in Shariah. Thus one who has been cheated has the prerogative to terminate the contract or accept it with some modifications. For example, if he delivered adulterated gold he can return it and

accept pure silver.

Now we shall quote a few legal rulings about cheating from Tauzihul Masael of Ayatullah Al-Uzma Agha Sīstani:

2079.* If a person sells ghee mixed with fat and specifies it, for example, he says: “I am selling 3 kilos of ghee” – the transaction will be void if the quantity of fat is more, to the extent that it cannot be called ghee. But if the quantity of fat is small, so that it can just be classified as ghee mixed with fat, the transaction will be valid. But the buyer has a right of refusal, based on the deficiency in the quality, and can therefore cancel the deal and ask for refund. And if ghee and fat are distinct from each other, the deal covering the fat will be void and the seller will have to refund the price of that fat and keep the fat for himself. But in this case also, the buyer has a right of cancelling the transaction of pure ghee which is in it. Where the seller does not say that he is selling a particular thing and just sells, say, 3 kilos of ghee he possesses, and if it turns out to be ghee mixed with fat, the buyer can return it and ask for pure ghee.

2133. * If a buyer does not know the price of the commodity, or was unconcerned about it at the time of purchase and buys the thing for higher than usual price, he can cancel the transaction if the difference of price is substantial and if the difference is established at the time of abrogation. Otherwise, the buyer cannot cancel the deal. Similarly, if the seller does not know the price of the commodity, or was heedless about it at the time of selling and sells the thing at a cheaper price, he can cancel the deal if the difference is substantial.

2132. * If one of the parties presents his commodity as better than it actually is and thereby attracts the buyer, or makes him more enthusiastic about it. This is called Khiyar tadlis.

1. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 336
2. al-Kāfi vol. 2 page 338
3. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il
4. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il
5. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 343
6. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 343
7. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 12 page 210
8. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 12 page 210
9. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 12 page 210
10. Wasa’il ul-Shia vol.12 page 363
11. Wasa’il ul-Shia Vol. 12 page 364

The Forty-fifth Greater Sin: Hoarding and Black-marketing

Hoarding of essential items like wheat, barley, rice and oil etc during periods of shortages with the intention of selling them at higher rates to people who are compelled to purchase them is Harām and a Greater sin. It is promised Hell-fire.

The Messenger of Allah (S) says that he heard from Jibrīl (a.s.) that there was a valley in hell and fierce fire blazed in it. When he asked the caretaker of Hell about those who would be put there he said that it was for Three groups: The hoarders, the drunkards and those who

earned commission on unlawful deals.1

He (S) also said that only the sinful people resort to hoarding goods. Also that if a person buys food items and hoards them for forty days so that prices rise in the Muslim markets, he has committed such a serious sin that if he were to later sell all the hoarded material and donate all the income it will not expiate for his sin.2

Some traditions have called the hoarders accursed. The traditions also say that one night divine retribution descended on Bani Israel. By next morning four groups of people had died: The drummers, the singers, the hoarders and those who ate pork.3

The Prophet (S) also says that one who hoards some goods for forty days will not be able to perceive the fragrance of Paradise, while the fragrance of Paradise reaches upto a distance of five hundred year's journey. When even the fragrance of Paradise is prohibited to him there is no question of his entering Heaven.4

He (S) also said that one who hoards food items for forty days in anticipation of rise in their prices has distanced himself from Allah and Allah tires of him and breaks off connection with him.5

Hoarding is not Harām under Three conditions. A person can hoard essential commodities when people do not need those items or if the need arises it is possible for people to fulfil their needs. Also when hoarding is done to fulfill the future needs of your family and not with the intention of selling it at a higher price. Other than this it is Harām and a Greater sin. It is the duty of the Hakim al-Shara to convince him to sell at a reasonable rate. But if he does not agree the Hakim al-Shara has the authority to purchase it at moderate rates and sell the food grains to the needy people.

1. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 12 page 314
2. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il Vol. 2 page 314
3. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
4. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
5. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il

The Forty-sixth Greater Sin: Disrespect of Qur'an

he fourth method to ascertain whether a particular sin is Greater is to see what is the opinion of the religious scholars about it. Its seriousness must be established among the religious people from the time of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Imams to the present day. To insult the sacred things whose respect is Wajib upon us is Harām and a Greater sin. For example the Holy Qur'an, the Ka'ba, Makkah Mukarama, Mosques, the tombs of the infallibles (a.s.) and the Martyrs of Karbala etc. It is Wajib to accord respect to all of them and any act of disrespect towards them is a Greater sin. In the following pages we shall briefly discuss the legal rulings with regard to each of them.

Respecting the Qur'an is one of the Necessities of

Faith

Every Muslim knows that Qur'an is the word of the Creator of the Universe. It is the most sacred and honourable book of the Islamic world. Nothing is more venerated than Qur'an. The Holy Prophet (S) has mentioned it as the 'Greater weighty object'. Thus he (S) says,

"Indeed I leave behind for you two heavy things. The Qur'an is the greater heavy thing and this wasi (legatee) of mine ('Ali) and my two sons (Hasan and Husain) and their descendants and successors (the Imams) are the lesser heavy thing."[1]

The Best Reward

Describing the greatness and virtues of Qur'an, Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says,

"On the day of Qiyāma the Qur'an will say: O Allah! Some of Your servants have accorded full respect to me. They protected me and did not allow anything of mine to be wasted. However, some other people have wasted me. They did not fulfill my rights and they falsified me.

Then Allah (S.w.T.) shall say, 'By My Honour, Majesty and High position, today I shall appoint the best of the rewards for your sake and also decree the worst punishment for your sake.'"[2]

It is related from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he said, the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says,

"By My Honour, Majesty and High position today I will honour the one who has honoured you and indeed disgrace the one who has disgraced you."[3]

Every Muslim is aware of the fact that insulting the Qur'an is a Greater Sin. Insulting Qur'an is insulting Allah (S.w.T.) and disrespect of the seal of the Prophets (S).

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

"On the Day of Qiyāma I shall be the first one to appear before Allah and accompanying me will be my family and the Book of Allah. After this my Ummah will enter. Then I will ask my nation how they dealt with the Book of Allah and my Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.)."[4]

Disrespect of Qur'an and Qur'anic Laws

In order to conclude whether a particular act is an act of disrespect or not, we should take into consideration the general view held in this matter. Any act of disrespect, verbal, by action or gesture which is commonly understood as disrespect for Qur'an, is therefore Harām. But it is Harām only if the intention of the person is to insult the religion of Islam and the Shari'a of the Chief of the Prophets (S). In other circumstances his action would tantamount to infidelity and he is a renegade. Since disrespect of Qur'an is Harām and it is one of the necessities of faith if one wilfully tramples the Qur'an under his feet, or throws it in Najasat his action is evidently an act of disrespect of religion and denial of respect for Qur'an. In these circumstances this man is an infidel. It is allowed to spill his blood except that he confesses, that it was in a bout of anger and that he was not in his senses.

At this juncture we feel it is necessary to mention important points with regard to the duty of respecting the Qur'an and prohibition of causing disrespect to it.

1-It is Harām to defile or cause disrespect to the cover of Qur'an, its covering, the pages, the letters and the printed matter. It is Harām to make them Najis (impure) and Wajib to make it tahir (pure) if it is causing disrespect to it.

2-It is Harām to write Qur'an with Najis ink. If it is written with a Najis ink or if after writing it becomes Najis, it should be purified and if it is not possible to purify it, the written part should be obliterated.

3-It is Harām to hand over Qur'an to a Kafir if he is going to cause disrespect to it or touch the letters. But according to some scholars, however, it is not permitted under any circumstance; if it is given it is Wajib to take it back from him.

4-If any of the sacred objects like the Qur'an, the pages containing religious inscriptions or names of infallibles, the soil of Karbala etc. accidentally fall in the toilet it is Wajib to remove them and make them tahir, even if their removal incurs lots of expenses. Till the time they are not removed it is Harām to use this toilet. If it is not possible to extract it, the toilet must be permanently sealed so that it can never be used in the future.

The removal of sacred objects from Najasat and their purification is not Wajib only on the owner or those who have made them Najis, it is Wajib upon all those Muslims who are aware of it. But it is a Wajib al-Kifai, that is if one performs it, others are relieved of their duty. If in spite of all of them being aware of it, none of them performs this duty, all of them shall be held responsible.

5-It is Harām to touch the letters of the Qur'an without Wuzu (ritual ablution), whether with hands or lips or with any other part of the body. There are detailed laws for this and those who wish to learn more should refer to Urwathul Wuthqa, section of Wuzu, Masla nos. 1-19.

6-At the conclusion Makasibul Muhrima Shaykh Ansari writes that a group of scholars believe that selling and buying Qur'an is Harām. Their decision is based on a tradition that we cannot narrate here. On the basis of this we should only make intention of buying and selling the covering and paper etc and not 'the cost of Qur'an'. The buyer should pay the cost with the intention of giving hadiya to the seller.

An Important Reminder

A person who is imbued with the Marefat of Allah (S.w.T.) and a superior level of understanding of the greatness and majesty of Allah (S.w.T.), would consider the Qur'an with the utmost respect. He will accord as much respect to it as possible, and yet consider himself deficient in fulfilling the rights of the word of Allah (S.w.T.). Such a person will never dare to touch the Qur'an without Wuzu. That is he will not even touch the cover or the margins of Qur'an without Wuzu or with a Najis hand, whether wet or dry. He will not carry it without being with Wuzu. If he has to always carry Qur'an with him, he will always remain with Wuzu. One should not turn ones back to Qur'an or stretch our legs towards it. Not to place anything on top of Qur'an. Sit facing the Qibla while reciting the Qur'an. Qur'an should be recited in a pleasant tone, slowly and with thinking upon the meaning. Qur'an itself says,

"Do they not then reflect on the Qur'an? Nay, on the hearts there are locks." (Surah Muhammad 47: 24)

If someone else is reciting it we must listen to it carefully as commanded by Almighty Allah,

“And when the Qur’an is recited, then listen to it and remain silent, that mercy may be shown to you.” (Surah al-Ar’āf 7: 204)

If one is present in an assembly where people do not show importance to Qur’an and would not listen attentively one should not recite the Qur’an there.

The book *Gulzar al-Akbari* records from Abul Wafa Hirwi that he said: I was reciting the Holy Qur’an in the royal court one day. The people present over there were busy talking to each and they were not listening to it carefully. That night I saw the Messenger of Allah (S) in my dream. The colour of his face had changed and he was angry. He said to me, “Do you recite the Qur’an in an assembly where people remain busy among themselves and do not pay heed to it? Indeed from today (because you had not observed the respect of Qur’an) you shall not be able to recite the Qur’an, except if Allah’s will is there.”

I awoke at once and found myself dumb-mute. But since he (S) had said ‘Except as Allah wills’ I was hopeful that one day I shall be able to speak again. After four months I saw the Holy Prophet (S) in my dream again, He said, “You have indeed repented.”

“Yes! O Messenger of Allah (S)”, said I.

He said, “Allah turns towards those who turns towards Him.” (those who repent).

Then he said,

“Put out your tongue.”

I put out my tongue and he touched it with his index finger and said as a warning,

“When you are reciting the Qur’an in an assembly where people are not listening to it carefully, you must stop the recitation as long as the people present there do not agree to listen to the Divine words.” When I awoke my speaking ability had been restored.

In the 40th chapter of the above book some anecdotes are mentioned in connection with the respect of sacred objects, places and personalities etc. Just as disrespect of Qur’an is Harām the disrespect of the collections of traditions of fourteen Ma’sūmīn (a.s.) is also Harām. For example Sahifa Sajjadiya. Like throwing them or stepping upon them. If it is generally regarded as an act of disrespect, it is Harām.

1. Safinat’ul-Bihār Vol. 1 page 132
2. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 597
3. al-Kāfi Vol. 2. page 602
4. al-Kāfi

The Forty-seventh Greater Sin: Disrespect of Ka’ba

After the Holy Qur’an there is nothing more respected and venerated than the Holy Ka’ba. Every Muslim is well-aware that not only is the disrespect of Ka’ba a greater sin, in some cases it tantamounts to Kufr and apostasy, as mentioned in the chapter of disrespect of

Qur’an.

Sadūq (r.a.) narrates from Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he said,

“Nothing is more honourable in the eyes of Allah than the following Three: The Holy Qur’an, which is His wisdom and Light, His House which He has appointed as the Qibla for men, and the Progeny of his Prophet (a.s.).”1

He (a.s.) also said,

“Allah has not created any house on the earth more loved by Him than the Ka’ba and more honoured by Him.”2

Every believer and all the Muslims are well-aware of the fact that disrespecting the Holy Ka’ba is a very serious crime. In fact it is obligatory for Muslims to respect the entire sanctuary and the city of Makkah.

Emphasis on Respecting the Ka’ba

Nass is available to indicate that it is a Greater sin to show disrespect to the Ka’ba and the Messenger of Allah (S) has clearly stated,

“It is a greater sin to consider the disrespect of the Holy House permissible.”

Allah (S.w.T.) says in Surah al-Mā’ida,

“O you who believe! Do not violate the signs appointed by Allah.” (Surah al-Mā’ida 5:2)

According to *Tafsīrul Mizan* the word ‘*Ihlāl*’ (violate) actually means to consider the disrespect of a sacred thing permissible (Mubah). It refers to the failure to maintain the sanctity of the signs of Allah (S.w.T.). There is no doubt that the Holy Ka’ba is a great sign of Allah (S.w.T.). It is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an that,

“And whoever respects the sacred ordinances of Allah, it is better for him with his Lord.” (Surah Hajj 22: 30)

Some commentators of Qur’an say that the words “Sacred Ordinances” in the above verse refer to the Holy Ka’ba. The term also implies the sacred Mosque, the city of Makkah which is a sacred city; the sacred months and other sanctified things.

Levels of Disrespect

As we have mentioned before, there are different levels of disrespect like tearing up the Qur’an, throwing it intentionally into Najasat and making it Najis; all these lead to infidelity and apostasy. But there are other ways of showing disrespect, some of which are mentioned below.

Defiling the Holy Sanctuary

Every sin and irreligious act committed in the Holy city of Makkah is actually an act of disrespect to the Ka’ba, because to go there and commit such illegal acts show that the

person has no regard of its status and sanctity.

According to some traditions any good deed performed in the Holy City carries a double reward and any sinful act committed there earns double punishment. The traditions of the Holy Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) indicate that if a person commits an illegal act in Makkah and is penalized for it, he deserves more than the prescribed punishment, because he has performed that deed in the sanctuary of Allah (S.w.T.). Therefore any sin committed within the Holy Sanctuary is a greater sin. According to Shaykh Ahmad Jazaeri in his book Ayātul Ahkam every sin committed within the Holy Sanctuary is a greater sin according to the following verse,

"and whoever shall incline therein to wrong unjustly, We will make him taste of a painful chastisement." (Surah Hajj 22: 25)

Please note that a sin committed within the boundaries of Makkah is itself a greater sin. When a sin is committed it causes disrespect to the Holy Sanctuary and it is an act of defilement. This is a separate crime. Therefore the one who sins earns the punishment for the illegal act as well as the punishment of defiling the Holy House.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"Every act of injustice that a person does upon himself, like stealing or oppressing people, or to cross the boundaries of divine law; is 'Ilhad' in my view."

For this reason extremely pious people refrain from overstaying in the Holy Sanctuary, lest they fall into some sin and bring down upon themselves divine punishment. A few more traditions of this kind are mentioned in the book of *Al Wafi.*

In the exegesis of the above hadith, Allamah Majlisi says that this tradition indicates that there is no harm in settling down within the limits of Makkah for one who can protect himself from sins. A person told Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) that there was a ferocious bird in the sanctuary and the pigeons of that area were not safe from its ferocity. Imam (a.s.) said,

"Catch this bird and kill it, because it has committed Ilhād in the Sanctuary."[3]

We should know that the boundaries of the sanctuary stretch to a radius of four farsakhs, which is altogether sixteen farsakh (Each farsakh equals Three miles). *(Masalik)*

The Sanctuary is an Area of Peace

No one can touch the person who has committed a crime outside the limits and then taken refuge within the holy boundaries. He should be boycotted in such a way that he would be forced to leave the holy boundaries of his own accord. Then he should be punished for the crime. However, if one commits a crime for which there are prescribed penalties he can be punished within the limits of the Sanctuary.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) was queried about the person who murders a man outside the holy limits and then enters the sanctuary. Imam (a.s.) said that as long as he was in the sanctuary he cannot be persecuted (killed). Such a person should be denied food and drink and no sort of dealing must be conducted with him. He should not be provided any lodging so that he ultimately leaves the sanctuary. Then he can be punished.

Then Imam (a.s.) was asked about the person who commits a murder or steals within the sanctuary. Imam (a.s.) says that he shall be penalized in the sanctuary itself because he has no respect for the sanctuary.

Sama asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) that a person owed him something but he continued to hide himself from Sama for quite a long time. At last Sama saw him going around the Ka'ba one day. So could he demand his money from this person? Imam (a.s.) said,

"No! But do not say salām to him (so that he recognizes you) you must not threaten him till he leaves the sanctuary."4

Killing of Animals and Uprooting of Vegetation

Except for camel, cow, sheep/goat and Chicken it is Harām to slaughter any other animal in the sanctuary. But it is allowed to exterminate snakes, scorpions, rats, mosquitoes and every other pest to get rid of its pestilence. In the same way it is Harām to uproot any vegetation that sprouts in the sanctuary. For details on this topic refer to the Manasik al-Hajj of Maraja al-Taqlīd.

Entering the sanctuary without Ihram

It is not allowed to enter Makkah without donning the ritual dress (Ihram). That is, in whichever part of the year we go to Makkah we have to tie the Ihram from Miqāt, and enter it. Then after performing the tawāf and Sa'ay he can take it off. However, those people who have to frequently enter the limits of miqāt are exempted from this rule. Like postmen, woodcutters, goatherds and doctors etc. Similar is the rule for those who have worn the Ihram less than a month ago. For details refer to the books of Hajj laws. Some scholars consider entering the sanctuary without Ihram a greater sin that falls within the ambit of 'Violation of the Signs'.

Relieving oneself facing the Qibla or with ones back towards it

It is Harām to urinate or defecate facing the Qibla or with ones back towards it. Whether in solitude or in populated areas. It is Harām even if one does it inside a building. Precaution dictates that we do not make even a young child sit facing the Qibla. However, if he does it of his own accord it is not incumbent to turn him away. Mature people of sound mind who are unaware of this rule must be made aware of it. Those who wilfully disobey in spite of knowing the rule should be restrained according to the dictum of Nahy Anil Munkar, the details of which have been explained in the previous chapters. If one sits a little to the left or right such that he is not exactly facing the Qibla or not having his back exactly to it, there is no harm. More details however are available in the books of religious laws.

1. Khisāl of Sadūq
2. Man la Yahzarul Faqih
3. al-Kāfi
4. Wafi

The Forty-eighth Greater Sin: Disrespect to Masajid

Every building that is designated as a Mosque by one or other sects of the Muslims is deserving of respect. Its respect is Wajib and its disrespect, like demolishing it or making it impure is a Greater Sin. Every religious person knows that a Mosque is associated with the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.).

"And that the mosques are Allah's," (Surah al-Jinn 72: 18)

Therefore disrespect of a mosque is an act of insult towards Allah, the blessed and the High.

Abu Basīr the narrator says that he asked Abu Abdillah Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) for the reason why respect of mosques is obligatory? Imam (a.s.) said that it was because a mosque is the house of Allah on earth.

According to traditions the Almighty Allah says, that, 'Mosques are My houses on the earth. How fortunate are those who perform Wuzu in My house and they visit Me in My house in a state of ritual purification. In these circumstances it is Wajib for the master of the house to honour the guests who visit him. To convey the good news of light (Nūr) that I will bestow on the day of Qiyāma upon those who leave their homes to go to the mosques in the darkness of the night.[1]

All the faithfuls consider disrespect of mosques a Greater Sin. The Holy Qur'an has mentioned breaking of a Masjid an act of disrespect to it and considered it one of the serious types of injustices.

"And who is more unjust than he who prevents (men) from the Masajid of Allah, that His name should be remembered in them and strives to ruin them?" (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 114)

We shall now explain in brief the various legal rulings with regard to Masjids.

Polluting a Masjid is Harām

t is Harām to make a Masjid najis. Also it is Harām to take any absolute Najis thing (Ain al-Najasat) inside a Mosque, lest it pollutes the Masjid. And even if the Masjid is not polluted it would be an act of defilement. The same rule applies to things that have become polluted (Najis) due to their contact with Ain al-Najasat, even if they are dry, and they will not pollute the mosque, it is Harām in all cases. But if it neither pollutes the Masjid nor is it an act of disrespect, it is permissible. However, on the basis of precaution Ain al-Najasat must not be taken inside the Masjid under any circumstances.

Purification of Masjid is Wajib

Purifying the Masjid immediately is Wajib, such that it should not be generally considered as wilful delay or heedlessness. Immediately means that if there is some time for the prayer it should be purified before prayers. It should also be clear that purifying the Masjid is

incumbent not only on the person who has polluted it, but it is a Wajib al-Kifai on all Muslims. It is Wajib to bear the expenses even if it is a costly matter. If one cannot bear the cost alone it is incumbent on him to ask help from others.

Staying in the Mosque in a state of Janabat, Haiz or Nifas

A Junub person, a woman in haiz or Nifas is not permitted to stay in a mosque. Thus the Holy Qur'an says:

"Nor when you are under an obligation to perform a bath — unless (you are) travelling on the road — until you have washed yourselves." (Surah an-Nisā' 4: 43)

In other words a Junub person is allowed to pass through a mosque from one door and out of another. He cannot come out from the same door nor leave anything inside the mosque. However, in the case of Masjidul Harām, Masjidun Nabi and Masjidul Aqsa the Junub persons and haiz and Nifas women cannot even pass through them.

Recommended Actions

Lighting a lamp in Masjid, keeping it absolutely clean and pure, entering it with the right foot forward and leaving it with the left foot first are all recommended (Mustahab) acts. Before entering we must ensure that our shoes are not najis, lest the Masjid becomes najis due to it. Enter the Masjid in a state of ritual purification (Ghusl and Wuzu). Wear the best dress, apply perfume and pray two rakat prayers of saluting the mosque.

Detestable (Makrūh) Acts

assing through a mosque is Makrūh without reciting at least two rakats of prayers. We must not throw nasal discharge and sputum in the mosque. Also makrūh are the following acts: sleeping in the mosque, raising ones voice except in Azan (call for prayer), announcing lost property loudly, or asking something from a person, reciting poetry that does not contain any moral lessons. Discussing worldly matters and business transactions are makrūh in a Masjid. We must not go to the mosque after eating onion, garlic or anything that creates a foul breath. We must also avoid taking young children and insane persons inside the mosque.

Different Grades of Mosques

The most sacred and honourable mosque is Masjidul Harām. A prayer inside this Masjid equals one hundred thousand prayers in ordinary Masjids. The next in status is Masjidun Nabi (of Madinah). A prayer performed in it equals ten thousand prayers in ordinary ones. Next in line are Masjids of Kufa and Aqsa. A single prayer offered in these mosques carry the reward of one thousand prayers in other Masjids. After this the Jama Masjids of the city carry great merit. And prayers in Jama Masjids are hundred times more rewarding than prayers in other places. After Jama Masjid the main Masjid of the area deserve greater respect because a single prayer in it equals twenty five prayers. Last of all is the Masjid in market, wherein prayers earn the worshipper twelve rewards in comparison to one reward of other prayers.

1. Wasa’il ul-Shia

The Forty-ninth Greater Sin: Disrespect of the Tombs of Ma’sūmīn (a.s.)

Respect of the tombs of the Messenger of Allah (S) and the Holy Imams is Wajib in the view of all Muslims because every religious person considers their disrespect a greater sin. Many traditions speak of the respect necessary from the *Tahzīb* of Shaykh Mufīd.

The Messenger of Allah (S) addressed Amir ul-Mu’minīn (a.s.) and said,

“O ‘Ali! The Almighty Allah has made your grave and the graves of your progeny a section (piece of land) of Paradise. And gave it an exalted position. Allah has made the hearts of his pure-hearted and sincere servants to incline towards them. Those who bear all kinds of difficulties and insults for your sake. They shall habitate your shrines. They shall continue to visit them (do Ziarat) for the pleasure of Almighty Allah and for the love of His Messenger (S).

O ‘Ali! These very people will deserve my special intercession. On the day of Qiyāma they will arrive at my pool and shall be my neighbours. Those who carry out the construction of these tombs and come to visit them are like those who helped Hazrat Sulaiman (a.s.) in building the Baitul Maqdas. The reward of seven non-obligatory Hajjs is there for those who visit them. His sins will be washed off as if he has just emerged from the womb.

O ‘Ali! Good news to you! And to your followers of such bounties that eyes have not yet seen nor ears heard them. They have not even entered human imagination so far. But there shall be some disgraceful people who would insult, persecute and criticise the visitors to your graves like the criticism of a wanton female. They shall be the most mischievous people of my Ummah who would not receive my intercession and they shall never be able to reach my pool.”1

For detailed traditions on the subject please refer to *Wafi, Wasa’il ul-Shia* and *Bihār al-Anwār* Vol. 22.

Disrespect of the Tombs of Ma’sūmīn (a.s.) is Kufr

The respect of the tombs of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Pure Imams (a.s.) is Wajib and a necessity of faith and their disrespect is a greater sin. In fact it is considered the greatest sin to the extent of Kufr and Shirk. If a tomb gets polluted and no disrespect is evident, on the basis of precaution, it is necessary to purify them.

According to jurists as in the case of mosques it is not permitted for Junub person, Haiz and Nifas ladies to stay in the holy Shrines. Some scholars even maintain that even passing through them is not permitted for polluted person, just as it is not allowed for Masjidul Harām.

Prayer at the grave of Ma’sūmīn (a.s.)

t is not permitted to prostrate on the grave of any Imam (a.s.) during any Wajib or Mustahab prayer. But one can keep his right cheek on the grave. While praying near the grave we must keep it ahead of us and stand behind the head. Prayer is not allowed standing ahead of the grave because no one has the right to stand ahead of ones Imam. It is allowed to stand to the left or the right and to pray. That is we must not stand ahead or parallel to the grave).2

It is related from Hazrat Hujjat Ibn Hasan (a.t.f.s.) that prayers are not allowed ahead of the grave of a Masūm (a.s.), nor is it valid at the left or right of the grave because no one has the right to stand ahead or with the Imam. The writer of Wasa’il ul-Shia has explained the hadith prohibiting prayers to the left and the right side by saying that it is makrūh. (detestable).

Some scholars maintain that disrespect is caused only when the follower stands ahead of his Imam. But it is not a disrespectful act if he stands to the left or the right. However it is better to act on precaution.

1. Wafi
2. Wasa’il ul-Shia

The Fiftieth Greater Sin: Disrespect to the soil of Imam Husain’s Grave (Turbah)

Soil which is in the vicinity of the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) is sacred. Allah has bestowed it with beneficence, unsurpassed in compassion to any other material. Allah has ordained it to be a cure for every illness, and source of Barakat and Divine mercy.

It is the most sacred of all things that can be used for prostration during the worship of Allah. Because of the utmost respect and faith that Shias have in the Turbah of Karbala, it has been used by us in different ways to overcome numerous problems.

Disrespect is shown by throwing it, stepping upon it or making it Najis, etc. If one drops a rosary (tasbhi) or Mohr of Turbah accidentally in the toilet, one is obliged to pick it up at once and purify it. It is Harām to use this toilet till the Turbah is removed. If removing it is not feasible the toilet must be sealed to prevent its use in future, as explained by us in the chapter of disrespect of Qur’an.

Merits of Turbah of Imam Husain (a.s.)

We have many traditions emphasising the greatness and beneficence of the soil of Karbala. We shall narrate two incidents with regard to the beneficial effects of Turbah and two anecdotes of the consequences of showing disrespect to it.

The respected scholar Shaykh Mufīd's teacher, Shaykh Ibn Qulaway records in his book Kamiluz Ziyarāt a narration from Muhammad Ibn Muslim. He says: I went to Madinah and fell seriously ill. Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) sent his slave with a vessel containing a drink covered with a handkerchief for me. The slave told me to drink it immediately because Imam (a.s.) had commanded him not to return till I have had it. The sherbet was cool and had the fragrance of musk. The servant told me: 'It is the Master's command that after taking the medicine you present yourself to him?' I was astonished that I was hardly able to get up, neither could I stand on my feet, how could I go to Imam (a.s.)? But as soon as I took the drink I felt as if I was released from tethering chains. I walked on my own to the residence of Imam (a.s.) and sought permission to enter. Imam (a.s.) said, 'You have regained health, so enter!'

I entered weeping and saluted Imam (a.s.) and kissed his hands. *'Why are you weeping, Muhammad?'* asked Imam (a.s.) I said, 'May I be sacrificed for you, I am weeping upon my lack of strength, separation from hometown, distance from my destination, separation from your respected self and the deprivation of your company.

Imam (a.s.) said,

'Due to lack of strength our Shias remain in difficulties and problems like you. But as far as your being at a distance from your hometown is concerned, the fact is that a believer is like an alien amidst the corrupt people of this world, till the time he meets his death. But as for your saying that your house is very far from Madinah you must follow Abu Abdillah Imam Husain (a.s.). How he left Medina and made the bank of Euphrates, his abode. As for your love and the desire of seeing us, Allah is aware of your feelings and He would surely reward you for your good intentions.'

After this Imam (a.s.) asked,

'Do you go for the Ziarat of Imam Husain (a.s.)?'

'Yes,' I replied, 'But in great fear.'

He said,

'The more fear and hardships are there, the more rewarding it shall be.'

One who is fearful of undertaking this journey shall be safe from the hazards on the day of Qiyāma. He shall return, purified of sins.

Then Imam (a.s.) asked how I had found the drink? I said, 'I testify that you Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) are Mercy and inheritors of Prophets (a.s.). When the servant brought the sherbet I didn't have the strength to stand. I had lost all hopes of remaining alive. When I drank the sherbet I felt that I had never drunk anything more tasty, fragrant and cool.

The servant told me that my master had summoned me, so I decided I will try to reach him even if I died in the endeavour. When I set out, I felt that my malady had disappeared and I thanked Allah for making your respected self a channel of mercy for the Shias. Imam (a.s.) said, 'The Sherbet you drank, was made from the soil of the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.). It is that beneficial thing which I use as medicine. Beware! Do not consider anything its equal. We give it to our children and women and perceive its unlimited benefits.' I said, May I be sacrificed on you, we shall also pick it up and seek cure from it.' Imam (a.s.) said, 'When people pick it up from the vicinity of Imam Husain's tomb and take it outside they do not

accord the respect due to it and do not keep it packed in a secure way. So every Jinn, animals and all those creatures who are in need smell from it and thus others derive benefit from it. However, a soil that contains such a cure must not be stored like this, lest it loses its effect. If one can ensure its protection then one should touch it to ones body or consume it, one shall be cured at once. Turbah is just like Hajar al-Aswad (the black stone) that used to glow like a white ruby and any diseased person who touched it used to be cured. Due to the infidels and the people of Jahiliyya touching it often, it became black and its effect lessened.

I asked, 'How should we pick up the respected turbah? And how should we store it?' Imam (a.s.) said,

'You also pick up the turbah like other people and without wrapping it up in anything you keep it in your dirty bag. In this way it loses its barakat'.

'You are right, Master,' I said. Then he said, *'How would you take it if I were to give you a little bit of Turbah?'* I said that I shall keep it between the layers of my clothes and carry it away.' Imam (a.s.) said,

'When you return you may drink as much Sherbet as you like but do not take any Turbah with you because you will not be able to take care of it'

Before I left, Imam (a.s.) gave me the same sherbet twice. After that I never suffered from the disease again.[1]

Keeping Turbah with the corpse

There was an adulteress who used to destroy her illegitimate issues by putting them in the oven for fear of her family members. Except for her mother no one knew of her misdeeds. When she died and people tried to bury her, the earth did not accept her and threw her out. When they tried to bury her at another place the same thing happened. The problem was presented to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) and he asked her mother which sin she had committed. When the mother confessed, Imam (a.s.) said that earth would never accept her because she used to punish Allah's creatures with the punishment that only Allah has the right to punish (That is, burning alive). Then Imam (a.s.) told them to place a little turbah in her grave. This was done and then the earth did not convulse when she was buried in it.[2]

Anointing the Corpse with Turbah

A little bit of Turbah should be placed on the face of the corpse when it is buried, it is Mustahab. It is also Mustahab to mix a little Turbah in the camphor which is applied to the corpse. However, it should only be used for anointing the forehead and palms. The knees and toes must be anointed only with camphor. Because applying Turbah to the knees and toes would be an act of disrespect to it.

Turbah has the cure for every disease

Shaykh Tusi writes in his Amali quoting his teachers that Muhammad Azdi said that: I was praying in the Jama Masjid of Madinah and sitting next to me were two men, one of whom was dressed like a traveller. He was saying: the turbah of Imam Husain (a.s.) has cure for

all diseases. I was sick for a long time and no cure was effective. I was losing all hopes of recovering. Death was staring me in the face. An old lady of Kufa came to me when I was in extreme pain. She told me that day by day my condition was worsening. 'Yes', I said, 'this is true'. She said if I permitted she can provide a cure for me. I agreed to it. She put some water in a vessel and told me to drink it. I drank it and was instantly cured, as if I had never been ill.

After a few months the lady visited me again. Her name was Salma. I put her under oath to tell me how she had cured me? She said that she had cured me with a bead of the tasbih she was holding in her hand at that time. I asked what was the speciality of that tasbih. She said it was made from the soil of the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.).

I said: O Rafidiyya![3] Did you cure me with the soil of the grave of Husain? The lady arose in anger and went away. My illness returned, and my condition was so serious that I was convinced of an early death.

The man's faith should have been enhanced by this edifying incident. Instead he insulted it and lost the benefits he had gained from it. He suffered the disease again, becoming an example of the ayat,

"And We reveal of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers, and it adds only to the perdition of the unjust." (Surah al-'Isrā', 17: 82)

How true are the couplets of Sadi, which say: Rain water is Allah (S.w.T.)'s Mercy. There is no doubt in its benefits and purity. But a drop that falls into the mouth of an oyster becomes a precious pearl, and a drop that falls in the mouth of the snake becomes fatal poison.

Disrespect of Turbah Invites Destruction

Shaykh Tusi mentions in the Amali quoting from Mūsa Ibn Abdul Aziz that he said: One Christian Physician by the name of Yohanna came to me and said, 'I put you under the oath of your religion and your Prophet, you tell me whether the man buried in Karbala, for whose Ziarat people come in hordes, was a companion of the Prophet?' I said, 'No! He was the grandson of our Prophet (S), Hazrat Husain (a.s.). Now! I put you under oath to tell why you had posed such a question to me?' He said: I have heard a very strange tale about him. One night, Shapūr the servant of the accursed Caliph Harūn came to me and took me to Mūsa Ibn Isa a close relative of the Caliph.

I found him unconscious on his bed. His internal organs were lying in a pail before him. Those days Harūn had summoned him from Kufa. Shapūr asked the special servant of Mūsa what was the matter with his master. He said that he was all right a few hours ago and chatting with his colleagues. One of them was Hashemite. He was saying: I was seriously ill and all the doctors had failed to cure my sickness. My scribe suggested that I seek the cure from the Turbah of Hazrat Husain (a.s.). I followed this advice and was cured.

Mūsa asked him if he had a piece of that turbah remaining with him? 'Yes', he said, and sent someone to get it for Mūsa at once. In order to defile it Mūsa threw it in the drain pipe of his bathroom. Suddenly Mūsa screamed 'Fire! Fire!' as if he was burning in fire. He asked for a pail and what you see in it are the pieces of his internal organs. Seeing that, all his friends left his house and a state of mourning descended on his family.

Shapūr told me to remain there for the night and observe his condition and draw some conclusion. He stayed for the night and Mūsa expired at dawn.

The narrator says that Yohanna the Christian visited the tomb of Imam Husain (a.s.) many times and ultimately he accepted Islam and remained a Muslim all his life. This report is also mentioned in the 10th volume of Bihār al-Anwār.

True Dreams

Mirza Husain Nūri (r.a.) writes in his book Darus Salām that one of his brother went to visit their mother. He was carrying the Turbah of Imam Husain (a.s.) in one of his lower pockets. When his mother came to know of this she reprimanded him that this was not the way to carry Turbah. There was a strong possibility that it gets crushed under the thigh while one sits, and would be an act of disrespect. The brother said that it was true and till then two mohrs had got crushed under his thighs. He told mother that he would never ever carry it in the lower pocket of the gown.

Now our father was unaware of this incident and one night he had a dream that Imam Husain (a.s.) had come to visit him in his study. He stood besides my father and spoke with kindness and generosity. Then he requested my father to summon his sons so that he may present them some gifts. My father had five sons. He called all of them and seated them in the opposite room. Some dresses were kept in front of Imam (a.s.). He summoned each son in turn and presented him a dress. When it was the turn of my brother who had carried the Turbah. Imam (a.s.) glared at him in anger. He (a.s.) told my father that 'this son of yours has crushed my turbah under his thigh, two times so far.' Imam (a.s.) did not present him with an expensive dress like the rest of the brothers. His dress was of inferior quality and Imam (a.s.) did not even hand it over to him. He kept it out of the room for him to pick it. When my father awoke he related the dream to our mother who told him about the previous incident. My father was astounded at the reality of his dream.

We beseech the Almighty by the holy name of the chief of the Martyrs (a.s.) that He give us the Tawfīq to seek forgiveness for the sins that we have committed in the past and to abstain from sins in future.

A Question and its Reply

After reading the complete book of Greater Sins people may ask, whether there were any other greater sins, apart from those mentioned in this book? Religious scholars have compiled hundreds of books on Islamic jurisprudence that deal with laws classified under, Prayers, Fast, Hajj, Zakat, Khums, Jihad … Business transaction… marriage etc. Shaykh Hurre Amili has written a book, *Bidayatun Nihaya.* In it he has dealt with every kind of legal problems. At the end of the book he says that the total number of obligations in the book are 1535 and total prohibitions are 1448 they add up to 2983.

So there are several other greater sins over and above the fifty mentioned in this book because anything done against any of the rules of Shariah, is considered to be a greater sin. The best practice for an individual to adapt is to exercise caution and not do anything against the rules of Shariah in all areas of activity, be they religious, personal, social or business etc.

The following sins are possibly Greater Sins:

(1) Consuming Najis things

(2) Revealing ones nudity before those who can distinguish right and wrong.

(3) Looking at the sexual organs of the same or the opposite sex

(4) Men dressing like women / women dressing like men

(5) Looking at Non-mahram

(6) Reading letters addressed to others.

(7) Preserving books that lead to deviation in religion, destroying them is obligatory

(8) Making idols

(9) Touching the body of a stranger

(1) Praising an oppressor except for Taqaiyyah

(2) Staying in an assembly of sin

(3) Eating from gold and silver utensils

(4) Not participating in congregation prayer and considering it unimportant

(5) Acting against any of the rules mentioned in Tauzihul Masael.

1. Mustanadush Shia / Layalial Akhbar
2. Mustanadush Shia
3. A derogatory term for Shias used by their opponents

Tawba (Part One)

‘Tawba’ or repentance is a part of the all compassing mercies of the Most Merciful Lord. It is one of the avenues of His unbounded indulgence that He has kept always open for His slaves. Had it been closed, no one would have ever attained salvation, such is human inclination towards evil.

The Kind and Wise Lord therefore ordained Tawba (repentance) to be a cure for diseases of the soul and a means of purifying indecent deeds, whereby Tawba can wash away man’s sins so that he can obtain eternal salvation.

Indeed, fortunate is one who appreciates the value of this gate of Divine Mercy, benefits from it and becomes Allah (S.w.T.)’s most beloved slave, and is thankful to Allah (S.w.T.) for His limitless bounties; and highly unfortunate is the one who remains deprived of Divine Mercy even though the paths leading to it are open to him.

On the Day of Judgement (Qiyāma) man will find excuses and say: O My Lord! I was unaware and ignorant; was chained by passions and desires and hence could not remain steadfast in the face of satanic instigations. In reply to these excuses he will be told: Did

We not keep the doors of Tawba (repentance) always open for you? Were you entrusted highly difficult tasks and ordered to perform a duty beyond your power? Were the conditions of Tawba beyond your ability?

Reality of Tawba

The Holy Prophet (S) said,

“To be ashamed of one’s sins is Tawba.”

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says,

“Repenting on one’s deed is enough Tawba.”[1]

Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) said,

“There is no man who Allah did not forgive who had felt ashamed of his misdeed. Whenever a man feels ashamed of his fault and then begs pardon of Allah He forgives all of his sins.”

Repenting over ones sins with heartfelt remorse is Tawba. Man should understand that Allah (S.w.T.) will be displeased with him if he commits a sin and he should not forget that his Lord is able to see whatever he does. It is like a man who, despite being warned by friends, invests all of his wealth in a bargain and consequently loses everything and becomes bankrupt and then repents. It is also like a sick person who eats something that a doctor had prohibited and, as a result becomes serious. He then gets nothing but disgrace.

Repentance, The cause of giving up of sins

The stronger a person’s faith in the Almighty, Qiyāma (Hereafter), Holy Prophets (a.s.) and the sayings of the Holy Imams (a.s.), the more acute will be his feelings of guilt and for the sins committed, he will bear this feeling of repentance continually in his heart.

Together with a feeling of shame and remorse, Tawba also includes a firm decision to give up sins forever because if a person does not have a strong will to refrain from sins it only indicates that he was not truly ashamed. Amir ul-Mu’minīn (a.s.) says,

It cannot so happen that a man has really felt ashamed and yet he did not give up sins.

When a man repents over his misdeeds it is necessary that he should make the utmost effort to keep himself away from sins. If the sin is about non-performance of duties like Salāt (daily prayers), Siyyam (Ramzan fasting), Zakat (poor tax) and Hajj pilgrimage, then, after expressing repentance he should perform Qaža (repeat to make good) of those duties. If the sin was regarding rights of people, like usurping someone’s property or money, then he should return it immediately to the owner, and if the owner is not alive then to his heirs.

If he does not know the heirs of the owner, then he should give away the dues in the path of Allah (S.w.T.) on behalf of the original owner. If he had shown disrespect to someone he should beg pardon of him and should try his best to please him. If the matter involves Diyat or Qasās (blood money or retaliation) he should hand over himself to the concerned person so that he may either take Qasās or blood money, or pardon him, if he so pleases. If the sin involves Hadd or punishment, like Qažaf (wrong allegation against anybody) then he must surrender himself to the authority so that he may be either punished or pardoned.

But if he is loaded with crimes for which Allah (S.w.T.) Himself has fixed punishments, like adultery, then it is not necessary for him to present himself to the Islamic court and to confess. In this case it is enough to merely repent over his sin and to make a firm decision to give up the sin forever and to pray for pardon. If the sins are Greater Sins for which punishment (hadd) is not fixed like listening to songs and music etc., then according to traditions a person should be sincerely repentant and beseech Allah (S.w.T.) to pardon and forgive him.

Perfect Repentance

Once a man came to Amir ul-Mu'minīn (a.s.) and exclaimed loudly: "Astagfirullah". The Hazrat said,

"May your mother mourn you! Do you understand what Istighfar is?"

For the word 'Istighfar' to be meaningful a person must first undergo a mental reformation. Which means that he is sorry and shameful about the earlier misdeeds, and has resolved to give up sin forever. He must pay the dues (rights) of others so that when he dies he meets his Lord Almighty without others' having any claim on him. He must perform all the duties obligatory on him without fail. If his flesh and blood were made up of unlawful earning he should be fearful and worry about the punishments of Hell to such an extent that his body becomes extremely thin and lean and only thereafter it should be rebuilt on lawful food. He must worship Allah (S.w.T.) so much that his body experiences hardships and atones for the unlawful pleasure enjoyed by it.

When these conditions are fulfilled, then you should utter Astaghfirullah.

All religious scholars have agreed that Tawba is obligatory for all sins. Muhaqqiq Tusi (r.a.) writes in his *Tajrīd al-Kalām* and Allamah Hilli (a.r.) writes in its commentary that Tawba is the means of making up for spiritual losses suffered, and wisdom therefore dictates that Tawba is compulsory.

Allah Almighty says in Surah Nūr's verse 31:

"And turn to Allah all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful."

He also says in Surah Tahrīm (Ayat:8):

"O you who believe! Turn to Allah a (Tawba of Nasūh) sincere turning; maybe your Lord will remove from you your evil and cause you to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow."

What is Tawba of Nasūh?

Allamah Majlisi, in Sharhe Kāfi, quotes the commentators about meaning of Tawbatan Nasūh:

1. To repent purely and piously in the presence of the Lord. Repentance should not merely be due to a desire of Paradise and fear of Hell, it should be due to a feeling of shame and remorse for not obeying Allah's commands. Tusi (r.a.) writes in *Tajrīd al-Kalam*. "It is not Tawba to worry about sins for fear of Hell."

2. The Tawba should be such that it may serve as a lesson even to others. A person should repent with such sincerity and such persistence that by observing his repentance other sinners may also be inclined towards Tawba. In this way he also becomes a means of guidance for others.

3. Nasīhat (admonition) or advice is like sewing. So the clothing of religion which was torn into pieces because of sins can be stitched by the threads of Tawba. Such repentant people are also called Awliyaullah (Friends of Allah).

4. He should give Nasīhat (admonition) to himself so thoroughly and honestly and perform such a Tawba that all soot of sins may vanish from the walls of his heart. His worship should be so intense that the radiance of Faith removes the darkness of sins totally. He must be so involved in performing good deeds that his bad deeds are fully compensated for.

A great religious scholar says: It is not enough to do Tawba, which would effect only a superficial cleansing of the soul. His worship to Allah (S.w.T.) should be to such an extent and his obedience to Allah (S.w.T.) is implicit, such that his sins are totally obliterated, and his heart and soul is purified with a thorough cleansing. The more his worship the purer will be his heart. A repentant must necessarily look at his past so that each and every sin can be repented for. For instance, if he had enjoyed nonsense songs and maddening music in a dance party he should now pay more and more attention to the recitation of Qur'an, Hadith, religious discourses, sermons etc.

He should regularly recite the holy Qur'an. It must be remembered that the letters (text) of the holy Qur'an must not be touched in a state of impurity. If he had entered a mosque in a state of impurity, he should now sit in Ihtikaf in the Masjid by way of compensation. If he had viewed prohibited scenes earlier now he must try his best to see more and more those things, the seeing of which draws Divine Reward like the text of the holy Qur'an, faces of one's parents, company of good and pious people. Similarly he should look at the signs of God's Might and draw wisdom from it. After doing Tawba he must give people their rights. He should spend the better portion of his wealth in the path of Allah (S.w.T.) on the poor and needy. If he has backbited a faithful he must compensate for it by praising his good points. In short, he must try and make up for his misdeeds in whatever manner possible and to whatever extent possible.

Merit of Tawba

1. It makes man a beloved of God

Allah (S.w.T.) says in Surah al-Baqarah, Verse 222:

Surely Allah loves those who turn much (to Him).

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said,

Allah becomes pleased with the Tawba of a Mu'min just as you are pleased on finding your lost thing.[2]

2. Evils are turned into good deeds

Tawba does not only removes the darkness of sins but it also replaces the darkness with light. The Almighty says,

"Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed; so these are they of whom Allah changes the evil deeds to good ones; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. And whoever repents and does good, he surely turns to Allah a (goodly) turning."

(Surah Furqān 25:70-71)

3. Praiseworthy Prayer of Angels

Allah Almighty says,

"Those (angels) who bear the (Arsh) power and those around celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask protection for those who believe: Our Lord! Thou embraces all things in mercy and knowledge, therefore grant protection to those who turn (to Thee) and follow Thy way, and save them from the punishment of the hell..." (Surah Ghāfir, 40:7)

4. The repentant will go to Paradise

Allah Almighty says,

"And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults – And Who forgives the faults but Allah, and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done. (as for) these – their reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and excellent is the reward of the labourers." (Surah Āli- 'Imran 3:135-136)

5. Tawba gives happiness in life

Almighty Allah has said,

And you that ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him; He will provide you with a goodly provision to an appointed term and bestow His Grace on everyone with Grace). (Surah Hūd 11:3)

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"The lifespan of some gets shortened because of their sins and some pass away at their appointed hour."

Sins can shorten life span.

6. Prayer are accepted by Tawba

This will be discussed at length afterwards. It will be explained in detail how *Tawba* makes a supplication acceptable.

7. Tawba Brings good tidings from God

Allah Almighty says:

And He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons the evil

deeds and He knows what you do. (Surah Ash-Shūrā 42:25)

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says,

Allah told Dawūd (a.s.); O Dawūd (a.s.)! Give good tidings to the sinners and show a ray of hope to the pious people. He said: My Lord! How shall I give good tidings to the sinners and show hope to the pious? The Lord said: Give good tidings to the sinners that I will accept their repentance and give hope to the pious so that they may not become proud of their piety and may not become self-centred because there is no one who may not be destroyed if I insist on taking his account.

8. Any number of sins will be pardoned through Tawba

Allah Almighty says:

Say: O My servants! Who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord time after time and submit to Him before there comes to you the punishment, then you shall not be helped. (Surah az-Zumar 39: 53-54)

This Ayat has put much emphasis on repentance.

It is the Ayat after which the Messenger of Allah (S) was satisfied regarding the sinners of his Ummah. The faithful should ponder upon the meaning and the commentary of the above verse.

Imam Riďa (a.s.) heard his companions say: May Allah curse those who fought against 'Ali (a.s.). He said that they should add: Then he did not reform his soul by repentance.

Then he added,

The sin that someone did not help 'Ali (a.s.) nor did he regret it is greater than the sin of one who fought with 'Ali (a.s.) and felt ashamed and performed Tawba.

This hadith shows that Tawba can cause even the most serious sin to be pardoned.

9. Breaking of Tawba does not nullify repentance

If a repentant breaks his promise or resolution and goes against it, his earlier Tawba will not be nullified. So he should take this opportunity to repent for his later sin and try his utmost to suppress sin and refrain from it.

Muhammad bin Muslim relates from Imam Baqir (a.s.) that the Imam said,

O Muhammad bin Muslim! Every sin of a Mu'min for which he has repented is forgiven. For the future after repentance and forgiveness they must continue good deeds. By Allah no one has this merit except the faithful.

I inquired; what if someone does Tawba and Istighfar and then commits a sin and again repents? In response, the Imam said,

O Muhammad bin Muslim! You know very well that a Mu'min can honestly be ashamed for

his deeds. Then if he repents, will Allah not accept his Tawba?

I asked what if he sins a number of times? He said,

Even then his Tawba will be accepted. Allah (S.w.T.) will pardon his sins because He is very kind. He will surely accept repentance and overlook our misdeeds. Beware! You may not make a Mu'min disheartened.

Abu Basīr says: I requested Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) to explain what was 'Tawba Nasūh' ordered by Allah? He said,

"A repentance after which he never commits that sin again."

I said, "Master! Is there anybody among us who would not sin ever again? The Imam replied,

"O Abu Basīr! Verily God loves His slave who gets deceived more and then repents over it."

Another Hadith says that begging pardon after an error is the best course.

10. The Door of Tawba is open forever

Imam Baqir (a.s.) said,

Adam (a.s.) requested God Almighty: My Lord! You have imposed Satan on me. So grant something to me also. Allah Almighty replied: O Adam! Yes, I have appointed something for you also. It is that if anyone from your progeny intends to sin, his sin will not be recorded. If he has sinned actually that sin (one only) will be noted. But when he will intend to do a good deed a good will instantly be noted in his account. Then if he will actually do that good deed, ten rewards will be credited to his account. Adam (a.s.) said: My Lord! Grant me something more. Allah responded: another bounty for you is that if, after committing a sin, they will seek pardon from Me, I will forgive them. Adam (a.s.) requested: My Lord! Add something more. Allah said: I have provided Tawba for your progeny and it is so vast that even if they beg My pardon at the last moment of their life, I will forgive them. He said: My Lord! This is enough.

The Holy Prophet (S) said,

"Anyone who does Tawba a year before his death, it will be accepted by God."

Then he (S) repeated,

"A year is a long time. If he begs pardon only a month before his end he will be forgiven."

Then he said,

"A month is also too much. Even if he begs pardon only a week before his departure it will be accepted."

Then he said,

"A week is also much more. If the sinner prays for pardon only a day before his death, his repentance will be accepted."

Then he said,

“A day is also a long time. Even if a man repents just before the arrival of the angel of death, his Tawba will be accepted.”[3]

Regarding this hadith, Allamah Majlisi (a.r) comments: The stages of Tawba will depend on perfection and acceptance because a perfect repentance will wash out all the dirt from the mirror of the soul. Therefore, make the mirror of your heart shining with weeping before Allah, with good deeds and with humility. If one is unable to repent in the last year of his life he can do so in the last month. If not in the last month then in the last week. If not even in the last week prior to death then just one day before the final departure. If he cannot repent even a day before death then he may do so only an hour before his demise. The Most Merciful Allah will forgive him. But traditions have pointed out even the particular moment at which it will be of no use.

Shaykh Bahai writes in his book *Arbaīn* that the particular moment is the time of seeing the angel of death. It maybe the time when one becomes sure of his death or he may feel that all bonds with life are breaking off. There is general agreement among religious scholars that Tawba of the last moment of death will be of no avail.

Verse 17-18 of Surah an-Nisā’ state:

Repentance with Allah is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn (to Allah) soon, so these it is to whom Allah turns (mercifully), and Allah is ever Knowing, Wise. And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them. He says: Surely now I repent; nor (for) those who die while they are unbelievers. These are they for whom We have prepared a painful chastisement.

Repentance should be Instant

Shaykh Bahai writes in *Arbaīn*: There is no doubt about Tawba being compulsory because, just as poison destroys man’s body so do sins (destroy his soul). After consuming poison it becomes essential for one to go immediately for treatment to save ones life. Likewise it is compulsory for a sinner to resort to Tawba immediately after sinning so that his Dīn (religion) may not be destroyed. The sinner who delays repentance takes a very big risk. The first risk is that if he continues to remain alive he may indulge in another sin (because a sincere Tawba implies that he has made a firm resolution not to commit that sin again). The second danger is that if death takes him suddenly he will die unrepentant. Allah (S.w.T.) says:

What! do the people of the towns then feel secure from Our punishment coming to them by night while they sleep? What! do the people of the towns feel secure from Our punishment coming to them in the morning while they play? What! do they then feel secure from Allah's plan? But none feels secure from Allah's plan except the people who shall perish. (Surah Al-A’raaf 7:97-99)

Elsewehere He says:

And spend out of what We have given you before death comes to one of you, so that he should say: My Lord! Why didst Thy not respite me to a near term, so that I should have given alms and been of the doors of good deeds. And Allah

does not respite a soul when its appointed term has come, and Allah is Aware of what you do. (Surah Munāfiqun 63:10-11)

In the explanation of this verse it is said that a man, at the time of his death, tells the angel of death: Please give me just one day's respite so that I may repent for my sins and be prepared for the journey to the Hereafter. Izrāīl says: The days of your life are now over. The person says: Just give me only an hour's respite. Comes the reply: Even the moments of your life are over. The door of Tawba is now closed for you.

Black heart

When a person sins and does not do Tawba, his heart darkens (polluted) as he commits more and more sins the dirt accumulates on his heart. It then becomes a vicious circle, the darkening of the heart leads to further sins, and the sins lead to further darkening of the heart. A stage is finally reached when his heart is irreversibly polluted and cannot be cleansed. Such a heart is referred to in narrations as a black heart.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says,

For human hearts nothing is more harmful than a sin. When the mirror of heart becomes black because of sins the blackness covers the entire soul. Then man tumbles down from his original position and gets separated from truth.

According to another tradition he also said,

"Such a sinner will not be able to do any good."

Such a man will not give up sins and hence the wisdom of doing good will be snatched away from him and he will not be able to perform Tawba till his last moment. If he will utter Tawba from his mouth it will remain limited to his lips. His heart will not support his tongue. As it is not a true Tawba it will not prove effective.

Stages of Tawba

Tawba means returning toward God. Repentance can be:

1. Turning from Kufr (unbelief) to Imān (Faith), to come out of a state of doubt into a state of trust and certainty. Similarly to give up Batil (untrue or false) belief and to accept the doctrine of Haqq (Truth).

2. To leave sinfulness and disobedience and to turn towards obedience. To give up opposition and accept obedience.

3. To come out of the uncomfortable atmosphere of sins, erring and to enter the shade of knowing the Lord and then to fulfill the duties of slavery. To give up carelessness and to remember Allah (S.w.T.) more and more. To hate injustice and oppression and to love faithfulness.

Tawba is a must for all. Tawba enhances the stage of a person's Marefat (recognition) which he can obtain by worship and thanksgiving. Full Marefat cannot be achieved by any amount of worship, thanksgiving etc. The holy Prophet (S) who is the highest of all creation, says,

“My Lord! I have not recognised You as is Your right to be recognised. I have not been able to worship You as was Your right to be worshipped.”

Thus even the Holy Prophet (S), despite his eminent position in virtue, the purity of his worship and the abundance of his thankfulness. The Holy Prophet (S) says,

“I recite Istighfar seventy times a day.”

The Method and recommended rituals of Tawba

The fires ignited by sins are fierce and there is no running away from them. A sinner should realize that disobedience to Allah (S.w.T.) is showing haughtiness to the Almighty, which brings down Allah (S.w.T.)’s wrath and punishment, and Allah (S.w.T.)’s wrath and punishment are too dreadful to bear, even the earth and sky cannot withstand them. Amir ul-Mu’minīn (a.s.) says,

“The calamities are so severe that they can destroy both the earth and the sky as the heat of this fire cannot be compared with the heat of the worldly fire.”

The Holy Prophet (S) said,

“If someone is extracted from the fire of Hell and thrown into a burning oven of this world (this life before death) he will be able to sleep with ease in it. It is not difficult to burn in an oven of this world but the fire of Hell is absolutely intolerable.”

Horrible Punishments

Surely the Might of Your Lord is Great. (Surah Al-Burūj 85:12)

And in Surah Muzzammil, the Lord says,

Surely with Us are heavy fetters and a flaming fire and food that chokes and a painful punishment. (Surah Muzzammil 73:12-13)

These Ayats describe the intensity of our Lord’s anger and the harshness of His punishment.

As we have mentioned, Tawba is a sincere feeling of shame and remorse experienced by the heart. The more the grief and sorrow in the heart the nearer the repentant will be to Divine acceptance of Tawba. The greater the sin, the deeper should be the sorrow. A man who has sinned is like a man whose lifetime earnings are burnt away. This realization will create intense grief and restlessness which will enhance the effectiveness of his Tawba. Tawba is therefore compulsory for a sinner if he wants to save himself from the horrible fate that awaits him. The loss will naturally create intense grief and restlessness. He should weep so much, remembering his sins, and he should continue to beg pardon of Allah (S.w.T.) restlessly so that when his end comes, the angel of death give him good tiding. His tears and entreaties put off the fire of hell.

His crying removes the darkness of his heart.

The Holy Prophet of Allah says,

“A repentant becomes like the one who had never sinned; rather, better than him.”

The Almighty Allah says,

Surely Allah loves those who turn much (to Him)…

This means that by weeping in fear of Allah (S.w.T.)’s chastisement and by reforming one’s character through good deeds, man can achieve nearness to Allah (S.w.T.). Allah (S.w.T.) is pleased with such an attitude.

Imam Sajjad (a.s.) prays to Almighty Allah,

“My Lord! Grant me the Tawfīq of such a repentance which takes me to the point of Your love.”4

“My Lord! Make me reach You through Tawba.”5

Repentance of Prophets, increase in remorse

Tawba is remorse of the heart. The more the remorse, the more easily sins are pardoned. Therefore, beg more and more pardon. The best course is to ponder over the verses of the Holy Qur’an. Especially read the events of the past prophets like Nuh, Dawūd, Yūnus, Yahya, Ayyub (a.s.). How much they wept while they were not even sinners like us. They wept to attain Allah (S.w.T.)’s nearness and to increase their status. As we have indicated earlier, study the stories of the repentant and obtain lessons therefrom. We shall narrate some such stories at the end of this book.

Perfection of Tawba, Siyyam, Ghusl and Salāt

Before doing Tawba the following should be done:

1. Fasting three days: Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“The one who wants to do Tawbatan-Nasūh should fast on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.”6

2. Ghusl al-Tawba: A man used to enjoy music, songs and dance parties. He was badly accustomed to this evil. One day he approached Imam Riďa (a.) and said: I was madly addicted to song and music. Now I want to repent. Kindly tell me what I should do? The Imam said,

“Get up! Take a bath. The holy Prophet (S) has said: There is no one whom Allah did not forgive if that man had made a repentance corresponding to his sins.”

Then he said,

“Get up, take a bath and make a as-Sajda (prostration) for Allah.”7

3. To recite two or four rakat Salāt: Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“A man who wants to repent should first perform Wuzu (ablution), then perform two rakats (units) of prayer and then seek pardon from Allah. God forgives him because He has said in the Holy Qur’an thus:

“And whosoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allah, he shall find Allah forgiving, Merciful.” (Surah an-Nisā'' 4:110)

It is written in *Kitab al-Iqbal,* that the Holy Prophet (S) used to ask his companions on Sundays of Zilqad,

“O people! Who from you wants to do Tawba?”

The companions replied: O Messenger of Allah! All of us want to repent. Then he used to say,

First perform ablution and Ghusl (bath), then offer four rakats of prayer. In every rakat recite Surah Ikhlas thrice, and Muawwazatain (Surah Falaq and Surah Nās) once after Surah Fatiha. Then recite Istighfar seventy times. Finally recite *Lā Hawla wa lā Quwwata illa billāhil a’liyyil A’zīm*. Then recite a brief Du’a, preferably this:

ياعزيز ياغفار اغفرلي ذنوبي وذنوب جميع المؤمنين
والمؤمنات فانه ﻻ يغفر الذنوب ﻻl انت

‘Yā A’zīzo, Yā Ghaffāro, Ighfirlī žunūbi Wa žunūbi Jamī’il Mo-minīna wal Mo-mināt. Innahu lā yaghfiruz žunūb illa ant.’

Then he said,

“Anyone from my Ummah (community) who does this will hear a voice from the sky that his repentance (Tawba) has been accepted and his/her sins pardoned. An angel in the Arsh (Throne) will say: “Those who were displeased with you (in the worldly life) will be pleased with you on the day of Qiyāma”. Another angel will announce: “O Believing Slave! Your grave will become wide and bright. Another angel will say: Your parents are pleased with you and, due to your performance, they too have entered the Mercy of Allah. Your provision in both this world and the Hereafter will be abundant. Hazrat Jibrīl (a.s.) says: At the moment of your death I will come to you along with Izrāel (the angel of death) and recommend to him to retrieve your soul with ease.”

The companions submitted: O Messenger of Allah! What if somebody performs this deed in any other month? The Holy Prophet (S) said,

“Yes, he too will get the reward mentioned by me. These are the words taught to me by Jibrīl during the night of Miraj (ascension).”

Istighfar, Repeated Repentance and the Early Morning Worship

Recitation of Istighfar: and one should recite the supplications taught by the Holy Imams for Tawba, especially the *Sahīfa al-Kamilah,* particularly its supplication No. 31 that is related to repentance. Similarly its 15th Munajat (prayer) is also regarding Tawba. One must ponder over its meaning and implication and should obtain lessons therefrom, thereby trying to bring conformity between one’s word and deed.

Repeated Repentance and Istighfar

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) said,

"The Holy Prophet (S) was reciting Istighfar hundred times a day and was praying for his Maghfirat (salvation) though he had not committed a single sin."8

It is also mentioned by him,

"The more one prays for pardoning of his sins the more good deeds will be credited to his account and on the Day of Judgement his deeds will appear shining."9

Imam Riďa (a.s.) says,

"The example of Istighfar is like that of a leaf trembling and making noise in the air. The one who recites Istighfar but does not stop sinning makes a mockery of God."10

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says,

The Holy Prophet (S) never got up even from the smallest meeting without reciting Istighfar 25 times.11

Another Hadith mentions,

"The Holy Prophet (S) recited 'Astahghfirullah Wā tūbo ilaih' seventy times everyday."

Saiyyid bin Tawūs, in his book *Nahj ud-Dāwāt* writes that the Holy Prophet (S) has said that a man who is inflicted by poverty and hardship should recite *'Astahghfirullah Wā tūbo ilaih'* thirty thousand times. The Lord Almighty will surely end his troubles. The narrator says this has been proved true by experience.

Selecting Morning Hours for Repentance

It is highly beneficial if man repents over his past misdeeds at any time or any place. But if he does so waking up in the last part of the night before daybreak, the effect is miraculous. All sins of the reciter will be pardoned, Insha'Allah.

The Holy Qur'an has ordered at several places for such prayers. Allah (S.w.T.) considers such worshippers as His hallowers and worthy of Paradise. It is mentioned in verse 17-18 of Surah Zariyat,

"They used to sleep but little in the night. And in the morning they asked forgiveness."

The 17th Ayat of Surah Āli- 'Imran says,

"And those who ask forgiveness in the morning times."

Amir ul-Mu'minīn (a.s.) said that Allah (S.w.T.) says,

"Had there not been those who loved My Might and who filled My Mosques and those who worshipped Me for forgiveness in the early hours of the dawn, I would certainly have chastised them."12

Hazrat Luqmān tells his son, “My dear son! Is not the cock wiser than you? It wakes up before dawn and asks forgiveness but you remain asleep!”13

There are many traditions regarding the merits of waking up in the early hours of the morning.

It is preferable (Mustahab) to recite *‘Astahghfirullah’* 70 times and *Al A’fwa* 300 times in the Qunut of Vatr prayer. Allah Almighty has granted a Praised Position (Maqame Mahmūd) to His dear Prophet and He fulfils every aspiration of a believer through this early awakening. It is said that those who reach a high position reach it only through such early awakening.

1. (al-Kāfi)
2. (al-Kāfi)
3. Usul al-Kāfi: Chapter of Tawba
4. Sahīfa al-Sajjadiyah
5. Du’a Abu Hamzah Thumali
6. Wasa’il ul-Shia
7. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il
8. Wasa’il ul-Shia, Kitabal Jihad
9. Usul al-Kāfi
10. Usul al-Kāfi
11. Usul al-Kāfi
12. Wasa’il ul-Shia
13. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il

Tawba (Part Two): Ten Incidents to enlighten our minds

Since the stories of the pious are very useful in awaking sleeping souls we present herewith some incidents regarding those who did Tawba, and quote some incidents that support some of the issues raised in this book. We sincerely hope that our respected readers shall benefit from these.

1. Wine changed into Vinegar

Sabzewari writes in his book Misbahul Qulūb that when the order prohibiting wine-drinking was revealed a caller was sent by the Messenger of Allah (S) who announced that henceforth no one shall consume liquor. By chance, one day the Holy Prophet (S) was passing through a bylane when a Muslim man also entered it carrying a bottle of wine in his hand. He was terrified on seeing the Holy Prophet (S) and he said ferverently to the Almighty Allah, “I repent for this and I shall never drink again. Please save me from disgrace.”

When the Messenger of Allah (S) came near he asked, *“What is there in the bottle?”*

“It contains Vinegar,” replied the man. The Holy Prophet (S) put forward his hand and asked the man to put a little bit on his palm. When the Prophet (S) examined it, it was indeed vinegar. The person was overwhelmed with emotions and he began to weep and say, “By Allah! It was wine!”

“But before this I had repented and begged Allah not to disgrace me,” He added.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said that it was true,

“Allah changes the sins of repenters into good deeds. “They are the ones whose sins are changed into good deeds by Allah.”

2. Repentance is accepted till the last breath

A tradition is recorded from Muawiyah bin Wahab in the chapter of the time for Tawba in al-Kāfi. He says, ‘We were travelling towards Makkah and accompanying us was a religious old man who did not follow the Jafariyya school of thought. Throughout the journey he recited full prayer (as is the practice among Ahle sunnat). The nephew of this old man was also with him and he was a Shia. The old man fell sick during the journey and he told his nephew to explain to him the Shia faith that Allah Almighty make it a way of salvation for him. All his friends were of the opinion that he should be left to die on his previous belief.

The nephew was not able to accept this and he began to say, “O Uncle! After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S), except for a few people, everyone turned back from Islam. After the Holy Prophet (S), ‘Ali (a.s.) deserved to be obeyed and it was obligatory on the people to follow him.” The old man sighed deeply and said, “I also have faith in this.”

The next moment he was dead. After this we went to meet Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.). ‘Ali bin Sarā related this incident to Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.). He said, that the old man was among the people of Paradise.

“How is it possible, Maula?” asked ‘Ali bin Sarā. “He accepted the true faith only in his last moments?”

Imam (a.s.) said,

“What more do you want from him? By Allah! He has entered Paradise.”

This shows that there is time for returning to the truth and repenting for sins even till the last breath. (However, one should repent before one is sure of death, as mentioned by us before).

3. A Perfect feeling of Allah (S.w.T.)’s fear is Tawba

Imam Zainul Ābidīn (a.s.) is quoted in volume 15, page 117 of *Bihār al-Anwār* to have said,

“There was a shroud thief among Bani Israel. One day his companion fell sick and was soon anticipating death. He called his friend, the shroud thief and asked how much he valued him as a friend. The thief accepted that he was a very good friend. The friend said that he had a desire and the thief agreed to fulfill it. The friend showed him two shrouds and told him to choose one for himself so that the other one could be used to bury him “But do not reopen my grave after I am buried and make me naked.” This was not acceptable to the thief but due to his friend’s persuasion he chose the better shroud for himself and went away.

When the friend died and was buried, the thief said to himself, “The dead cannot know that I have broken a promise to him.” He began to dig the grave and was about to unclothe it when he heard a scream and the corpse was saying, “Don’t do this!” The thief was

frightened and filled up the grave. When his own death neared, the thief summoned his sons and asked them how he had been as a father to them? The sons agreed that he was the best of fathers. The thief said that he had a last wish and the sons agreed to fulfill it.

He said that after he died they should cremate him and throw half his ashes into the sea and half into the desert. The sons agreed to do this and fulfilled their promise after the thief father died. However, the Almighty Allah gathered his scattered ashes and made him alive again. Allah asked him, "Why did you make such a bequest?" He said, "By Your Might, I made such a bequest due to the fear of Your chastisement."

Allah said, "I have pardoned you and changed your fear into safety and also satisfied the people who had claims of rights upon you."

This incident proves that if a person is ashamed of his deeds and has fear of Allah (S.w.T.), the Almighty shall pardon him and also make his enemies satisfied with him.

4. Refraining from sin brings forgiveness

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says in Rawdatul Kāfi that there was a hermit in Bani Israel. He was absolutely free from sins. Upon seeing this the head Satan called his cohorts and asked which one of them could mislead this man? One of them volunteered and Satan asked what method he would use? He said through women. The Satan told him that he would not succeed because the person was oblivious to sexual pleasure. Another Satan rose up and said he would deviate him through wine and sensuality.

The big Satan said that he too was unsuitable for this job because the sage was not interested in these things. A third Satan stood up and said that he would cause him to err through good deeds and noble character. The big Satan said that indeed he was fit for the job. This Satan, at once went to the place where the sage was engrossed in his meditation, and stood up beside him and began to pray Salāt. The worshipper was feeling sleepy but the Satan continued to perform prayers. When the worshipper got tired he would take a rest but the Satan did not take a break.

The worshipper felt himself inferior and went to the devil to ask him the secret of his stamina in praying. The junior devil did not give any reply and the worshipper reiterated his question. Yet there was no response from the devil. When the worshipper asked him the third time the devil said, "The fact is that I had committed a great sin and since then whenever I remember my sin, I get impetus to worship more." The worshipper asked him what sin he had committed so that even he can do it and gain the stamina to worship so much. The devil said, "Go to a particular prostitute in the town, pay her two dirhams and fulfill your needs with her." "From where can I get two dirhams?" asked the worshipper, "I don't even know what a Dirham means". The devil took out two dirhams from under his feet and gave them to the worshipper and also gave him his cloak and sent him towards the city.

The worshipper sought the address of the prostitute. The people guided him thinking that he was going to her to guide her towards morality. The worshipper gave the two dirhams to the woman and asked her to entertain him. The prostitute invited him inside with respect and said, "Pious people like you do not visit prostitutes. Why have you taken such a step?" The worshipper explained his aim in detail. The woman told him, "Actually, avoiding a sin is easier than repenting for it. Because it is not necessary that a sinner will get a chance to repent. I think that the one who has advised you for this is Satan, who has assumed a

human form to mislead you. Go back to your place and you shall find him missing.”

The worshipper returned home and by chance the prostitute died the same night. In the morning people saw the following inscribed on her door: Take part in the funeral of this woman, She is from the people of Paradise. The people fell into doubt and were so astounded that for Three days they were not able to bury her. Till the Almighty Allah revealed upon His Messenger, Mūsa Ibn Imran (a.s.) to recite her funeral prayer and also command the people to participate in it. “Because she had prevented a servant of Mine from committing a grievous sin. So I have forgiven all her sins and made Paradise incumbent on her.”

5. Allah (S.w.T.)’s Mercy is Very Vast

Tafsīr al-Safi mentions under the exegesis of Surah Āli- ‘Imran that one day Sa’ad Ibn Ma’az came weeping to the Messenger of Allah (S). After replying to his Salām the Prophet (S) asked him the reason for crying. Sa’ad said. “O Messenger of Allah! A young man is standing outside the house and weeping upon his youth like a woman mourns the death of her child. He desires to meet you.” The Holy Prophet (S) ordered that the young man be presented to him. Sa’ad came to the Prophet (S) with the youth. He saluted the Messenger (S). After replying his Salām the Holy Prophet (S) asked the young man the reason for his grief. “Why shouldn’t I grieve,” said the young man, “I have committed so many sins that even a few of them are sufficient to earn me Hell-fire. I am sure I shall be punished for my sins.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

“Have you attributed partners to Allah?”

“I seek refuge of Allah from attributing a partner to Him.”

“Have you murdered one unjustly?”

“No”,

“Allah shall certainly forgive your sins even if they are like mountains,” the Prophet of Allah (S) said.

“But my sins are greater than mountains,” said the young man.”

“Even if your sins are heavier than seven earths, seas, mountains, trees and all creatures Allah will condone them.”

“My sins are heavier than all of these,” said the youth.

“Allah will forgive them even if they are heavier than the heavens, stars, Arsh and Kursi.”

“My sins are more than these.”

“Pity on you! O young man! Who is greater, your sins or your Lord?”

Hearing this, the young man fell into prostration and said,

“My Lord is pure, nothing is greater than Him and He is greater than the greatest thing.”

“Would the High and Mighty Lord not forgive your great sins?” asked the Prophet (S).

‘No’, said the young man and became silent.

Then the Holy Prophet (S) said,

“Fie on you, young man, can you tell me about one of your great sins?”

“Yes, for seven years I used to exhume corpses and steal their shrouds. One day a young girl from the Ansars died. After she was buried I opened her grave in the middle of the night and removed her shroud. I was about to return when the Shaitan instigated me, I looked at her body and defiled her chastity. When I was leaving, a voice came from behind her head, ‘Fie on you for the chastisement of Qiyāma! You made me naked and junub (ritually impure). Fie on you for the fire of Hell.’”

Then he said, “O Messenger of Allah (S)! I think I shall not be able to even smell the fragrance of Paradise. What do you think?”

“O Transgressor! Get away from me,” said the Prophet (S), *“Lest your fire may burn me! How close you are to the fire!”*

He repeated this sentence a number of times and the youth finally went away from there. After taking some necessary items he went to the mountains of Madinah. He used to tie his hands behind the neck and plead for forgiveness. “I am Your sinful slave and degraded servant. I am regretful of my deeds. O Allah! I went to Your Messenger and he sent me away. This has increased my fear. I implore You by Your greatness, do not make me hopeless and include me among Your mercies.” He continued this for forty days. Even the beasts began to take pity upon him. After forty days had passed he asked, “O my Lord! What is Your decision regarding me. If You have forgiven me, inform Your Messenger about it. If You have made a firm decision to punish me, burn me at once or subject me to some other punishment and save me from the degradation of Qiyāma.” Upon this, the Almighty Allah revealed the following ayats on His Messenger (S):

“And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults — and who forgives the faults but Allah, and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done. (As for) these — their reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and excellent is the reward of the labourers.” (Surah Āli- ‘Imran 3:135-136)

As soon as these verses were revealed the Messenger of Allah (S) came out of the door reciting the ayats and smiling. He told the companions, *“Who can tell me about the repenting young man?”* The companions said, “O Messenger of Allah! He is on such and such mountain.”

The Holy Prophet (S) went to the young man with his companions and found him standing between two rocks. His hands were tied behind him and his face was black due to the heat of the sun. The eyelashes had fallen due to weeping and he was saying: O Allah! You bestowed countless bounties on me and did favour on me. If I could only know whether my abode is Paradise or Hell. O My Lord! My sins are greater than your heavens, earths, Arsh and throne. If I could only know whether You would forgive me or degrade me on the day of Qiyāma.” He was repeating these words and weeping. He picked up sand and put it on his

head. Looking at his conditions, the animals and birds around him were also weeping. The Messenger of Allah (S) came to him and untied his hands. Cleaned the soil from his head and said,

"Young man! Good news for you that Allah has accepted your Tawba." Then he told his companions, "You should repent for your sins in this way" and recited the above-mentioned ayats. In this way the good news of Paradise was conveyed to the young man.

A point needs to be explained here. The Holy Prophet (S) drove away the young man probably because he wanted his fear of divine punishment to intensify to such an extent that it could atone for his deadly sins. That the tears of regret may wash his evil deeds and he may qualify for divine mercy. This was exactly what happened. The more earnest a person is in seeking forgiveness the more he shall be near to divine mercy.

Hence the driving away of the young man became a cause for the young man's expiation.

6. One should remain between Hope and fear till the end of one's life

It is mentioned in *Safinatul Behar* (Vol. 1, page 127) that the Holy Prophet (S) besieged the fort of Banu Qurayza. Banu Qurayza was a Jewish tribe who lived near Madinah and they were always trying to harm the Holy Prophet (S) and the Muslims. At last the Messenger of Allah (S) decided that there was no solution to this problem except to attack and destroy them. During the siege Banu Qurayza requested that Abu Lubaba be allowed to meet them so that they can seek his counsel. Abu Lubaba was acquainted with the Jews before this. Abu Lubaba was commanded by the Holy Prophet (S) to go to Banu Qurayza. When he went to them, they asked him if it was advisable for them to obey the orders of the Messenger of Allah (S).

He told them to accept the orders of the Messenger (S) without any delay because he had arrived to destroy them. Saying this, Abu Lubaba made a gesture towards his neck. However, immediately after this he began to regret the act and thought that he had committed Khayanat with the Messenger of Allah (S) and exposed his secret. Deep in thought he exited from the Fort but due to shame he could not face the Holy Prophet (S). He went straight away to the Masjidun Nabawi and tied his neck to a pillar. Today the same pillar stands near the tomb of the Prophet (S) and is referred to as the Pillar of Tawba. Abu Lubaba said that he would not release himself from the pillar till he died or the Almighty forgave him. The companions informed the Holy Prophet (S) about this. The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "If he had come to me I would have requested Allah for his forgiveness but since he has directly referred to Allah, He knows better what to decide. Abu Lubaba fasted during the day and in the evening his daughter brought him some food just enough to sustain him. She used to untie him for necessary needs and then tied him up again. This continued for sometime. One day while the Messenger of Allah (S) was present in the house of Umm Salama the verses of Abu Lubaba's exoneration were revealed. The Holy Prophet (S) told Umm Salama that the Tawba of Abu Lubaba has been accepted by Allah.

Umm Salama asked him if she was permitted to inform Abu Lubaba for the same? *"Yes! Why not?"* replied the Prophet (S). Umm Salama went to her door and informed Abu Lubaba.

"Alhamdolillah", said Abu Lubaba. When the people offered to untie him he restrained them saying that only the Holy Prophet (S) could release him. The Messenger of Allah (S) arrived and said,

“The Almighty Allah has accepted your repentance. Now you are free of sins as a newborn child.”

He asked, “Do you permit me to give all my wealth in Sadaqah as a token of thankfulness?”

‘No!’ said the Prophet (S).

‘Then 2/3 of my wealth?”

“No!”

“One third?” persisted Abu Lubaba.

Finally the Messenger of Allah (S) allowed him to donate one-third of his wealth and then recited the following ayat,

And others have confessed their faults, they have mingled a good deed and an evil one; may be Allah will turn to them (mercifully); surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. Take alms out of their property, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby, and pray for them; surely your prayer is a relief to them; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing. Do they not know that Allah accepts repentance from His servants and takes the alms, and that Allah is the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful? (Surah at-Tawba 9:102-104)

The above two incidents tell us that a person who does *Tawba* must keep in mind two things. First of all he must not consider his sin insignificant. He should be absolutely ashamed of it and he must implore the Lord’s forgiveness. He must feel the compelling need of divine forgiveness and strive to achieve this with sincerity and continue in this pursuit till he is certain that Allah (S.w.T.) has forgiven him. Generally, this certainty is not achieved even till the time of his death. So he must continue to dread Allah (S.w.T.)’s chastisement and implore His forgiveness till the Angels of death will Insha’Allah give one the good news of divine forgiveness and bounties of the Hereafter. Secondly, as we already mentioned, it is incumbent on us to have hope and fear with regard to the acceptance of Tawba.

7. Controlling ones carnal desires causes salvation

Sayyidul Ulamah Mir Damad’s grandson Fakhrul Muhaqqaqīn quotes Shahīd al-Thani in his book, Fazail-us-Sadāt that a man arrived in Egypt. There he saw a blacksmith extracting red-hot iron from the kiln with his bare hands. The hot iron did not affect his skin. Certain that he must be some holy personality he came near and saluted him and said, “By the one who has gifted you this ability, please pray for me.”

Upon hearing this request the black smith began to weep. Then he said, “O Slave of Allah! I am not as you think and I do not count myself among the righteous.”

The visitor said, “But the gift that you have is not possible for anyone except a righteous personality?”

“It is due to another person,” explained the blacksmith.

The visitor implored him for further enlightenment.

The Blacksmith said,

“One day I was busy in my workshop when a most beautiful woman came to me and complained of her poverty and difficulties. I was stunned by her beauty. I told her to satisfy my needs and in return I shall solve her problems. She told me to fear Allah and said that she was not of loose character. “Okay!” said I, “You can go!” The woman went away dejected. After a while she returned and said that her need had compelled her to return to me. I took her to a house. We went inside and I locked the door. She asked me why I have locked the door? “So that people may not know about us” I said. She asked me why I did not fear Allah and I replied, “because He is Forgiving and Merciful.” When I approached her I found her trembling like a thin twig in gusty wind. She was weeping profusely. “What is the matter with you”, I asked.

She said that she was fearful of Allah Who was a witness over them. “If you leave me alone, I can guarantee that Allah shall make you immune to the fire of this world and Hell-fire,” the woman said. The words had the desired effect and I gave up my evil intention. I gave her whatever I had and said that I was releasing her due to the fear of Allah (S.w.T.). The woman returned home satisfied. That night, I dreamt of a lady wearing a crown of rubies. She was telling me, “May Allah give you a goodly reward,” When I asked her who she was, she said that she was the mother of that poor woman. “May Allah keep you safe from the fire of this world and the Hereafter,” she prayed. I asked her to which family she belonged and she told me that they were from the progeny of the Holy Prophet (S). I thanked Allah. From that day fire does not affect me. I also hope that the fire of Hell would cause me no harm.

We conclude that Allah (S.w.T.) cools the fire for one who controls his carnal desires and abstains from indecencies despite having all the means. Allah shall accommodate such people in His Mercy. Thus, the Holy Qur’an says,

And as for him who fears to stand in the presence of his Lord and forbids the soul from low desires, Then surely the garden — that is the abode. (Surah an-Nāzi’āt 79:40-41)

8. Leaving Sins and respecting the Sayyids cause Salvation

The same book mentions another incident wherein Ishaq bin Yaqūb Tahiri had a dream in which he saw the Messenger of Allah (S) saying to him,

“Release the killer!”

He awoke with a start and summoned his servants and asked them who the killer was and where he was at the moment. The killer was presented at once. He had himself confessed to the murder. Ishaq told him to explain everything truthfully and that he shall be released. He said, “I belonged to a group of people with bad morals and we committed fornication in Baghdad where an old woman supplied us with girls. One day the old woman brought a very charming and beautiful girl. As the transaction neared completion the girl screamed and fell down unconscious. When she regained consciousness she implored us to fear Allah (S.w.T.) and leave her alone. “This old woman had lied to me that she was taking me to see a play,” She explained. “She has cheated me. Please fear Allah, I am from the Progeny of ‘Ali (a.s.) and Fatimah Zahra (S).”

The prisoner said, “My companions did not heed the entreaties of the girl and began to

force her into submission. The status of Hazrat Fatima (S) made me feel ashamed of myself and I began to prevent them. They attacked me in return and the wounds are still visible. Finally I struck the head of the rapist and he died, and I succeeded in saving the girl. I sent her home. She prayed for me saying, 'Allah will save you just as you have saved me.' Presently there was a lot of commotion and my companions caught me as I held the blood-smeared sword. The person whom I had hit was writhing in blood. The bystanders caught me and brought me here. Ishaq said, 'I forgive you for Allah and for the sake of the Messenger of Allah (S).' The murderer said, 'I too repent of my deeds. By the Holy Personalities who saved me, I shall never commit such indecent acts again.'"

Allah (S.w.T.) helps those who help the oppressed and give up sinful acts. This man was saved because he had saved the honour of the Messenger of Allah (S). Allah (S.w.T.) rewarded him not only by saving his life but also by giving him the Tawfīq to do Tawba.

9. Do not Consider a Small thing insignificant

The late Hāj Shaykh Abbas Qummi (a.r.) writes in his book *Manazel Ākhera* that a person name Ibn Samad used to take account of himself many times during the day and night. One day when he was calculating the number of days he had lived, he realized that sixty years of his age have passed. He calculated the number of days in sixty years to be 21500. "Woe upon me!" he said, "Even if I have not committed more than one sin everyday, I would still meet Allah with the burden of 21500 sins." As soon as he realized this he fell down unconscious and died within a short time.

Narrations state that once the Holy Prophet (S) during a journey camped at a place absolutely bereft of any vegetation. He told the companions to collect sticks. All of them said that they were in such a desolate place that it was not possible to find any sticks. The Messenger of Allah (S) ordered each of them to collect as many twigs as he can. In the due course each companion brought some sticks and put them before the Prophet (S). When all of them had made a pile of sticks, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

"Sins also accumulate in this way."

The Messenger of Allah (S) wanted to show by this example that even though we may be unaware of our sins when they accumulate they could make a big heap. If we calculate the sins we commit in our life they shall reach a staggering figure. Thus when Ibn Samad assumed one sin for each day of his life he found 21500 sins in his scroll of deeds.

In the words of Sa'di the Persian Poet,

"An increase of drop on a drop makes a stream

An increase of a stream upon a stream makes an ocean."

10. The Bounties of Allah (S.w.T.) cannot be computed

Fazil Naraqi writes in *Merājus Sadāt* that a wanton lady named Shauna lived in Basra. She did not miss a single sinful gathering in the town. One day she was passing through the streets of Basra with her maids. She passed by a house from where there was a lot of weeping and wailing. The wanton said, "Subhan Allah, what a commotion!"

Then she sent one of her maids to find the reason behind the commotion. The maid went

inside but did not return. The second maidservant was dispatched but she too did not return. Finally a third one was deputed inside with express orders to return soon. The third maid went inside as in compliance to the order returned soon. She said, “O Lady! The weeping and wailing is not for the dead. It is for the living ones. It is the mourning of the evil-doers, the oppressors and the wretched sinners.”

Shauna became more interested. She said, “I am going to see for myself.” When she entered the house she saw a speaker delivering a sermon. People had gathered around him. He was warning them of divine retribution and they all were weeping. Shauna had entered when the speaker was explaining the tafsīr of the following ayat.

When it shall come into their sight from a distant place, they shall hear its vehement raging and roaring. And when they are cast into a narrow place in it, bound, they shall there call out for destruction. (Surah al-Furqān 25: 12-13)

The ayats had profound effect on Shauna. She said to the speaker, “I am one of the evil doers and sinners. Would my Lord forgive me if I repent for my deeds?” “Certainly!” said the speaker, “Even if your deeds equal that of Shauna”. “I am Shauna, myself,” said Shauna, “and I promise that I shall never commit a sin again.’ The speaker said, “Allah is beneficent and Merciful, if you do good, He shall certainly forgive you.” Shauna did Tawba, released all her slaves and started worshipping. She kept trying to compensate for her sins.

At last her flesh sagged and she became extremely weak and thin. One day she noticed her melting flesh and said, “O how much my flesh has melted. If this is the condition in this life, what would happen in the hereafter?” A voice from the unseen said, “Be patient! And keep serving Us like this till you are rewarded on the day of Qiyāma.”

A couplet:

“No repentant sinner comes to Our door,
Whose sins are not washed away in the flood of his regret.”

Glossary of Islamic Terms

Āq al-Walidayn: One who disobeys or angers his/her parents

Ahl ul-Bayt: “People of the House”. They are the Holy Prophet (S)’s family: Janabe Fatima Zahra (s.a.), ‘Ali (a.s.) and eleven of their descendants who are successors to the Prophet (S) after Imam ‘Ali (a.s.).

Ahsan: Goodness

Amanat: Trust

Amrbil Ma’rūf: Enjoining others to do good

Ayat: Verse of the Holy Qur’an

Barakat: Divine blessings and bounties

Barzakh: Purgatory. The intermediary stage between death and the Day of the Judgement

Bismillah: Literally “In the Name of Allah”. Said before commencing any task.

Dhuhrain: The two ritual prayers of Dhuhr (noon) and Asr (afternoon)

Dhuhoor: Reappearance (of Imam Mahdi [a.t.f.s.]).

Dirham: Unit of currency

Diyah: Blood money

Du’a: Invocation or Supplication

Fajr: Dawn

Faqih: Jurisprudent, Islamic Jurist

Fir’aun: Pharaoh (In this context Ramases II)

Furū ad-Dīn: Branches of Religion or the practical laws of Islam

Hadd: Islamic legal punishment (plural: Hudūd)

Hadith: A statement of the Holy Prophet (S) or of the Holy Imams (a.s.)

Hajj: Annual pilgrimage to Makkah during the month of Dhul Hijja

Halāl: Permissible, legal

Harām: Prohibited, illegal

Hasana: A good deed deserving heavenly rewards

Hijab: Statutory Islamic dress for women, veil, curtain

Iblīs: Satan

Iddah: A prescribed period a woman has to pass after divorce or her husband’s demise before she can remarry.

I’tikāf: A recommended ritual consisting of a continuous stay of at least three days in the mosque during the last ten days of the month of Ramadhan.

Imān: Faith

Imla: Respite given by Allah to the sinners in which they become more heedless of their sins

Insha Allah: Common expression that literally means “If Allah wills” or “God Willing”

‘Isha: Late evening

Jamaat: Congregation

Janabat: A state of ritual impurity that can be removed by performing ghusl (bath)

Jihād: Struggle in the way of Allah (S.w.T.), religious war

Kāba: The Holy House of Allah in Makkah, the directions that Muslims face during prayers.

Kaffara: Religious fine, penalty

Kāfir: One who denies God

Kalima: To say: “I witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad (S) is the Messenger of Allah”. Also called the Shahadayn. This testimony makes one a Muslim.

Kuffār: Plural of Kāfir

Kunniyat: Patronym

Laylat ’l-Qadr: The Night of Power. Believed to be one of the odd numbered nights in the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan

Maghribain: The two prayers of Maghrib (early evening) and ‘Isha (late evening)

Makrūh: Detestable, in the Islamic terminology it denotes an action performing which does not incur sin but refraining from which earns divine rewards

Ma’rifat: Recognition, Realization

Masjidul-Haram: The Holy Mosque in Makkah

Ma’sūmīn: Infallible, Inerrant (Singular: Mas’um)

Mahram: Relatives between whom marriage is prohibited

Mahshar: The field where people will be collected on the Day of the Judgement for their final Accounting

Mi’rāj: Ascension (to heaven)

Mithqāl: A measure of weight of about 4.6 gms.

Muhib: Admirer

Mu’min: Believer

Mubāh: Permitted. It denotes an action performing of which earns no rewards and refraining from it is not punishable

Mujtahids: Doctors of Islamic law

Munāfiq: Hypocrite

Mushrik: Polytheist

Mustahab: Recommended. It is an action performing which earns rewards and refraining from it is not punishable

Mutawātir: A frequently related tradition

Nahy ‘Anil Munkar: Forbidding evil

Najis: Unclean

Nāma-e-Amal: Scroll of deeds (Farsi). Arabic: Kitāb al-Amāl

Non-mahram: Persons between whom marriage is possible

Nawāfil: Recommended prayers (singular: Nāfila)

Nikah: Marriage ceremony

Qasr: Shortening of the ritual prayers during a journey

Qat’a ar-Rahm: Breaking off relations with relatives

Qadha: An unfulfilled obligatory act

Qādhi: Judge, jurist

Qunut: Despondence

Rakat: A unit of ritual prayer

Riwayah: A narration

Riyaa: An act of showing off

Rizq: Sustenance

Sādāt: Descendants of the Holy Prophet (S) through Imam Husain (a.s.)

Sadaqah: Voluntary charity, alm

Salām: Salute, Islamic greeting

Salāt: Ritual prayers

Shābān: A month of the Muslim calender

Shahadatain: See Kalima

Shari’a: Islamic law

Shirāz: A city of Iran

Silat ar-Rahm: An act of goodness towards ones relatives. The opposite of Qat’a ar-Rahm

Sirāt: Path

Siyām: Fast

Taqwa: Piety

Taslim: Acceptance

Tawakkul: Reliance

Tawfīq: Divine inspiration

Tawhid: Belief in the absolute Oneness of Allah

Thawāb: Divine or spiritual reward

Toman: Currency of Iran

Ulil-Amr: One who holds an authoritative position

Umma: Followers (of Prophets)

Uqūq: (Plural of Āq): See *Āq al-Walidayn*

Wājib: Obligatory

Wājib al-A'ini: An obligation that is to be carried out by every person

Wājib al-Kifai: An obligatory act which if performed by one ceases to be obligatory on the others

Wilāyat: Love and obedience

Yās: Despair

Zakāt: Obligatory Islamic wealth tax

Ziyarat: Visitation or the recitation of salutation while facing the tomb of religious personalities

Zimmi: A non-muslim who lives under the protection of an Islamic government

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