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## Help from the Unseen World

We read in Nahjul Balagha that Imam Ali (a) asserts that God Almighty throughout the history has meritorious servants to whom He talks through their mind and intellect. The words of Imam (a) are as follows:

"وما برح لله - عزت آؤه - في البرهة بعد البرهة وفي أزمان الفترات عباد  
ناجاهم في فكرهم، وكلمهم في ذات عقولهم، فاستصبحوا بنور يقظة في  
الأبصار والأسماع والأفئدة..."

"In all periods and times, particularly during the interregnum (the interval between the coming of two prophets) there are persons with whom Allah-great are His bounties-whispers (through inspiration) into their minds and intellect, and illumines their heart's eyes and ears with the light of consciousness. 1

These competent servants of Allah are the ones who are thus described in "*al-Munajat al-Sha'baniyya*":

"الهي واجعلني ممن ناديتهم فأجابك ولاحظته فصعقَ لجلالك فناجيتهم سرا وعمل  
لك جهراً"

"O Allah! Rank me among those who will answer you when You call them, and will fall unconscious by the manifestation of your Light when you look at them; You whisper to them secretly, and they work for You openly."

After being delivered from the traps of *nafs-i ammara* (the imperative carnal soul) and the satanic temptation and opening up of his heart's eyes and ears, the young tailor was ranked among such competent servants and from then on occasionally enjoyed inspirations from the Unseen, some received

in dreams and some while awake, thus being graced with special guidance that is granted to the devoted and sincere *mujahids* (volunteers of faith).<sup>2</sup>

This guidance is explained in a *hadith* quoted from the Holy Messenger of Allah (s):

"إذا أراد الله بعبده خيراً فقهه في الدين، وألهمه رشده"

"Whenever Allah intends good for a person, He makes them expert in religious law and inspires them toward the right path.<sup>3</sup>"

## Penalty of a Disapproved Thought

One of the significant blessings of Divine guidance for those under His special training is awareness of one's own shortcomings. The Holy Prophet (s) is quoted as saying:

"إذا أراد الله عز وجل بعبده خيراً فقهه في الدين، زهده في الدنيا، وبصره  
بعيوب نفسه"

"Whenever Allah intends good for a person, He makes them expert in religious law, unwilling toward the world and aware of his own shortcomings.<sup>4</sup>"

Having been directed on the path of Divine guidance, the young tailor enjoyed plenty of such inspirations.

Ayatollah Fahri<sup>5</sup> related that the reverend Shaykh had told him:

"One day I got out to the market for some business; an improper thought crossed my mind, but I repented right away. On the way, I saw a string of camels carrying in firewood from outside town. All of a sudden one of the camels gave me kick that if I hadn't pulled myself aside in time, it would severely hurt me. I went to the mosque with this question in my mind that where this event had originated from. I asked anxiously: 'O God! What was that?!"

I was told intuitively: 'That was the outcome of what you thought. I said I did not commit any sin. I was responded: 'The camel's kick did not really hit you either.'<sup>6</sup>"

### Threatened to a Destiny Like that of Balaam of Boer (*Bal'am-i Ba'ura*)

Among the Shaykh's devoted disciples was also Ayatollah Agha Mirza Mahmud–Friday prayer leader of Zanjan—who was a scholarly student of Mirza Na'ini. Such a learned scholar was highly impressed by the

sincerity and brilliance of a detached person who was lacking formal education.

The Shaykh once said: "The Friday prayer leader of Zanjan came over along with some of the dignitaries from Tehran. He introduced the latter to me. Due to this visit I felt (with a sense of self-importance) that I attained such a high status that dignitaries come to meet me.

The night (of that same day) I had a strange state of mind, feeling so depressed. With imploring and beseeching God Almighty, my state of purity was restored. I got mindful that if this attitude had continued, what I would have done. How did it turn out this way?! I was engaged in such thought when I was shown Balaam of Boer<sup>7</sup> and was told: If this (attitude) continued you would turn like him; the outcome of all your struggle and attempts was that you would associate with famous figures, enjoying the world and being deprived of the Hereafter. This event was over and done with. On Fridays, we had regular sessions. Once, the session took longer than usual and lasted until noon. The owner of the house and the other friends proposed to have lunch there, and I agreed. The next week again the session lasted until noon and once again the tablecloth was spread; naturally with more variety of foods this time. And this happened for several weeks. In one banquet with various foods and a best quality bar of butter in the middle of the tablecloth attracting everyone's attention. It crossed my mind that this banquet was for me, the meeting was held for me, and the other friends were invited for my sake, so I was prior to others to have the butter.

With this idea, I picked a little bread, and as soon as I reached for the butter, I saw Balaam of Boer in a corner of the room laughing at me! Then I held back my hand."

## **"You are Satiated and your Neighbor is Hungry?!"**

One of the Shaykh's disciples related that he had heard him say: "One night I dreamed that I had been found guilty and some agents came over to take me to the prison. The next morning I was very upset, wondering what the cause of that dream had been. With the grace from the Almighty Allah I found out that the dream was somehow related to my neighbor. I asked my family to see into the matter and inform me about it. My neighbor was a bricklayer; it was found out that he had been out of work for several days and the night before he and his wife had nothing to eat and slept the night hungry. I was told (intuitively): 'Woe to you! You sleep full whereas your neighbor is hungry?' At that time, I had a saving of three *abbasis* in cash! Without any delay, I borrowed another *abbasi* from a grocer in the neighborhood and together with my savings gave it to the neighbor and requested him to let me know whenever he was jobless and penniless."

## **"Love your Children for the Sake of God!"**

Once the Shaykh said:

"One night I found I was in veil<sup>8</sup>, and was unable to find my way to the Beloved. I tried to trace the origin

of this veil. After long pleading and probing, I found it was the result of the feeling affection or one of my children the evening before when I looked at his (her?) face! I was told (intuitively) that I should love my child for the sake of God! (So) I prayed God to forgive me for that (personal) affection. ..."

## The Veil of Eating Food beyond Need!

One of the Shaykh's devotees related about him that the Shaykh was once holding a session in one of his friends' house. Before starting his talk, he felt somehow weak due to hunger and asked for some bread. The householder brought him half a loaf of bread for him to eat, and then he started the meeting. The following night he said:

"Last night I made salutations to the holy Imams (a) but I did not see them. I pleaded to find the reason. I was told intuitively: 'You had half of that food and the hunger alleviated. Why then did you eat the other half?! Having some food enough for body's need is all right, but extra to that would cause veil and darkness.'"

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1. Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 222.

2. (والذين جاهدوا فينا لنهدينهم سبلنا) (And those who strive in Our (Cause) –We will certainly guide them to our paths.) (Al Mulk: 69)

3. Mizan al-Hikma, IV, 1602: 5359.

4. Ibid., IV, 1602: 5360.

5. The representative of Wali Faqih and prayer leader of Masjid of Zainabiyyah in Damascus. He has narrated the next account about the Shaykh, too.

6. This account has been related in very slightly a different form by two of the Shaykh's other devotees. The present account was narrated by Ayatollah Fahri.

7. Balaam of Boer was a scholar, according to the Tafsirs, whose supplications were granted. He had twelve thousand disciples, but due to carnal desire and whims, he went to the aid of the despotic ruler of his time, to the extent that he got ready to curse the army of the Prophet Musa (a). He was likened to a dog, as referred to in the Qur'an: (His similitude is that of a dog: if you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls out his tongue.) فمثله كمثل الكلب ان تحمل عليه يلهث او تتركه يلهث (al-A'raf: 176). See also: Tafsir al-Mizan, VIII, 339; Tafsir Qummi, 1, 248; Munyat al-Murid, 151.

8. i. e., veiled inwardly and in darkness of soul.

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