

## Chapter 9: Resigning to Destiny

Be informed, as we have already stated, that a believer ascends the heights when he emulates the Prophet (‘s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). It is narrated in *Al-Kafi* that the son of Ibn Ya`fur quotes Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) as having said,

**‘The Messenger of Allah (‘a) never said about something that had happened in the past, ‘I wish something else had taken place.’** (*Al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, p. 52).

Notice how he (‘a) did not wish anything other than what was the reality, fearing to incur the displeasure of the Almighty. What a believer is required to do is to accustom himself to accepting the status quo no matter what. And be informed that the origin of displeasure, of wishing something other than the status quo, is ignorance of the wisdom behind events and why they take place. Had the wisdom behind things been manifested to him, one would not have desired anything other than what already is.

If a believer accustoms himself to contemplating on the wisdom of things and on their purposes, a great deal of the same would have been manifested to him, and it would have been easy for him to accept them. If there are things which he cannot understand, he renders them to the most of what he does not know<sup>1</sup>.

There are purposes, and there is wisdom, behind everything. No matter how earnestly one implores his Lord, beseeching Him to show him some facets of a particular thing, He will show him according to his readiness to absorb, according to his ability, to the extent of his wish and will. This is the shortest way to resigning to destiny.

As for being pleased with something [or some event] when the wisdom behind it is unknown, this is quite difficult, taking into consideration what we have already stated. It has been transmitted that our master, Imam al-Hasan (‘a) son of Imam Ali (‘a), taught one Shi`ah man about the world of dreams. He told him that he could get close to Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and become able to see them (in his visions) whenever he wished if he acted upon the following verses:

**Shy away from your worry,  
All matters are rendered to destiny;  
What is tight may become wide,  
And what is wide may become tight,  
The outcome of something incurring your ire  
May indeed bring you in the end a pleasing desire.  
Allah causes whatever He does will  
So do not object to His will:  
Allah accustomed you to see from Him goodness,  
So measure accordingly what already has taken place.**

By my life, these verses contain a cure for every ailment were one to act upon them, and their zenith is being pleased with what Allah decrees:

**‘And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint, none but persons of the greatest good fortune.’** (Qur’an, 41:35).

These sacred verses, coming from the fountainhead of wisdom and the personification of infallibility, contain guidance as to how one can attain such a high status. Among such guidance is that one must shy away from his worries, for this is one of the greatest preludes to attaining such a status. Worries spoil the heart the most. A heart occupied by worries turns away from its Lord, becomes distracted from Him, Glory to Him, because of its worries and griefs. Thus, the heart is done injustice by distracting it from its Maker. The body will, therefore, collapse, and one may fall very seriously ill, leading to its damage and annihilation.

After despondency, the inability to tackle things, when hopes and aspirations are dashed, you find someone saying, **‘Everything depends on Allah,’** as if Allah entrusted him to his own personal measures which do not fatten anyone, nor do they put an end to hunger! All of this results from ignorance of Allah’s purpose, of the way of Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), of feeling comfortable with what the evil-insinuating self is accustomed to.

What Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have advocated is that a believer must accustom himself to avoiding worries so that his heart will be totally filled with remembrance of his Maker. Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, has said,

**‘... those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah: without doubt, hearts do find rest in the remembrance of Allah.’** (Qur’an, 13:28).

When the heart turns to the remembrance of Allah, to His kindness, grace, compassion and mercy..., worries, griefs and depression flee away from it. The latter ills result from paying attention to the [evil insinuating] nafs, to doing things as it requires, the feeble that it is, to contraction, to bias in everything, to the desire to keep what is in its possession<sup>2</sup>. One must constantly remember his own single pit [grave]: Anything far from it is near, and anything hard is easy when compared to it. Anything in comparison to it is one and the same.

Its requirement is kindness and mercy; so, where are worries and griefs in comparison to it, and why should one then be so sad and depressed? If one feels sad about the past, it will never return. Whatever one lost will be compensated manifold. Perhaps what he lost was not a loss but a gain. One thing you lost for which you were compensated with a thousand, or with thousands, or with that which cannot be enumerated or will never deplete [as is the case in the Hereafter] is not lost at all.

So, Brother! Truly, there is no comfort for the heart except in the remembrance of Allah and *no* unhealthy palpitation except when one turns his attention to his own self, to a narrow world, to miserliness and stinginess, to despondency from the world of the soul, from the domain of comfort. Shying away from worries prompts one to direct his full attention to the ever-Living, the One Who sustains all, or it may prompt one to contemplate when contemplation does away with worries, wipes out depression.

The least means to attaining satisfaction with destiny is turning worries and depression away from one's heart, fully directing one's attention to the domain of the Great One. It is then that we can witness His hidden manifestations of kindness clear and glorious, His guarantees that His servant will have sufficiently with regard to total or partial matters. This is manifested in this verse of the Greatest One, the most Exalted:

**'Does not Allah suffice His servant?'** (Qur'an, 39:36).

You have no alternative to rendering all matters to His destiny. Although Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, ordered us to uphold the causes, He did not do so at all except with the condition that one must not rely on such causes totally, thus abandoning reliance on Him. Rather, one should seek the means out of obedience to His Command.

If these means become effective, their effectiveness is achieved through His permission, the most Exalted and the most Great that He is. But if they are not effective, a servant of Allah has carried out his responsibility and is under no obligation. A wise person must follow what his wisdom dictates. A servant of Allah must render any matter to His destiny, so he must be patient, surrender and accept.

If destiny brings something appreciated, then destiny is appreciated. But if it brings what one's nafs does

not like, a servant of Allah has to contend himself with the hope that there will be ease after hardship; otherwise, one may disbelieve [if he does not accept Allah's destiny], and the space may seem to be straitened although it is quite spacious. The Wise One, then, is inclined to alter the conditions of His servant so that such a servant will not contend himself with one particular condition.

His goal is that His servant must have Him in mind in all circumstances. When one is enjoying ease, he must not feel secure against a change in a minute. He, therefore, has to keep Him in mind during that minute and every minute, and so on<sup>3</sup>. The same applies to hardship and deprivation. A servant of Allah will then be in a dire need for Him because of being unable and too weak to tolerate affliction.

If the circumstances of such a servant of Allah have to alternate, one must receive solace from the fact that such circumstances do not last forever. They are fraught with change and alteration; therefore, one ought not depend on the happiness they bring him nor should he be elated by their ease. This is based on the verse saying,

**'... so that you may not despair over matters that pass you by, nor should you exult over favors bestowed upon you'** (Qur'an, 57:23).

Add to the above, in as far as solace is concerned, the fact that most of these calamities are trials. When a worshipper's condition becomes clear to be either patience, inability, disgruntling, and he gets to know the same about himself..., Allah will then lift that affliction from him and turn the outcome of his affair into ease<sup>4</sup>. And it is similar to the poetic line saying,

**The outcome of something incurring your ire  
May indeed bring you in the end a pleasing desire.**

A test often happens when one is afflicted without a need for its prolongation. If the time period is short, and if its outcome is pleasing, the affliction can then be tolerated. As for the poetic verse saying

**Allah makes happen whatever he does will,  
So do not object to His will,**

... it contains a warning against opposing Allah's decree. The Commander of the Faithful ('a) has said,

**'One who dawns depressed because of a worldly concern is actually angry with Allah's destiny.'**  
(*Nahjul-Balaghah*, short pieces of wisdom, No. 228).

*Al-Kafi* cites Imam al-Sadiq ('a) saying that Imam al-Hasan ('a) son of Imam Ali ('a) met Abdullah ibn Ja'far and asked him,

**'O Abdullah! How can a believer believe if he is angry with his lot, degrading his own status, while the One to judge him is Allah?! I guarantee for anyone who is pleased with his lot that when he supplicates to Allah, his supplication is answered.'** (*Al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, p. 51).

As regarding his saying,

**Allah accustomed you to see from Him goodness,  
So measure accordingly what already has taken place,**

..., it has the perfect contemplation on the beautiful things which Allah has for His servants, His great acts of kindness which, when a servant of Allah notices them, will cause him to realize on his own that Allah will not leave him by himself when catastrophes assault him. He will bestow upon him one of his acts of kindness whereby He brings what is dead to life and compensates for what is lost. This as well as the meaning before it are included in poetry attributed to our master Ali ('a) and cited in *Misbah al-Shari'a* as follows:

Pleased I am with what Allah allotted for me,  
My affairs have I entrusted to the One Who created me,  
Just as Allah was benevolent to me in the past,  
So will He for what remains.

References to urging one to be pleased with his lot are innumerable. One of them is the famous qudsi hadith wherein Allah Almighty says,

**'There is no god but I. Anyone who is not patient when I try him, let him take a god other than Me.'** (*Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 79, p. 132).

Such a divine threat suffices to admonish any rational person and to bring an ignorant person to his senses. Al-Husain ibn Khalid quotes his father quoting his ancestors saying that the Messenger of Allah ('a) said,

**'Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, has said, 'Whoever is not pleased with My destiny, nor does he believe in the fate which I decree, must seek a god other than Me.'**

The Messenger of Allah ('a) has also said,

**'In each and every decree of Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, there is something good for the believer.'** (*Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 68, p. 139).

Be informed, Brother, that **'Allah obliterates whatever He pleases, and He fixes whatever He pleases, and He has with Him the Mother Book.'** When a fateful decree approaches a servant of Allah, it comes inclusively, that is, it may include a blessing in it, or it may include a condemnation, or it may appear to be a sort of trial and punishment. If the worshipper thinks well of his Lord, becomes optimistic and decides to accept his destiny, Allah will change what outwardly looks like a wrath into a blessing, reversing the situation, and vice versa<sup>5</sup>. Because of thinking ill of his Master, limited acceptance of destiny and intense anger because of the sources of trials and tribulation, a servant of Allah brings upon himself one affliction after another, turning the blessing upon him into Divine wrath and affliction.

Imam al-Ridha' ('a), as we read in *Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah*, cites his father citing his ancestor saying that the Messenger of Allah ('a) said that Allah revealed to one of His prophets to 'Tell so-and-so the king that I shall cause him to die on such-and-such [date].' The prophet went and informed him. On his bed, the king kept supplicating to Allah till he fell from his bed saying, 'Lord! Postpone my death till my son grows up, then take my soul away.'

Allah revealed to that prophet to tell that king that He agreed to postpone his death and add fifteen years to his life-span. The prophet said, 'Lord! You know that I have never told a lie.' Allah Almighty inspired to him saying, 'You are to follow My orders.' The prophet did, indeed, convey this message to the king, and Allah is never questioned about what He does, as we read on p. 123 of *Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah*.

There is no doubt that keeping Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, in mind, seeking refuge with Him, thinking well of Him, initiating an undertaking with offering charity, supplication and joining the ties of kinship..., all this certainly causes a change in one's destiny.

Lord! If I am counted with You as a wretch, or deprived, my sustenance strained, I implore You to write me with You as happy, receiving Your mercy, receiving my sustenance in abundance, for You have said, 'Allah obliterates whatever He pleases, and He fixes whatever He pleases, and He has with Him the Mother Book,' and do bless Muhammad ('s) and his pure progeny (*Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 87, p. 135).

So, my Brother! How can a worshipper be displeased with his Master's destiny?! Imam al-Ridha' ('a) has cited his forefathers ('a) quoting the Messenger of Allah ('a) as saying that Allah says,

**'O children of Adam! You all have strayed save those whom I have guided; you all are poor save those whom I enriched; you all shall be annihilated save those whom I shall save; so, plead to Me, and I shall give you sufficiently and guide you to the right path of your guidance. Among My believing servants are those who can be improved [spiritually] only when impoverished: If I enrich them, wealth will spoil them. Among My believing servants are those who cannot be improved except if I grant them good health: If I permit them to fall sick, it will spoil them. Among My believing servants are those who exert an effort to worship Me, spending their night praying, so I cause them to be drowsy out of My own kindness to them. They would sleep till the morning and leave the bed self-loathing, self-indicting. But had I permitted them to do what they wanted to do, they would have felt proud of their deed, so they would cause their own souls to perish on account of such pride and feeling of being pleased with themselves, thinking they have surpassed all worshippers and excelled in their endeavor beyond the limit of those who fall short. It is then that they grow distant from Me while thinking they are getting closer to Me. None should rely on their own deeds even if they are good, nor should the sinners lose hope [of My mercy] no matter how many sins they have committed. But let them trust in My mercy and hope for My favor. Let them be content with My looking well after them; I deal with My servants in ways which are best for their own good, and I am Munificent towards them, fully knowledgeable.'** (*Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 68, p. 140).

***Precise Observations:*** Ahl Al-bayt ('a) Admonishing Their Shi'ah With Regard to Resigning to Destiny

Be informed that Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have sublime observations regarding resigning to destiny; so, congratulations to whoever pays attention to them and comes across them, for they are among their treasures which they have entrusted to the pages of books. Perhaps such books will reach those who realize their value, knowing how small in number these are.

Indeed, few of Allah's servants are appreciative. We hope Allah will honor this book if we put together in it what other books do not contain. Our main objective is to point out to what was not recorded, or critique what already is, if its source is not a pure well.

One of them is that they took upon themselves not to side with their own selves when they are afflicted. Rather, they receive affliction with resignation and patience till they receive the order to abandon what brought the affliction about and to shun it with supplication. This is why they sometimes appeared submissive to Allah, feeling heart-broken before Him, when they lose the most basic of things such as food and water although they could get anything only if they simply supplicated to Allah for it.

This is only because they have restrained themselves and chained their nafs by not supporting its wishes with supplications. Instead, they prefer to be patient although they have the option to either persevere or side with their own souls [with supplications]. But according to them, patience is the best option, and they do not forget the first option till they receive the special order to give preference to one

over the other.

The idea above is made clear in an incident which took place to Imam Ali ('a) son of Imam al-Husain ('a). One of his Shi`ah complained to him of want. The Imam ('a) wept because of feeling so deeply for the man. The man asked the Imam ('a), 'Master! Is not weeping spared for major calamities and catastrophes?'

The Imam ('a) answered him by saying,

**'What calamity and what catastrophe is greater than a Muslim seeing his believing Brother in need without being able to help him?'**

That Shi`ah man came out of the Imam's meeting place puzzled. Then he heard that the enemies of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) were saying, 'How strange these folks are! Once they claim that the heavens and the earth obey them, and that everything is at their disposal, and once they are unable to provide their own Shi`ah with the least amount of help!' The same poor man went back to the Imam and said, 'My calamity of hearing what these enemies of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have been saying is much greater than my poverty and extreme want.' The Imam ('a) said,

**'Woe unto them! Do they not know that Allah has friends who do not provide Him with suggestions?! O servant of Allah! Allah has permitted an ease for you from your hardship.'**

The Imam ('a) gave him food for his iftar as well as suhur. Thus, Allah swiftly removed his hardship, granting him a very large pearl which the man found inside the belly of a fish; he sold it for a large sum of money. The man returned both bread loaves to the Imam ('a) (*Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 46, p. 20 with a variation of wording).

This incident is quite famous. The most important part of it is the Imam's statement:

**'Do they not know that Allah has friends who do not provide Him with suggestions?'**

Similar to this incident is the case of Salman the Persian (ra) who was afflicted by the Jews beating him and saying, 'Why do not you call upon Allah, Muhammad and Ali to speed up our perdition and thus save you from our hands?!' He kept saying to them, 'Patience is better. I rather plead to Allah to grant me patience, perhaps Allah will get out of your loins someone who will believe in Islam. If I implore Him to annihilate you all, such a believer will never come into being.'

He did not curse them. This went on till the veil between him and the Messenger of Allah ('a) was removed. The Prophet ('s) ordered him to implore Allah against them, telling him that they would never



produce a believer, as we read on p. 68 of the tafs'r work by Imam al-`Askari ('a).

The case in the tafs'r work by Imam al-`Askari ('a) occurs in the explanation of the verse about **'those who believe in the unknown'** (Qur'an, 2:3). Anyone who likes may refer to it, for it is a timeless wonder. Nobody should find the case of Salman the Persian (ra) hard to believe because nobody should wonder about a man who emulated his masters so much that they told him he was one of them, Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

In the same category falls the case of the mi`raj. The Prophet ('s) was required to perform fifty prayers, and he did not implore his Lord to reduce their number till prophet Moses ('a) suggested to him to do that. He kept imploring Him to decrease their number till their number was reduced to five. Moses asked him why he did not implore Him to reduce their number any more, whereupon he ('a) said to him,

**'I am too shy because of imploring Him so many times.'**

It was then that Allah inspired to him that

**'Since you are patient with regard to the five prayers, I shall regard them equivalent to fifty.'** (*Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 18, p. 348 with a variation of wording).

The suggestion of Moses was to request the lightening of the burden. Prior to that encounter with him, the Prophet ('s) did not like the idea to make such a request. The Imam ('a) was asked, 'Why did the Prophet ('s) not ask Allah to lighten the burden before that?' Actually, all prophets before ours ('a) never implored their Lord to exempt them from having to endure some afflictions or strenuous responsibilities relevant to their nations.

As for our Prophet Muhammad ('s) and his Ahl al-Bayt ('a), it did not happen [besides the above] that they ever requested exemption from any responsibility. On account of their welcoming destiny, forgiveness is granted to them through the blessing of upholding what requires hardship and trial. Their *Shari`ah*, therefore, became the most light of all and the most easy, so much so that the Prophet ('s) said,

**'I have brought you the tolerant and the easy *Shari`ah*.'**

Aqil son of Abu Talib did well when he solaced Abu Dharr who was banished to the Rabatha desert. Ali ('a), both al-Hasan ('a) and al-Husain ('a), as well as Aqil went out to bid Abu Dharr farewell. In order to offer solace to him, Aqil said to him, 'If you plead for exemption from the affliction, it will be a sign of impatience. If you consider its removal to have been too slow, it is a sign of despondency. Abandon both

impatience and despondency and say, 'Suffices us Allah, and how good He is for help!.' (*Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 22, p. 436).

You have already come to know that such lofty stations are well known about the few elite persons who kept Ahl al-Bayt ('a) such good company that they derived from their lantern such noor.

Do not be discouraged by Satan from obtaining your share of such stations. Satan has inspired the people of our time, may Allah guide them, to say that 'Such concepts are confined only to Ahl al-Bayt ('a), that they are specifically relevant to them; so, their implications do not include people like us.' By my life! These folks have strayed greatly, going further away from the right path. These stations, which our minds and imaginations cannot grasp, are for the slaves of Ahl al-Bayt ('a), even for the least significant of their slaves. As for the stations relevant to them, what a distance there is between Venus and the hand that stretches to touch it! What a distance it is from their dreams and the mentalities! Consider just this verse:

**'In the Prophet of Allah you truly have a beautiful pattern of (conduct).'** (Qur'an, 33:21).

Ahl al-Bayt ('a) render the discussion of ethics and the meanings of norms of conduct to the Messenger of Allah ('a), narrating them from him, urging people to emulate them, attracting people to them, never suggesting that anything attributed to him ('a) is relevant only to him, so nobody should act upon it. Praise be to Allah! What an obvious fallacy!

It has been transmitted that Abu Dharr al-Ghifari used to prefer sickness over health because of the rewards therein (*Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 78, p. 173 in a variation of wording). One Imam ('a) stated this fact then commented saying,

**'We are folks who prefer health over sickness. But when we are actually sick, we then prefer sickness over health.'**

Such is the statement coming from the fountainhead of wisdom and infallibility. It attracts one's attention to preferring the degree of resigning to fate, whether it is with regard to something loved or hated, over the preference of what is hated versus what is loved in the hope of attaining its rewards and out of eagerness for its compensations.

There is no doubt about it; despite its equivalent value to preferring what is hated and its being more liked than when a fateful event does take place, it furthers goes to prefer health over sickness and seeking it when it is not there. If one wishes for it out of his desire to earn its rewards, to feel pleased with it, so it becomes something very much desired, this is one of the lofty stations which only people such as Abu Dharr can attain.

Otherwise, its suggestion is tainted with making a suggestion to Allah and objecting to His destiny. The Imam ('a) wanted to remove this misconception and point out the shortcoming of such wisdom. Such is the station of true moderation, complete straightforwardness to the difficulty of which the Master of both Worlds ('a) pointed out when he said,

**'One verse in Surat Hud caused me to grow gray hair.'** (*Jawami` al-Jami`*, p. 170),

a reference to the verse saying,

**'... therefore, stand firm (on the straight path) as you are commanded.'** (Qur'an, 11:112).

Surely Allah has said the truth.

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1. The insistence of a believer on a particular need springs out of his conviction of the final outcome of things, being convinced that the achievement of that objective will bring him happiness. The truth is that nothing was manifested to such a believer which would bring him such a certainty; so, what makes him insist on being displeased with what Allah has decreed in postponing the fulfillment of his need?! A servant of Allah who insists on his need being fulfilled accuses Allah, even if he may not be aware of it, with regard to His wisdom which decreed the postponement of the fulfillment of his need, or even of compensating for it in the Hereafter with many, many times as much, so much so that a servant of Allah will then wish not a single desire of his was ever fulfilled in the life of this world.

2. The problem of worries and depression causes hardship in one's life especially during this century where man's requirements have increased in number. One feels disappointed if he cannot attain them all, thus he falls into a crisis following this feeling of disappointment. The accumulation of such crises causes one to fall into a state of chronic depression and continuous worry. The only solution is what the author mentions: abandon greed, do not pay attention to anything which brings about worries and sadness by turning only to Allah Almighty. If one deems Allah Almighty as Great, everything else in his eyes dwarves. It is then that comfort, which is referred to in the verse above, is felt.

3. From this clear wisdom, it is known that if a believer invests calamity in dedicating himself totally to Allah Almighty, he will not only find calamity as a good companion, he welcomes such a calamity which drives him towards his Lord swiftly. This is why the friends of Allah are not perturbed during the most critical of times. Rather, this is one of the circumstances and conditions which people in this world cannot absorb, let alone comprehend.

4. This is one of the niceties of the author. He assigns for affliction one of these fruitful outcomes, then he inspires hope in the souls which do not want affliction to perpetuate. Says he, 'If the fruit becomes ripe, when the result is out, Allah Almighty will lift the affliction the aim of which is the bringing about of one of these fruits.' This means that one of the ways to earn a safe outcome is to attain these fruits prior to being afflicted by making an inward struggle, by quite often contemplating on one's nafs, and by admitting before Allah Almighty of being helpless, weak.

5. This is the difference between commoners and the elite people. A naive worshipper who does not know the objective of the Lord and His wisdom in dealing with His creation combines the burden of the affliction and [the sin of] grumbling about it, thus losing this life and the Hereafter. As for the selected few, those for whom Allah Almighty opened the gates of His knowledge, these turn anything which comes their way in the life of this world, be it a blessing or an affliction, into sustenance for their Hereafter. What a difference it is between a deed the pleasure of which disappears while its burden remains and one the burden of which disappears while its reward remains!

6. The compiler has surely accurately diagnosed the wound when he pointed out to one of Satan's greatest deceptions. What a distance there is between the confusion regarding the particulars of the path after one has walked upon it and the

confusion which diverts a servant of Allah from the basis of the movement along the said path! This is the secret. Seeking a path to Allah Almighty has become an exception which only rare servants of Allah undertake. The basis was attachment and feeling comfortable with the life of this world, the running after its wares. One would thus feel satisfied by performing the least of his obligations, something which does not enable him to reach the essence of the Shari`ah. This is why you find those who reject the necessity of taking this path, the one called for by the Qur'an in the verse saying

'... so let anyone who will, take a (straight) path to his Lord.' (Qur'an, 73:19)

not enjoying the sweetness of leading a life under the Shari`ah in its norms of adoration, nor do they achieve perfection in the essence of its legislation.

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