

## Fourth Greater Sin: Al Amno Min Makrillah (Disregard of Allah (S.w.T.)’s punishment)

### Heedlessness to Allah (S.w.T.)’s Anger and Retribution

One of the Greater Sins is a total disregard for Divine punishment. The person is fearless of the unseen retribution and scoffs at the idea of being punished for his actions. He lives blissfully in a world of material comforts and does not realize that he is fettered down by his sins. This is a Greater Sin. The Holy Imams, Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.), Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.) and Imam Riḍā (a.s.) have classified the fearlessness of Allah (S.w.T.)’s punishment among the Greater Sins. The Qur’an announces:

***“What! do the people of the towns then feel secure from Our punishment coming to them by night while they are asleep?” (Surah al-Arḥāf 7:97)***

***“What! do the people of the towns feel secure from Our punishment coming to them in the morning while they play?” (Surah al-Arḥāf 7:98)***

***“What! do they feel secure from Allah’s plan? But none feels secure from Allah’s plan except the people who shall perish.” (Surah al-Arḥāf 7:99)***

These Three verses clearly prohibit the fearlessness of the punishment of Allah (S.w.T.). The last verse mentions that those who do not fear Allah (S.w.T.)’s punishment would be losers in the hereafter. Divine retribution will be their lot on the Day of Judgement, as will be the fate of the unbelievers and the non-repentant sinners.

It is clear from the Qur’an that to remain heedless of Allah (S.w.T.)’s plan is a Greater Sin. Hence carelessness about the punishment and warnings of Allah (S.w.T.) is equivalent to disregard of His orders and prohibitions and an abject ignorance of His Supremacy. How can a lowly and insignificant being, now dare to oppose the Lord of the two worlds. This heedlessness and disregard is a Greater Sin

that does not merit pardon, except that the sinner feels remorse and asks for forgiveness. It would appear from the above discussion that whether a sin is pardonable or not depends more on the attitude of the sinner, rather than the sin itself. If in the innermost recesses of his heart, the transgressor is fearful of Allah (S.w.T.), he is deserving of forgiveness, but if he is brazenly fearless of Allah (S.w.T.)'s punishment, he is most unfit for pardon and mercy.

The plan of Allah (S.w.T.) means a sudden punishment that descends upon the sinners, as mentioned in the Divine book,

***“Does man think that he is to be left to wander without an aim?” (Surah al-Qiyāma 75:36)***

## **‘Imla’, Respite**

‘Allah (S.w.T.)’s plan’ includes ‘Imla’. From the time Allah (S.w.T.) created man it has been a Divine practice that the thankless ones and the sinners should not be punished for their sins immediately. Rather they are given a long respite. Since everyone is prone to sin except the Infallibles, if each one were to be punished for their misdeeds immediately, not a single person would remain on the face of the earth. Allah (S.w.T.) has stated in the Holy Qur’an,

***“And if Allah had destroyed men for their inequity, He would not leave on the earth a single creature, but He respites them till an appointed time...” (Surah an-Nahl 16:61)***

Besides, Imla proves to be the Grace of Allah (S.w.T.) for the pious. It gives them time to reflect upon their behaviour, realize their mistakes, repent, and make a firm intention not to repeat their sins. Allah (S.w.T.)’s indulgence thus helps them to achieve the good in this world and the hereafter. On the other hand indulgence shown to unrepentant sinners only makes them heedless of the fact that eventually they will be accountable for their deeds. They continue to commit one sin upon another and when their corruption reaches a limit, a sudden punishment descends upon them.

***“And I grant them respite; surely My scheme is effective.” (Surah al-Araf 7: 183)***

Disbelievers and sinners leading successful and comfortable lives may conceitedly feel that their capabilities have brought them success but in reality all that they have is a form of punishment from Allah (S.w.T.) and a sort of retribution which is referred to as ‘the Plan of Allah (S.w.T.).’

## **Respite for the Wrong Doers**

The Glorious Qur’an quotes thus,

***“And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is better for their souls; We grant them respite only that they may add to their sins; and they shall have a disgraceful chastisement.” (Surah ‘Alī- ‘Imran 3: 178)***

Imam Riḍa (a.s.) said,

“By Allah, they have not been punished with anything more severe than Imla (respite).”<sup>1</sup>

Imam Sajjad (a.s.) has mentioned in Du’a al-Makarimul Akhlaq:

“(O Allah). Give me such a life that my (long) life is spent in obedience to you. And when my life becomes a field of Satan take away my soul towards you (before I become eligible for Divine retribution).”

## Istidrāj (Drawing Near)

*Istidrāj* is also included in Allah (S.w.T.)’s plan. At times the respite granted by Allah (S.w.T.) also includes a new blessing. Allah (S.w.T.) bestows His bounties upon a person who has sinned so that he may feel ashamed of himself and make amends. Instead, the person often develops confidence and blatantly commits more sins. Such unfortunate people are mentioned in the following verse of Qur’an:

***“And (as to) those who reject Our communications, We draw them near (to destruction) by degrees from whence they know not.” (Surah al-Arḥāf 7: 182)***

It is recorded in Safinat’ul-Bihār, “When Allah wishes good for a person and he commits a sin, Allah involves him in difficulties so that he may become aware that the cause of his problems is his own sin. He can then repent for it (immediately). When Allah wishes to punish a person who commits a sin, He gives him a new form of blessing so that he may be dazzled by the blessing and ignore repentance. This is what Allah means in the Ayat (quoted above).”

## Istidrāj denotes failure to repent

When Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) was asked the meaning of “Istidrāj” he replied:

“When a person commits a sin he is given respite and a new blessing, then when he fails to repent he is slowly led towards destruction; about which he is heedless. This is known as Istedraj and ‘Allah’s Plan.’”<sup>2</sup>

It is related from Amir ul-Mu’minīn (a.s.) that he said:

“Certainly, those who are given an increase in wealth and property by Allah, should not think anything but that it is Istidrāj. They should not be fearless (of Allah’s plan). Because calm precedes storm.”<sup>3</sup>

## Fearlessness of Allah (S.w.T.)’s Plan

Allah (S.w.T.) possesses two kinds of qualities, the Jamali (good) and Jalali (severe). Example of Jamali qualities are His being Rahmān (Beneficent), Rahīm (Merciful), Karīm (Generous), Halīm

(Magnanimous), Shakūr (Thankful), Ghafūr (one who forgives).

The Jalali qualities are His being Jabbar (Mighty), Qahhar (One who punishes), Muntaqim (One who retributes), Muzallil (One who degrades), Mutakabbir (Proud) and Shadūdul Iqab (Severe in punishing). Hence Allah (S.w.T.) informs of His good qualities and then warns of His Severity:

***“Inform My servants that I am the Forgiving, The Merciful, and that My punishment – that is the painful punishment.” (Surah al-Hijr, 15:49-50)***

Elsewhere Allah (S.w.T.) says,

***“The Forgiver of faults and the Acceptor of repentance, severe to punish, Lord of bounty.” (Surah Ghāfir, 40:3)***

Thus Allah (S.w.T.) is the most Merciful of the mercifuls in the matter of forgiveness and also the most severe in retribution.

## **Fear and Hope Are the Signs of Marefat**

One who recognizes the boundless expanse of Allah (S.w.T.)’s Mercy is bound to have great hopes; if he has repented, his sins will be forgiven, if he has worshipped Allah (S.w.T.), his invocation will be accepted and Allah (S.w.T.) in His generosity will let him have the maximum benefits. Allah (S.w.T.) is known to be the ‘Forgiver of sins’ and ‘Acceptor of prayers’.

In the same way the knowledge of the severity of Allah (S.w.T.)’s chastisement for every sin will make one tremble with fear. The fear of Allah (S.w.T.) inspires a person with Tawfīq that insulates him from transgressing the bounds of prohibitions, and compels him towards sincere repentance. When we are in the throes of temptation to commit an aggression, we have to be extremely cautious not to give in. It may so happen that the particular sin we are about to commit will seal our fate and deprive us forever, of Allah (S.w.T.)’s Mercy and forgiveness. It is narrated from Imam Ja’far as-Sādiq (a.s.):

“One who intends to commit a sin (should control his selfish desires and) must not put it to practice. Certainly when (sometimes) a person commits a sin, Allah dislikes him and says: “By My Honour and Greatness I will not forgive you after this.”<sup>4</sup>

Since there is a possibility that a sin may not be eligible for pardon, it is extremely important that we keep ourselves protected from every sin; be it big or small. In fact the sins which do not deserve to be pardoned are regarded as insignificant by the one who commits them.

Imam Ja’far as-Sādiq (a.s.) states:

“You must fear the small sins, for they are not pardoned.”

The narrator asked, “What is meant by ‘small’?” Imam replied;

“A person commits a sin which he considers to be insignificant and says, “I deserve admiration for I have not committed a sin as serious as that of the other person.”<sup>5</sup>

## **Speech and Action Should Be Guarded By Divine Fear and Hope**

Even if the sinner repents for his sins, he should continue to be fearful. It may be that his repentance has not fulfilled the necessary conditions. For example, he have made an intention of not repeating a sin, but later he does not remain firm upon it. We should therefore continue to live between fear and hope till the end of our lives, hoping for Allah (S.w.T.)’s rewards for our good deeds and dreading the accountability of our sins committed knowingly or unintentionally.

## **One Must Fear the Acceptance of His Prayers**

If a prayer is not accepted it should be feared that (maybe) it is because of our sins. And if it is granted, it may be that one is so disliked by Allah (S.w.T.) that He could not stand his invocation again and again and has thus accepted his prayers immediately.

## **Separation is the Most Painful Experience**

If we are able to achieve success, be it material, intellectual or even spiritual, at all times we should be aware that our achievements are a Grace and Mercy from Allah (S.w.T.), and not the result of our own capabilities. Thankfulness to Allah (S.w.T.), alone earns Allah (S.w.T.)’s approval. Pride and ingratitude will forever separate us from our Creator and this is the worst of the punishments.

Amir ul-Mu’minin ‘Ali (a.s.) says in Du’a al-Kumail:

Suppose, My Lord! My Master! My Cherisher! I am able to endure your punishment, how can I endure separation from Thee. Suppose I am able to endure the heat of Thy fire, how can I endure not gazing upon Thy generosity.

## **How Should We Remain Till the End of our Lives**

We should be very apprehensive and anxious about our end. We have seen good and pious people who, in the final stages of their lives, turned to evil. Let us implore the Merciful Lord to protect our faith, and let us die as believers.

***“... Therefore take a lesson, O you who have eyes!” (Surah al-Hashr 59:2)***

## Everyone Shall Be Tested

We must also be fearful of the difficult test that we have to undergo. All the believers who have attained a high position have been in constant dread of failure when put to test. The respected Book of Allah (S.w.T.) has said:

***“Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, ‘We believe’ and not be tried?” (Surah Al-Ankabūt 29:2)***

## Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) and the Fire

When Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) was tied to a catapult to be thrown into the blazing fire he said, “Allah (S.w.T.) is sufficient for me.” When Ibrahim (a.s.) claimed that Allah (S.w.T.)’s help was sufficient for him, and he did not need help from anyone else, Allah (S.w.T.) decided to test him and sent Jibrīl, who asked Ibrahim (a.s.) if he had any kind of wish so that it may be fulfilled.

Ibrahim (a.s.) replied, “I do have a wish but not from you.” Jibrīl said: “It is correct but express your wish to the one in whom you repose hope.” Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) replied: “He is aware of my condition hence there is no need for me to say it verbally.”

## Successful When Tested

Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) deserves admiration. In the most difficult circumstances he refrained from showing his want, even to the trustworthy angel of revelation Jibrīl (a.s.). Thus he emerged successful from the most severe test. Hence the Divine verse says:

***“And (of) Ibrahim who fulfilled (the commandments).” (Surah an-Najm 53:37)***

We must also not be heedless of the Divine test nor should we be fearless of Divine retribution. Even the most near ones to Allah (S.w.T.), the angels, the prophets and the messengers were not careless in this regard. Especially in times of difficulties and calamities we have to be extra careful; constantly imploring Allah (S.w.T.) to prevent us from overstepping the boundaries prohibited by Him. Imam Sajjad (a.s.) says in the beginning of Du’a al-Abu Hamza Thumali:

“Do not punish my sins by letting me to be heedless of your retribution.”

## Tawfīq is From Allah (S.w.T.)

Let it be very clear to us that whatever good we are able to do, is only due to Tawfīq from Allah (S.w.T.) and we have to be most humbly grateful to Allah (S.w.T.) for this Tawfīq. Thanklessness in the matter may result not only in the loss of such opportunities in the future but may even nullify the good already done, and bring us disgrace.

## Wise People Fear Allah (S.w.T.)

Those who realize the Greatness and the Majesty of Allah (S.w.T.) in comparison to their own worthlessness are more fearful of Allah (S.w.T.). Only those who realize how utterly miserable and worthless they themselves are and how exalted and Supreme is their Creator, are fearful of Allah (S.w.T.).

The Holy Qur'an says:

***“Those of His servants only who are possessed of knowledge fear Allah.” (Surah Fāṭir 35:28)***

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said: *“The fountain-head of wisdom is the fear of Allah.”*<sup>6</sup>

## The Prophet's (S) Conversation With Umm Salama

Janabe Umm Salama says that she saw the Holy Prophet of Allah in a middle of the night standing in a corner of the house and entreating Allah (S.w.T.): “O Allah! Whatever You have given me, do not take those blessings away. Never let me become the butt of criticism and jealousy of the enemies. O Allah! Never let me return to the vices from where You have extricated me. O Allah! Do not leave me (free) to myself even for a blink of the eye (for a moment).”

Umm Salama says: When I heard these words I began to weep uncontrollably. The Prophet asked the reason for my lamentation. I replied, “Why shouldn't I weep when you, who have attained such a high position, are invoking Allah in such a (humble) way?”

Holy Prophet (S) said:

“Why should not I fear thus. When Allah left Hazrat Yūnus (a.s.) on his own for a moment, what did happen.” (That is, he remained in the belly of a whale).<sup>7</sup>

## The Prophets (a.s.) and the Imams (a.s.) Were the Most Fearful

The Holy Qur'an praises the prophets in the following words:

***“Surely they used to hasten, one with another, in deeds of goodness and to call upon Us, hoping and fearing; and they were humble before Us.” (al-'Anbiya' 21:90)***

Regarding the Holy Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) the Divine words are:

***“They fulfill vows and fear a day the evil of which shall be spreading far and wide.” (Surah al-Insān 76:7)***

The fear of the Prophets and the Holy Imams, specially that of 'Ali (a.s.) is well-known. He used to lose

consciousness due to the fear of Allah (S.w.T.). Imam Zayn ul-'Abidin (a.s.) expresses this fear most eloquently in the Duas of Sahifat'ul-Sajjadiya. If we are to record all such examples we shall be straying away from our aim. We hope that the examples given so far will be sufficient for the intelligent.

## **A Believer Lives Between Fear and Hope**

A believer lives in a state of anxiety and optimism, (as prescribed by the traditions) He is fearful of Divine punishment and yet hopeful of Divine Mercy. The Holy Qur'an says:

***"It is only the Shaitan that causes you to fear from his friends, but do not fear them, and fear Me if you are believers."*** (Ali- 'Imran 3: 175)

This type of fear is obligatory for every Muslim. The fear which refrains him from even approaching sins. Allah (S.w.T.), the Almighty addresses his Prophet (S) in the Qur'anic Ayat,

***"Say: Surely I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the chastisement of a grievous day."*** (Surah al-An'am 6: 15).

## **Hope Should Not Cause Arrogance**

The trust and hope we repose in Allah (S.w.T.)'s Mercy and generosity will certainly bring us additional bounties. But this trust should not assume proportions that make us feel confident and arrogant that we think, we shall not be punished. As is mentioned in Qur'an,

***"Let not the arch-deceiver (Satan) deceive you respecting Allah."*** (Surah Fati'ir 35:5)

Allah (S.w.T.) tells the polytheists in Surah al-Hadid,

***"...the arch-deceiver (Satan) deceived you about Allah."*** (Surah al-Hadid 57: 14)

The exegesis of this ayat as recorded in "Minhaj us-Sadiqin" is that Satan says, "Have complete faith in the magnanimity and the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.). He does not punish any one."

Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) said,

"There is no believer who does not possess two lights in his heart. One is the light of fear and the other, the light of hope. None of these is heavier than the other. Both are equal."<sup>8</sup>

## **Action of Man Depicts Hope and Fear**

It is related from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he said, "A believer cannot have belief till both fear and hope are present in him. Nor can he be called as fearful and hopeful till he makes it evident in his actions."<sup>9</sup>



Man's psyche should contain a perfect balance of fear and hope. It is related from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.):

“Hakim Luqmān (r.a) advised his son in his will. ‘If your deeds equal the good deeds of all men and Jinns, together, you must expect that you may yet be punished by Him. And you must hope in Allah so much that even if you carry the burden of the total sins of men and jinns, and approach Allah for forgiveness, He will pardon you.’<sup>10</sup>

## **A Lesson**

Now I invite the readers to contemplate on this. Do we have true hope and real fear of Allah (S.w.T.)?

If we truly dread Allah (S.w.T.)'s punishment then why are we not fearful of our sins?

Why is there a sluggishness in following the commands of the Ma'sūmīn (a.s.)? If we truly regard ourselves to be desiring of Divine Mercy, why do we not strive for the goal? Why are our actions not directed towards absolute obedience and worship?

Yes, we do have genuine fear and hope with regard to the worldly affairs. This is evident in the excessive care, concern and caution we exercise to preserve our physical safety and material assets. Any sign of losing them, and we get restless till the danger is averted. If a worldly object is our goal we strive for it tirelessly and are not negligent for a moment.

By Allah (S.w.T.)! Let us look at the amount of efforts we put in our worldly affairs and honestly admit to ourselves whether we work even a fraction of it for the Hereafter. We most certainly do not. So let us resolve to divert some of our energies towards the fear and hope of the hereafter. If a sin has been committed, let us continuously feel remorse and weep for forgiveness, forgetting luxury and comforts, repenting till our last moment when we hear the good news.

***“(As for) those who say: Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the Garden which you were promised.” (Surah Fussilat 41:30)***

Let us realize that it is obligatory for the believers to remain in fear of Allah (S.w.T.) till the end of their lives.

## **Between Two Fears**

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

“A believer is always between two fears. One is the fear of his past sins, (so) he does not know as to how Allah would deal with him. Secondly he fears until the end of his life and does not know the sins that might be committed by him, causing his destruction. The believer does not forgo his fear for his whole

life, and his affairs do not improve without fear.”<sup>11</sup>

## **One Must Strive for the Hereafter**

We must understand that Allah (S.w.T.) has guaranteed sustenance for us in this world. The Qur’an says,

***“And there is no animal in the earth but on Allah is the sustenance of it...”(Surah Hūd 11:6)***

However the success of the hereafter depends upon the efforts of man. As Allah (S.w.T.) says,

***“And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for; And that his striving shall soon be seen.” (Surah an-Najm 53:39-40)***

## **Claim Must Be Substantiated By Action**

Amir ul-Mu’minīn ‘Ali (a.s.) says in Nahjul Balagha:

“One who claims (verbally) and says that I am hopeful of the Mercy of Allah, is a liar. By Allah if his claim is genuine then why is his sincerity not reflected in his actions.”

It is true that hope and fear are inner feelings, but they are manifested in one’s actions. Hence, Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“The Proof of fear is flight and the proof of hope is the effort to come near.”

So, those who do not resort to flight from the sins prove that they do not have fear. Similarly, those who do not strive for the hereafter, make it evident that they do not have any hope in the bounties of Allah (S.w.T.). Such people claim only verbally that Allah (S.w.T.) is Most Merciful. Actually, Satan has deceived them, and speaks through their tongue. Why is it that they do not just claim Allah (S.w.T.) to be generous for worldly benefits. Rather, they strive hard to procure these but are content to claim that Allah (S.w.T.) is Merciful for the Hereafter, and feel very secure in that thought without making any effort to strive for the Hereafter.

## **Fear Allah (S.w.T.) As If You Can See Him**

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

“Allah has to be feared as if you see Him with your own eyes. Because even if you can’t see Him, He is surely watching you. If you think that He is not watching you, you are a Kafir. However if you know that He is watching you and still commit sins, it means that you have regarded Him as an insignificant viewer.”<sup>12</sup>

If any mortal were to see us committing a sin we would feel ashamed and refrain from such a behaviour. But its a pity that we disregard the All-seeing Almighty and indulge in sins, unabashed.

## **The Perfect Example**

One look at the life of Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) will make the best of us hang our heads in shame. We would appear to be the most despicable and wretched creatures, when judged in the light of his excellence.

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

“A stroke of 'Ali (a.s.) on the day of Khandaq (battle of Ahzāb) is superior to the total worship of men and jinns.”<sup>13</sup>

'Ali (a.s.), inspite of his exalted position, is all humility when he addresses his Lord. Not an iota of significance does he attach to his outstanding achievements. They are all a Mercy from his Creator. In himself, he sees only shortcomings, faults and weaknesses for which he weeps and prays till he becomes unconscious. Abu Darda relates that I heard 'Ali (a.s.) reciting in a disconsolate voice: “O my Lord, there is no doubt that I have spent a good part of my life in Your disobedience<sup>14</sup>.

Still I do not hope for forgiveness from anyone but You. Nor do I intend to please anyone except You. O my real Master when I think of Your Mercy, the weight of my sins begins to feel light. But when I remember Your severity, the load of the difficulties crush me.”

Abu Darda says, ‘When there was a silence after this, I moved forward and saw that 'Ali (a.s.) had fallen unconscious. When I shook his arm, it seemed lifeless. I thought that my master 'Ali (a.s.) has passed away.’

Similarly Zorara says, ‘Once I saw 'Ali (a.s.) in the last part of a dark night. He was holding his beard and pleading in a sorrowful voice: ‘O! The provisions for the journey are less and the distance vast. The way is horrifying and the path dangerous.’

'Ali (a.s.) says in Du'a Kumail:

“O Allah the trials have increased and my condition has deteriorated and my good deeds are very few.”

## **The personality of 'Ali (a.s) is a Model For Us**

Like his fear, the hope of 'Ali (a.s.) is also well known. Since his birth upto the last moments of his life he remained engrossed in worship and obedience. He did not forgo worship even for a single moment. Sometimes he used to pray a thousand rakats of prayers in a day. Throughout his life, he fasted the whole of the month of Shabān. He never missed the midnight prayers. Even in the night of the battle of Siffin, which is known as the coldest of the nights he offered his midnight prayers.

For Three continuous days he broke his fast with water. He gave his share of bread to the poor, the needy and the orphans. He gave in charity the proceeds of the sale of the garden that he had planted with his own hands. A detailed chapter of *Bihār al-Anwār* deals with the endowments of ‘Ali (a.s.) and his charity. A few examples are quoted below.

## **An Excerpt From the Will of ‘Ali (a.s.)**

The will of ‘Ali (a.s.) is phrased in the following manner:

“This writing is that in which we have willed regarding one’s belongings. The slave of Allah, ‘Ali hopes that Allah shall reward him for this by Heaven and shall protect him from the fire of the Hell on the day when the faces of some people would be white and the others black. Whatever property I own in ‘Yambao’ and its suburbs, I leave all of it as an endowment to achieve the happiness of Allah.”

In spite of excelling in good deeds and worship, while returning from a battle, he was seen exclaiming,

“Certainly, the best deed of a man is to die a martyr. I fear I may not get a chance to achieve martyrdom.”

At last the Holy Prophet (S) informed him:

“O ‘Ali! Your end shall be martyrdom.”

## **We Shall Follow ‘Ali (a.s)**

We may think that it is not possible for sinners like us to come up to the level of a lofty personality like ‘Ali (a.s.) in terms of piety and spiritual realization.

In reply to this we can say that, though it is not possible for us to reach that stage we can at least try to follow his commands as much as possible. For example, if a child sees a shining cobra, it is possible that he may try to catch it and risk being bitten to death?

Let us suppose the child is accompanied by his father. In such a situation the father who is aware of the poisonous qualities of the cobra will shout warnings and move forward to rescue the child.

O the heedless one! Is not ‘Ali (a.s.) your spiritual father and the virtual guide? Are you not the claimant of his love and *Wilāyat*. If your reply is positive then you must strive to follow and imitate your master as much as possible. The hardships and the punishments of the Day of Judgement make one shudder with horror and one cannot be complacent about the preparations of this last journey. If you are a true Shia of ‘Ali (a.s.) then he is the best model for you. ‘Ali (a.s.) has himself said,

“You cannot imitate me entirely, but you can imitate (to some extent) and follow us.”

“Our Shias are only those who follow us.”

## **Warning of the Leader**

The leader of the caravan issues warning regarding the dangers of the journey and advises his followers to make all the necessary provisions for the perils and the wild animals they would encounter. Every person will be responsible for himself. Saying this he himself busies himself in preparations. The fear of the impending journey makes him terror-stricken.

Seeing their leader in this condition the followers respond by feeling a similar concern for the journey and its preparations.

Let us not be complacent and heedless, and waste precious moments. Let us follow our Imam (a.s.) faithfully, so that we do not have to face remorse on the Day of Judgement.

## **The Chief of the Caravan is Terror-Stricken**

O! the caravans of piety and belief. The leader of your caravan, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) is extremely afraid of the pitfalls of the last journey. He has issued clear warnings regarding the dangers. Every night he announced at the Masjid al-Kufa,

“Travellers! may Allah have Mercy upon you. Pack up the provisions for your journey and be prepared. Certainly you have in your path deep ravines and terrible dangers. There is no alternative but to traverse this path.”

After this he used to say,

“It is a pity! The provisions are meagre and the journey extremely long and the destination, great.”<sup>15</sup>

It is truly deplorable that our involvement in worldly affairs has created a wide unsurmountable gap between us and our Imam (a.s.). We have been completely cut off from his virtuous life and perfect morals. May Allah (S.w.T.) protect us from departing His influence to follow the misguidance of Satan. Certain sins cause us to be deprived of the Wilāyat of Allah (S.w.T.) and love of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) and lead us to the Wilāyat of Satan. After this we come under the control of Satan who rules us totally. Let us take refuge with Allah (S.w.T.) from such a doom.

## **Insulting a Believer Expels One From Wilāyat**

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

“If a person slanders a believer to expose his faults to the public, or to insult him, Allah expels him from His Wilāyat and leaves him to the Wilāyat of Satan.”<sup>16</sup>

***“Like the Satan when he says to man: Disbelieve, but when he disbelieves, he says: I am surely clear of you; surely I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds.” (Surah al-Hashr 59: 16)***

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1. Safinat'ul-Bihar

2. Wasa'il ul-Shia

3. Bihar al-Anwar

4. al-Kafi

5. al-Kafi

6. Wasa'il ul-Shia

7. Bihar al-Anwar

8. al-Kafi

9. al-Kafi

10. al-Kafi

11. al-Kafi

12. al-Kafi

13. Bihar al-Anwar

14. 'Disobedience' as mentioned by the infallible Imam (a.s.) is not to be equated with disobedience as we understand. For details refer to the introduction to Psalms of Islam translated by William Chittick.

15. Nahjul Balagha

16. al-Kafi

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