

Introduction

As regarding the Introduction, be informed that reason is the mechanism whereby Allah is known, Praise to Him, and through it belief in the messengers and the upholding of the divine legislations are achieved. He, the Almighty, urges us to seek virtues, forewarns us of being characterized by lowly deeds, so He administers both abodes and is the causation for winning mastership of both worlds: His likeness is light in the dark, for such light must be little among some folks, so it becomes like the vision of the night-blind, and it may be more among others, so it is like daylight in the high morning time.

One who is granted reason should not disobey Him, nor should he feel comfortable about his own absent-mindedness or inclinations. Rather, he must make Him a judge for himself and against his own *nafs*. He should refer to Him for guidance: He will then reveal to him whatever is required to make one pleased by what Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to him, decrees especially with regard to whatever calamity has afflicted him on account of such separation. This is achieved through many aspects to some of which we refer here below:

First: If you look at the justice and wisdom of Allah, at the perfection of His favors and mercy, at the completion of His care of His creation, for He is the One Who brought them into being from void, showering them with great blessings, helping them with His compassion, providing them with His generous aid and assistance, all of this so they may take their share of eternal happiness and perpetual honor, not because He needs them, nor because he depends on them to affect His decree in their regard, for He is the Absolute Independent, the truly generous One.

He has commissioned them to undertake hardships, to do what is tough, so they may derive from all of this their lot and hope, and so He may test them and distinguish from among them those who do what is best. And He does not do that except only for their own benefit, for the perfection of their interests. He has sent them messengers to bring them glad tidings and to warn, and He revealed to them the books in which He has embedded notifications to the worlds. The achievement of this goal is dealt with in detail in the chapter about justice in the science of logic.

His actions, Exalted and Sanctified is He, are all for their own good: In them is the completion of honoring them. Death is one of these actions as the divine inspiration states in many verses of the Holy

Qur'an such as these:

"Nor can a soul die except by God's leave, the term being fixed as though in writing" (Qur'an, 3: 145);

"Say: Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death" (Qur'an, 3: 154);

"Wherever you are, death will find you, even if you are in towers built up strong and high!" (Qur'an, 4:78);

"It is Allah Who takes the souls (of men) at death" (Qur'an, 39:42)

and other such verses.

Had this not been the ultimate end of interest and the final destination of benefit for the weak servant of Allah who is unaware of what is best for him, who wanders about in his delusion and absent-mindedness, Allah Almighty would not have done it.

This is so because you have already come to know that He is the most merciful of all merciful ones, the most out-giving. If your *nafs* insinuates to you the contrary to this, you should get to know that it is the veiled *shirk* (disbelief). And if you are convinced about it but you are not comfortable with it or your fear of it does not subside, it is nothing but obvious foolishness.

The above resulted from heedlessness about His wisdom, Allah Almighty, in dealing with His creation and about the goodness of His decree with regard to His beings, so much so that a worshipper pleads and calls upon Allah Almighty to have mercy on him and to respond to his plea, whereupon Allah Almighty says the following to His angels: "How should I have mercy on him by ridding him of something through which I am bestowing mercy on him?!" So, consider, may Allah Almighty have mercy on you, about this divine statement; it should suffice you in this Chapter if Allah Almighty so wills.

Second: If you take a look at the living conditions of the Messengers, peace be with them, and if you believe the reports they brought about issues related to this life and to the Hereafter, to the promises they made of eternal happiness...

If you come to know that what they had brought came from Allah, the most Great, the most High, if you moreover believe that their speech is divinely protected from error and safeguarded from mistakes and inclinations, and if you hear about the rewards promised for any type of calamity as you will see and hear..., you will then find its taking place easy, and you will come to know that you have in it ultimate benefit and perfect perpetual happiness, and that you have prepared for yourself safeguarded treasures, Nay!

You have protection, a fortress, a shield from painful torment and immense penalty of Hereafter which

no human can ever withstand, nor can anyone be strong enough to tolerate, in addition to your son being your partner in this happiness! You and he, then, are the winners; so, you should not fret and lose patience.

Take this example: If something magnanimous assails you, if a lion or a snake leaps on you, or if a fire overtakes you, and if you have with you the most precious of your sons and the dearest to your heart while there is in your company one of the prophets whose truthfulness you do not doubt.

And if he tells you that if you offer your son in your stead, you and your son will be saved, but if you do not do so, you will be annihilated, while you do not know if your son will be harmed or not..., will a rational person doubt that offering the son as a sacrifice will mean achieving the safety of the son and, in addition to that, the father, too, will be safe, that this will be the ultimate benefit and that the opposite, the father and the son being exposed to harm, is nothing but a pitiful conclusion!

Perhaps many people prefer their own safety over that of their sons, offering the latter as sacrifices even if they are sure that they will be harmed as is the case when in valleys during times of famine. All this takes place during a single hour in a fire or in peril, and after it one may be transferred to comfort and to Paradise; so, what would you think about pain which remains without an end and stays for many, many "years"? Surely a :

"day" with your Lord of these days is like a thousand years of our own calculation. Had one of us seen hell or about to see it, he would have wished to offer his sons, wife, brother and the tribe that shelters him, even all people of the world, so he may be spared the penalty. "Nay! By no means! For it would be the Fire of Hell plucking out (his being) right to the skull, inviting (all) who turn their backs and turn their faces away (from what is right) and amass (wealth) and hide it (from use)!" (Qur'an, 70: 15-18).

From this onset comes what has been narrated about the Prophet (ص) saying the following to 'Uthman son of Mad`oon, may Allah be pleased with him, whose son passed away so he was very grieved about it: "O son of Mad`oon! Paradise has eight gates, while hell has seven. Does it not please you that whenever you come at any of its gates, you will find your son standing by it pleading to your Lord to grant you his intercession till Allah Almighty accepts his intercession?"

God willing, there will be many such traditions.

Third: You love your son to stay with you so he may be of benefit to you in your world here or in your Hereafter, and you most likely do not desire him to stay only for his own good, for such is the human nature. His benefit to you based on his stay is unknown. Rather, most often, it is thought that such benefit does not exist, for time seems to have drawn to a close, evil and absent-mindedness have prevailed over most people: The happy ones are rare, and the praised righteous ones are few.

How much one benefits you, rather at least benefits himself, is unknown. His present benefit and safety

from danger, as well as benefit to you, have all become known; therefore, you must not leave the known matter for the sake of the matter which is unknown, imagined or fancied. Consider the sons of most posterity; do you see anyone who benefits his parents except rarely?

Or do you see one staying awake [for night prayers] except very few? If you see one such person, you must compare him with thousands who are different from him. If you regard your son as being among the rare ones rather than the majority is nothing but stupidity and absent-mindedness, for most people are similar to others in their lifetime than they are to their parents, as the Master of the *wasīs* (guardians), blessings of Allah and His peace be with him, has described.

Although the individual whose similarity you seek, one who is righteous and useful according to what appears to be, what would inform you about his inner thoughts, the corruption of his intention and the doing of disservice to himself?! If you unveil his innermost, it will likely appear that his thoughts are bent on transgressions and scandals which you do not wish for yourself or for your sons, and you wish that if your son is like that, his death is better for him than his life.

This is so if you want your son to be unique among the people, a *wali* (saint) among the righteous; so, how would it be the case if you want him only to inherit your house, orchard, animals or such low soon-to-vanish things?!

Why do you not leave him to inherit the Higher Paradise in the company of the sons of the prophets and messengers resurrected in the company of those who are secure and glad, reared if young in the lap of Sarah the mother of prophets, according to reports cited about the Master of Messengers (ص), this is counted as nothing but nonsense if you only are wise enough to see it?!

Had your objective been to see him as one of the firmly rooted scholars, the God-fearing good ones, and you let him inherit your knowledge and books and other means of goodness, remember also that even if all of this happens, what Allah Almighty has promised of the rewards for losing him is even greater than your objective, as you will come to hear by the will of Allah Almighty.

One example is narrated by al-Sadīq who cites Imam al-Sadiq (ع) saying, "A single son whom a man offers is better than seventy who survive him and who become contemporaries of al-Qa'im(2." (عج

Consider there is a poor man who has with him a son wearing worn-out clothes whom he housed in a desolate dilapidated shed that has many beasts, and it has holes for snakes, scorpions and fierce lions, and he is in his company approaching something terribly bad.

A wise sage having wealth, trains, servants, high mansions and lofty stations feels pity for this poor man and for his son, so he sends some of his servants to him to say, "My master says this to you: 'I have felt pity for you on account of the condition of this run down place', and he worries about you and your son because of the perils to which you may be exposed, so he has granted you out of his own favor this mansion where your son can reside, and a great bondmaid from among his best bondmaids will serve

him till you take care of your personal needs. After that, if you come and wish to reside, he will let you accompany him in the mansion or even in a better mansion."

The poor man would say, "All this does not please me, and my son will not part with me from his run-down shed neither because I do not believe in the generous man nor due to the absence of my desire for his home and mansion, nor because I feel that my son is secure in this dilapidated shed, but such is my nature, and I do not wish to do the opposite of what my nature dictates to me."

So, how would you, having heard the description of this man, or would not count him to be among the lowest idiots and the most mean of all stupid people?! So, do not fall into a conduct which you do not wish others to commit, for you are more interested in what is best for you than anyone else.

Be informed that the snake bites, the devouring by the beasts and other perils of this life cannot be compared with the smallest calamity of the Hereafter which is earned because of what one has done in this life. Nay! It cannot be compared with the most Truthful One, Glory to Him, turning away from one and chastising him for one moment on the Judgment Day or even for one moment of being inside the fire then getting out of it quickly.

So, what would you say about a chastisement that will last for a thousand years or many times this long, or a puff of the torment of hell the pain of which lingers for a thousand years, or a sting of its snakes and scorpions the pain of which lingers for, say, forty years?! What a comparison would there be between the highest mansion in the life of this world and the lowest ranking abode in Paradise?! What comparison is it between worn-out clothes of this life and their very best, in addition to the silk and brocades of Paradise?! You can make more and more such comparisons with regard to the eternal bliss of Paradise.

If you deeply contemplate on this example, looking into it through your mental vision, you will come to know that such is the conduct of a generous person, one great in spirit. Indeed, all rational people do not accept this poor man simply surrendering his son like that; rather, it is wisdom if he praises and thanks the person who makes him such an offer, expresses the appreciation that he deserves, for such is the requirement of appreciating a bliss.

Fourth: Grumbling and anger imply a greatly lower status than that of accepting the destiny decreed by Allah Almighty. If one does not accept it, he would place himself in a sure peril and would miss great rewards. The Almighty denounces those who feel angry about His decree saying [in a Qudsi *hadith*], "If one does not accept My destiny and is not patient about My affliction, let him worship a god other than Me."³

Speaking to Moses, peace be with him, when the latter said to Him, "Lead me to something which pleases You," the Almighty said, "I am pleased with your own pleasure with My decrees."⁴

The Holy Qur'an states the following:

"Allah is well-pleased with them, and they with Allah" (Qur'an, 58:22).

Allah inspired to David (Dawood) the following: "O David! You want something while I want something (else); whatever will be shall be what I want; so, if you surrender to what I want, I shall spare you the ill of what you want, but if you do not surrender to what I want, I shall wear you out regarding what you want, and in the end, what will be shall be only what I want."⁵

Allah Almighty has said:

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

Be informed that accepting what Allah Almighty decrees is the fruit of love for Allah, for when one loves something, he is pleased with what it does. A servant's pleasure with Allah is evidence of the pleasure of Allah Almighty with that servant.

Such servants are pleased with Allah and they with him, and one who reaches such a status while Allah Almighty is pleased with him acquires the most perfect form of happiness and the most beautiful of all perfections: He remains relaxed because he does not tell himself that he wants this but not that: Both are the same, the Pleasure of Allah is the greatest of all; surely such is the most perfect form of wisdom. God willing, we will elaborate on this subject later in a chapter about acceptance with pleasure.

Be informed that weeping does not negate acceptance, nor does it incur Wrath: Its source is the heart, as you will come to know by the will of Allah Almighty. Prophets and Imams, peace be with them, wept over their sons and loved ones; this is quite normal for humans, and there is no harm in it if it is not combined with anger as you will come to find out.

Fifth: One afflicted with a calamity must consider the fact that he is living in an abode accustomed to toil and hardship; it is characterized by calamities and afflictions. What takes place in it is necessitated by its nature, and if the opposite takes place, it will be out of the ordinary especially to important personalities, men of nobility, prophets, successors to prophets and the righteous. These have all suffered hardships and calamities too much for the mountains to carry as is well known in their biographies. If some of these are narrated, volumes will be needed.

The Prophet (ص) has said, "Those who are tried the most are the prophets then the righteous then the most exemplary."⁶ And the Prophet (ص) has also said, "Life is the prison of the believer and the heaven of the unbeliever."⁷

It has been said that there is no true pleasure in life; rather, its true pleasure is ease after pain. Its best pleasure is approaching women due to its result in getting progeny, yet how many pains would succeed it? The least pain is weakness, exhaustion from making a living and fatigue. Whenever something loved is acquired, it proves that the pain it incurs is more than the pleasure, and the happiness with it is not

even one-tenth of the sighs it brings about. The least of its perils, in all reality, is parting with it which still causes pain to the heart and weakness to the body.

Any drink in life turns into mirage, any structure, no matter how good, is destined to ruin, any wealth, though an ignorant person is elated by it, will sooner or later vanish. Yet one who wades in deep waters never complains about wetness. One who enters between two ranks is not without fear, and how amazing is one who gets his hand into the snakes' mouths and complains about their stings! More amazing than him is one who expects a harmful thing to benefit him. One of the best speeches is the following by a man of virtue who eulogized his son's death by saying,

Its nature is polluted, yet you want it without impurities and pollutants,

One who expects days to be the opposite of their nature

Expects water to provide him with a torch.

If you wish for the impossible, you build on a crumbling cliff.

Some men of knowledge have said that one who is afflicted with a calamity ought to think of it as being less than what it is when he remembers that extinction is the ultimate end of all paths, that life is the abode of one who has no abode, the wealth of one who has no wealth: It is hoarded by one who is not rational and it is sought by one who is not to be trusted: In it, those who have no knowledge become enemies of each other, those who do not deeply discern into things envy others who have it, those who are healthy become sick on its account, those who become sick because of it hate life, those who desire it out of want become grieved, and those who are enriched by it fall into trials and tribulations.

Be informed that you are created in this abode for a special purpose: Allah Almighty is above doing anything without a purpose; He has said:

"I have not created the jinns and mankind except so they may worship Me" (Qur'an, 51:56).

He has made it an opportunity to win your way to eternity, making its rations the good deeds, its span the lifetime, which is very short compared to the sought eternal happiness which has no end.

If you work towards this end, if you remain vigilant as men do, if you care about it as the pious do, you will then hope to obtain your own share of its pleasures; so, do not waste your lifetime caring about anything other than the purpose for which this life is created for you; otherwise, you will then waste your time and consume your life without having benefited from it: One who goes never returns, a deceased man will never come back, and you will thus miss out on the [eternal] happiness for which you were created.

Your sighs will then never end, your doing your own self disservice will never alter, especially when you look and see the degrees earned by the righteous who race to do good, when you observe the stations of those who are close to Allah, and when you see how you fall short of doing acts of righteousness: Your store will be empty of profitable goods! Measure such pain and compare it with the worldly pains;

shun away the hardest on you and the most harmful while you actually are capable of avoiding their root cause.

Imam Ali (ع) has said, "If you are patient, destiny will be affected in your regard while you receive your rewards. And if you are impatient, destiny will be affected in your regard while you bear the weight of your sins⁸; so, take advantage of the opportunity of your youth before your old age, of your health before your illness, and let death stand before your eyes and get ready for it through good deeds; do not busy yourself watching someone for death is approaching you not the person."

Contemplate on this verse of the Almighty:

"Man can have nothing but what he strives for; (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight" (Qur'an, 53:39-40).

So, do not be carried away too far with your hopes; reform your actions, for the main reason which prompts one to pay so much attention to wealth and sons is high hope.

The Prophet (ص) has said to some of his companions, "When you receive the morning, do not talk to yourself about the evening, and when you are in the evening, do not talk to yourself about the morning: Take out from your life what benefits you in your death, from your health for your ailment, because you do not know what your name tomorrow will become."⁹

Ali (ع) has said, "The most concern I have about you are two characteristics: obeying desires and having high hopes. As for obeying desires, it takes one away from the path of righteousness. As for having high hopes, it brings about love for this life."¹⁰

Then he said, "Allah grants life to whomsoever He likes or dislikes: But if He loves a servant of His, He grants him *iman*. Religion is served by some, and life is served by some; so, be among those who serve religion, and do not be among those who serve life. Indeed, life is leaving and the Hereafter is coming, and you are now in a life for action without reckoning, and you are about to approach a Day of Reckoning where there will be no deeds [to save you]."¹¹

Be informed that a loved one who parts with you, so you stay feeling a sigh and a pain because of such parting, and if he is in touch with you, you labor, toil, work hard and exhaust yourself. Despite all of this, the time you spend with him is not without embittering through him or because of him so you may direct your mind away from him and seek another one to love: You will try hard to find him characterized by good health, continuous company, more pleasing and perfectly of benefit for you.

If you find such a person, he ought to be the one whom you seek and keep, about whom you care, with whom you spend your time, the ultimate love, the ultimate objective, and this is nothing other than keeping your mind occupied by Allah towards Whom you direct your attention, for such is love for Allah Almighty: He loves such folks and they love Him, and those who have *iman* are the ones who love Allah

the most.

The Prophet (ص) has preconditioned love for Allah as a requirement of *iman* saying, "None of you truly believes till Allah and His Messenger are dearer to him than anyone else."¹² There can be no love for one whose actions are hated and with whom one is not pleased or when he himself is not actually pleased with such love.

Prophet David (ع) was once addressed by the Almighty thus: "O David! Carry this message to those who live on My earth: I love those who love Me, I am the companion of those who accompany Me, the comfort for those who find comfort in remembering Me, the friend of those who befriend me.

I choose those who choose Me, and I listen to those who obey Me. Nobody loves me truly from his heart except that I accept him for Myself and love him, too: None from among My creation is advanced over him.

Whoever truly seeks me shall find Me, and whoever seeks anyone else shall never find Me. So, O people of the earth! Abandon your vain desires, and hurry towards My dignity, My company, My companionship: Feel comfortable about Me so I may give you comfort and hurry to loving you."¹³

Allah Almighty has inspired the following to one of the men of the truth: "There are among My servants those who love Me and whom I love. They are eager for Me and I for them. They remember Me and I remember them. If you follow your way, I shall love you, and if you avoid it, I shall hold you in contempt." The man of the truth asked, "Lord! What is their mark?"

The Almighty said, "They look after their shadows during daylight just like a kind shepherd looks after his flock; they are eager for sunset just as the birds are eager for their nests at sunset. When night overshadows them, and when the dark settles, the beds are spread, and each lover seeks seclusion with the one whom he loves. They stand for Me on their feet [praying], facing the dust [in prostration], talking to Me silently through My own words, seeking to please Me by remembering My blessings upon them, some wailing and crying while others are sighing and complaining, some standing and sitting, while others are bowing and prostrating.

I see with My eyes how they tolerate for My sake, and I hear how they complain about the love they have for Me in their hearts. The least that I give them are three things: First, I cast of My own *noor* (light) into their hearts, so they talk about Me just as I talk about them; Second, had the heavens and the earth and everything within beeb the weight of their deeds on the scale [of good deeds], I would have regarded that as too little for them; Third, I approach them with My face: One whom I approach with My face is one I know what he wants, so I give it to him."¹⁴

Here we stop our Introduction and start the Chapters.

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1. As-Saduq quotes on pp. 2, 316, Vol. 3 of his book *Man la Yahdaruhu Al-Faqih* Abu Abdullah (ع) saying, "Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted, entrusted to the care of Ibrahim and [his wife] Sarah the believers' children whom they nourish from a tree in Paradise that has udders similar to those of cows in a mansion created of a pearl. On Judgment Day, they will be outfitted, perfumed and gifted to their parents; so, they are in Paradise like kings with their parents, and this is the interpretation of the verse that says: 'And those who believe and whose families follow them in faith, to them We shall unite their families' (Qur'an, 52:21)."
 2. *Thawab Al-A`mal*, Vol. 4, p. 233.
 3. *Jami` Al-Akhbar*, p. 133; *Al-Rawandi's Da`awat*, pp. 169, 471; *Al-Jami` Al-Saghir*, Vol. 2, pp. 235, 6010.
 4. This is narrated by *Al-Rawandīzi* in his *Da`awat*, pp. 164, 453 with minor wording variation.
 5. This is narrated by *As-Saduq* in his *Tawhid*, pp. 4, 337.
 6. This is narrated by *Al-Kulaini* in his work *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, pp. 2, 196, by *Ibn Majah* in his *Sunan*, Vol. 2, pp. 1334, 4023, by *Al-Tirmidhi* in his *Sunan*, Vol. 4, pp. 28, 2509, by *Ahmad* in his *Musnad*, Vol. 1, pp. 172, 180, 185, by *Al-Darmi* in his *Sunan*, Vol. 2, p. 320 and by *Al-Hakim Al-Naisaburi* in his *Mustadrak*, Vol. 1, p. 41 and Vol. 4, p. 307 with minor variation in wording.
 7. This tradition has been narrated by *As-Saduq* on p. 262, Vol. 4 of his work *Man la Yahdaruhu Al-Faqih*.
 8. *Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol. 3, pp. 291, 224.
 9. This tradition is narrated by *Sheikh Waram* in *Tanbih Al-Khatir*, Vol. 1, p. 271, by *Sheikh Al-Tusi* in his *Amali*, by *Al-Daylami* in his work *Irshad Al-Qulub*, p. 18, and by *Zaki ad-Deen* in *Al-Targheeb wal Tarheeb*, Vol. 4, pp. 17, 243 with minor variation in wording.
 10. *Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol. 1, pp. 41, 88. It is also narrated by *Al-Daylami* from the Prophet (ص) in *Irshad Al-Qulub* with a minor wording variation.
 11. This is narrated by *Al-Daylami* from the Prophet (ص) in *Irshad Al-Qulub* with a minor wording variation.
 12. This is recorded by *Al-Fayd Al-Kashani* in his work *Al-Mahajja Al-Bayda'*, Vol. 8, p. 4. It is also narrated in a slightly different wording by *Ahmad* in his *Musnad*, Vol. 3, pp. 172, 248, by *Al-Nisa'i* in his *Sunan*, Vol. 8, p. 95 and by *Ibn Majah* in his *Sunan*, Vol. 2, pp. 1338, 4033.
 13. This is recorded by *Al-Majlisi* in his *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 70, pp. 26, 28 and by *Al-Hurr Al-Amili* in *Al-Jawahir Al-Saniyya*, p. 94, where *Musakkin Al-Fuad* is quoted.
 14. This is recorded by *Al-Majlisi* in his work *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 70, pp. 26, 28 where *Musakkin Al-Fuad* is quoted. It is also recorded by *Al-Fayd Al-Kashani* in *Al-Mahajja Al-Bayda'*, Vol. 8, p. 58.

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