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Fountain of Wisdom, a Group of Teachings and Instructions by Grand Ayatullah Sheikh Bahjat

In this section, we will discuss short statements by the sheikh that are fraught with wisdom and some of the precious brief answers which Ayatullah Bahjat presented in answer to some questions in various subjects and issues.

1. Treatment of Pretension and the Value of Knowledge

A virtuous man in Qum's theological seminary writes the following:

“They asked Ayatullah Bahjat: ‘One may do a good deed in the way of Allah in which he conforms to all sincerity, but the insinuations of the devil, such as love for fame, showing off and reputation may find their way to his mind. Will this state of mind be regarded as pretension, and will it void the good deed?’ The sheikh answered, ‘Pretension is relevant to acts of worship. Pretension in worship is prohibitive, and it is said it voids [good deeds], too. But there is no problem with pretension in issues other than adorations. But pretension itself can be a cure for pretension. This takes place when pretension is lifted through sound contemplation. Let me give you an example: One may need to earn the respect of the police commissioner and attract his attention. In this case, he may go to a policeman and try to influence him to make him a link between himself and the commissioner. It is better this person must here pay attention and say to himself: ‘This policeman is only a link. Even if he writes something or mediates in the issue, the one who will put the paper in the right place and in the end settles the matter is the police commissioner. Therefore, what is right is to attract the attention of the police commissioner directly and without an intermediary. In other words, pretension must be applied to a higher end.’”

Had this person been wise and knew that there is a higher station than that of the police commissioner, such as the minister, the prime minister or the president, for example, he will then say this to himself: It is better that I present my good deed to the minister or the prime minister or the president of the republic. That is to say, one must act upon pretension to impress the strongest ranks. If this happens, pretension will be a cause for treatment for pretension itself. So, if pretension in acts of worship is for the

sake of the Strongest, the One Who has the highest position in the world, that is, Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, there is no problem in this pretension, and it will be a treatment for itself.

Traditions state that one who turns during the prayer to make a show to people will be herded by Allah in the form of a donkey. This in fact is the reality. Is not the one who shows his deed to the policeman in the presence of the minister or the police commissioner a donkey?! Yes, he is a donkey in the human form to which he is accustomed. If you tell him that he is a donkey, he will be angry with you. But we must tell him not to be angry because his deeds all day and night long is like that; so, “Why are you angry?!”

But Help, Help from ignorance, for it takes man to Turkistan instead of Mecca! Since Day One, the ignorance of Iblis was the reason for Adam’s problem. Satan said, “*Then, by Your might, I will put them all in the wrong, except Your servants among them, the sincere and purified ones*” (***Qur’an, 38:82–83***). Iblis was ignorant, although before then he used to be a worshipper but not a man of knowledge, and his deed was incomplete. Did he not say to Allah Almighty when He ordered him to prostrate to Adam: “I am better than him: You created me from fire, and You created him from clay” (Qur’an, 38:76)?! This was the minor argument of Iblis. As for his major one, it is his reasoning that anything created out of fire is higher, whereas anything created out of clay is lower! We must ask: Why so and according to what proof?!

This outward outfit is not angelic. Look at the symmetry and beauty of the peacock and the difference between it and the other animals. Likewise, the soul of man cannot be compared with that of jinns or of the angels. The human soul can ascend to whatever Allah wills even if it is outfitted with an outfit made of clay. An outfit does not make an attribute. If one wears a mantle made in Naeen and another wears a mantle made in Afghanistan, will that be an evidence for one’s inferiority and the other’s superiority? When we, too, become ignorant, we will then be like Iblis, and we will stray as he did. The characteristic of straying is that it transgresses; i.e. a staying person causes others to stray, too; so, beware of ignorance.

It is ignorance if that person says that the Holy Qur’an contains this verse: “*It is He Who has spread out the earth for (His) creatures*” (***55: 10***); therefore, there is no difference among people; all are equal in possessing and utilizing the earth. He does not know that the wording of the verse connotes an outcome and benefiting, and he also does not know that he must take note of the other verses which interpret this verse.

These ignorant folks cause others like them to stray. They come and bring the Qur’an with them in the beginning, but their goal is to take away the Qur’an from the hands of people in the end. There will be none to object when they say, “Burn the Qur’an!” We laugh at this matter, finding it amusing, but the truth is that unless we are strong in our argument, they will chase us out. They spend wealth and buy these ignorant folks.

The result is that this ignorance will create a new religion. Did not one Bahaai person say that the name of “Sayyid Ali Muhammad al Bab” exists in your Qur’an, too, in this verse: “Hee–Meem–Ayn–Seen–Qaaf” which means “The Qaim is Sayyid Ali Muhammad” when it is read from left to right?! So, we nowadays need knowledge and deduction more than anything else because the matter is one of creed. We have to stand in the face of this ignorance and these imported ignorant folks; they want to train their henchmen and spend their wealth on them; so, we have to learn logic very well so we may be able to answer them; otherwise, the wolves will eat us and digest us.

2. Conditions of Vigilance of the Heart, Finding Pleasure in Adoration and Prayer

Sayyid Gharawiyān writes the following: “The mentor was asked once the following question: ‘Ayatullah Bahjat the mentor! Our lifespan has expired while we are yet to feel the pleasure in our adoration especially in our prayer. What should we do in order to taste a little of what our Infallible Imams (as) have said?’ The mentor shook his head and said, ‘It is a general affliction and a pain which we all feel.’ They said, ‘Anyway, the matter is relevant, and it has many levels. Some people, such as yourself, have sublime levels, whereas others, such as ourselves, have no level. What should we do?’ He answered saying, ‘Perhaps I wish to be in your own level.’ They said, ‘O sheikh! It is not a matter of courtesy; it is a fact.’ With particular humbleness, the sheikh answered saying, ‘Your aunt is like you,’ meaning by this axiom that ‘I am just like you.’ Anyway, after some lengthy insistence, the sheikh said, ‘The feeling of pleasure during the prayer requires two types of introductions. The first type is the introductions beyond the sphere of prayer. The second type is the introductions within the framework of the prayers. The matters which we should uphold before the prayer, that is, outside its sphere, is that one does not commit sins, nor should he pollute the heart with acts of disobedience to the Almighty. Disobedience taints the purity of the soul and puts out the light of the heart. As regarding the matters which must be observed in the prayer, they are: One must surround himself with an iron barrier so he fears none save Allah. In other words, he has to shift his thinking from anything other than Allah, and his concern is about nothing except Allah. If his mind is occupied by something else unconsciously, he has to stop mentioning that thing as soon as he becomes aware of it.’”

Ayatullah Quddas, one of the students of Sheikh Bahjat, says this: “I asked the sheikh once what I should do so my heart may become more attentive during the prayers. The sheikh lowered his head in contemplation. Then he raised his head and said, ‘It is only that the heater is too little.’ I understood what he meant. He wanted to say this: ‘Your knowledge and inner conviction is weak; otherwise, it is not possible for the heart not to be attentive when the knowledge is present.’” Ayatullah Muhammad Hasan al-Ahmadi, the *faqih* from Yazd, said the following in this regard: “When you face the *qibla*, and when you recite the Hamd Chapter and the other chapter, be attentive to their meanings so the connection may remain safeguarded.”

Professor Khosroe–Shahi says, “Once Ayatullah Bahjat was asked this question: ‘What should we do in order to achieve our heart’s full attention during the prayer?’ He said, ‘One of the major factors which cause the heart being attentive during the prayer is that we should control our five senses (vision, hearing, etc.) all day long because we must prepare the necessary introductions in order to gain the heart’s attentiveness during the prayer.’”

In another place, someone asked the sheikh this: “What should we do so our earnestness may increase in obeying the commandments of Allah especially with regard to the prayer?” The Sheikh said, ‘Seek help from the Imam of the Time (aj) before performing the prayer, then carry out the obligation in its absolute completeness.’”

Another person asks this question: “What should we do so our mind may focus and our heart may be attentive during the prayer?” The sheikh wrote this in his answer: “In the Name of the Almighty: At the moment when you face [the *qibla*], go with your own choice.”

3. Sincerity of Intention, Conjoining Knowledge and Deed

The sheikh was asked, “What should we do so our intention may be sincere when we seek to wear the turban?” The sheikh answered, “Let the Shari`a be the criterion for your deeds. Look and see if this deed agrees with or violates the Shari`a. If we want to have such doubts, we should doubt all our acts of adoration and prayers, for what would inform us whether our intention is sincere or not? Should we abandon the performing of the obligations simply because we are not sure about the sincerity of our intention?” The sheikh added saying, “So, let your intention be to conjoin your knowledge to your deed, and neither should lag behind the other. Most of our calamities result from knowledge and deed being separate from each other. The knowledge of some people lag behind their deed, whereas it is ahead of that of others, such as in your case. The knowledge of some once lags behind their deed and once goes ahead of it; therefore, your intention must be to act upon your knowledge, and let your knowledge accompany your deed.”

Sayyid Hosroe–Shahi says the following in this regard, “Ayatullah Bahjat used to always emphasize the necessity of knowledge being inseparable from deed. One day he said, ‘A man with knowledge but without deed is like the lamp that lights the path to people while burning itself by itself.’”

4. Reliance on and Trust in Allah

Sheikh Misbah says, “Once Sheikh Bahjat said, ‘I was sitting in the room but I kept hearing the voice of the children who were playing in the courtyard. The son of our neighbor was playing near the door. A beggar came to him and said, ‘Go home and bring me something from there.’ The child said, ‘Why do you not ask your mother [for something]?’ The beggar said, ‘I have no mother; so, go to your mother and bring me something from her.’ The sheikh adds saying, ‘I understood from the dialogue of this child with that beggar that the child thought he could get anything he wanted from his mother due to his trust in her

and reliance on her.” Then he deduces this: If we trust in Allah Almighty as this child trusts his mother and ask Allah, the most Exalted One, to grant us what we need, we would not have suffered from any problem and all our needs would have been taken care of.”

5. Result of Human Perfection

Hujjatul-Islam wal Muslimin Quddas says, “I said this once to the sheikh, ‘A student saw in a vision that he was praying at a holy site. Whenever he prostrated, he would hear the sands praising the Almighty with him.’ The sheikh said, “When man reaches perfection, he will see and hear this even when he is awake.”

6. Serving the Imam of the Time (aj)

Hujjatul-Islam wal Muslimin Quddas also says, “I said this to the sheikh once, ‘My going to one of the villages and presence there for Islamic propagation has a good impact. People in this village are very merciful. They listen to the speech and follow it, but they are poor. They do not pay for the months of Muharram and Ramadan except very little, unlike other areas which are spiritually weaker but financially stronger.’ The sheikh said, ‘If you are busy serving Imam al-Mahdi, the Imam of the Time, may Allah hasten his reappearance, do you think the Imam will neglect and not think about you?!’”

7. Precision in Narrating Traditions

Hujjatul-Islam Quddas also says, “Forty-five years ago, I talked once with the sheikh about my work program during the blessed month of Ramadan and said to him, ‘I do not ascend the pulpit in the daytime during the blessed month of Ramadan and do so during only the nights.’ The sheikh asked why. I said, ‘I am not certain about the accuracy of many pursuits which I present on the pulpit and am concerned some of them may be false.’ The sheikh asked me, ‘Are you sure about their accuracy during the night?!’ I then realized from the statement of the sheikh that this method was not sound.”

8. Practical Call

Hujjatul-Islam Lutfi says, “I went once to Sheikh Bahjat following the morning prayer and asked him to admonish me. He said, “Be callers upon people to the path of Allah but not with your tongues.” It seems, the author says, the sheikh wanted to attract the attention of the seeker of the admonishment, who is one of the men of spirituality, to the best call: the practical call.

9. Avoiding Transgressions

Ayatullah Sheikh Jawad al-Karbalaai, one of the scholars of ethics, says, “I was honored to know Ayatullah Bahjat since distant time and benefited from some of his perfections and admonishments.

Here are some of these perfections and admonishments:

“The sheikh used to always emphasize abandonment of transgressions and say, ‘Allah has bestowed His boon on all classes of His friends through His special niceties, making the abandonment of transgressions a means to seek nearness to Him. Since the levels of man’s knowledge and love for his Creator are numerous, so are the levels of abandoning transgression, too, so much so that it has been said that the good deeds of the righteous are the bad ones of those who are close to Him.”

One of the students who had just joined the theological seminary in Qum said, “I went to Sheikh Bahjat and said to him, ‘I have come to the theological seminary in order to pursue theological sciences. What should I do in order to be a successful student?’ The Sheikh lowered his head in contemplation then said, ‘There is no difference between a student and a non-student; what is important is to avoid transgressions.’”

Somewhere else the sheikh was asked about the best *dhikr*. He said, “I think the best *dhikr* is the practical *dhikr*, i.e. abandoning transgression in belief and in action. Everything needs this matter, whereas this does not need anything: It generates everything good.”

The sheikh was also asked, “Through what deed, other than teaching and caring about the Book of Allah and the exegesis of Ahl al-Bayt (as), can we strengthen ourselves for piety and treading towards the Adored One?” Answering this question, the sheikh wrote saying, “In His Name, the most Exalted One. It is through continuous determination to abandon transgression in belief and in action.”

One of the men of virtue says, “I wrote a letter to Ayatullah Sheikh Bahjat and asked him this question: ‘What should we do so our love for our Creator and for the Imam of our Time (as) may increase?’ He wrote this in his answer: ‘Abandon transgressions and perform the prayers as soon as they are opportune.’”

Sayyid Quddas says the following in this regard: “One day I talked with Sheikh Bahjat saying, ‘Have we considered a program and a specific time for this distraction (of disobeying the Lord and not acting upon His commandments)? That is, will a day come when we abandon transgression? Or will we continue as we are? If our intention is not to continue this status, let us sit and put a specific time for it, say a month, six months, a year or many years. What is important is that we must realize the seriousness of this situation and at least put an end to it.’”

10. Secrets of the Prayer

Somewhere else, the Sheikh wrote the following: “The similitude of the prayer is like the Ka`ba and the *Takbirat al-Ihram* in it: It is abandoning everything save Allah and entering in His Holy Presence. Standing in it is like the lover speaking to the one he loves. Bowing is the slave bowing down before his Master. Prostration is the ultimate submission, the feeling of nothingness and of humility to Him. When a

slave finishes the prayer, he offers the greeting as a gift. Such is the trip that is filled with mysteries.”

11. Ethics of Ziyara

Hujjatul-Islam wal Muslimin Khosroe-Shahi says, “Once, I and some friends were determined to visit the shrine of Imam al-Riḍā (as). We went to Ayatullah Sheikh Bahjat and asked him about the ethics of *ziyara*. He contemplated for a short while then said, ‘One of the most important norms of ethics of *ziyara* is that we should believe that there is no difference between the life and death of the Infallible Ones (as).’ He did not say anything else other than this statement. After we had sat with some friends contemplating on the gist of this statement, we deduced that the ethics of *ziyara* may be summarized in this statement. And I asked him once, ‘It has been said with regard to the *ziyara* of the Infallible Lady (as) that whoever visits her shrine fully knowing her esteem will deserve Paradise. So, what is the meaning of ‘fully knowing her esteem’?’ He answered me in one sentence thus: ‘He must believe that her status is less than that of the Infallible Ones and greater than that of others.’”

12. Conforming to Moderation in Teaching and Educating the Offspring and Finding Diversity for Them

In a special meeting with the genius child who knows the Holy Qur’an by heart, namely Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai, and his father, Sheikh Bahjat addressed the son thus: “I hope you will not shrink from moderation. Do not pressure him [the child], nor should he pressure himself. For example, do not require him to memorize *Nahjul-Balagha* or the *Saheefa Sajjadiyya* after having memorized the Qur’an. Let his task be easy, distant from hardship. I also ask him to travel quite often, to set aside some of his time to play and legitimate pastime, and I commend to him to change his environment because this is very effective. Some people travel abroad to replace their blood, but I think traveling by itself compensates for it. I plead to Allah to grant you success to cultivate him outwardly and inwardly, in form and in essence.”

They said to the sheikh, “What type of travel do you mean since Muhammad Husayn travels always abroad? Do you mean making such trips more often?” The sheikh said, “No. Let his contacts be more. For example, he goes to Chamkran Mosque every week. This by itself is a good change. Seeking the means of nearness is very useful. You should visit the resting places of the Sayyids who belong to the Imams (as) because each of these Sayyids has his own characteristic and impact, just like the fruits each one of which has a particular vitamin. By the will of Allah, you should not forget this. If this is not available, walking in an open space and being regular in offering supererogatory supplications following the obligatory prayers has a great deal of impact. Anyway, we just have to remind you of these matters.”

During that meeting, we sensed some cultivating points to which we would like to point out as follows:

1. When Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai (the flag-post of guidance) entered the chamber of the sheikh,

the sheikh welcomed him warmly. As he was shaking hands with him, he said, “Lord! Let him one of the spiritual scholars who act upon their knowledge!” Then he seated him in his own place, on his own bedding, as he sat near him on the carpet.

2. The sheikh asked Muhammad Husayn’s father: “Does he recite the Qur’an every day?” Sayyid Tabatabai said, “Yes. He recites one chapter every day.” The sheikh said, “This much suffices to retain in memory. Let him divide this chapter on the prayer times.” After that the sheikh recited two traditions relevant to memorizing the Qur’an: “One who memorizes the Qur’an gets the prophetic mission inscribed between his sides except he receives no revelation.” “One who is with the Qur’an is with the Prophet’s Progeny, and one who is with the Prophet’s Progeny is with the Qur’an.”

3. Sayyid Tabatabai thanked Sheikh Bahjat and asked him to pray for Muhammad Husayn. The sheikh said, “If one of you wants to memorize the Qur’an, let him recite this supplication three times every morning and evening,” then he rubbed Muhammad Husayn’s head with his hand as he recited this supplication: “Lord! Let me be in Your shielded fort in which You place whoever You please!”

13. Value of the Tahajjud and the Standing During the Ashar

Ayatullah Muhammad Husayn Ahmadi, the *faqih* of Yazd, says, “The sheikh used to highly recommend *tahajjud* and prayers during the *ashar* [pre-dawn times], so much so that he often used to say, “The Prophet (P) earned divine knowledge due to his *tahajjud* and standing during the times of the *ashar*.”

The sheikh believes the night prayers and the *tahajjud* during the *ashar* as well as regular prayers and optional adoration are all very important. It is narrated about the senior scholars upon whom Allah bestowed sublime stations that they used to resort to the *ashar* and to celebrate the Names of Allah during them if they wanted to ask something of Allah or earn His boons because dedicating time solely to Allah Almighty and to worshipping him during the ashars has its own effect. The sheikh used to always emphasize this fact.

14. Continuous Dhikr

Ayatullah Muhammad Husayn Ahmadi also says this: “One of the attributes to which the sheikh used to point out often is that one must always be engaged in performing *dhikr* because one who does so will always see himself in the presence of the Lord, talking to Him. The sheikh used to mention some narratives in this field from time to time.

15. One Should not Admire his Good Deeds

Professor Khosroe-Shahi says, “Ayatullah Bahjat used not to see the acts of righteousness and adoration which he performed and always used to say, ‘What a better person is that who, when doing something good, says he has not done anything, but if the same deed is done by others, he says how

great it is!’ In other words, he believes we have to underestimate our deeds while admiring and magnifying those of others.”

16. First Step in Treading the Path Towards Allah

Professor Khosroe–Shahi also says this: “Ayatullah Bahjat used to say, ‘The first station earned by one who treading the path of seeking nearness to Allah is seeing the distance between him and his Lord. He, therefore, maintains this distance and not distances himself from the Lord. If he cannot shorten the distance, he must not lose hope. What is important is to maintain this distance, that is, he must not first distance himself, then he has to gradually shorten this distance and gets closer to his Lord, the most Exalted, the most Great.’”

17. Earning Support of the Imam of the Time (aj)

He also says, “The sheikh used to say the following in his chats: ‘We, students [of theology], have to think about how we can earn the support of our Lord, the Imam of the Time, may Allah hasten his reappearance. That is, we have to know how to study and work in order to win his support and pleasure. Every students must keep this matter on the top of the list of his priorities (at every time, during his study and after he completes it). He must always think about how his deeds and norms of conduct should be in order to win the support of the Imam (as). If the student thinks about this matter and treads this path, he will not face in his life any deviation in action, speech and conduct. He will not then undertake any conduct which does not suit him, and the crises will not confuse him.’”

18. Necessity of Avoiding Moral Lowliness and the Way to Reach this Goal

Khosroe–Shahi also says this: “The sheikh used to stress avoiding moral sins and say, ‘Prolong the prostration is one of the acts of adoration which break the back of Satan. If one prolongs his prostration, he has to stand before a mirror and notice the place of prostration marked on his forehead, whether the prostration left a mark on his forehead or not. If there is a mark, he must rub it till he wipes it out so that he may not be characterized by pretension.’”

Somewhere else, Ayatullah Bahjat describes the role of knowing the Truthful One as a very important and essential role in removing moral sins. He says, “All moral sins originate from weakness in knowing Allah, Praise and Exaltation are His. If one realizes that Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, is always and in any condition more beautiful than everything beautiful, he will never then abandon feeling comfortable with Him.”

In another place, the sheikh was asked, “What should we do so we may distance ourselves from pretension?” He said, “You must greatly stick to believing in a perfect creed.” Somewhere else the

sheikh was asked about a treatment for anger. He said, “You must perform abundant prayers with full conviction.”

The sheikh was also asked, “What is the cure for conceit?” He wrote the following in answer: “In His Name, the most Exalted One. Sticking greatly to perfect conviction is the treatment for conceit.”

Someone asked him about a treatment for unholy insinuations. He wrote this in answer: “Abundant testimony about the Unity of Allah is the cure for such insinuations.”

19. Value of Intellect and of Contemplation

Khosroe-Shahi says, “The sheikh used to stress monitoring what the tongue utters and say, ‘We have to safeguard our tongue, think twenty four hours but speak for only one hour. That is, we have to contemplate and meditate all day long but talk for one single hour. And even this lone hour may be too long.’”

20. Status of Information and Knowledge

Khosroe-Shahi also says, “Once, on his way from home to the shrine, the sheikh said to the students in his company, ‘What a great blessing it is when Allah made you among those who tread the path of seeking knowledge, for knowledge is indeed a great blessing!’” Then the sheikh made a comparison between knowledge and wealth and said, “Knowledge is better for you than wealth because it guards you while you guard wealth. There is another difference between knowledge and wealth: Spending depletes wealth, whereas knowledge increases when disseminated.’ Thus did the sheikh encourage the students to earn knowledge”.

21. Student’s Duties

Khosroe-Shahi also says this: “In the area of encouraging education, culturing and encouraging beginner students to undertake this matter, the sheikh used to emphasize that the students should not abandon learning, studying and researching under any circumstance. He used to say, ‘What should be observed at the beginning of educational achievement is acting upon the obligations as they should be and avoidance of prohibitions.’”

But he talks differently with the students who undertook a long stride along the path and arrived at a relatively high academic level. I remember he said this to me once when he was going from home to the mosque to lead the congregational prayers: ‘The students started their studies with the *Muqaddimat* (Introductions). They will then study the *Ma`alim* (Features) and *Maghna* (indispensable studies).’ Then he asked me, ‘What will they study thereafter?’ I said, ‘They will study the Lam`a.’ He asked, ‘Then what?’ I said, ‘Al-Makaasib’ Then he asked, ‘Then what?’ I said, ‘Al-Kifaaya.’ He asked, ‘Then what?’ I said, ‘The Kharij studies.’ He asked, ‘Then what?’ I said, ‘They attain the status of ijtiḥad.’ He asked,

‘Then what?’ This was a great lesson and an important piece of advice which the sheikh provided in this short phrase: ‘Then what?’ It seems from his statement that he thinks knowledge is not sought for itself but as means seeking nearness to Allah. This point was a signal and a warning to the students who earned a higher academic level.”

22. Non-Reliance on Life

Khosroe-Shahi also says the following: “Ayatullah Bahjat used to say that life is a large hotel: We do not know from where people come to it or who goes to it.”

23. Interest in Spirituality

Hujjatul-Islam wal Muslimin Khosroe-Shahi also says this: “Ayatullah Bahjat used to say, ‘Had one looked after his soul as much as looks after his body, he would not have had any worry or conver. But unfortunately humans endeavor to secure their physical needs only. For example, one goes to the doctor and asks about the useful nutrition, but he does not attempt to know what benefits his soul. At any rate, had one endeavored to attain spirituality as much as he attempts to earn material things, he would not have suffered any grief in his life. We, therefore, have to know the things that benefit our souls. What is commendable, for example, is useful and effective, and we have to endeavor to perform them.”

24. Moderation in Apprehension and Anticipation

Also, Khosroe-Shahi says the following: “Once I asked Sheikh Bahjat about fear and hope emphasized by scholars of ethics a great deal. He said, ‘It is the apprehension and the sought anticipation which do not go beyond the limits of moderation. If it goes beyond the limit of moderation, it is not useful because non-moderate fear causes one to lose hope of the mercy of Allah. Non-moderate anticipation causes one to be rude towards the Lord.’ I also heard this narrative from him: ‘It has been narrated about the Messenger of Allah (P) that the believer stands between two kinds of fear: fear of what has passed and fear of what remains.’ In other words, we must be concerned about falling short and must not undertake it once more.”

25. Reliance on the Lord

He also is quoted as having said once, “If we trust our Master as the small child trusts his parents, all our affairs would have improved.”

26. Acting Upon Knowledge

He has also said that Ayatullah Bahjat used to say, “Had people acted upon their knowledge, all their affairs would have improved. That is, if they perform their duties, abandon what is prohibitive and

endeavor to perform what is commendable as much as they can, their affairs would have improved.”

27. Love for what is most Perfect Prevents Evils

A man asked Ayatullah Bahjat, “I have loved a woman, and loving her has captivated me; so, what should I do?” In answer, the sheikh wrote the following: “A wise man loves perfection, completion, what is more beneficial and most lasting, and he gives precedence for such love over loving anything else. Also, loving what is most perfect shuns afflictions, contrarily to loving anything else.”

28. Great Status of Prayer

Sheikh Bahjat was requested to write a brief and wise statement about prayer so it would be engraved in memory. The sheikh wrote this: “Among the wise statements about the great status of prayer in its lofty station is the famous speech of the Infallible One: ‘Prayer is the ascension of the faithful’ for those who are convinced about the truth in this statement and seek this station without shrinking from conviction.’ Peace, blessing and mercy of Allah be with you.” (Signed:) Servant of Allah Muhammad Taqi Bahjat.

Hujjatul-Islam wal Muslimin Fiqhi says, “One day, Ayatullah Bahjat said, ‘If one adheres to performing the prayer on its time, he will arrive at the anticipated station.’”

29. Path of Nearness to Allah

A man asked the sheikh this question: “I wish to seek nearness to Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great; so, what is the path and the norm of conduct [for achieving this goal]?” In answer, Ayatullah Bahjat wrote the following: “In His Name, the most Exalted One. If the seeker is truthful, abandoning sins suffices for one’s lifespan even if it may be a thousand years.”

Somewhere else a man asked him this question: “I have set my mind to be near to the Lord. I hope you can provide me with guidance: Does this deed need a professor or what?” The sheikh wrote this in answer: “In the Name of the most Exalted one. Knowledge is the professor, while the teacher is the means and nothing else. You have to act upon what you learn and be persistent on it. This will suffice because ‘One who acts upon what he knows will be permitted by Allah to inherit the knowledge with which he is not familiar’. The Holy Qur’an states this:

‘And those who strive in Our (cause) We will certainly guide them to Our paths, for truly Allah is with those who do right’ (Qur’an, 29:69).

If you get no result, be informed you did not perform the deed properly. You should also set aside an hour a day to study theological sciences.”

Somewhere else the sheikh was asked: “Does the path to Allah require the presence of a professor? If

there is no professor available, what should be done?” Answering this question, the sheikh wrote the following: “In the Name of the most Exalted One. Your professor is your own knowledge. Act upon what you know, it will suffice you for that which you do not know.”

A man wrote this to the sheikh: “Tell me, please, how one can attain the feeling of being in comfortable company with Allah and with the Purified Imams (as).” In answer, the sheikh wrote the following: “This is possible through obeying Allah, His Messenger (P) and the Imams (as) as well as abandoning the sins in belief and in action.”

30. Method of Self-Discipline

It was said to the sheikh that some students in Lebanon asked for ethical admonishments and necessary instructions in this regard, and they inquire about a method for self-discipline. “We,” they added, “hence request you to guide us in this field.”

The sheikh said, “One of the most useful things in this regard is to remind the students who attend your daily classes one Shari’a-related narrative in the chapter of self-discipline stated in the book titled *Wasaail al-Shi’a* and also the narratives transmitted in a chapter on the ethics of companionship in the Hajj chapter in *Wasaail al-Shi’a*. Of course, this deed must be accompanied by contemplation and doing all what you know.”

Ayatullah Bahjat, in another recommendation in this regard, says, “Anyone who brings about every day one tradition in the chapter of self-discipline in the book titled *Wasaail al-Shi’a* and contemplates about the clear matters in it and acts upon it will see that he is transformed completely only one year from that time.”

31. True Asceticism

The sheikh was asked what true asceticism is and how we can be truly ascetic. He said, “Asceticism is that you control your self and monitor the permission of Allah Almighty to do or not to do each action.”

32. Method to Firm the Relationship with Ahl al-Bayt (as) especially with the Imam of the Time (aj)

The sheikh was also asked: “How can we firm our relationship with Ahl al-Bayt (as), especially with the Imam of the Time (aj)?” He said, “Obedience of Allah, after having come to know Him, causes love for Him just as it causes loving those whom Allah Almighty loves, namely the prophets and *wasīs*. The one who is the most loved by Allah from among the latter is Prophet Muhammad (P) and his Progeny (as), and the nearest to us from among them is the Imam of the Time, may Allah hasten his reappearance and ease.”

33. The Path of Knowing Allah

The sheikh was asked, “What is the path to knowing Allah?” He said, “The path to knowing Allah is knowing the self (*nafs*). We know we did not create ourselves and we can never do that. Likewise, others like us did not do it either. So, the One Who created us is the Absolutely Able One, Allah Almighty. The path to getting close to Him and to thanking His blessings is to obey Him. The hardship in this obedience is only in the beginning and will not endure for long till it becomes to those who seek nearness to Allah sweeter than anything else.”

34. Foot Kissing is not Prohibitive

Ayatullah Bahjat was asked, “Is it prohibitive to kiss one’s foot or not?” He said, “No. There is no problem with kissing one’s foot, but there is a problem in prostrating before anyone other than Allah.”

35. Status of Supplication

The sheikh believes supplication enjoys a lofty status and is convinced that Allah is the One Who judges all affairs of life. Professor Hadawi says, “My daughter was once sick, so I went to the sheikh and asked him to supplicate for her. The sheikh said, ‘You have to recite this supplication three times a day: ‘Lord! Do cure her with Your own cure, give her Your own healing, and grant her health from You.’ After the third time, recite this ‘Through Imam al-Kadhim, for she is Your bondmaid and the daughter of Your slave.’”

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