

Chapter 8: Lamaat, The Rays of Light

The First Ray of Light: About Prayer

After considering the beliefs of Faith, we now discuss about the physical and practical tenets. The most important of these is *Salat/Namaz* or mandatory and optional prayers. Therefore in the call for prayer, the *Adhan*, it is announced ‘*Hai aala khairil aml.*’ – come and join the best of acts! But there is one group that chose to avoid using this expression in their *Adhan!*

Salat, as announced in every call for the prayer, is the most important aspect of the practice of the Muslim Faith. This doesn’t mean that having performed the most important act, there isn’t need for practicing the other tenets.

In His Perfect Wisdom, Allah has devised the most beneficial norms of action for the human race. For example, one might say that the meat is the best of foods. But this doesn’t mean that the other foods are not good! Can we imagine someone eating the meat to his satisfaction and not drinking the water! This proves that everything is necessary and has to be used judiciously. It is quite another matter that there are degrees of importance of various things.

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) has said, that among the tenets of practice in Islam, the best is the *Salat*. When a person has taken the bath of purification, has done his ablutions and goes to a corner to offer his *Salat*, the Satan pleads that the progeny of Adam (as) is prostrating to Allah while he has himself refused to accept Allah’s Command and did not prostrate!

The Prophet of Islam (S) says that the *Salat* in Islam can be compared to the perpendicular pillar of a tent on which the entire structure of the tent rests. If the pillar is removed, nothing else in the tent will be of any use.

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) says, “An old person’s account of deeds will be considered on the Day of Reckoning, and when it will be noted that his good deeds are less than his bad deeds, Allah will say, ‘This old man used to offer prayers and I feel sorry to consign him to the Hell!’ Then Allah will order the

angels to take the man to the Heaven!”

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said that on the Day of Reckoning, *Salat* will be the first thing about which the people will be questioned. If a person was regular in offering his *Salat*, the way to Heaven will be smooth for him. Otherwise, the person will be consigned to the Hell.

Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) says that if a person visualizes about the Greatness of Allah during his *Salat*, he will remain in prostration the rest of his life.

The Second Ray of Light: Differences In Jurisprudence And Censure Of Hypocrisy

The superior Prophets (as) were all endowed with their own *Shariah* (Jurisprudence) that was relevant to their times. The Prophet of Islam (S) too brought with him the perfect *Shariah*. If there was juridical change with each Prophet (S), it doesn’t mean that the earlier laws were defective in any manner.

Since the followers of Prophet Musa (as) were very mischievous, stringent punishments were prescribed to reform them. It was the rule, for example, that if someone got some urine splashed on his body, the skin of that part was peeled off. For murder, there was no other punishment than death.

The people of Prophet ‘Isa (as) were mild natured. They were not required to do *Jihad*. Capital punishment was not practiced. Celibacy and living like hermits was in vogue.

The people of our Prophet (S) were moderates. The *Shariah*, therefore, is middle of the road. For the crime of murder, *Qasas* (life-for-life) and *Deet* (payment of blood money) are both permitted. In cases of bodily harm, the right to pardon has been given to the sufferer or his successors in the event of his death.

Innovation Explained

Interpreting or changing the *Shariah* using ones inept and unbefitting intellect is apostasy and heresy. Getting misled by Satan and praying with ones own intuition and considering this as nearness to Allah is gross ignorance (*Jehalat*). Our intellects are a combination of good, bad and indifferent. The Prophets (as), on the other hand, have been endowed with superior intellects and the laws enunciated by them have Allah’s seal of approval. Any deviation from them is hypocrisy and heresy. For example: a pious Christian celibate thinks that if he died inflicting hardship on himself in seclusion, he would earn nearness to God! This is sheer misguided ignorance.

Bidaa (innovation) means declaring things taboo that are termed good by Allah and declaring things good that are taboo according to the dictates of the Almighty. For example, Allah has allowed (*Mustaheeb*) offering of prayers (optional) without restriction of timing. But if someone thinks that he

should offer prayer exactly at the time of sunset thinking that Allah has strictly prescribed that timing is sheer innovation and is *haram*. Omar has prescribed six *Rakaat* (acts of standing, genuflection and prostration) of optional prayer exactly at the time of mid-morning (*chasht*). This is an innovation and *Haram*.

Our Imams (as) have forbidden this practice. Similarly if some one offers three *rakat* of optional prayer, it would be an innovation. Similarly doing two genuflections (*Ruku*) in one *rakat* is an innovation because the Prophet has never adopted this practice. Another example: Repeating the words *La ilaha ila Allah* continuously is the practice (*Sunna*) of the Prophet (S) and is extremely beneficial to the supplicant. But prescribing it as compulsory act to be repeated twelve thousand times after the morning- prayer is an innovation. The Prophet (S) never prescribed this practice.

Bidaa or innovation in the religious practices is a big sin. There has always been a dispute between the *Shi'a* and *Sunni* Muslims that *Shi'as* have been emulating their *Imams* (that are exactly in accordance to the practice of the Holy Prophet!) and the *Sunnis* have been abstaining from following the *Ahl-ul-Bayt*. They have been using their own poor intellects and have given rise to several innovations. Our Imams (as) have therefore rejected them.

Kulaini quotes from a reliable source that the Prophet (S) has said, "Every hypocrisy is heresy, and the way a heretic takes leads him to the Hell."

It is narrated that a person asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) and Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as), "How should I offer prayers to Allah?" They said, "Don't do innovations in the Religion. Whoever interferes with the tenets of the Faith, he gets punished. One who veers away from the pronouncements of the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as) has gone astray. One who disobeys Allah is an infidel!"

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) said, "One who uses his own mind in religious matters and gives *fatwa* is interfering in the affairs of Allah. He commits the blunder of determining *Halal* and *Haram* wrongly through his own intuition."

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "The innovator is the person who shuns the *Sunna* (the practices) of the Holy Prophet!"

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, When innovation raises its head amongst my people, the *Ulema* should propagate their knowledge to stop the spread of the innovations. If the *Ulema don't do this, they are the accursed (the malaoon)*. The Prophet (S) added, "A person who visits an innovator and pays respects to him, he is tantamount to abetting the spoiling of Islam!" The Prophet (S) also said, "Allah does not answer the prayers of an innovator!" "The love for the innovations gets fixed in the heart of the innovator and never leaves him!"

The Tale Of A Seeker Of The World

Bin Babawiyah quotes through a reliable source that Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has told about a person who lived in the olden days. The man sought to find livelihood through fair means. He failed. He tried illegitimate means and even then he didn't succeed. Satan came to him and told him that he would suggest a stratagem to the man to succeed in his efforts. The person agreed. Satan suggested to him to float a new religion. Encourage people to join its ranks. The man acted on the suggestion and soon became very rich.

One day the man thought that he had committed the foulest of deeds. He felt that he had led lots of people astray. He realized that any amount of penitence would not get him a pardon unless he corrected the people who had left the right path because of him. He started telling people that the faith propagated by him was a farce and they should abandon it.

But the idea was engrained in their minds and they told him that his faith was authentic and that he was lying to them. He could not change even a single person. In desperation he went to the forest and tied himself in a heavy chain. He resolved that unless Allah forgave him for his sin he would not free himself. Allah sent a Revelation to the Prophet (S) of the time that the person must be informed that even if his body goes to shreds repenting his sin, his penitence would not be accepted! The only way for his pardon was through reforming all the persons who had been led away from the right path by him!

It is reported from Halabi that he asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), "O Imam (as)! Tell me about the smallest thing that can turn a believer into an infidel?" The Imam (as) said, "It is innovation by the person in the matters of Faith! A person who follows the innovator too is an infidel and also one who opposes the adversaries of the innovator!"

Abi Rabi Shami says that he asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), "O Imam (as)! What is it that expels a person from the Faith?" The Imam (as) replied, "Conviction against righteousness and insisting on that!"

Bareed Ajali reports that he asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), "O Imam (as)! What is it that makes a person an infidel?" The Imam (as) picked a few pebbles from the ground. And said, "A person who says that these are the seeds of dates!" The Imam (as) further added, "This would mean that the person is speaking against the factual position. Similarly when a person speaks against the True Faith and hates its followers. Such a person is a *Nasibi*, an infidel!"

It is narrated that people asked Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), "What is the meaning of *Sunna*, *Bidaa*, *Jamaa* and *Furqa*?" The Imam (as) replied. "*Sunna* is what the Prophet (S) of Islam has enunciated and put into practice. *Jama-at* are the people living with whom the Prophet (S) has exhorted, these are the Righteous (*Ahl-ul-Haq*). However small in numbers these *Ahl-ul-Haq* might be. *Furqa* are the group of persons the Prophet (S) has warned his people not to follow. These persons are the misguided group! They might be in larger numbers!

Kulaini narrates from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as), “Allah has not missed anything that is necessary for His people. He communicated all of it to the Prophet (S) and Revealed in the Holy Qur’an. He fixed the measure for everything and Has Prescribed punishment for exceeding the limits.”

Authentic sources narrate from Imam Zain-ul-’Abidin (as), “The best act in the consideration of Allah, however small, is that which is in accord with the practice of the Prophet of Islam (S).”

It is narrated from Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) that the Prophet (S) said, “Saying something without acting on it is futile. Belief and action are both futile if the intent is not right. And all the three are of no use if they are not in accordance with the precept and the *sunna* of the Prophet (S).”

It is said that when Satan refused to prostrate to prophet Adam (as) and Allah’s curse was inflicted on him, he said, “O Allah! Excuse me from prostrating to Adam (as)! I shall offer prostrations to an extent that any angel or prophet (S) would never do!” Allah observed, “We don’t need your supplications! Obeying My Orders in itself is supplication to Me!”

Sheik Toosi narrates from Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) that the Prophet (S) said, “O people! It is mandatory for you to follow my *Sunna*! Doing small things according to the *sunna* is better than doing more through innovation (*Bidat*).”

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says, “If you have any doubts about the matters of Faith, refer them to us. We shall explain them to you!”

Imam Mehdi (as) says, “If you get doubts about the tenets of *Shariah*, refer to the narrators of our traditions. They (*the Ulema*) are the authorities (*Hujjat*) for you and we are the authority (*Hujjat*) from Allah for them.”

Authentic sources narrate a tradition that if one has doubt about matters of religion, he must refer to the people who are well versed about *Halal* and *Haram*. Consider them your referee that Allah has appointed them as such. If you reject their advice, it will be tantamount to rejecting our orders and Allah’s Orders! One who rejects Allah’s Orders is a polytheist (*mushrik*) and infidel. Bear in mind that on the Day of Reckoning Allah will condone following anyone who is fully conversant with the orders of the *Ahl-ul-Bayt* and do not make interpretations with ulterior motives of worldly gains.

The Identity Of The Ulema

Imam Hasaan Al-’Askari (as) narrates from Imam Zain-ul-’Abidin (as), “When you see a person who has the appearance of a religious scholar, gives deep thought in giving opinion on religious matters, shows excessive humility in his dealings, don’t make haste in falling to his stratagems. There are plenty of people who, for worldly gains, pretend to be what they are not in reality. If you notice that the person is not interested in material gains, manifests external piety, even then one should be careful in deciding about his authenticity. Remember! There are many kinds of mundane desires. If a person is not

interested in wealth, he might be inclined towards other things that are against the Law of the Religion (*Shara*).

If you are sure that the person is free of these aberrations too, you have to observe him further that there are some persons who lack in intellect and for this failing sometimes they cause grave damage to the Religion in their ignorance. Even after assuring yourself about this, observe the person further unless you know that his emotions don't prevail over his better sense in any matter.

Ensure that he doesn't prefer worldly pomp (*Riyasat*) and show. There are many persons in this world who lose their Faith in search of worldly gains! They may be deprived of both! Because of these sins Allah removes His Munificence and Mercies from them and leaves them in the morass of depravity. Then they start pronouncing as legitimate (*Halal*) what is termed taboo (*Haram*) by Allah and they try to prove *Haram* things that are deemed *Halal* by the Almighty. For worldly pomp the person forgets his Religious obligations. These are the people who will be the accursed of Allah and will have stringent Retribution in store for them!

A bold person is one who controls his carnal desires. He expends his energies in the way of Allah. He will have a firm belief that he has to prepare for the benefits of the Hereafter in this life. He knows that the worldly fame and adulation is transitory. If he has to bear some hardship in this world to follow the dictates of the Faith, he is sure of the perpetual pleasure and benefits in the other world. He will have all the qualities that make him fit and ideal for emulation (*taqleed*) by others. *His prayers are always answered!*

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) says, "Two persons break my back! The first, a person who is wise but is a transgressor and immoral. The second, one who is ignorant but keeps himself very much busy in prayer. The first person misguides others with his wrong acts. The second sets a bad example for others with his excessive indulgence in prayer. O people! Beware of the transgressing scholar and the ignorant worshipper because their emulation might lead you astray. I have heard the Prophet of Allah (S) say, 'My people will suffer at the hands of the hypocrites!'"

It is narrated that Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) told to Abu Hamza Shimali, "O Hamza! Beware pomp and pelf! Avoid making disciples and also avoid following others!" Abu Hamza said, "O Imam (as)! Pomp I don't know of, but I have been emulating others that I tried to find your sayings from them!" The Imam (as) replied, I don't mean what you have understood from my talk. But remember, every act doesn't qualify one for a reward. Bearing every hardship doesn't bring one nearer to Allah! The yardstick of judging acts, good or bad, is according to the Ordinance of Allah and His Prophet (S). The Deliverance is only through this route.

The unfortunate Jews are very rigid about not accepting any change in their *Shariat*. They don't accept that in later periods Allah could have made amendments and changes in the *Shariat*. The changes are not because of the ignorance of the commentator or interpreter. But they are because of the changed

circumstances and needs of the times. A physician, while treating his patient, changes the medicine as he makes progress towards the cure. Similarly, the *Shariat* has to undergo changes to suit the circumstances and the times. Therefore, the Prophet of Islam (S), and the Infallible Imams (as) after him, have laid down the norms of *Shariah*, for their times. Any alteration, addition or deletion of these is tantamount to innovation (*Bidaa*) that is taboo (*Haram*).

The Third Ray of Light: About Celibacy

Reclusiveness, abstinence from women and the legitimate pleasures of life is the practice of the celibate monks. It was prevalent in the people of Prophet 'Isa (as). But this is prohibited for the followers of Prophet Muhammad (S) the Last Prophet. Marriage, the *Nikah*, is a practice enjoined by the Prophet (S) on his people. It is termed as a *Sunnamu'akkadah* or a practice particularly to be adhered to by the people.

A monk, who practices celibacy, keeps away from good food, good raiment, women and company of people. Prophet 'Isa (as)'s followers used to castrate themselves and go into the caves of the jungle to spend lonely lives there. They used to wear rough cloth and hated every comfort of life.

Celibacy Condemned

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, The people of my Faith should keep away from celibacy and should opt for *Jihad* instead. Instead of castrating themselves, they should have recourse to fasting. He said that there is great reward for men mating with women, celibacy is taboo in Islam. When a man looks at his mate, two angels cover him with their wings as if he is making *Jihad* in the way of Allah. When the man is in the process of mating with his spouse, his sins will drop away the same way the leaves of trees drop in the season of fall. When the person takes a bath of cleanliness thereafter, his sins will be washed away.

Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) said, "The prophets (as) practiced three things—use of perfumes, clipping away excessive hair and mating with their spouses."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says that two genuflections (*Rakaat*) of prayer of a married person are better than seventy of the unmarried. One who opts for the *Nikah* (the ritual of marriage) would save half of his Faith. Then he added, "A person came to my revered father (as). He asked him, 'Do you have a wife?' The person said, 'No!' The Imam (as) told him, 'I won't be happy with every comfort of life if I don't have the company of my spouse in the night!' Then he added, 'Two genuflections of a married person is better than the parayer that an unmarried person offers the whole night and fasts every day!' Then he gave some Dirhams to the person to purchase the paraphernalia for his marriage and told him that Allah would enhance his livelihood if he married."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that three women approached the Prophet (S) to complain about

their husbands. One complained that her husband didn't eat meat, the second said her spouse disliked perfumes and the third said that her husband keeps away from her. The Prophet (S) was angry. He went to the Mosque and asked the people to gather. Then he said, "Listen to me! I eat meat, use perfumes and mate with my spouses! *Nikah* (the ritual of marriage) is my *Sunna*! One who refrains from my *Sunna* is not one with me! Marry that your livelihood increases! Two genuflections of a married person are better than the prayers of an unmarried person offered throughout the night!"

The Fourth Ray of Light: Reclusiveness Condemned

A person told to Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), O Imam (as)! A person holds the Shi'a Faith and is a firm believer. But he has gone into reclusion and doesn't meet his friends and relatives.

The Imam (as) said, "How will he learn about the matters of Religion if he runs away from company of people?" Then the Imam (as) added, "O people! You must regularly offer prayers in congregation at the mosque. You should try to meet pious and good persons. In time of need you must bear witness in their matters. Join the funeral processions of Mu'mins. Human life is not possible without social interaction of people in the society."

The Imam (as) said, "One Muslim has seven rights over other Muslims. If one of these rights is not honored, then a person might be excluded from the roster of Allah's friends. The smallest right of a Muslim over his compatriots is that whatever one wishes for himself, he should wish the same for his brethren. Similarly whatever he dislikes to happen to him, he should want not to happen to his brothers in Islam.

The second right is: that a Muslim should avoid displeasing another Muslim. The Third right consists in that a Muslim should help another both physically and monetarily to the extent possible. The fourth right of a Muslim is that he must guide other Muslims to the best of his abilities. The fifth right is that if a Muslim is hungry, the other should share his food with him. The sixth right is that if one has a servant and the other doesn't, then the servant should be sent to the other for a part of the time. The seventh right is that he should visit the other Muslim when called, take care of him while sick and participate in the funeral rites when there is a death. Fulfil the other Muslim's needs without his asking for help. When these rights are taken care of, then there will be amity and love between the members of the society."

Then the Imam (as) told to his companions, Do good deeds. Live like brothers and sisters. Your friendship should always be in Allah's way and when you meet, discuss the matters of Faith and Religion. Keep the True Faith alive and give it strength. Doing something for a *Mu'min* is equivalent to freeing a thousand slaves. It is also better than sending a thousand horsemen for *Jihad*.

The traditions that hint at keeping away from people point to maintaining a distance from bad company. Because such company might cause some harm to a person's Faith. Meeting the virtuous and admonishing the sinners has always been the wont of the Prophets (as). This act is more superior to

many. Staying at home is advised only to keep men away from bad companions.

The Prophet (S) has said that a Muslim who starts his day not giving a thought to the needs of his other Muslim Brothers is not a true Muslim. A Muslim who finds another in trouble and does not help him, is not a Muslim.

Someone asked the Prophet (S) as to who is the most beloved person of Allah? The Prophet (S) replied, "One who is of help to other human beings!" Another asked, "O Prophet (S)! Can Allah be seen?" The Prophet (S) replied, "Why not! Go to meet a Mu'min. The reward that one gets in meeting a pious person is equal to that of meeting Allah!"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said that helping a Muslim Brother could beget more Blessings from Allah than freeing a thousand slaves.

The Fifth Ray of Light: Honest Livelihood, Kasb al-Halal

Authentic traditions indicate that striving to acquire wealth through fair means is legitimate and necessary. It is the duty of a person to make his best efforts and the success or failure is in the hands of Allah. One should always have his sights on, *Assayee minni wa itmam min Allah*. One who trusts on Allah, Allah is sufficient for him!

If a person is not able to earn sufficiently after all the efforts, he should be contented with what he has. If the honest livelihood (*Kasb al-Halal*) is meagre, one should prune his expenses by avoiding unnecessary luxuries. He should not be attracted to riches if they are coming through unfair means. If he gets huge sums through fair means, he should first disburse the Prescribed Rights and then spend the rest for his family and other needy persons. He should eat well, live well but avoid waste and lavishness!

The Prophet (S) has said that if a person has five dates or five *naans* or five Dirhams, the best way of expending them is to first use them for his parents. Secondly on himself and his family, then on relatives and neighbours and lastly on the poor and needy. Allah has warned people against extravagance and He doesn't like miserliness too. One should not spend so little as to keep the family half fed, nor waste money extravagantly.

Those Whose Prayer Is Not Answered

It has come in the traditions that the Prophet (S) has said. In my *Ummat* there are some people whose prayers are not accepted. Among them are those who pray for harm to their own parents. Then,, there are those who give loans and don't take a witness for these transaction. The third category is of such men who, when in d'Isagreement with their spouses, reproach them continuously, instead of giving them divorce (*Talaq*) which is allowed to them by Allah.

The fourth type is of persons who don't make any serious effort to earn livelihood and sit at home

praying to Allah to provide him sustenance. Allah says, "O my creature! I have provided to you the means for earning your livelihood. I have given you the limbs to work and earn a living. Even after sincere efforts if you are unable to earn, pray for My Help!" The fifth type is of the persons who have been gifted with lot of wealth that they squander. Then they pray to Allah to give them more. Allah's response will be that they were given plenty. Why didn't they use their wealth frugally instead of squandering it. Allah doesn't like extravagance (*israaf*). The sixth category of such persons is of those who talk ill of their kith and kin.

When Salman Farsi (r.a.) used to receive his allowance, he used to keep aside sufficient to meet the expenses for the year and distribute the remainder to the needy. Someone said, "Salman! Because you are a very old and pious person, you can afford to be charitable!" Salman said, O ignorant person! You don't know that like death, life too is unpredictable. Don't you know that when a person has no means of livelihood, he will be worried? When the person has with him the means of sustenance, he will be contented and at rest.

Abu Dharr (r.a.) used to earn his livelihood from sheep rearing. He used to entertain his guests by slaughtering his sheep. When there used to be more persons to feed, he used to slaughter more animals. He used to distribute portions to everyone and keep an equal portion for himself. It has to be noted that these two, Salman and Abu Dharr, were very dear and highly respected companions of the Prophet (S). They were charitable and frugal at the same time. They did help the needy but saved something for themselves that they didn't suffer penury because of extravagance.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) freed a thousand slaves with his earnings from hard physical labor.

A reliable source narrates that Asbat bin Salim went to the presence of Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as). The Imam (as) inquired about Omer bin Muslim. Asbat said, "O Imam (as)! He is in good health but has stopped his business activity!" The Imam (as) said, "This is the work of Satan!" The Imam (as) repeated the sentence thrice, and added, "Doesn't Omer know that the Prophet of Allah (S) himself used to do trading? Once a caravan arrived from Syria. The Prophet (S) bought some merchandize from them. He got so much profit from that deal that he cleared all his debt. The remainder he distributed to his kith and kin."

It is narrated that Omer bin Yazid told to Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), "O Imam (as)! A person says that he always remains at home. He keeps himself occupied with prayers and fasting. He says that his livelihood comes to him without stirring out!" Hearing this the Imam (as) said, "He is one of the three persons whose prayer is never answered!"

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) has said, "A person who works hard to earn and provide sustenance to his family, to help his neighbors and friends, will have a face as bright as the full moon on the Day of Judgement."

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "Allah's worship is of seventy types. The best of them is striving to

earn a legitimate livelihood!”

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), On a warm day my father was coming from the environs of Medina, reclining on two slaves. Muhammad bin Mankandar saw him, came close to him and said, 'It is a pity that at your advanced age you are striving to get worldly gains. What if the strain causes your death?' Wiping sweat from his face the Imam (as) said, 'If I meet with death at this time, I shall be thankful to Allah that I died striving to provide sustenance to my children that they don't have to stretch their hands before you for help!'

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) enquired about a particular person from his companions. They replied that the person was well and busy praying night and day sitting at home. He says that his livelihood reaches him without stirring out of his house. The Imam (as) said, "The person is one of those, whose prayers are not accepted!" The Imam (as) inquired about another person. The companions said that he too was well and staying at home all the time busy in prayer. They also told that the person was provided livelihood by his neighbors. The prayers of this person too will not be answered. The act of the persons who provide him livelihood is more acceptable to Allah than all his prayers!

A jeweler asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that how a person should earn his livelihood? The Imam (as) replied, "He should open a shop and organize it properly. He has done what he must. The rest is in the hands of the Provider!"

The Sixth Ray of Light: Beautification, Ornamentation And Nutrition

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) says that Allah is Magnificent and likes beauty and charm. Therefore, taking care of one's own person is a good act.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says that when Allah has bestowed a person with good personality, he must make it visible! He should take care of his person that the angels say, 'this is Allah's friend who is expressing gratitude to Allah by manifesting the good personality endowed to him!' If the person behaves contrary to the above, the angels would say, 'The person is Allah's enemy. He is hiding his personality and is taking Allah's blessing for granted!'

It is narrated from authentic sources that Sufian Suri saw Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) at the mosque dressed in expensive raiment. He went near the Imam (as) and said, "O son of the Prophet (S)! Your ancestor, the Prophet (S), never wore such expensive clothes!" The Imam (as) replied, "Yes! That was the time when the Muslims were impecunious and the common man did not afford good clothes. The Prophet (S) didn't want to wear expensive clothes to respect the feelings of the people. Now the times have changed and the people are prosperous to afford good clothes. In these circumstances the Imam (as) cannot wear sub-standard clothes!"

Then the Imam (as) drew Sufian Suri nearer to himself and said, “Do you think I am wearing these clothes to satisfy my ego?” Then he removed his expensive clothes and showed to him the less than ordinary clothes he was wearing beneath the expensive dress, and said, “This is the dress that I wear to satisfy my conscience while the outer garment is for the view of the common people.” Saying this, he drew aside Sufian Suri’s dress and showed him the garment he was wearing inside, that was much more expensive than the outer garment. Then the Imam (as) said, “This is your clothing you wear to satisfy your ego and the inexpensive clothing you wear as outer garment is to show to the people that you are frugal in your habits! This is sheer deception that people consider you a pious person!”

About Elegance and Adornment

When Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) deputed Abdallah bin Abbas to visit the *Khawarij* (the Dissenters) to make the final presentation about the Imam (as)’s authenticity (*Hujjat*), Abdallah was dressed in expensive raiment and wore fragrant perfume. He was astride a high quality steed. The Dissenters protested, “O Abdallah! Why are you dressed like the despots?” In reply Abdallah recited this verse from the Qur’an,

﴿قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ﴾

“Adornment with Halal and pure earning is not Haram (taboo)” (7:32)

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) always used to wash new clothes before wearing them. He said, “Wear decent dress and adorn yourselves with the gifts of Allah!”

Imam Zain-ul-’Abidin (as) used to wear a robe worth five hundred and a shawl worth fifty Dinars. After the winter season he used to sell the dress and give the proceeds to the poor in alms. Similarly the dress he wore during the summers, he would sell at the end of the season and give the money to the poor and needy.

It comes in the traditions that Allah likes people adorning themselves well. He doesn’t like people to give appearance of penury and shabbiness. Someone asked the Prophet (S), “How should one manifest the Blessings of Allah?” He said, “Adorn yourselves with good dress, wear decent perfume, keep your dwelling clean and tidy, at sunset light a lamp in your house. This way penury and hunger escape from you. Prosperity will come to you!”

Rabi bin Ziyad complained to Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) in Basra about his brother Asim bin Ziyad that he had abandoned his children and become a recluse, dressing like a beggar! Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) called Asim and told him, “O enemy of your soul! The Satan has led you astray! You have no mercy on your family and children? Do you think that Allah has made His legitimate Blessings taboo (*Haram*)

for you? Allah is the Greatest and would not put you to such unnecessary hardship.

Therefore He says in the Holy Qur'an, "**And He made the land for His creatures which has fruits and date palms having covers over their bunches. (Sura Rahman, 55: 10-11)**" Then the Imam (as) continued, "*He made two rivers flow that meet (at a confluence) They have a boundary between them from which they cannot exceed. From them pearls and oysters come out.*"

Using the Bounties of Allah by His creatures is dear to Him. He likes men to thank him too for His Bounties. He says, "*And keep talking about Allah's Blessings*" Aasim said, "O Imam (as)! Then why do you content yourself with dried bread and coarse clothing?" The Imam (as) replied, "O Aasim! I am unlike you! Allah has made it obligatory on us to live like the poor and the needy that they don't become conscious of their penury! When they see their Imam (as) in that condition, they would resign to their own fates!" Hearing this, Aasim reverted back to his former habits. If Allah has given fair means to a person, he should make good use of them for himself and help the poor and needy to the extent possible.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said that Allah will take account of three things from all the humans: firstly, the food that a person consumed, secondly, the dress that the person had used thirdly, the help the person had given to others with good intent,

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, "O Abu Dharr! If Allah gives good raiment to a person, he should wear it! If He gives coarse clothing, the person should be content with it. Man should be grateful to Allah under all circumstances."

The Seventh Ray of Light: Purity And Cleanliness

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "The cleanliness of the head gets rid of the dirt from the body and gives light to the eyes. Wearing clean and tidy clothes keeps away cares and sadness from the person. It becomes a cause for the acceptance of the person's prayers. Taking regular bath and hygiene of the body keeps one in good health. People prefer the company of clean and tidy persons. Wearing a good perfume is very necessary. At least on Fridays, one should wear a good perfume. This was the tradition of the Prophets (as). Our Prophet (S) used to spend more on perfumes than on his personal food."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said that wearing perfumes gives contentment to one's heart. He also said that one genuflection (*Rakat*) of prayer wearing a perfume is better than seventy without it.

Remember, there are plenty of traditions about the virtues of purity and cleanliness. We are contenting ourselves with the few examples quoted above.

The Eighth Ray Of Light: About Delicacies

There are several traditions of the Prophet of Allah (S) and the Imams (as) about the virtues of good food. They have said that meat is the tastiest and the most nutritious of the foods. Some people wrongly feel that the Prophet (S) has deprecated *Khana al-pur gosht* (the household that has plenty of meat). This is a misnomer. In fact *khana al-pur gosht* is an idiom that means a household where people sit and do backbiting of others. The Prophet (S) definitely has deprecated this habit of people. Otherwise meat, in fact, is complete food. When a person eats meat, the flesh of his body increases and consequently his strength too enhances. He will have more energy for physical work and prayer.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says that it is a saying of the Prophet (S) that if a person doesn't eat meat for forty days at a stretch, he should borrow money to buy and eat. Meat. Allah will give him means for clearing his debt. If Allah has provided a person to eat well after meeting all his obligations, he must! Otherwise, his abstention from good food would be termed as refraining from using Allah's Bounties!

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) has said that Allah likes people of piety. Piety is the ornament for a person. But the most important thing for a pious person is honest livelihood and good food. A pious person lives with his worldly brethren earning honest livelihood and wholesome food. The worldly people, however, cannot be in the company of the pious in the Hereafter.

Good food improves the physical strength of the bodies, which helps in the good performance of the worldly duties and spiritual prayers. If a person doesn't get proper nutrition, he might be weak and sickly and consequently unable to discharge his duties properly.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) further said that good food, fruits and beverages are allowed to be used by a person who can acquire them through fair means. However, gluttony is bad. And excessive use of anything can have negative effect on the health of a person.

Shunning Good Food and Mystic Seclusion, Tarke Lazaez Wa Chilla Kashi

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) narrates from the Prophet of Allah (S), This is a firm and decisive Faith! Scale its heights, but calmly! Don't put excessive weight of prayer on your bodies! Don't be like a rider who tires his animal by travelling more than it possibly can! It may fail to reach you to your destination! Satan has misguided some of our people and made them abstain from meat and other delicacies. Such abstention is against the Jurisprudence (*Shariah*).

People have started calling such abstention *tasawwuf* or mysticism. They abstain from food and sit in a cave for forty days in thought of their *Pir* (the master). Since their physical and mental capabilities become dull due to abstention from food, they start getting hallucinations. They keep strengthening the thought of the master in their minds and this hallucination gets better of their rational thoughts. When they emerge from their seclusion (*Chilla kashi*) and show their condition to the *Pir*, he says that the

previous night he had been to the Firmament five times and they don't feel any need for confirmation.

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, A person who offers prayers every morning with a pure heart, Allah will give him access to knowledge and wisdom!

Every transgressor (*Bidati*) and the person who spreads canards about the Prophet (S) and his Holy Progeny (as) will be accursed. Every action of a person should be in the way of Allah. If a person, unwittingly, perpetuates an innovation (*bidat*) with the conviction that he has done it in the way of Allah, he will be a transgressor (*Aasi*). Allah dislikes such persons.

Remember that *Chilla Kashi* is contrary to the dictates of Allah. And is an innovation. Can it be termed as a prayer if someone practices wrestling for forty days! Definitely not! This *Chilla Kashi* is contrary to the tradition of the Prophet (S) quoted above about offering prayers every morning for forty days. This act of penance of the persons is a *bidat* according to the other tradition quoted.

After knowing the norms of sincerity of prayer, one will understand the futility and difficulty of the forty days' *Chilla*, which, in fact, is a sheer waste and ignorant activity. One should apply his mind to differentiate between a scholar who perpetuates knowledge and learning about Allah and the other who sinks his followers in the abyss of ignorance. Sufian Suri and Ibad Basri were persons who kept objecting to the Infallible Imams (as) and creating doubts in the faith of the people.

The Ninth Ray of Light: About Prohibition Of Music

On *Ghina* or song the opinion of all the Shi'a jurists is united that it is *haram* because the singer is termed a person destined for the Hell. Therefore *Ghina* is considered a major sin in Shi'a Islam.

Ghina is Haram in all the schools of Sunni jurisprudence too. The only exception is that of their *Sufi* cult.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says that the house in which songs are heard will be the abode of misfortunes, the prayers made from there will not be answered and angels will not descend in that place. The household will be denied the Blessings of Allah.

Song and Music

Riyan bin al Salat inquired from Imam 'Ali Ar-Ridha' (as), "O Imam (as)! Hisham bin Ibrahim says that you have given permission to listen to music?"

The Imam (as) replied, It is a falsehood! When he asked me, I told him that someone asked Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) about music. The Imam (as) replied, 'If Right and wrong are separated, on which side will be song and music?' The man said, 'On the side of wrong!' The Imam (as) affirmed, 'You are right!'

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, "Allah's Blessing will not be on a gathering assembled to listen to

music. Song is the mirror of hypocrisy and the woman who sings is accursed and also those who share her earnings.”

It is recorded in *Ayoon al Akhbar ar Ar-Ridha'* that someone asked Imam Ar-Ridha' (as), “What do you say about song and music?” The Imam (as) replied, “The people of *Hijaz* think it is legitimate. But song is taboo and is an amusement and a waste of time. Therefore Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, ‘*When they pass by the vicinity of undesirable activity, they pass quietly like the merciful ones.*’ Whoever keeps himself away from music, will have a tree in the Heaven which, when shaken with Allah's orders, will produce musical notes that no one has ever heard. Those who had been listening to music in the world, will not have this privilege in the Heaven.”

Ghina has been defined by the Ulema as modulation of the voice in the throat in such a way that the listeners enjoy hearing.

Ghina is that which gets appreciation for the reciter and the listeners go into a stupor of happiness or sadness. Doing such thing is *Haram*. There are very few occasions when music is allowed. Some do not put a condition that the song should create the feeling of joy or of sadness. Because the musical notes generally has a profound effect on the heart. If a particular person takes no effect from music, then it cannot be taken as the reason for ineffectiveness of the music.

For example, honey is sweet and pleasing to the taste. But if a person doesn't like the taste of the honey, it cannot be a proof against its generally accepted quality. To the contrary, the person who expresses aversion to honey will be questioned about his taste! During the functions at the weddings, when men are not there, some people are of opinion that a *domni*, a singing-dancing girl, can entertain the ladies with her performance according to some people. Some others say that this practice is undesirable. But there is a tradition that approves of the practice.

A person asked the Imam (as), “A singing girl lives in my neighborhood. When I go to the toilet, I hear her singing. Sometimes I am attracted to the singing and purposely delay coming out of the toilet.” The Imam (as) asked him to avoid the practice. He said, “I don't go to the toilet with the purpose of listening to the songs. It is just that the sound comes to my ears and I listen.” The Imam (as) said, “Have you not heard that the ears, eyes and nose will give witness about the person's actions on the Day of Reckoning?”

The prophet of Allah (S) told to Salman al-Farsi, “O Salman! In the last epoch the worst thing that would emerge will be the recitation of the Holy Qur'an in sing-song voices!” Also the Prophet (S) said, “Recite the Qur'an in Arabic intonation and don't recite in the tone adopted by the disobedient (*fasiq*) people because it is a major sin.”

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said that buying and selling singer slave girls is *Haram*. One who earns a livelihood from this profession is accursed.

Some scholars have permitted singing to encourage the camels to run at good speeds while travelling. Some other scholars have permitted singing the *marsias (elegies) of Imam Husayn (as)*. It is better to refrain from these.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says, “Singing is one of the major sins. Allah will punish its practitioners with Hell Fire.” Then the Imam (as) recited the following verse from the Qur’an, “*there are some amongst the people who buy the false voice that takes them away from Allah’s Way. They are ignorant and ridicule those who are steadfast on Allah’s Way. For them there is stringent retribution.*”

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) has said commenting on the following verse of the Qur’an, “*Fajtannebuurrijsa minal autane wa ajtanebu qaulazoor (Al Hajj)*. Here *Qaul az zoor* refers to *Ghina* or songs.

The Tenth Ray Of Light: About Invoking Allah’s Name—Dhikr Allah

The dictionary meaning of the word *Dhikr* is to remember. There are many ways to remember Allah.

The first way of remembering Him is to give up evil habits thinking of the Almighty.

The second way to remember Allah is while offering mandatory and optional prayers.

The third way to remember Allah is in times when one gets legitimate worldly benefits.

The fourth way of remembering Allah is in times of adversity.

The fifth way of remembering Allah is through the heart, thinking of His Qualities and meanings of His Book through the interpretations given by the Holy prophet (S) and the Ahl-ul-Bayt.

The sixth way to remember Allah is through the word of mouth, invoking the true knowledge, talking of the qualities of the Ahl-ul-Bayt, reciting the Holy Qur’an, reciting Allah’s Names. All these invocations that come out of the tongue should emanate from the heart!

It is narrated that Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) said, “One who remembers Allah in quiet he remembers Allah well. The hypocrite makes the show of remembering Allah at the top of his voice. For such hypocrites Allah says, ‘*People do things cunningly to show off to others, they do not remember Allah but little.*”

The Prophet of Allah (S) says that the true obedience of Allah is that He is remembered the more, despite little recourse to optional prayer viz. *Saalat* and recitation of the Qur’an. Sin against Allah (*Masiat*) is not remembering Allah despite over-indulgence in the rituals like optional prayers and fasting.

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) has said: Nothing hurts the Satan more than one talking about the virtues of Allah, the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt (as) to his fellowmen. The Satan then sadly complains that Allah’s

angels keep cursing him!

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that Prophet Musa (as) asked Allah that being near to Him, could he talk to Him as one does with persons near to him! Or if Allah is far away, should he talk in a loud tone that he would be audible to Him! The reply was, "I am very near to those who remember me away from people in loneliness! They are My sincere creatures! Those who pretend to remember me in a loud voice to make a show of their love for me to others are hypocrites and men-of-the-world!"

Loud Invocation, Dihkr al-Jalee

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) has said, "Whosoever remembers Allah quietly has so much reward that only Allah can measure it!" This proves that trying to remember Allah by making loud intonations and humming noises is against the *Shariah* and is innovation.

The *Dhikr al-Jalee* of the Sufis has many other innovative practices than these. For example they sing love lyrics in loud voices and wrongly think that it is a form of worship. This practice in the *Imamah* sect, with unanimous assent, is *Haram*. Besides these aberrations, the Sufis indulge in several undesirable acts like clapping in unison, dancing and do these things even in the solemn precincts of the Mosque. This, despite the Prophet (S) exhorting his people by saying, "One who recites poetry in the Mosque should be told that Allah will smash his mouth! The mosque is for reciting the Qur'an and not for reciting the mundane poetry!"

The Sufis generally do these activities on the eve of Friday although the eve of Friday and the day of Friday reciting couplets is a sin.

If these people are told why they act against the dictates of the *Shariah*, they say that they have achieved nearness to Allah. They don't realize that nearness to Allah is not possible without implicitly following the rules of *Shariah*. The contemptuous activities of the Sufis are termed by them as *Haal* (getting enraptured!). During *Haal* they get thought of the mundane love in their minds and in the melee of song and dance they start jumping and cavorting. Surprisingly, such scenes are common in drinking parties too!

The Sufis Get Enraptured, The Haal

In the state of *Haal* the Sufis throw themselves on the ground with such artistic cunning that they don't get hurt. They pretend to abstain from the pleasures of life like eating of meat etc. They undergo a sort of penance that their bodies grow weak. The women and children of this cult too are of poor physique. But the Sufis proudly claim that they can be cured. The Sufis prohibit people crying. They curb this natural instinct that is spontaneous during times of extreme joy or sorrow. If the tears don't come off the eyes, the heart will be affected. The Sufis do not plead with Allah for amelioration of their hardship. They are under the spell of the Satan and give vent to their feelings by singing, dancing and jumping! But truly pious persons busy themselves in prayer and supplication to Allah!

The Sufis Are Innovative, Bidati

A big proof of the Sufis being innovative is that no scholar of any sect has quoted any of the Sufis of the past in their works. The Prophet (S) never swooned at any *Qawwali* (mystic chorus) session nor did he teach his companions to do any such thing. It is observed that very few persons recite the supplications authored by the Immaculate Imams (as). To the contrary hordes of people will flock to the Qawwali meets of the Sufis and indulge in the same antics as their hosts! They do things that the Imams (as) have termed as Haram. They will have to give account of their deeds on the Day of Judgement.

A person came to Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) and said, "O Imam (as)! I have invented an invocation!" The Imam (as) replied, "Leave that aside! Recite the supplications that we have taught to you!"

The Silent Invocation, Dhikr al-Khafi

Another way of worshiping Allah is offering silent invocations. In this condition, at all times and in all circumstances, the heart of the person is bent towards Allah. The evident aspect of this type of worship is very attractive but the shape the Sufis have given to it is an innovation. There is no reference about this in Shi'a literature.

Amongst the Sunni scribes only Maroof Karkhi has quoted from Imam Ar-Ridha' (as). But this is doubtful because there is no evidence of Maroof having any interaction with Imam Ar-Ridha' (as). Some say that he was a janitor at the house of the Imam (as). This too is a very doubtful statement. Other people say that the teacher (*Peer al-Tariqat*) of Maroof was Dawood Tayee who was a bigoted Sunni. What connection he could have had with the Imams (as)!

Thirdly, Maroof Karkhi's beliefs are evidenced by such unreliable persons as Noor Baksh Noor who went to the extent of claiming himself to be the Mehdi and felt that people had recognized him as that. Fourthly there are different ways of *Dhikr al-Khafi*. Therefore, whichever way the *Peer* instructs the *Mureed* (the disciple) to do the *Dhikr*, it is acceptable. The fifth; Sufis consider such worship better than the mandatory prayers. How could it be possible that the Imam (as) instructed only Maroof Karkhi about this and did not tell any of his close companions! Then, if Maroof was the one and only to be instructed on this method, then why the populace is motivated to adopt the practice by the Sufis!

Sixth: If the Imam (as) communicated about the *Dhikr al-Khafi* to Maroof in secret then there have been more pious and learned persons like Salman and Abu Dharr. There is no tradition that indicates that such companions of the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as) have ever been instructed about the *Dhikr al-Khafi*. It is a funny situation that the Sufis leave aside thousands of authentic traditions and depend on one tradition quoted by the unauthentic Maroof Kharkhi!

Respect For The Mosques

It should be remembered that Allah has termed the Mosques as his homes. Therefore, they are places

where people can seek nearness to Allah. Otherwise, Allah is not restricted to any home or place. In comparison with other places, the mosque has more Favor and Blessings of Allah. Therefore it is better to offer the mandatory prayers in a mosque, preferably with a congregation. Similarly giving the *Zakat* (Religious Tax) in public is preferable. But the *Tahajjud* (late night prayer) is to be offered in loneliness.

Reliable sources narrate from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that the Prophet (S) asked Jibraeel about the portion of land that is liked by Allah. Jibraeel said, "The Mosque and the people who congregate there. More than that Allah likes the person who arrives earlier than others at the mosque and is the last to leave it!"

It is mentioned in the Torah that Allah said: My home on the land is in the mosques. Blessed is the person who does ablution at home before coming to My Presence in the Mosque. It is necessary for him to greet those he meets at the mosque pleasantly. Tell the persons who reach the Mosque in the darkness of the night that on the Day of Reckoning their faces will be shining with light. Every place where they offered their prayers on the earth will bear witness to their piety.

The Prophet (S) has said, "One who recites the Holy Qur'an and goes to the Mosque to offer prayers will be given a palace in the Heaven by Allah." When Allah finds a group indulging excessively in sinful acts, and if there are three men of piety in that formation, He says, "O Sinners! If these three pious persons were not in your midst, who care for each other and inhabit the Mosque, every morning they supplicate to me, then I would most certainly have sent stringent Retribution to you!"

Fadl Baqiaaq narrates that Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said: O Baqiaaq! Only those come to the Mosque who are the chiefs of the tribes and the heads of the families. When they return from the Mosque, they would have got at least one of the following three things:

1. The acceptance of the Prayer that would take them to the Heaven.
2. Safety from any worldly calamity for which they might have prayed.
3. Getting a brother firm in his Faith.

Sweeping In The Precincts Of The Mosque

It is narrated that sweeping in a Mosque is equivalent to the reward for freeing a slave. When a person removes the garbage from a Mosque, Allah will Grant to him double the Reward.

It is mentioned in the traditions that whoever sweeps the mosque on Friday eve and removes the garbage from there, Allah will forgive all his sins.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, "Don't do any trading transactions inside the Mosque. Don't allow children (small) and mentally ill person inside the Mosque. Don't announce about a missing person or also don't raise a complaint for punishment to a criminal at the Mosque. A person who abstains from

spitting inside the precincts of a Mosque, his ailments will be cured.”

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, “Whoever lights a lamp in the Mosque, till that light lasts, the angels and the inhabitants of the Firmament keep praying for him!”

Imam Al Ar-Ridha’ (as) says that once Satan went to Prophet Yahya (as). Prophet Yahya (as) asked him, “Will you answer a question of mine?” Satan said, “Why not! I can certainly oppose you!” Prophet Yahya (as) said, “Tell me, how you misguide people?” Satan said, “I shall tell you tomorrow.” The next day Satan came to Prophet Yahya (as) in the form of a monkey dressed in feminine garments.

Prophet Yahya (as) asked him, “What are all these colors?” Satan replied, “These are the different colors I use to subdue men. If one color is not effective I use the others.” Prophet Yahya (as) said, “Have you ever been able to subdue me?” Satan said, “No! But I like your nature very much!” Prophet Yahya (as) asked in surprise, “What is that?” Satan said, “You eat food in a little excess and therefore you are tardy in offering prayers to Allah. You get up late for your prayer and that pleases me a lot!” Prophet Yahya (as) raised his hands towards the sky and said, “O my Sustainer! Yahya (as) shall not eat his fill from now onwards!”

The people who have made music and song their way of offering prayers to Allah can only be told that no Sufi, Shi’a or Sunni, can produce a proof that the Prophets (S), the Imams (as) or the Revered Companions ever had a singer or a dancer in their gatherings.

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said: O Abu Dharr! *Salat* (prayer) is a pillar of the Faith! And the tongue is most respected! Whoever uses his tongue to propagate the true beliefs, the Two statements of bearing Witness (*la ilaha il Allah, Muhammad Rasool Allah*) and spreads the word of Allah is superior to any other prayer. Therefore Allah has said in the Qur’an,

﴿إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ﴾

“No doubt salat prevents from bad deeds and unsavory acts, but spreading Allah’s word (Dhikr) is superior.” (29:45)

Offering the obligatory prayers at the Mosque in congregation is attendant with more rewards. It is better to offer optional prayers in the seclusion of ones house. It is better to spend some time in the Mosque after the prayer to spread the Word of Allah. But in this, one should refrain from hypocrisy.

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) says that three things will bitterly complain on the Day of Judgement:

A Mosque where no one offers prayers.

The scholar (*Aalim*) who lived amongst ignorant people and they had not bothered to give him attention.

The Qur'an which had been kept in the bookshelf and has taken dust because of no one reading it for long spells.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said that a person who lives in close neighborhood of a Mosque, and for no valid reason, offers his mandatory prayers at home, his prayers will not be accepted.

Any services provided to the Mosque, however small, bring high rewards to the person.

The Prophet (S) has said that the angels in the Heaven will pray for the person who puts lights in the mosque till that light fades off.

The Eleventh Ray of Light: Charity And Alms

There are several traditions that highlight the importance of charity and alms. We are restricting to quoting a few traditions here.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says that a Jew greeted the prophet (S) by saying *assamalaik* (that would mean, 'may death come to you'). The Prophet (S) replied, "*Alaik assaam* (meaning, 'May death come to you too!)" The Companions protested to the Prophet (S), "The Jew has wished for your death!" The prophet (S) replied to them, "Similarly, I have wished for his death too! By this evening he will be a dead person! A snake will bite his head!" The Jew was a woodcutter. He went to the forest and returned around sunset with a stack of wood on his shoulder.

When the companions saw the Jew they informed the Prophet (S) that the Jew was still alive. The prophet (S) asked them to call him. The Jew came to the presence of the Prophet (S), who asked him to throw the stack of wood down. When the stack was put down a snake emerged from it and ran away. The Prophet (S) asked the Jew, "What good deed you had done today?" The Jew said that he had two pieces of bread, of which he gave one to a beggar. The prophet (S) said, the alm (*sadaqa*) *has saved you. That snake had brought the message of death for you. It had a sliver of wood stuck in it's mouth that prevented it from biting you.* The prophet (S) then said that *sadaqa* can ward away death. If a person wants to be safe against unforeseen difficulties, he should start the day by giving a *sadaqa*.

The Reward For Charity and Alms

One who wishes to ward away the evil influences of the night, he should give alms in the evening. The alms (*Sadaqa*) quench the fire of the anger of Allah.

One day Prophet 'Isa (as) went to the bank of the river. At one spot he took out bread from his basket and put in the river. His disciples asked him, "Why did you put the only bread you had in the river?" He said, "The animals of the river will eat the bread and I shall get great rewards for the act!"

Someone asked the Prophet of Islam (S), "O prophet (S)! What is a good *Sadaqa*?" The Prophet (S)

said, "That which you give to your nearest enemy!" The Prophet (S) added, "The rewards for *Sadaqa* are ten-fold, the rewards for giving loans to the needy are eighteen times the amount, helping a Mu'min is twenty times and the reward for assisting ones relations is twenty fold."

Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) used to go out of his house in the nights with a bundle of breads on his shoulder to distribute to the poor. He used to hide his face during these trips that the people don't recognize who their benefactor was. Almost a hundred households depended on this nightly charity of the Imam (as). During Ramadan the Imam (as) used to get the soup of goat's meat cooked in a big cauldron. He just used to smell it and then get the entire contents distributed to the poor. He himself used to break his fast with dry bread and dates.

About The Sufferings Of The Pious In The World

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that the prophet of Islam (S) said: For great suffering, man gets equally rewarded by Allah. When Allah considers a person His friend, he puts him to severe test too. If the person confronts those hardships with patience and forbearance, he would receive Allah's Help. If the person doesn't resign to the Will of Allah, his suffering will be the more.

Abdallah bin Bakr asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), "Can a pious *Mu'min* ever suffer from leprosy and other serious ailments?" The Imam (as) replied, "Hardships are only for testing the *Mu'mins*." Then he added, "Allah has taken a promise from the *Mu'mins* that their wishes will not be granted in this world and their enemies will therefore not be punished here. The Mu'min may have to bear several indignities in his lifetime." And said: A *Mu'min* will not be free of four things: First: He will always have a nagging neighbor. Second: The Satan will shadow the *Mu'min* at every step to misguide him. Third: The hypocrite will look to the chance of exposing the *Mu'min's* faults. Fourth: The *Mu'min* will have jealous people around him. This will be the most difficult aspect of a *Mu'min's* life. The jealous would make false allegations against him and the others in the society would accept those as true.

The prophet of Islam (S) has said, "Allah says, 'If it was not that I would feel ashamed of the Mu'min, I wouldn't have left even the tattered clothes on his body. When I see that a person has become perfect in piety, I involve him in weakness and economic hardship. If he gets disheartened, I give back what was taken away from him. But if he is patient and forbearing in his suffering, I boast about him to the angels!'"

The Prophet of Islam (S) said, "O Abu Dharr! The world is hell for the *Mu'min* and heaven for the infidel!"

The higher the status of the Faith of a *Mu'min*, the more shall be his suffering and hardships.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "Those who had maximum hardship have been the Prophets (as). Then followed their Vicegerents. The hardships and sufferings have been so close to the *Mu'mins* as the rain is to the earth." Then the Imam (as) added, "If a *Mu'min* locks himself in an invincible fort, Allah will create the instrument to cause hardship to him for the purpose of enhancing his rewards!"

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says that Allah sent two angels to the earth. They met each other halfway to the destination. One asked the other why Allah had sent him to the earth? The other asked the first, why he has been sent? The first angel said, "In Babel a sinner has wished to have fish. I have been ordered to snare the fish towards the net of the fisherman in the Babel Sea so that the wish of that cruel person is fulfilled and he gets his heart's fill of whatever he wants in this world only."

Then he asked the second angel, "what is your errand?" The second angel said, "I have been ordered to perform a very unusual task! A pious *Mu'min* keeps himself busy in prayer the whole night and fasts during the days. His piety is the subject of adulation amongst the inmates of the Firmament! At this moment he has put a pot on the fire to cook his broth for breaking the fast. I have to go and turn that pot over. The purpose is that the *Mu'min* gets closer to Allah from more hardship caused to him!"

Samaa Ravi narrates that a person went to Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) and complained of his penury and hardship. The Imam (as) said, "Be patient! Allah shall soon give you relief!" After a while it was known that the person was an inmate of the gaol at Kufa. He said, "I have been incarcerated in a very narrow and stinking cell. "The Imam (as) said, "The world for a *Mu'min* is like a gaol. Then why do you crave for comfort and happiness. There are also people in this world who Allah deprives of the comforts that He sends for them. Whatever hardship comes, it comes to them!" Then the Imam (as) added, "Ourselves, you and all our Shi'as are for facing hardships day and night!"

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) said, "When Allah holds a person dear, gives him a plunge into the river of hardship. When he prays, Allah says, 'O My creature! What you have asked for, I am Omnipotent to bestow on you! I can give you more than you have asked for! But the rewards and Bounties that I have in store for you are far better than all the pleasures of the world!'"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says that a *Mu'min* doesn't spend forty days when a new difficulty does not confront him. In fact, he is not a *Mu'min* who is free of all worldly difficulties!

The Imam (as) said: A person invited the Prophet (S) over a meal. When the fare was laid in the courtyard of the house, the Prophet (S) looked towards the wall of the house. He noticed a pigeon has laid an egg that was resting on the top of the wall. And thus was saved. He told to the host, "Your pigeon has laid an egg that is lying safely on the top of the wall!" The man said, "O Allah's Prophet (S)! What is there to be surprised about that? I swear by the Creator, Allah, that in my entire life I have not suffered any loss!"

When the Prophet (S) heard this, he got up and said, "I cannot share a meal with a person who has never suffered any loss whatsoever during his entire life! I do this because you have no contact with Allah and you don't possess any quality. *A Mu'min, even if he is comparatively comfortable in the world, will be in difficulty when compared with the comforts he would enjoy in the Hereafter!* Even if a *Mu'min* is given the entire world, the status that awaits him in the Hereafter is far superior to what is available to him in this life! In comparison this world is like the Hell for a *Mu'min*. Similarly if an infidel is involved in

all the worldly hardships, his life here will be like living in the heaven when compared with the hardships that he would bear in the Hereafter.”

Imam Hasan (as), attired in expensive raiment, was riding along on a horse accompanied by his companions on steeds too! On the way an old Jewish woodcutter met him and said, “O son of the Prophet (S)! Your ancestor said that the world is Hell for the *Mu'min* and *heaven* for the *kafir*. I see that you are astride a grand Arab steed wearing expensive garments. You are enjoying comforts and I am living in sheer penury!” The Imam (as) replied, “If you witness my status and condition in the Hereafter, you will realize that this world is worst than a jail for me! If you witness your own position in the Hereafter, you would think that this life is like enjoying the comforts of the Heaven!”

Crying for Fear of Allah

Imam 'Ali Naqi (as) narrates that Prophet Musa (as) asked Allah, “O Allah! What is the reward for one whose eyes shed tears with Your fear?” The reply was, “O Musa (as)! I shall save his face from the heat of the Hellfire and prevent him from the hardship of the Hereafter!”

The Prophet of Islam (S) said, “One whose eyes water with the fear of Allah, in return for every drop of his tears Allah will give him a palace in the Heaven. The palace will be decorated with pearls and precious stones.”

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said: If the sins create such a distance between the sinner and the Heaven that will be equivalent to the distance between the Firmament and the *Taht as sara*, the person will grieve and cry that the Heaven comes close to him as the eye is to the eye-lashes! The people who cry over their sins with Allah's fear in the world, will be happy with Allah's Mercies on the Day of Judgement. Everything has a weight and measure. But a single drop of tear of compunction can cool the fire of many rivers of fire in the Hell. The face that carries the tears of remorse over the sins committed, Allah will make the Hellfire *Haram* on him. A people who have even one person who grieves and mourns, Allah will have His Mercy on the entire community!

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) said, “The tears that flow with Allah's fear on the cheeks in the darkness of night, are more pleasing to Allah than anything else.”

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, “On the Day of Judgement all the eyes will be crying excepting of three persons. One of them who closed his eyes to the things that have been pronounced as *Haram* by Allah. Another is the person whose eyes remained open in obedience to Allah. The third person is that whose eyes shed tears with fear of Allah in the nights.”

Ishaq bin Ammar narrates that he told to Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as): O Imam (as)! I want to cry but tears don't come out! Many a time I try to remember the dead of my kith and kin thinking that it might give vent to my tears. Is it legitimate to do this? The Imam (as) said, “It is legitimate! But when you start crying get busy remembering Allah!” The Imam (as) said at another occasion, “If you are unable to cry, put your

thoughts on it! Even if you get a tear as small as a fly, it will be good for you!”

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) said once, “When you have any fear or you have a wish to make, then first praise Allah. Then call for peace on the Prophet (S) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as). Then submit to Allah for His Mercies! Man will be closest to Allah when he has his head in the prostration of prayer and is crying for His Help.”

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said: O Abu Dharr! Seven persons will be such that Allah will give them place in His Firmament on the Day of Judgement. They will be:

- The Just Imam (*Imam al-Adil*)
- The truthful youth.
- The person who does charity hidden from others.
- One who remembers Allah in seclusion.
- One who makes friends with *Mu’mins* to please Allah.
- One who emerges from the Mosque thinking that he would return to it again.
- One whom a beautiful woman tries to entice, but he says with Allah’s Fear that he is afraid and fearful.

O Abu Dharr! Allah said, ‘I shall not have two fears with my creatures at the same time. One who fears me in the World, I shall have him fearless in the Hereafter. The one who is not afraid of Me in the world, I shall frighten him on the Day of Judgement!’

The innumerable admonitions and advises that the Prophet (S) made to Abu Dharr have some lessons for the people. These are dealt at some length in the next chapter.

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