

# Imam Ali's Commandments for his Son Muhammad bin Hanafiyya

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In his commandment for his son Mohammed bin al-Hanafiyya, Amir ul-Mu'minin (a) said:  
O son, beware of relying on hopes, for they are the goods of the foolish. They also frustrate of getting the (means of the) life to come. It is highly fortunate to have a good friend. Sit with the people of charity and you will be one of them. Be away from those who preclude you from mentioning Allah and death by means of decorated falsities and fabricated lies and you will be discriminated from them. Do not let mistrust of Allah overcome you, for it will spoil every conciliation between your friends and you. Kindle your heart with good manners like fire when kindled with wood, for good manners are the best support to the charitable people and experiments are the best support to the intelligent. Collect the opinions of men then choose the nearest to the reward and the remotest from suspect.

O son, there is no honor higher than Islam, no generosity more glorious than God-fearing, no fortress more protective than piety, no interceder more successful than repentance, no dress fitter than good health, no defense more shielding than safety, no treasure more sufficient than satisfaction, and no wealth more dismissive of poverty than satisfaction with the sustenance. He who confines himself to the minimum necessity will have rest before others and will find himself a place in the tranquil life. Acquisitiveness is the key to the plunging into sins. Repeal the incoming grieves by means of the resolutions of patience. Accustom yourself to steadfastness, for it is the best of moralities and make yourself stand the worldly horrors and griefs that befall you.

The triumphant ones have won and those to whom Allah has already promised blessings have been saved, ... for it is a guard from poverty. In all of your affairs, rely exclusively upon Allah, the One the Omnipotent, for, if you do so, you will entrust them to a protective cavern, defending fortress, and shielding stronghold. Pray to Allah sincerely because good, evil, giving, deprivation, granting, and divestment—all are in His hand exclusively.

In the same commandment, Imam Ali (a) said:  
O son, sustenance is of two kinds - one is that which you seek and one is that which seeks you and will come to you even if you do not approach it. Do not apply the care of your year on the care of your day, for every new day will cover all your needs (of that day). If that year is decided

to be within your age, Allah will take to you all that which is decided for you every new day. If it is not, what is your business with the care and grief that are not yours? You should also know that no seeker will precede you to the sustenance that is decided for you and no one, no matter how powerful he is, will seize it against you. All that which is determined for you will not be kept against you. Many are those who fatigue themselves for seeking earnings, but their sustenance is withheld against them and many are those who are moderate (in seeking earnings), but the decrees of fate helped them (in enjoying abundant provisions). Nevertheless, everybody is subject to extinction. Today is yours, but it is uncertain that you will attain tomorrow! It often happens that an individual who begins a day cannot see its end and it often happens that an individual who is happy in the first hours of a night will shed tears in the last hours (of the same night). Do not be deceived by the long term of Allah's showering of graces and the postponement of His punishments, for He would have anticipated the punishment before (your) death if He had expected your escape.

O son, accept the sermons of the wise people and ponder over their dicta. Precede others in applying (to yourself) the matters with which you ask people to do and stop committing the matters against which you forbid others. Enjoin good and you will be one of its people, for the perfection of matters in the sight of Allah is to enjoin good and forbid evil. Learn the religious questions, for the scholars are the heirs of the prophets. The prophets did not bequeath dinars and dirhams, but they bequeathed knowledge. He who acquires knowledge is surely acquiring great goodness.

You should also know that all those who are in the heavens and the earth, including the birds in the sky and whales in the oceans, are seeking Allah's forgiveness to the seekers of knowledge. As a sign of submission, the angels low their wings for the seeker of knowledge, which achieves honor in this world and the obtainment of Paradise in the life to come, for the scholars are the callers to the paradises and the guide to Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He. Treat all people kindly as long as you want them to treat you kindly. Accept for them whatever you accept for yourself, and find ugly for yourself all that which you find ugly for others. Treat all people with good manners so that they will long for you when you are absent and will weep for you and say, 'We all are Allah's and to Him we will return,' (Inna lillah wa inna ilayhi raji'oun) when you depart this life. Do not be one of those about whom people say, 'All praise is due to Allah the Lord of the worlds,' when they depart this life.

You should also know that compliance with people's moods is the head of intelligence after believing in Allah, Powerful and Majestic is He. Those who do not associate courteously with the ones the association with whom is inescapable, until Allah makes for them a way of

salvation, are worthless. I have found that all the affairs of people's mutual association can be considered as one measure, two-thirds of which is approval and one is negligence. Wording is both the nicest and the most hideous thing that Allah has ever created. By means of wording, some faces have become white and by means of wording, some faces have become black. You should know that wording is under your control so long as you do not say it. If you say it, you will be under its control. Save your tongue in the same way as you save your gold and currencies. The tongue is as same as a mordacious dog; if you give free rein to it, it will bite others. It happens that a single word causes the removal of a grace. He who gives full rein to his tongue will be driven to every item of misfortune and scandal. Then, he will not get rid of such consequences before he becomes the subject of the detestation of Allah and the censure of people.

He who pursues his opinions exclusively is risking. He who propounds the various opinions will realize the places of errors. He who engages himself in affairs without looking in their outcomes will suffer scandalous misfortunes. Planning before acting saves against regret. The true intelligent is he who learns lessons from (others') experiments. In experiences lies resumed knowledge. The inwardness of men is realized in the vicissitudes of time. Days show you the hidden secrets.

You therefore should understand my commandment and avoid neglecting it. In fact, the best wording is the most useful.

Know, my son, that it will be inevitable for you to be returned and asked about your provisions. Hence, try to be light-burdened. Do not load your back beyond your power lest its weight becomes a mischief for you when you will be resurrected and interrogated on the Day of Resurrection. Violence against the servants – of Allah- is the worst supplies to the world to come. Know that in front of you lie pitfalls, abysses, bridges, and impassable valley; your terminating point at the other end of this passage will necessarily be either Paradise or Hell. Therefore, prepare the place before getting down. If a person is willing to borrow from you in the days of your affluence to pay it back to you at the time of your need then make use of this opportunity and borrow him as much as possible so long as you are able to do so. Put in that provision as much as you are able to, for it is likely that if you may need him (afterwards), you may not get hold of him. Beware of relying upon the impious and the distrustful in the question of loading your supplies. If you do it, you will be like the thirsty that is advancing to mirage; when he reached it, he found nothing. Hence, you will be alone without any supplies on the Day of Resurrection.

In the same commandment, Imam Ali (a) said:

O son, oppression takes to destruction. A man who appreciates himself very precisely will not fail. He who controls his passions will guard his prestige. The value of a man is what he does expertly. Learning lessons (from others) achieves good sense. The honorable wealth is to neglect hopes. Acquisitiveness is the permanent poverty. Affection is an advantageous kinship. Your friend is your full brother, but not every full brother is your friend. Do not befriend the enemy of your friend lest you become the enemy of your friend. Many are the remote ones who are closer than the nearer (kinship). A poor man who keeps good relations is better than a wealthy one who breaks his relations (with others).

Admonition is the haven of him who keeps it. He who reminds reproachfully of his favors is spoiling his favors. The mentality of the ill-mannered individuals is always bad and it would better to hate such ones. It is not fair to depend upon conjecture in issuing judgments. How ugly wickedness in situations of ingratitude is! How ugly depression in excessive hardships is! How ugly severity with the neighbors is! How ugly disagreement with the (intimate) associate is! How ugly the perjury of the men of personality is! How ugly the treachery of the powerful is!

Ingratitude is foolishness. Sitting with the foolish is evil omen. Respect the rights of everybody, whether masters or humble individuals.

He who ignores moderation will wrong. He who trespasses the right will be detained in narrow courses. Many diseased persons were cured and many healthy ones passed away. Despair may be success and greed may be destruction. Blame him whom you wish to blame. Matters of cheating are rewardless. The vilest dress of Muslims is betrayal. It is quite proper to be disloyal to the betrayers. Corruption destructs the much amount while moderation causes the small to grow.

Regard of the relatives is a sign of generosity. He who is generous will be master and he who understands (something) will seek more (knowledge about it). Offer proper advice to your friends and help them in every situation except those who lead to the acts of disobedience to Allah. Follow your friends in every situation. Do not desert your friend due to suspicion and do not leave him before you blame him. Perhaps, he has his excuse while you are blaming him. Accept the apology of everyone so that you will be included with the Intercession. Honor those who support you and increase your charity, honor, respect, and reverence to them as long as you enjoy good health. It is improper for you to disregard him who respects you or injure him who covers up your defects.

Treat your companion with kindness as much as you can, for you can gain his righteous deeds if you will. He who betakes pudency as his dress will have his defects screened from eyes. The

burdens of those who seek moderation are light. He who prevents his soul from its passion will gain his right guidance. Comfort lies with every hardship and choking is expected in every bite. No grace can be obtained unless it is preceded by harm. Be lenient with him who enraged you so that you will win your need. Times of care are times of forgiveness. Hours, however, take your age to termination. The pleasure that is followed by fire (of Hell) is worthless and every good matter that is followed by fire (of Hell) is also worthless. Likewise, the evil that produces Paradise is not evil. Any bliss other than Paradise is valueless and any misfortune other than Hell is (regarded as) good health. Do not ignore your friends' rights in reliance on your relationship, for those whose rights are ignored by you are not your true friends. Do not make the disregard of your friend control your building good relation with him and do not make his mistreatment with you control your kind act to him. O son, if you are strong, employ your strength in the fields of acts of obedience to Allah, and if you are weak, employ your weakness to avoid the acts of disobedience to Him. If you can deprive women of the possession of matters other than the personal, then you should do it, for this is better for achieving prosperous and peaceful life and permanent beauty with them. A woman is a flower, not an administrator. To enjoy tranquil life with a woman, treat her so kindly. Stand the satisfaction with the acts of Allah. If you want to have the good of this life and the life to come altogether, you should drive yourself to despair of all that which is in people's possession.

Peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you.

.That has been the commandment of Amir ul-Mu'minin for Mohammed bin al-Hanafiyya

**Source: Al-Mawaaizh, Shaykh Saduq**