

Imam Sajjad's Book on Asceticism

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And with the first chain of narration from Ali b. Mahzyar, from al-Hasan b. Mahboob, from Malik b. Atiyya, from Abu Hamza al-Thumali, who said: "I had not heard of anyone more pious and ascetic than Ali b. al-Husain, peace be upon him, till I learnt about Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be upon him."

Then Abu Hamza said: "Whenever Ali b. al-Husain, peace be upon him, spoke about piety and asceticism and admonished people, he made all those present weep."

Abu Hamza said: "I read a page which contained Ali b. al-Husain's admonition on piety and asceticism, so I copied from it and brought it before him. He recognized it and confirmed its content. It said: In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful.

"May Allah be sufficient for us and you to thwart the evil planning of the oppressors, the rancour of the jealous and the power of the tyrants. O believers, your main affliction is from the insolents who love this world, are grossly inclined towards it and are tempted by it. They fall for it and for that which will soon become lifeless chaff and dead straw tomorrow. So be aware of what Allah has cautioned you from, and detach yourselves from things Allah has enjoined you to remain aloof; and do not incline to worldly things like the one who has taken it as permanent abode or native place.

And by Allah, the mundane has enough warning pointers for you, to its (wilting) flourish, to its changing times, to its revolutionary changes and to its exemplary punishments; and to the way it plays with its people. Surely, it raises the lowly and cuts down the noble ones, and it will despatch to hellfire many nations tomorrow. In this, indeed, is a lesson to draw and a test and a deterrent for the one who is cautious.

Surely, the hearts (and minds) are prevented from awakening (to the truth) by the events which occur to you every day and night, like the misleading trials, the unprecedented events, the rampant inequities, the disasters wrought in every age and era; the fear of the ruling powers and the whispers of the devils. They distract them from the existing (divine) guidance and the recognition of the Truth; except a few who Allah has saved.

And none can understand and appraise the influence of those days, its capriciousness and the harmful end of its temptation, except those who have been saved by Allah; those who have walked the path of right guidance, progressing on the way of temperance, seeking help from Him through abstinence and renunciation. Such a person persistently ponders, draws lessons

from the happenings and is so deterred; remains unattended to the fleeting allurements of the world and its delectations. He is inclined towards the permanent bliss of the next abode (i.e. hereafter) and works hard for it. He is ever watchful about death and finds life in the company of the tyrants most loathsome.

And then he is able to see the world with the sharp, penetrating eyes, appraising and perceiving the trials and tribulations, the misleading new events, the darkness of the tyrannical powers. And by my soul, you have had enough experience from the dark tyrannical order of the bygone days to guide you to disassociating from the despots, from the partisans of innovations and torment and from those who unjustly spread corruption on the earth. So seek help from Allah; return to His obedience and to the obedience of those who deserve best to be followed and obeyed.

So, take your precautions before (the day of) remorse and distress dawns and before you are in presence of Allah, standing before Him! By Allah, whenever a nation proceeded from divine disobedience, it always ended up in His chastisement; and whenever a nation preferred this world over the hereafter, evil has been their road and evil has been their final abode!

And Knowledge about Allah and acting in obedience to Him are nothing but the intimate couple. So, whoever knows Allah, fears Him and that fear prompts him to act obediently. Surely, the people of (that) knowledge and their followers have recognized Him, acted for Him and have remained inclined towards Him; and thus, Allah says (in the Qur'an): 'Surely, those of His servants who have knowledge fear Allah alone.' (Ch.35: V.28) Do not solicit anything of this world in a sinful manner (or by transgressing the law of Allah) and engage yourselves in the world His way. So, take the advantage of its days and work hard in it to gain salvation tomorrow. Indeed, that is the least which is required of a true follower, nearest to the excuse (should he lapse) and most hopeful for salvation.

Therefore, in all your affairs, put forward the command of Allah, His obedience and of those whose obedience He has made obligatory. And do not put forward the affairs brought upon you by the despots in the form of the worldly temptation of this world, before the commands of Allah, His obedience and the obedience of those who have divine authority upon you.

Know you all that all of us are slaves of Allah; and He, the Master Judge, will judge us tomorrow. Before Him, you will be ranged and asked; so prepare for the answer before the halt, the interrogation and before presentation to the Lord of all the worlds. 'On that Day, no souls shall speak except by His leave.' (Ch.11:V.105).

And know you that on that Day, Allah will not confirm the liars, nor will He belie the truthful. And He will not reject the justifiable excuse, nor will He excuse the wilful sinner. Rather, He will

have the conclusive authority over His creatures for having sent His messengers and their successors. So, O slaves of Allah, be mindful of your duties to Allah (and fear him); meet Him with your reformed selves, in obedience unto Him and unto those who He made you follow. Lest there be one who repents (on the day) for having neglected his duties to Allah, or having wasted the rights of Allah! So, seek forgiveness from Allah and return unto Him! Indeed, He accepts repentance and forgives the sins and knows all that you do. Do not ever be in the company of the sinners, nor helpful to the oppressors, nor close to the transgressors. Be careful of their temptations and remain at a distance from their spheres. And know you all that he who opposes the righteous slaves of Allah and adopts a way other than His religion, and doggedly follows his own whims in the face of the guidance given by the righteous slaves of Allah, such a man is (already) in the bursting flame of fire, which eats up the bodies which have lost their souls, overwhelmed by their adversities. They are dead, insensitive to the heat of fire! So, take warning those who have eyes to see! And praise Allah with gratitude for having guided you. And know that you cannot get out of domain of His power to any other! Allah shall soon see your deeds and then you will be gathered to Him. So, take the benefit of the admonition and adopt the ways of the virtuous."

The Dua invoked by Imam Zainul Abedeen (A.S.)

He said: Abul Hasan Ahmad b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. al-Walid reported to me from his father, who reported from Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Saffar, from Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Isa, from Harun b. Muslim from Mas'adah b. Sadaqah who said: I requested Abu Abdillah Ja'far b. Muhammad, peace be upon him to teach me prayers which I should invoke in crucial moments. He brought forth for me some pages from an old book and said: "Make a copy of what is in there, for it is a prayer of my grandfather, Ali b. al-Husain, Zainul Abedeen, may peace be upon him, for crucial moments." So I copied it down and whenever I felt distressed or landed in crisis, I invoked that prayer. Allah relieved me of my worry and removed my sorrow and affliction and granted my need. It is:-

"O Allah! You guided me, but I was diverted by delusion,
You admonished me, but my heart was hardened,
You blessed me with the best, but I transgressed,
You taught but I persisted in ignorance,
Then I realized and sought forgiveness and You pardoned,
Then I repeated the sin, and You covered it.
So, all praise and thanks to You, O my Lord!

I have rushed into the valleys of my destruction
and I have paved the ways to my ruin,
So, in it, I am exposed to Your wrath,
and by entering there, to Your chastisement.
And my only means to Your pleasure is my faith in Your Oneness.
And that I never associate any partner to You,
nor did I adopt any god beside You,
I flee unto You from my self,
and unto You do the sinners flee!
And You are the refuge for one who has ruined his fortune!
So all praise and thanks are to You, O my Lord!
How, many enemies had unsheathed their swords
of hostility against me, and sharpened their blades for me?
And mixed potions with deadly poisons to kill me,
and whetted for me its keen edge.
Aiming at me his unfailing arrows!
The enemy's vigilant eyes never ceases to watch me,
hiding in his bosom his willful desire to harm me,
and to feed me with the distasteful potion!
But you saw my weakness against the unbearable adversity,
and my inability to defend against the one who intended to fight me,
and my loneliness in the midst of numerous adversaries,
who had planned such misery against me, of which I had not imagined!
So, You initiated with Your help,
and You affirmed my strength with Your power.
Then You blunted his sharp blade and made him alone
in spite of the multitude.
And You raised me above him,
Then You caused his own plan to turn against him,
You repelled him, but that did not quench his thirst for revenge,
nor did it dampen the heat of his anger!
He bit his hands and retreated, alone and deserted.
And many a despot wronged me with his intrigue,
setting up for me the traps to catch his victims,

and appointing agents to investigate and watch me,
hiding himself the way wild animals hide for their prey,
waiting patiently for an opportunity to pounce.
Then I called upon You, O my Lord, appealing for Your help,
with certainty about Your quick response,
and the knowledge that whoever seeks refuge under Your
shelter, will not be wronged;
and whoever seeks refuge in Your bastions
will have no fear.

So You fortified me with Your might, against his evil.
And many an evil cloud You have dispersed,
and many an overwhelming suffering You have relieved,
You are not questioned about Your acts!
But You were asked and You granted,
and (even if) You were not asked, You initiated!
And Your bounty was sought and You never turned it down.

You have ordained nothing but good,
while I have persisted in breaking through Your injunctions,
trespassing the limits set by You and being heedless to Your
warning!

So all praise and thanks to You, O my Lord, the Mighty,
Who cannot be overcome and, the Patient Who has no hurry.
This indeed is the place for one to confess one's default,
and to testify against oneself its ruination.

O Allah! I seek nearness to You through the
Elevated stature of Muhammad,
And I turn my face sincerely unto You, through the
shining brightness of Ali,
Grant me refuge from evil of that You have created,
and from evil of the one who has ill intentions against me,
For that does not straiten Your might,
and does not make it difficult for You in Your power.
And You have power over all things.

O Allah! bestow upon me Your grace by enabling me to

avoid all sins, for as long as You allow me to live!
And have mercy on me by warding off such burden
from me, which do not benefit me!
And bless me with an insight into such acts which please You,
and let my heart guard Your Book, just as You have
taught it to me, and make me recite it the way You may
be pleased with me.
Let the Book give light to my eyes and let my ears hear
it attentively.
And open up my chest by the Book and gladden by it my heart,
and grant me free speech by it, use my body in its service,
and grant me from Your might and power that which would
make it easy for me to do so.
Surely, there is no might or power except by You.
O Allah! let my night and day, my life and hereafter,
my return and my abode, be free from all ills and
evils, coupled with pardon and blessings from You.
O Allah! You are my Sustainer, my Lord, my Master, my Hope,
my God, my Succour, my Support, my Creator, my Helper, my Trustee and my Expectation.
My life and my death is for You,
And so is my ear and eye!
My sustenance is from You,
and all my affairs of this world and hereafter repair to You!
You owned me by Your Might
and controlled me with Your authority,
You only have the power in all my affairs,
My forelock is in Your hands,
None can intervene without Your consent.
Because of Your compassion, I hope for Your mercy,
And through Your mercy I hope for Your pleasure,
And I do not expect that because of my deeds,
For my deeds have frustrated me, how can I expect
from that which has frustrated me?
I raise my complain to You about my poverty,

my weakness, my excesses, and all that comes about
from me and about all that You know more than I do,
So be my sufficient guard in all of them.

O Allah! make me among the companions of Your beloved Muhammad and Your friend
Ibrahim;

And group me among those who are in peace
and security on the Day of great fear, so grant me security;

And bless me with Your glad tidings

And grant me shelter under Your dense shade

And save me from the chastisement of hellfire,

And do not subject me to evil nor to disgrace,

And deliver me from the temptations herein,

and accept my plea on the Day of Judgement,

and remind me of Your remembrance

and smooth my way for ease,

and keep me away from hardship,

and inspire me to pray and to pay alms as long as I live,

and help me in worshipping You,

and make me serve in the way of knowledge

and Your pleasure, and sustain me from Your beneficence,

and brighten my face on the Day of Judgement,

and grant me a lenient reckoning,

and do not put me to shame because of my ugly acts;

and guide me with Your guidance and make me hold firm to the Truth in this life and in the
hereafter.

And endear to me that which You like

and make me abhor that which You dislike,

And be sufficient for me in all my worries, in this life and hereafter, and bless my prayers, my

fasts, my supplications, my

sacrifice, my gratitude, my life here and in the next world;

and promote me to the chosen position,

And appoint me for me a strong helper;

And forgive my transgression, my ignorance and my

intemperance against my own soul.

And redeem me from the trials of life and death,
and save me from all abominations, open or hidden;
And group me on the Day of Judgement among Your friends,
and give permanence to all Your endowments conferred upon me, and grant me satisfaction
from things which are lawful,
and make good things sufficient for me, rather than the bad ones.

And turn to me with Your graceful Face,
and do not turn it away from me!

And guide me unto Your straight path
and help me do things You like and approve.

O Allah! I seek refuge in You from doing or saying things
so as to attract admiration from others, and from
grandeur, glorification, conceit, pride and haughtiness
and from wantonness, vanity, self-esteem and arrogance,

So, O my Sustainer! save me from those,
And I seek refuge in You from incompetence and miserliness
and from avarice, jealousy, rivalry and fraud

And I seek refuge in You from greed, impurity, restlessness,
anxiety, corruption, wickedness and transgression.

And I seek refuge in You from dishonesty, hostility and despotism.

O my Sustainer! I seek refuge in You from the sins,
from breaking off the blood relations, from evils vulgarity
and misdeeds.

And I seek refuge in You from iniquities and sins,
from things forbidden and made unlawful, from bad things
and from all that does not please You.

And O my Sustainer! I seek refuge in You from the
evil of the Satan and his plans, his wrongs, his oppression,
his enmity, his snare, his patrons and his army.

And I seek refuge in You from the evil of all Your
creation; the animals, the pests or Jinn and humanbeings
and all that moves; and I seek Your protection from the evil of all that descends from the
heaven, and all that ascends to it; and from the evil of all that is created in the earth, and that
which grows from it;

And I seek refuge with You from every soothsayer, sorcerer and swindler; and also from those
who (cheat and) blow into knotted reeds (for curses).
O my Sustainer, I seek refuge with You from the evil of every envious person, and from tyrant,
oppressor, (ill-intentioned) rival, despot, transgressor and wrongful person;
And I flee unto You from blindness, deafness, dumbness, leprosy and from doubt and distrust;
and I seek Your protection from sluggishness, from losing courage, inadequacy, remissness,
(unnecessary) haste; and from being wasteful, negligent and procrastinating;
And I seek Your refuge from the evil of all that You have created in the heavens and the earth
and all that is between them, and all that is under the earth.
O my Sustainer, I seek refuge with You from penury, (unfulfilled) want, privation, and from
begging (from others) and being deprived or becoming a pauper;
And I seek Your protection from paucity and humiliation;
And I seek refuge with You from straitened circumstances, and hardships and from being
confined or imprisoned, from being shackled or incarcerated, and from all such adversities and
calamities with which I can put up. Amin, O Sustainer of the worlds.
O Allah, grant us all that we have asked for, and add to it with Your favour, measuring up with
Your Mightiness and Greatness. (I ask) in Your name; there is no god but Allah, the Mighty and
Wise.

Admonition from Imam Ali b. al-Husain (A.S.)

He said: Abul Hasan Ahmad b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. al-Waleed al-Qummi, may Allah
bless him with mercy, reported to me from his father, from Sa'd b. Abdillah, from Ahmad b.
Muhammad b. Isa from al-Hasan b. Mahboob, from Malik b. Atiyyah, from Abu Hamza al-
Thumali, who reported that:
Ali b. al-Husain, peace be upon him, used to say: "O son of Adam! You will always be your best
as long as you have an admonishing inner self; and as long as you are anxious to take your
own account; and as long as the fear of Allah is your norm, and sorrow (over your lapses) is
your garment. O son of Adam! Surely, you will die one day, and you will be resurrected and
".made to stand before Allah, Most High, and be questioned. So prepare an answer