

(.The Holy Prophet's Counsel to Imam Ali (A.S

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بِالسَّنَدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ إِلَى أَفْضَلِ الْمُحَدِّثِينَ وَأَقْدَمِهِمْ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ رِضْوَانُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ عِيسَى، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الثُّعْمَانِ، عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ عَمَّارٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَقُولُ: كَانَ فِي وَصِيَّةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لِعَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَنْ قَالَ: يَا عَلِيُّ، أُوصِيكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ بِخَصَالٍ فَاحْفَظْهَا عَنِّي. ثُمَّ قَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنَهُ، أَمَّا الْأُولَى فَالصَّدْقُ، وَلَا تَخْرُجَنَّ مِنْ فِيكَ كَذِبَةٌ أَبَدًا. وَالثَّانِيَةُ الْوَرَعُ، وَلَا تَجْتَرِئْ عَلَى خِيَانَةٍ أَبَدًا. وَالثَّلَاثَةُ الْخَوْفُ مِنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ ذِكْرُهُ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ. وَالرَّابِعَةُ كَثْرَةُ الْبُكَاءِ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ يُبْنِي لَكَ بِكُلِّ دَمْعَةٍ أَلْفَ بَيْتٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ. وَالْخَامِسَةُ بِذَلِكَ مَالِكَ وَدَمَكَ دُونَ دِينِكَ. وَالسَّادِسَةُ الْأَخْذُ بِسُنَّتِي فِي صَلَاتِي وَصُومِي وَصَدَقَتِي. أَمَّا الصَّلَاةُ فَالْخَمْسُونَ رَكْعَةً، وَأَمَّا الصَّيَامُ فَثَلَاثَةُ أَيَّامٍ فِي الشَّهْرِ؛ الْخَمِيسُ فِي أَوَّلِهِ وَالْأَرْبَعَاءُ فِي وَسْطِهِ وَالْخَمِيسُ فِي آخِرِهِ، وَأَمَّا الصَّدَقَةُ فَجُهِدْكَ حَتَّى تَقُولَ: قَدْ أَسْرَفْتُ، وَلَمْ تُسْرِفْ. وَعَلَيْكَ بِصَلَاةِ اللَّيْلِ، وَعَلَيْكَ بِصَلَاةِ اللَّيْلِ، وَعَلَيْكَ بِصَلَاةِ اللَّيْلِ، وَعَلَيْكَ بِصَلَاةِ الرَّوَالِ، وَعَلَيْكَ بِصَلَاةِ الرَّوَالِ، وَعَلَيْكَ بِتِلَاوَةِ الْقُرْآنِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ، وَعَلَيْكَ بِرَفْعِ يَدَيْكَ فِي صَلَاتِكَ وَتَقْلِيْبِهِمَا. وَعَلَيْكَ بِالسَّوَالِ عِنْدَ كُلِّ وُضُوءٍ. وَعَلَيْكَ بِمَحَاسِنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ فَارْكَبْهَا، وَمَسَاوِي الْأَخْلَاقِ فَاجْتَنِبْهَا. فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَلَا تَلُومَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ.

With my continuous chain of transmission reaching up to the best of the traditionists and the foremost of them, Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from Muhammad ibn Yahya, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from 'Ali ibn al-Nu'man, from Mu'awiyah ibn 'Ammar, who says, "I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (A) say: In a counsel that the Prophet (S) gave to 'Ali (A), he said, "O 'Ali, I exhort you concerning certain characteristics (khisal) which you must preserve in yourself (as a trust) from me." Then he prayed, "O God, help him." (Then he continued) "As to the first of them, it is truthfulness: never should a falsehood come out of your mouth. The second is piety (wara'), and never venture upon a treachery. The third is to fear God-sublime is His remembrance-as if you see Him. The fourth is to weep a lot out of the fear of God, the Exalted, and a thousand mansions shall be built for you in the Garden for every tear. The fifth is to offer your property and your blood for the sake of your religion. The sixth is to follow my sunnah in respect of my salat, my fasting, and my charity (sadaqah). As to the salat, it consists of fifty rak'ahs. As to the fasts, they are to be kept on three days in a month: on the first Thursday, on the Wednesday at its middle, and on the last Thursday. As to the charity, that consists of the utmost that you can give, so much so that you say to yourself, 'I have been immoderate,' whereas you will not have been immoderate. ""Commit yourself to the nightly prayer (salat al-layl)! Commit yourself to the nightly prayer! Commit yourself to the nightly

prayer! Stick to the (supererogatory) noon prayer! Stick to the noon prayer! Stick to the noon prayer! Accustom yourself to reciting the Qur'an at all times. Make it your practice to raise your hands during prayer and to turn them. Take care to brush your teeth every time that you perform wudu." Commit yourself to ethical virtues, practice them, and refrain from moral vices, and if you don't, don't blame anyone except yourself."

Khisal is the plural of khaslah, meaning khui (i.e. trait, characteristic, disposition) as mentioned in the Surah. Accordingly, its usage to denote the generality of dispositions as well as acts, as in this noble tradition and other places, is a figurative one. Or, perhaps, khaslah has a wider meaning than trait, in which case this kind of usage will be a literal one.

As to the word al-wara' (with fathah on the ra'), which occurs in the narration of the Imam (A) that and ri'ah are verbal nouns of wari'a and yari'u (with kasrah on ra' in both the cases) meaning God-fearing (taqwa) or intensity of God-fearing and piety. Probably it is derived from [I restrained it], for wara' is, in reality, restraining of the soul and] ورعته توريعاً meaning كففته making it refrain from transgressing the limits of the Shari'ah and reason.

Or, it might have been derived from warra'a in the sense of radda (meaning dissuasion). Thus, i.e. 'I turned back (radadtuhu) the camel from water. That is وَرَعْتُ الْإِبِلَ عَنِ الْمَاءِ it is said because, in wara', one dissuades the soul from what it covets and seeks to indulge in.

and means temerity, daring, and إفتعال it pertains to the verbal form لا تجترئ (As to his words (A) boldness of action in matters. Al-Sihah, quoting Abu Zayd, states الجراءة مثال. الجرأة: الشجاعة. Also, it is mentioned in al-Sihah that الجرئ: المقدام.

with dammah or fathah on the الجهد (in the statement of the Imam (A) فَجْهْدُكَ As to the word when one أجهدها وأجهدها It is said jim, (الطاقة والمشقة). It means strength and hardship makes one's mount run with all its power. Jahd is also used in the sense of effort and exertion and this meaning seems [more] more appropriate for this tradition.

is an ism al-fi'l (verbal noun) which is used عَلَيْكَ بِصَلَاةِ اللَّيْلِ, here عَلَيْكَ (As to his statement (A) i.e. 'Look) أَلْزَمُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ means عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ. in the sense of a transitive verb or as its substitute is for the sake of stress and emphasis and (بصلاة after your own souls') Accordingly this ba' (in not for making the verb transitive.

استمسك In the Majma' al-bahrayn it is stated that if the ba' be transitive it gives the sense of i.e. stick to). This kind of expression does not exist in Persian, and in Arabic it is used for) intensive emphasis upon a certain matter. Probably, a close Persian expression for it would does not accord به فلان کار. However, its translation as something like بر تو باد به فلان with common usage. God willing, we will expound the relevant themes of the tradition in the .course of a preface and several sections

Preface

In this noble tradition, there are several aspects which reveal that these exhortations made by the Noble Messenger (S) to the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A), were very important in his blessed eyes. One of them is that these were addressed to the Commander of the Faithful (A) though that master stood above any possibility of negligence in regard to the laws of the Shari'ah and Divine commandments.

However, since the matter was itself of supreme significance in the blessed eyes of the Noble Messenger of Allah (S) he did not refrain from exhorting him, and it is quite usual to find him exhorting someone concerning a matter that he considers as important and is concerned about, though he may know that that person will carry it out without fail.

As to the possibility that this counsel given to that holy personage was really aimed at others, i.e. 'I tell you in order that) إِيَّاكَ أَعْنِي وَاسْمَعِي يَا جَارَةً (being of the kind referred to in the proverb the neighbor may hear'), such a possibility is remote. That is because the very context of the tradition bears witness that it was addressed to him and aimed independently at that holy in yourself) and the order to cherish and) فِي نَفْسِكَ personage, as indicated by the words safeguard them, as yell as the invocation for Divine assistance.

These kind of exhortations were customary amongst the Ahl al-Bayt and it was usual for the Infallible Imams (A) to make them to one another. The very context of every one of these exhortations clearly shows that they were addressed by those holy personages to one another. Hence, in one of these counsels the Commander of the Faithful (A)says to Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (A): "This is my counsel to the two of you and the other members of my household, as well as anyone whom this letter of mine should reach..."

It is clear that the Hasanayn (A) were included in this counsel and these exhortations reveal the supreme importance of the matter and the intensity of the love that those holy personages had for one another. In fine, the very fact that the Commander of the Faithful (A) should be the addressee of these exhortations reveals the great importance of the matter.

Another point is that although it was addressed to Hadrat Amir (i.e. Imam 'Ali), who would never have done anything against the Messenger's exhortations or treated them with laxity or negligence, the Prophet considered it essential to stress the matter with such a great force.

Another point is that after saying "I exhort you," he added, "you must safeguard them as a trust from me" in order to bring to his attention the importance of these exhortations. Thereafter, on account of his desire that Hadrat Amir should fulfill these important duties, he supplicated saying, "O God, help him." In addition, there are other scattered points of stress in a number of the use of repetition, and لا يَخْرُجَنَّ), the sentences, as indicated by the nun of emphasis (as in

so on, which need not be mentioned. All this shows the importance of these matters. Of course, it is obvious that the Prophet's sacred personage had no imaginable self-interest in any of these matters and his sole concern was to benefit his addressee. And although Hadrat Amir (A), was the one to whom these exhortations were originally addressed, but since these duties are of a universal nature, we should do our utmost so that the exhortations of the Messenger of God (S) do not go unheeded. We should know that the greatness of the love that the Noble Messenger (S) had for Hadrat Amir (A) requires that there be a very great benefit in these matters and that they be so much important that he should have mentioned them in this manner. And God knows best

The Evils Of Lying

One of the exhortations of the Noble Messenger (S) enjoins truthfulness and requires abstention from falsehood. The fact that it is mentioned foremost amongst his exhortations shows that its importance was greater in his venerable opinion than all the other things. We shall mention the evils of lying before the benefits and virtues of truthfulness. Hence, know that this vice is one about whose ugly and vicious character there is agreement between reason and revelation. In itself, it is one of the major sins and indecencies, as indicated by many traditions. Moreover, at times it leads to other vices whose ugliness and viciousness is no lesser than this fatal sin. Sometimes it happens that due to the discovery of a single lie a man so loses his credibility in the eyes of the people that its loss cannot be compensated for until the end of his life. God forbid that one should ever become known for being a liar, for; perhaps, there is nothing that can do a greater injury to one's reputation.

In addition to this, the religious harms and otherworldly punishments associated with it are also numerous. Here we will confine ourselves to mentioning some of the noble traditions relating to this topic and refrain from undue elaboration, for the matter is of a clear and well-known character.

In al-Wasa'il, it is narrated from Muhammad ibn Ya'qub, who reports with his isnad from Abu Ja'far (Imam al-Baqir) (A) that he said, "Verily, God, Almighty and Glorious, has assigned certain locks for evil and made wine the key to these locks. Yet falsehood is more evil than wine."

Now reflect a little on this sacred tradition, whose source is the Learned One of the Prophet's Household ('Alim Al Muhammad) and which is recorded in a book which serves as a source book for all the ulama of the Ummah (R) and which is accepted by all of them, and see if there remains any room for any excuse. Can a lax attitude in regard to lying have any cause other

than weakness of faith in the traditions of the infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A)? We do not know the Hidden forms of our deeds and are unaware of the spiritual links between the realms of mulk and malakut. As a result, we regard this kind of traditions as far-fetched and consider those like them as overstatements. This is itself an erroneous approach arising from nescience and feeble faith. If, supposedly, we consider this noble tradition as an hyperbole, shouldn't there be some grounds for the exaggeration to be proper to the occasion? Can it be said of anything that it is worse than wine? Isn't it that the evil of that thing should be so great that one may hyperbolize it by stating that it is worse than wine?

Hadrat Baqir al-'Ulum, i.e. Imam al-Baqir (A), said, "Lying is the ruin of faith." Truly, such traditions as this make one's heart tremble and give one cold feet. I think lying is one of those behavioral vices, which are so prevalent that their ugliness has totally disappeared. We only become aware [of its evil character] at a time when we wake up to find our faith, which is the most vital asset of the life of the Hereafter, forfeited as a result of this fatal sin without our knowing it.

It has been narrated from the Eighth Imam (A) that he said, "The Seal of the Prophets was asked if a believer could possibly be cowardly and timid. 'Yes,' he replied. Then they asked him if he could be stingy. 'Yes,' he said. 'Can a lie be a liar?' they asked him. 'No!' came the Prophet's reply."

It has been narrated from the Truthful of the Sect (Saduq al-Ta'fah, i.e. al-Shaykh al-Saduq) that he said, "Amongst the sayings of the Messenger of God is the statement: Lying exceeds usury [in its evil]."

Such is the matter, whereas the severity of the banality of usury has been so much emphasized as to make one amazed.

Of the things that one should note is that telling an untruth even in jest and for humor's sake has been considered lying and regarded with severity. The ulama have also prohibited it in their fatwas. Thus, the author of al-Wasa'il (M) has given the following title to a chapter [in his compilation] - a title that accords with his fatwa: "Chapter on the prohibition of lying, in small and big matters, in serious talk and in jest, to the exclusion of what has been excepted."

In the noble al-Kafi, it is reported through a chain of transmission reaching up to Imam al-Baqir (A) that he said, " 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (A) used to tell his sons: 'Refrain from falsehood in your speech, whether it is a small or big matter, whether it is said in serious talk or in jest. That is because lying in trivial matters produces the temerity to lie in big matters. Don't you know that the Messenger of Allah (S) said, "There is a servant of God who so perseveres in truthfulness that God writes his name amongst the truthful ones, and there is a servant who makes lying his

wont until God, the Exalted, styles him a liar?"

Again al-Kafi reports with its isnad reaching up to the venerated Asbagh ibn Nubatah that he said: The Commander of the Faithful (A) said, "One does not taste the flavor of faith until he refrains from lying, in serious speech and in jest."

In a counsel given by the Noble Messenger (S) to Hadrat Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, the Prophet is reported to have said: O Abu Dharr, woe to the man who tells lies in order to make other people laugh. Woe to him! Woe to him!

Now, with all these traditions and severe warnings of the Messenger of God and the Imams of guidance (A), it needs great audacity and wretchedness for one to perpetrate this enormity and commit this serious vice.

In the same way as lying has been considered as one of the most serious vices, truthfulness of speech has been commended as one of the most significant of virtues. It has been highly praised in the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt, and here we will confine ourselves to mentioning some of them: Muhammad ibn Ya'qub reports with his isnad from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said, "Call people to righteousness through means other than your tongues, that they may observe diligence, truthfulness and piety in you."

The venerated Saduq reports with his isnad from the Messenger of God (S) that he said, "The nearest of you to me on the Day of Resurrection and the worthiest of my intercession will be the one who is the most truthful amongst you, the most reliable amongst you in regard to his trusts, the most genial of you in disposition, and the closest amongst you to the common people."

The Meaning Of Wara' And Its Levels

Wara' has been reckoned as one of the stages of the wayfarer's journey. In accordance with the definition of it given by the well-known gnostic, the venerable Khwajah 'Abd Allah Ansari, it is: It means that wara' is the utmost of restraint and the ultimate of self-vigilance accompanied with the fear of stumbling; or it means subjecting the soul to a rigorous discipline for the sake of God's glorification. And this includes all its levels, because there are many degrees of wara. Thus the wara' of the common people consists of abstaining from major sins, whereas the wara' of the elect (khassah) consists of refraining from suspect things for the fear of falling into what is unlawful (muharramat), as indicated by the noble hadith al-tathlith.

The wara' of the zahid (ascetic) consists of abstaining from lawful things for the sake of avoiding the burden (of answerability) that they entail. The wara' of the wayfarers of the path of gnosis is abstaining from beholding the world for the sake of attaining to the stations

(maqamat). The wara' of those captivated by the Divine Being (majdhubun) is to relinquish the stations for reaching the Threshold of Allah and witnessing His Beauty. The wara' of the awliya' is to refrain from paying attention to ends (ghayat). Each of these has an elaborate description, engaging wherein is not beneficial for our state.

However, that which we should know in this connection is that the exercising of wara' or piety in relation to what Allah has made unlawful (haram) is the root of all spiritual excellences and Hereafterly stations, and none can attain any station whatsoever except by abstaining from the muharramat.

A heart that does not possess this wara' becomes so covered with rust and obfuscations that there ceases to be any hope of its deliverance. The purity of the souls and their burnish comes through wara'. This is the most important of the stages for the common people, and reaching it is one of the most essential goals of the wayfarer of the path of the Hereafter. Its excellence, as described in the traditions of the infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A) is more than what can be mentioned in these pages. We will confine ourselves to mentioning some of these traditions, and anyone seeking further details should refer to the compilations of hadith.

In al-Kafi of, al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said, "I exhort you concerning God-fearing, wara', and diligence in worship, and know that a diligence that is devoid of wara' is of no benefit."

There are still other traditions containing this theme. They indicate that a worship that is devoid of wara' is devoid of worth. It is obvious that the main purpose of the acts of worship is self-discipline and restraint, and its aim is the domination of malakut over the realm of mulk and physical nature, which cannot be perfectly realized without intense wara' and piety.

The souls, which are afflicted with sinfulness and disobedience to God are unreceptive to the spiritual forms. Any effort to impress these forms on the tablet of the soul is futile unless the tablet's surface is first cleared from the obfuscations of rust. Thus worship, which is the form of the perfection of the soul, remains futile without purifying the soul from the rust of sinfulness. Without the soul's burnish, it remains an empty form devoid of meaning, and a body without spirit.

Yazid ibn Khalifah says: Abu 'Abd Allah (A) sermoned us, exhorting and directing us to adopt zuhd. Then he said, "Commit yourselves to wara', for, verily, that which is with God cannot be attained by anything except wara'."

Thus, in accordance with this sacred tradition a man who is devoid of wara' is deprived from the bounties that God, the Exalted, has promised His servants, and this is the height of wretchedness and failure.

The following tradition is reported with isnad from Imam al-Baqir (A): The Imam said, "Our wilayah cannot be attained except with works (of righteousness) and piety." In another tradition, Imam al-Sadiq (A) says: "One who lives in a city of a hundred thousand wherein there are other people more pious than him, such a one is not one of our followers (shi'ah)."

The same assertion is made in a tradition recorded in the noble al-Kafi. It should be known that, in accordance with the noble traditions, the criterion of perfection in wara' is abstention from that which has been forbidden by God, and anyone who refrains from what God has made unlawful is considered the most pious of men. So do not let Satan make this matter appear as greatly difficult in your eyes, and make you despairing and despondent. For it is the habit of that accursed one to lead man into everlasting wretchedness by the way of despair.

For instance, in this regard he will tell you: "How is it possible to the most pious person in a city of hundred thousand people or more?" This is one of the tricks of that damned creature and the insinuations of the carnal ego. The answer to this is that, in accordance with the traditions, everyone who refrains from what God has decreed as unlawful stands in the ranks of the most pious of men referred to in these traditions. Refraining from the Divine muharramat is not a very difficult task. Rather, with a measure of spiritual training and practical effort one can avoid all the muharramat.

Of course, if one desires to be one of the felicitous and one of those who attain salvation, and if one aspires for the protection of the wilayah of the Ahl al-Bayt and the mercy of God, the Exalted, without possessing at least this much of forbearance in regard to sin, that cannot be. .Certainly, a measure of resistance, forbearance, and austerity is essential

The Evils Of Treachery And The Meaning Of Trustworthiness

There is a point here that needs some elucidation, which is that the Noble Messenger (S) refers to the avoidance of betrayal of trust as a matter subsidiary to his exhortation regarding wara'. That, despite the fact that wara' relates to the generality of muharramat or, as said, is something still more inclusive. Hence 'treachery' here must either be taken in a wider sense corresponding to wara', than the customary sense of it, in which case it would include the generality of sins and perpetration of anything that is an obstacle in the Godward wayfaring and which amounts to a betrayal of trust. That is because the Divine duties are Divine trusts, as pointed out in this noble verse: We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it; and man carried it. Surely, he is

unjust, ignorant. (33:72)

Some exegetes have interpreted [the 'Trust' in this verse] as the Divine duties. Rather, all the bodily members, organs, and faculties are God's trusts and their use in a manner contrary to God's good pleasure is a betrayal of trust. Similarly, turning the heart's attention to anything other than God is a treachery: This soul that the Friend had lent to Hafiz as a trust, I'll restore to

Him one day when I see His face.

Or, what is meant by 'treachery' here is its usual sense, and that it has been singled out here for mention due to its great importance, as if the totality of wara' lay in refraining from betrayal of trust. If one were to make a study of the traditions of the Infallible Ones (A) concerning the delivery of trust and abstention from treachery, one would understand how important this

matter is in the view of the Holy Lawgiver.

Moreover, its innate viciousness is not hidden from any sensible person. The perfidious person is to be reckoned as standing outside the fold of humanity and counted among the vilest of devils. It is obvious that if someone becomes notorious among the people for his treacherous

and villainous character, his life will be greatly miserable in this world itself.

Mankind can lead a prosperous life in this world only through mutual help and cooperation. It is not feasible for anyone to lead an isolated existence, which is possible only if he leaves the society of men to join the fold of wild beasts. The great wheel of social life revolves on the axis of mutual confidence amongst the people. If, God forbid, mutual confidence were to depart from the life of mankind, it would not be possible for them to lead a satisfactory life. The great

pillar of mutual confidence rests on trustworthiness and abstention from treachery.

Hence, the treacherous person does not enjoy the confidence of others and is an outcast from civil life and the membership of human society. His membership is not accepted in the walks of civic existence and such a person, obviously, lives a life of hardship and misery. In order that the benefit of this section be complete, we shall cite some traditions of the infallible Ahl al-

Bayt concerning this theme, and these suffice wakeful hearts and open eyes.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub (al-Kulayni) narrates with his isnad from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said, "Don't look at the protracted kneelings and prostrations of a man, for that is something which he does out of habit and would be upset if he were to neglect them. But look at the truthfulness of his speech and his fulfillment of trusts.

(Al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Abu Kahmas that he said: I said to Abu 'Abd Allah (A): "Abd Allah ibn Abi Ya'fur conveys his salam to you." The Imam replied: "May peace be upon you and upon him. When you see 'Abd Allah convey my greetings and tell him that Ja'far ibn Muhammad says to you: Consider what made 'Ali attain the standing that he attained with the

Messenger of God (S) and stick to it, for, verily, 'Ali (A) attained the standing that he attained with the Messenger of Allah through truthfulness of speech and fulfillment of trust."

And you, my dear, reflect upon this sacred tradition and behold how sublime is the station of truthfulness and trustworthiness, which brought 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A) to that lofty station of his! This tradition shows that the Messenger of God loved these two characteristics more than anything else, and amongst the attributes of perfection of Mawla- 'Ali (A) it were these two which had brought him so close to the Prophet and raised him to that distinguished station. Also Imam al-Sadiq (A) recommends these two, from among all kinds of deeds and characteristics, to Ibn Abi Ya'fur, who was a dedicated and self-effacing follower of the Imam, and sends him a message asking him to cling to them, because they were very important in his blessed eyes.

(Al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Abu Ja'far (A) that he said: Abu Dharr (R) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) say: "On the Day of Resurrection the Womb and the Trust shall stand on the two sides of the Sirat. When one who has fulfilled the duties of kinship and discharged his trusts passes over (the Sirat), he will cross over to paradise. But when the betrayer of trust or the violator of the rights of kinship passes over it, no work of his will benefit him by the side of these (vices), and the Sirat will turn him over into hell."

This indicates that the [otherworldly] forms of the Womb and the Trust shall stand on the two sides of the Sirat in that world and they will assist one who has fulfilled the duties of blood relationship and discharged his trusts. No work will benefit him if he has violated these two, and they will cast him into hell.

Al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said: Amir al-Mu'minin (A) said, "Discharge your trusts, even if they pertain to a murderer of the offspring of the Prophets."

(Al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Abu 'Abd Allah (A) that he said in one of his exhortations, "Know that even if the assassin of 'Ali (A) who struck him with the sword, were to entrust me with something and were he to seek my advice and counsel, and were I to accept his request, I would not betray his trust."

Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn reports with his isnad from Abu Hamzah al-Thumali that he said: I heard the Master of the Devout, 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A) say to his followers (shi'ah), "Commit yourself to trustworthiness; for, by Him Who sent Muhammad (S) with the Truth as a Prophet, even if the killer of my father, al-Husayn ibn 'Ali (A) were to entrust me with the sword with which he had killed him, I would not betray his trust."

(Al-Saduq reports) with his isnad from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he narrated from his ancestors from the Prophet (S) that, in a tradition concerning certain proscribed acts, he forbade the

betrayal of trust and said, "Whoever betrays a trust in the life of the world, not delivering it to those to whom it belongs, and then dies, such a person doesn't die upon my creed and he shall meet God in a state wherein He will be wrathful with him. And whoever knowingly purchases the despoils of treachery is like the traitor."

There are other traditions of this kind, and it is obvious what consequences will result from the wrath of God's Sacred Being upon a servant. Of course, the venerable intercessors, too, will not intercede on behalf of someone who is the object of God's wrath, especially since the betrayer of trust is out of the pale of the creed of the Messenger of Allah (S). It is stated in a (prophetic) tradition that: Whoever commits a breach of trust in regard to a believer does not belong to me."

It is mentioned in another tradition that such a man "is outside the faith of Islam and he will be cast into the abyss of hell for ever and ever." I seek refuge in God from the evil of this vice. It is obvious that the breach of a believer's trust includes dishonesty of a financial nature as well as other breaches of trust that are of a more serious nature. Hence, one should be very vigilant of the carnal self, which may make one turn a blind eye to certain matters and make their vicious character appear as something trivial and simple, though they be the cause of everlasting wretchedness and perpetual ignominy. This is the state of those who commit treachery against God's creatures, and from this, we come to know the state of treachery in relation to the trust of God, the Exalted

Concerning Some Divine Trusts

It should be known that God, the Blessed and the Exalted, has bestowed upon us all our outward and inward faculties and bodily members and organs. He has spread out the table of bounties and beneficence throughout the inner and outer realms of our being, subjecting all of them to our power. He delivered them to us as trusts in a form wherein all of them were pure, immaculate, and free from formal and spiritual impurities. Everything that He sent down for us from the world of the Hidden, was pure and free from any kind of contamination.

Therefore, if while meeting that Sacred Being we return these trusts to Him in the condition of purity from the contaminations of the corporeal sphere and the impurities of the mundane world and mulk, we shall be reckoned as trustworthy; otherwise we shall be held guilty of betrayal of trust and cast outside the pale of genuine Islam and the creed of the Noble Messenger (S).

It is mentioned in a famous hadith that: The heart of the believer is the throne of the All-Beneficent.

And it is said in a well-known hadith qudsi
Neither [the vastness of] My earth, nor [that of] My heaven can contain Me. Indeed it is the
heart of the man of faith which can contain Me.

The believer's heart is the throne and seat of Godhead and the abode of that Sacred Being. That Sacred Being is the owner of the heart. Riveting the heart's attention on other than God, the Exalted, is a breach of His trust. The love of anything other than that of the Holy Being and His elect, loving whom is the same as loving Him, is considered a treachery in the creed of gnosis. The wilayah of the Household of Purity and Infallibility and the friendship of the Family
of the Messenger (A) and the gnosis of their holy station is a Divine trust.

Accordingly, in many noble traditions the word 'Trust' (in verse 33:72) has been interpreted as the wilayah of the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali (A). In the same way as the usurpation of the authority and office of that personage is a treason, so also the failure to follow that sacred personage is one of the degrees of treachery. And it is mentioned in the sacred traditions that
"A shi'ah is one who follows [the Ahl-al-Bayt] in a complete manner. Otherwise, the mere claim
of being a shi'ah will not be considered as tashayyu' (shi'i hood)."

Many of our fancies belong to the category of fake longings. At the mere feeling of love for Hadrat Amir (A) in our hearts, we become proud of this love and imagine that this love will survive even if we don't continue to follow him. But what surety is there that this attachment
will survive if we fail to take care of it and if we neglect the attendant qualities of this love"

It is possible that during the pangs of death, which are experienced by all except the Faithful (mu'minun) and the Sincere (mukhlasun), one may forget 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (A) as a result of the panic and terror of the last agony. It is mentioned in a tradition that a group of sinners facing punishment in hell will forget the name of the Noble Messenger (S). When their term of punishment draws to its close and they are purged of and purified from the filth of sin, the
blessed name of the Prophet shall come to their memory, or they will be reminded of it.

Thereupon, they will raise the cry of 'Wa Muhammada! O Muhammad! (S). Thereat, they will receive mercy and release. We imagine that the encounter with death and the last agony is something similar to the experiences of this world. My dear! A short attack of fever is sufficient to make you forget everything that you know. Think what will happen when those calamities, agonies, terrors, and panics hold you in their grip! If one loves and fulfills the requisites of that love, remembering the beloved and following him, of course, such a love of the absolute friend
and the absolute beloved of God shall enjoy Divine favor.

But if one makes merely a claim unaccompanied by action, or, rather, accompanied by defiance, it is possible that before he departs from this world its diversions, vicissitudes, and

shifting scenes may lead one to forsake the love of that Master, or, na'udhubilldh, turn one into his enemy. We have seen persons who claimed to befriend God and the Messenger (S) but who, after moving about in degenerate company and adopting evil conduct, became hostile to the Prophet and his Family (A).

And even if, supposedly, one were to depart from this world with that love, though he will ultimately attain salvation and felicity in accordance with certain noble traditions and sacred verses, yet he will still have to suffer the afflictions of Barzakh and the terrors of death and resurrection in accordance with this tradition: "We shall intercede in your favor on the Day of Resurrection. But it is up to yourselves to do something for the life of Barzakh."

I seek God's refuge from the punishment and pressures of the grave and the hardships and tortures of Barzakh, which have no resemblance to anything in this world. That door of hell which opens into the grave, should it be opened upon this world, it will destroy all its creatures.

.God be our refuge from such horrors

The Fear Of God Almighty

Know that the fear of God, the Exalted, is one of the stages that is hardly equaled by any other in respect of the common people. Aside from the fact that this fear is itself one of spiritual excellences, it is the source of many virtues of the spirit and one of the important reforming agents of the soul. Rather, it may be reckoned as the mainspring of all reform and the healing source of all spiritual ailments.

A human being with faith in God and a wayfarer and emigrant towards Allah should give utmost importance to this stage and pay great attention to everything that increases it in the heart and strengthens its roots, such as the remembrance of chastisement and punishment, recalling the severity of the perilous passes of death, and, after death, those of Barzakh and resurrection, the terrors of the Sirat, the Balance, the scrutinies of the Reckoning, and the various punishments of hell, as well, as the remembrance of the Might, Glory, Irresistibility, and Sovereignty of God and the remembrance of the gradualness of deviation (istidraj), the Divine stratagems, the possible evil of one's ultimate end and the like. Since we have in these pages described all these stages to some extent, we shall confine ourselves here to citing some traditions concerning the merits of the fear of God: Muhammad ibn Ya'qub reports with his isnad from Ishaq ibn 'Ammar that he said: Abu 'Abd Allah (A) said, "O Ishaq, fear God as if you see Him. For if you don't see Him, indeed He sees you. And if you imagine that He does not see you, you have disbelieved. And if you know that indeed He sees you and yet go forth to disobey Him, then you have made Him the least of onlookers who behold you."

Know that if someone should understand the character of the manifestation of the Divine in mulk and malakut and the revelation of that Sacred Essence in the heavens and the earths, either through unmediated (huduri) experience, or epiphany, or through real faith, and should he apprehend the relation of God to creation and the relation of creation to God as it really is, and should he have the knowledge of the character of the manifestation of the Divine Will in determinate things and their dissolution fana'in it, as it really is, he would know that God, the Exalted, is present in all places and realms, and he would observe Him with unmediated knowledge ('ilm huduri) in all existents, as stated by Imam al-Sadiq (A): I don't see a thing without seeing God with it or in it.

In the intimacy of the nawafil (supererogatory prayers) the true meaning of: I will be his hearing, his sight and his hand, and other than that will become disclosed to him. Then, he will see, in accordance with his own station, the Divine Presence in all the levels of being, knowledgewise or faithwise or through direct experience and epiphany.

Of course, at this stage, the wayfarer-whatever his rank-would observe the etiquette of the Divine Presence and refrain from the defiance of that Sacred Essence. That is because the observance of presence and its etiquette is something innate in human beings, and no matter how shameless a person might be, absence and presence [of someone] are not the same for him, especially when the presence is that of the All-mighty and the All-perfect Provider, which is independently impressed in the presence-observing nature of everyone

The Disparity Of People In Observing The Divine Presence

It should be known that every believer, wayfarer, gnostic, and wali observes the etiquette of the Divine Presence in a manner that is special to him. Hence, the faithful and the God-fearing consider observance of the presence to lie in abstaining from unlawful things and in observing the precepts. The majdhubun consider it to lie in refraining from attending to other-than-God and in directing one's perfect and complete attention to God. The awliya' and the Perfect consider it to lie in the negation of otherness, as well as the negation of the ego.

In fine, one of the sublime stations of the gnostics and the people of the heart is the experience of Divine Presence and its observance. Hence, with the apprehension of the character of God's active knowledge and the dissolution of all things in His Sacred Essence and the presence of all beings before Him, and with the understanding that the realm of being is present before the Lord, each of them, whatever his station, observes the requisites of presence. Also, this is an innate characteristic of the human nature.

The Noble Messenger (S) has referred to the first station in the spiritual counsel that he gave

to Hadrat Amir (A) and which we are now engaged in expounding. The same station is referred to in the noble tradition narrated by Ishaq ibn 'Ammar, wherein the Imam (A) says: And the third thing is to fear God-sublime is His remembrance-as if you see Him.

And where he says: Fear God as if you see Him.

Imam al-Sadiq (A) refers to the second station where he says: For if you don't see Him, verily He sees you.

Imam al-Sadiq (A) refers to the natural proclivity to observe presence in his statement: And if you know that He indeed sees you

Further, there are various levels of the fear in accordance with the different levels of the faithful, the wayfarers, and the people of austerities and gnosis, and one of its higher levels is the fear of the Greatness of God and the manifestations of Divine Might and Glory. It is possible not to reckon this station as a level of 'fear', as stated by the famous 'arif in Manazil al-sa'irin: That is, there exists no fear for the people of the heart and the mysteries of wilayah .except the awe of Divine Majesty, Magnificence, Greatness, and Glory

The Virtues Of Lamentation

There are many virtues in weeping and lamenting for the tear of God. As mentioned in this noble hadith, God shall build a thousand mansions in paradise for every tear that is shed in fear of Him. The venerable Shaykh Saduq (R)narrates with his unbroken chain of transmission from Imam al-Sadiq (A)from his forefathers, from the Noblest Messenger (S) that he said in a tradition relating to certain things that one should refrain from: "One whose eyes weep from the fear of God shall be bestowed for every tear that he sheds a palace ornamented with jewels and pearls every paradise the like of which no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no heart has ever imagined."

In the Thawab al-'a'mal (al-Shaykh al-Saduq reports) with his isnad from Abu Ja'far (A)that he said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "Except God, there is nothing that doesn't have an equal, for, verily, nothing equals Him. And there is nothing, which equals [the statement], "There is no god except God." And [the worth of] a tear shed in fear of God cannot be weighed by anything, for the face on which it flows shall never ever be covered with abasement and humiliation thereafter."

In al-Kafi, it is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (A) that "Everything has a weight and measure except tears, for a tear is sufficient to extinguish seas of fire." And he said, "If there is a single person who weeps [out of fear of God] in a community (ummah), all of its members receive .Divine mercy." There is a large number of traditions containing this theme

Doubts Regarding Disproportionate Award

That which is essential to point out here is that some feeble souls lacking conviction question the possibility of such great rewards for trivial matters. They are ignorant of the fact that if something appears small to us in this world that does not prove that its Hidden and malakuti form be trivial and insignificant as well. For it is often the case that a minute creature has an

inward and malakuti being that is extremely great and magnificent.

Thus the holy frame and physical form of the last and the noblest of Messengers, the honored and the venerable Prophet (S) was one of the small existents of this world, whereas his holy spirit encompassed the realms of mulk and malakut and was the mediating means for the creation of the heavens and the earths.

Therefore, to judge the inward and malakuti form of something as trivial and small, presumes the knowledge of the world of malakut and the inward reality of things. Hence the like of us have no right to make such a Judgment. Rather, we should open our ears to the pronouncements of those who have the knowledge of the world of Hereafter, that is, the prophets and the awliya' (A).

Another point is that the basis of that world rests on the expansive bounteousness and the infinite mercy of God, Glorious and Exalted. There is no limit or bound to the munificence of God, the Exalted, and it is the height of ignorance and nescience to doubt the generosity of the Absolutely Generous and the infinite mercy of the All-merciful.

All these bounties that He has bestowed upon His creatures, which minds cannot encompass, or, rather, even the comprehension of whose general features confounds the intellects, have been awarded without asking and without any background of deservedness. So why should it appear incredible if He, out of His sheer generosity and without any prior deservedness, gives a manifold reward to His servants? A world whose very basis has been decreed in accordance with [the principle of] the influence of the human will, and regarding which He has said: Therein being whatever the souls desire, and the eyes delight in. (43:71)

is it possible to regard it as far-fetched and improbable, although that which the human soul desires is without limit and boundless? God, Blessed and Exalted, has so determined that world and has so fashioned the human will that anything that it wills would come into existence by the sheer act of the will.

My dear! The number of the noble traditions and narrations relating to this kind of rewards is not one or two so that there should remain any room for denial. Rather, their number exceeds the limit of tawatur. All the reliable and trustworthy works of hadith are replete with this kind of traditions. They are such as if we have heard them directly from the Infallible Ones themselves

(A).

Their character is not such as to allow one to take resort in interpretation (ta'wil). Therefore, to deny the truth of this matter without any grounds—a matter that is in accordance with mutawatir texts and is not contrary to any discursive proof, or rather agrees with a certain kind of proof—such a denial springs from weakness of faith and extreme ignorance. Man should

submit to the statements of the prophets and the awliya' (A).

Nothing is better for human perfection than submission to the awliya' of God, especially in matters which human reason cannot fathom and there is no way to whose understanding except the way of revelation and prophethood. Should man try to butt in his inadequate intellect and his fancies and presumptions on matters of the Hidden and the Hereafter and those relating to worship and religious law, that would ultimately lead him, little by little and in gradual stages, to deny even the self-evident necessities of the faith.

Even if, supposedly, you should doubt the authenticity of the traditions and their chains of transmission—though there is no room for such a doubt—you cannot question the authority of the Noble Scripture of God, the Glorious and the Celestial Qur'an. The likes of such rewards are also mentioned there, as in the following statements of God, the Exalted: The Night of al-Qadr

is better than a thousand months. (97:3)

The likeness of those who expend their wealth in the way of God is as the likeness of a grain of corn that sprouts seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. So God multiplies unto whom He will, God is All-embracing, All-Knowing. (2:261)

My conjecture is that one of the factors responsible for the tendency to regard such rewards as far-fetched and unlikely and to deny their truth is the exaggerated sense of the worth of our works and pride in them. For instance, if someone fasts on a day and spends a whole night in prayer and later on hears that such acts have a very great reward, he does not regard such a thing as unlikely, although such a thing is far-fetched if one were to go by (the proportionality of) wages and work. But since he considers this act of his as something big and takes pride in it, he affirms the otherworldly reward of that act.

My dear! This entire duration of our lives, which is some fifty or sixty years. Even if, supposedly, we carry out therein all our religious duties and leave the world with a sound faith, with righteous deeds, and a valid repentance, what measure of reward, do you think, do this measure of works and this faith of ours deserve? Yet, in accordance with the Book and the Sunnah and the consensus of all religious creeds, such a person receives Divine mercy and goes to paradise, a paradise where he will enjoy everlasting gifts and comfort and dwell in eternal mercy, bliss and fragrance. Is there any room for denying the truth of this?

And if one were to go by the idea of compensation for work-that is, if we make the invalid assumption that our works deserve compensation-it could not be so disproportionate, quality-as well as quantity-wise, to be beyond the comprehension of human reason. This shows that the matter is based on another foundation and revolves around some other axis. If we understand this, there no longer remains any ground for denying this truth or considering it .unlikely and far-fetched

Concerning the Number of the Naw'afil

In the statement of the Noblest Messenger-may God bless him and his Household-the fifty rak'ahs of prayer, which he says accord with his sunnah, consist of the obligatory (wajib) and supererogatory (nafilah, pl. nawafil) prayers. Excepted, here, are the two rak'ahs offered, while sitting, after the 'isha' prayers and are counted as a single rak'ah, which if included with the wajib and nafilah prayers make up fifty-one rak'ahs.

Perhaps, the Messenger of God-may God bless him and his Household-did not mention this rak'ah because only the other fifty rak'ahs constituted his sunnah that has been emphasized upon (sunnah mu'akkadah), as indicated by the following narration of Ibn Abi 'Umayr: (Ibn Abi 'Umayr) says: "I asked Abu 'Abd Allah, may peace be upon him, concerning the best sunnah practised in relation to prayer. He replied, 'It is to offer all the fifty [rak'ahs]:"

That which can be inferred from some traditions is that the practice of the Messenger of God-may God bless him and his Household-was to offer these fifty rak'ahs, although some other traditions indicate that he used to offer the 'atama as well. Perhaps, the absence of its mention and the confinement of the prevailing sunnah to the fifty rak'ahs is for the reason that the 'atamah is, in fact, the watr prayer and has no independence of its own, as indicated by the narration of Fudayl ibn Yasar; and in a noble tradition it has been referred to as Watr. Some other traditions state that one who offers it before his death is like one who dies after having offered the watr prayer.

Hence these two rak'ahs are actually the watr prayer that is offered before its time for the fear of imminent death. However, when the time of watr prayer arrives, these do not serve as its substitute. It is mentioned in some traditions that these two rak'ahs did not form part of the fivefold prayers and they were added to round up the number so that the nawafil make up twice the number of wajib prayers. These traditions together do not conflict with one another in respect of their import. Possibly, the most meritorious sunnah in practice is the offering of the fifty rak'ahs and these two rak'ahs constitute a sunnah that has not been emphasized upon and they have been prescribed for the sake of precaution for the event of death and to round up the

number.

In any case, there is a great merit in offering the daily nawafil, and in some traditions their omission has been considered a sin. In some others it has been stated in this context that God would mete out punishment for the neglect of the Sunnah, and in certain traditions they have been referred to as obligatory. This is to stress their observance and to prevent their being neglected. What is proper is that one should not fail to offer them as far as possible, because, according to the noble traditions, the purpose of prescribing them is the completion of the obligatory prayers and their acceptance.

It is stated in some traditions that "Our Shi'ah (followers) are the people of fifty-one rak'ahs of prayer. It is evident from this tradition that that which is meant is the offering of these rak'ahs, not mere belief in them, as against the Ahl al-Sunnah. The same is indicated by the tradition .concerning of the sign of a person of faith

Concerning the Istihbab of Fasting on Three Days in Every Month

As to the second sunnah of the Noblest Messenger-may God bless him and his Household-which consists of fasting on three days of every month, there are many traditions, more than forty, about its merit. There is a difference of opinion amongst the leading 'ulama' in this regard. The prevailing opinion among them, which is also in accord with many traditions and the practice of the Noblest Messenger-may God bless him and his Household-during the last part of his life as well as with the practice of the Imams of guidance, is that these three days consist of the first Thursday, which is a day of the presentation of works [of all the faithful before the Prophet and the Imams], the first Wednesday of the next ten days, which is an inauspicious day and a day of descent of Divine chastisement, and the last Thursday of the last ten days, which is also a day of presentation of works.

It is stated in a tradition that whenever punishment befell one of the former communities, it was upon one of these days. Hence the Noblest Messenger-may God bless him and his Household-used to fast on these fearsome days. In a tradition it is stated that the fasts on these three days are equivalent to perpetual fasting, and in some traditions the following noble verse has been interpreted as referring to these fast: Whoever brings a good deed shall have ten the like of it (6:160)

As to a different order mentioned in some other traditions, that may be ascribed to the various ranks of merit, and if, supposedly, there should be any conflict, there are many reasons for preferring these narrations. Rather, it may be said that the conflict between them is one between the nass and the zahir or one between the azhar and the zahir. As to the mursal

tradition narrated by al-Saduq, wherein it is stated that "in case there be two Thursdays during the last ten days, fast on the first one, since you may not see the second one," it is not contrary to these traditions, since, apparently, that is for the sake of attaining to a nearer merit for the fear of absence of opportunity on account of death or some other cause.

A similar reason was mentioned for the prescription of the 'atamah. Hence, this tradition itself is one of those which support the greater merit of fasting on the last Thursday, and it does not support the traditions indicating a contrary meaning. The apparent meaning (zahir) is that if one fasts on the first Thursday, on reaching the last Thursday it is better to partake of the merit of fasting on it again and the first fast would not be a substitute for it. That which the august authority, Fayd, and the majestic traditionist, the author of al-Hada'iq, and particularly the latter, may God have mercy upon them, have said in the way of a reconciliation between the traditions .is farfetched

On the Merit of Sadaqah

As to the sunnah of the Noblest Messenger-may God bless him and his Household-relating to sadaqah (charity) and doing one's best in giving it, that is also one of mustahabb acts which is hardly equalled by any other mustahabb action in its merit. The traditions concerning the subject of sadaqah, regarding the giving of charity even to those who do not belong to one's creed, and about being charitable towards the animals of land and sea, are so numerous that it is not possible to cite them here. However, we shall confine ourselves to citing a few of them:

In a tradition that Muhammad ibn Ya`qub (al-Kulayni) has reported with his isnad from `Adb Allah ibn Sinan, Abu `Abd Allah, may peace be upon him, said, "There is nothing harder upon Satan than the giving of sadaqah to a person of faith, and it falls into the hands of the Lord,

Blessed and Exalted, before it falls into the hands of the servant (who receives the sadaqah)."

In a tradition (that al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad, Abu `Abd Allah, may peace be upon him, has said, "Verily, God never created anything without assigning a treasurer to store it, with the exception of sadaqah, for the Lord Himself is its caretaker. It was the practice of my father (i.e. al'-Imam Muhammad al-Baqir) when giving anything as sadaqah, to put it in the hands of the needy person, then to take it back and embrace and smell it and then to put it back into the hands of the receiver."

About the same theme occurs in several other traditions and that indicates the exalted station and excellence of sadaqah, whose caretaking has not been assigned to anyone else by God, the Blessed and the Exalted, and He with His Might and His all-enveloping Sustention has taken up the preservation of its perfect Hidden form

Reflection on this sacred tradition, and others like it narrated in the various chapters of the books of our companions, may God be pleased with all of them, is revelatory of Divine activity (tawhid fi'li) and the manifestation of Divine sustention for the people of the heart and gnosis. There is an important point in it attention to which is very essential for anyone who carries out this important duty. That point is that one should realize to whom the sadaqah is being delivered For if, God be our refuge, should there be a sense of doing favour or some offensive conduct on one's behalf in relation to the poor person, that is misconduct first in relation to

God, the Blessed and the Exalted, and after that in relation to the one seeking help. And should one act with humility, and give sadaqah with the utmost humility to a man of faith beseeching help and in a humble, unpretentious and condescending spirit, it is humility towards God, the Exalted, as was the wont of the Learned of the Household of Muhammad (`Alim Al Muhammad, i.e. al-'Imam al-Baqir) may God bless him and his Household-and the lover of Divine Beauty, the Baqir al--Ulum, may peace be upon him, who would embrace and smell the sadaqah after passing into the hands of the receiver and scent its pure and pleasing fragrance. And God knows what tranquility of the soul and peace of mind would descend upon that sacred being immersed in the love of God, and how these gestures of love would appease the

flames of his heart and the fervour of his inward passion
Alas! a thousand alas, that this writer, immersed in the seas of carnal desire, bound to the lowly ground of physical nature and in the bondage of lusts, a captive of the belly and underneath, unaware of the realm of being and drunk with egoism and self-lave! He came into this world and would leave it soon, without partaking anything of the love of the awliya and without understanding anything of their captivations, fervours, passions, stations and courtship. His stay in this world was a bestial stopover and his acts therein animalistic and devilish, and should he remain such, his death too would be the death of a beastly and satanic creature!

My God, I address my complaints to Thee and on Thee do I rely!
O God, do Yourself come to our help with the light of Your guidance! Awaken us from this heavy slumber and call us to the realm of ghayb and light and the abode of delight and ecstasy,
to the privacy of love and exclusive company!

(Al-Kulayni reports) with his isnad from Abu `Abd Allah, may peace be upon him, that he said: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his Household, said: `The ground on the Day of Resurrection shall be all fire excepting fin] the shadow of the believer, for verily his sadaqah shall enshadow him' ".

And it is stated in a tradition that "God, the Exalted, raises sadaqah, in the same way as you raise a camel's calf. If you give half a date in sadaqah, God, the Exalted, multiplies it and on the

Day of Resurrection it shall be given to the servant in a form like or bigger than the mountain of Uhud.

There are many traditions like it, and it is mentioned in a large number of them that sadaqah saves one from bad kinds of death, brings livelihood, eases the payment of debt, prolongs one's life, averts seventy bad forms of death, and God the Exalted, recompenses it to an extent of ten to a hundred-thousand-folds.

Also, it causes increase in one's wealth; anyone who gives sadaqah in the morning is secure from natural calamities during that day, and if one gives it at the beginning of night, he is safe from natural calamities during that night. Through sadaqah the sick are cured, and should one meet the needs of a Muslim household, saving them from hunger, clothing them, and protecting their honour, his work is better than a seventy hajj pilgrimages. This, despite the fact that one hajj is superior to freeing seventy slaves, and this despite that which has been said regarding the setting free of a slave, that anyone who sets free a slave, God shall liberate every member of his body from the fire of hell for a member of the body of the manumitted slave, and the Commander of the Faithful, may peace be upon him, set free a thousand slaves with the earnings of his toil. There are yet other traditions whose citation will prolong this discussion.

Another Point

We will conclude this topic with a point worth knowing. That point relates to what is mentioned in this sacred verse: You will not attain virtue until you expend of what you love; .. (3: 92) It is mentioned in a tradition that at-'Imam al-Sadiq, may peace be upon him, used to give sugar in sadaqah. Asked why he did that, he replied, "I like sugar more than anything else and I want to give in sadaqah that which I like most."

There is a tradition that Hadrat Amir, may peace be upon him, once bought a dress which pleased him He gave it away in sadaqah, saying, "I heard the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his Household, say, `Whoever prefers another to himself, shall be preferred by God for paradise on the Day of Resurrection Whoever loves something and then dedicates it to God, on the Day of Resurrection God, the Exalted, shall declare to him: "My servants were wont to recompense one another in an appropriate manner, and t shall give you paradise as your recompense." ' ' "

It is narrated that when the above noble verse was revealed, one of the Prophet's companions distributed an orchard that was the most cherished of all his possessions amongst his relatives. Thereupon, the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his Household, said to

him: "Well done! Well done! This property has brought you much profit."

Once a guest came to visit Abu Dharr al-Ghaffari He said to the guest, "I have some work to do. There are some camels that belong to me; go and bring the best one of them:" The guest went and brought a lean camel. Abu Dharr said to him, "You have let me down" He replied, "The best of the camels was the camel stallion, but I thought of the day you would need it." Abu Dharr said, "The day when I shall need it is the day that I am laid in my grave. For God, the Exalted, has said, 'You will not attain goodness until you expend of what you love'." Then he added, "Every property is owned jointly by three; one of them is fate, to it which makes no difference whether a thing is valued or worthless: it takes it away and destroys it. The second is one's heir, who awaits your death. And you yourself are the third one. So if you are able to prove yourself more effectual than they, do so. God, the Exalted, says, 'You will not attain virtue unless you expend of what you love.' This camel was the most cherished of my possessions
".and so I wished to send it forth as a provision for myself

One of the Secrets of Sadaqah

One should know that man grows up and is brought up with a love and attachment for property, wealth and worldly adornment. This attachment becomes deeply seated in the depths of his heart and it is the source of most ethical vices and religious deviations, as mentioned in numerous traditions, and we have referred to this matter in the exposition of some of the traditions.

Hence, if one could eradicate or reduce this attachment by the means of sadaqat and self-denial, he would abolish this source of corruption and exterminate this vicious germ, thus opening the doors to the learning of the higher teaching and attention to the hidden realm of malakut and advancing towards higher morality and meritorious traits. And this is one of the great secrets of obligatory and supererogatory forms of charity, and it is evidently more true of .supererogatory charity

A Complementary Note

One should know that the giving of supererogatory sadaqat in a secret and concealed manner is better than giving it openly and publicly. In the noble al-Kafi, it is narrated with isnad on the authority of 'Ammar al--Sabati that al-'Imam al-Sadiq, may peace be upon him, said O `Ammar! By God, the sadaqah when given secretly is better than the sadaqah given openly.
Similarly, by God, worship in secrecy is better than the one performed publicly.

It is mentioned in many traditions that sadaqah given secretly averts Divine wrath, and it is stated in a tradition that "there are seven groups of people whom God, the Exalted, shall protect in His shelter on the day when there is no shelter except His. One of these consists of those who give sadaqah secretly so that their left hand does not know what their right hand gives."

Perhaps the reason for the superiority of the one is that worship performed in secrecy is farther from ostentation and nearer to sincerity. Another reason might be that in the case of sadaqah the observance of secrecy preserves the dignity of the poor.

Also, the giving of sadaqah to one's relations is better than giving it to others, for it falls under the category of kindness to blood-relations, which is one of the best forms of worship, as mentioned is a tradition which states that "The best of sadaqat is one given to a relative. The reward of kindness to brethren is twenty-fold and to a blood-relative twenty-fourfold.. Rather, it is stated in some traditions that the sadaqah given to non-relatives is not accepted when there are relatives in need

Conclusion

From the words of this noble tradition, "Do your utmost in sadaqah until you imagine that you have been immoderate although it would not be immoderation ... ," it appears that that which is desirable in sadaqah is its being in plenty, and however great its quantity be it would not be a waste or extravagance. It is reported in tradition that al-'Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba, may peace be upon him, thrice in his lifetime, distributed half of his possessions amongst the poor, so that if he had two pairs of shoes or two pieces of clothing, he shared one of them with the poor.

It is mentioned in another tradition that al'Imam al-Rida, may peace be upon him, once wrote to al-'Imam al-Jawad, may peace be upon him, "I have heard that when you take a ride, while go out, your slaves take you from the small door. They act out of niggardliness and they don't want you to give anything to anybody. By the right that I have over you, your exit and entry should not be except through the main door. When you going out, take gold and silver with you and let there be no one who asks you for help without your giving it to him. If anyone of your paternal uncles requests anything of you, don't give him less than fifty dinars, and you may give more if you like. It is my wish that God raise your station. Therefore give, and don't be afraid that God would reprove you."

These traditions do not contradict with those which indicate that immoderation in giving sadaqah, to the extent of putting one's family in financial straits, amounts to extravagance and

waste (israf), and that God does not answer the prayer of anyone who gives charity without leaving anything for his family's subsistence.

And it is mentioned in hadith that the best sadaqah is that which is given from the surplus over the minimum necessary to support one's life. The reason for not regarding them as contradictory is that fastidiousness and generosity in sadaqah does not have to be so extreme as to cause hardship to one's family, for there are people who can give a half as more of their wealth in sadaqah while providing for their family's maintenance so that they don't face any hardship.

On the Merit of the Nightly Prayer

In this noble tradition there is a profound emphasis on the observance of the night and noon prayers. As to the night prayer, we have discussed it earlier in the exposition of certain foregoing traditions. Here we will confine ourselves to giving a translation of some of the relevant sacred traditions for tabarruk's sake.

Al-Wasail cites from al-Kafi a tradition with sanad reaching at-'Imam al-Sadiq, may peace be upon him, wherein he said: "The distinction of a believer lies in his observance of the night prayer and his dignity lies in abstaining from doing anything that may compromise other people's honour."

In another tradition a-l'Imam al-Sadiq, may peace be upon him, is reported to have said, "The Noble Messenger, may God bless him and his Household, asked Gabrael to exhort him, whereupon he said: "O Muhammad, live as much as you want to, but remember that ultimately you will die; love anything that you want to, but remember that ultimately you will separate from it; and do whatever you wish, but remember that you will encounter it one day. Know that the distinction of a person with faith lies in his observance of the night prayer and his dignity lies in abstaining from compromising other people's honour."

In another tradition with sanad reaching al-'Imam al-Sadiq, may peace be upon him, he is reported to have said, "Children and wealth are the adornments of the life of this world and eight rak'ahs of prayer towards the end of the night are an adornment of the life of the Hereafter, and, at times, God, the Exalted, grants both of them to some people."

Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, may God's good pleasure be with him, reports that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his Household, said, "When one of My servants arises from his bed and foregoes the pleasure of sleep to stand for the night prayer in order to please God, God, the Exalted, takes pride in him before the angels and says, 'Bear witness that I have forgiven him: "as There are many traditions of this kind, but we cannot cite them here for the brief scope of

.this discussion