

Inscriptions on the doors of Janna & Jahannam



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A STUDY OF SELECTED AHADITH ON AKHLAQ

The following information is part of a hadith quoted in Biharul Anwar narrated by Abdullah ibn Masud.

The Prophet (pbuh) was told by Jibrail about the inscriptions on the 8 doors of Janna and the 7 doors of Jahannam.

1st DOOR OF JANNA

There is no god except Allah, Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, Imam Ali is the wali of Allah.

Everything has a means of attainment, and to enjoy one's life one must adopt the following four qualities:

- **CONTENTMENT**
- **HONOUR THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS**
- **ABSTAIN FROM FEELINGS OF HATRED (ENMITY)**
- **SIT WITH AHLUL KHAYR**

2nd DOOR OF JANNA

There is no god except Allah, Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, Imam Ali is the wali of Allah.

Everything has a means of attainment, and to attain happiness in the hereafter, one must adopt the following four qualities:

- **AFFECTION TOWARDS ORPHANS**
- **SHOW COMPASSION TO THOSE WHO ARE WIDOWED**
- **STRIVE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF MU'MINEEN**
- **ENQUIRE ABOUT AND VISIT THE POOR AND NEEDY**



3rd DOOR OF JANNA

There is no god except Allah, Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, Imam Ali is the wali of Allah.

Everything has a means of attainment, and to attain a healthy life in the world, one must adopt the following four qualities:

- **LESS TALK**
- **LESS SLEEP**
- **LESS DESIRES**
- **LESS EATING**

4th DOOR OF JANNA

There is no god except Allah, Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, Imam Ali is the wali of Allah.

Whosoever believes in Allah and in the last day (Qiyama) should:

- **HONOUR HIS GUESTS**
- **HONOUR HIS NEIGHBOURS**
- **HONOUR HIS PARENTS**
- **SPEAK THE BEST OR REMAIN SILENT**

5th DOOR OF JANNA

There is no god except Allah, Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, Imam Ali is the wali of Allah.

- One who does not wish to be dealt with unjustly should **NOT ACT UNJUSTLY**
- One who does not wish to be abused should **NOT ABUSE**
- One who does not wish to be belittled should **NOT BELITTLE OTHERS**
- One who wishes to hold on to a firm rope in this world and in the hereafter should **SAY “LA ILAHA ILLALLAH”**



6th DOOR OF JANNA

There is no god except Allah, Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, Imam Ali is the wali of Allah.

- One who wishes for his grave to be wide and spacious should **BUILD A MASJID**
- One who wishes not to be eaten by maggots under the earth should **VISIT A MASJID**
- One who would like his body to remain fresh in the grave should **CLEAN A MASJID**
- One who would like to see his place in Janna should **LAY COVERING ON THE FLOOR OF A MASJID**

7th DOOR OF JANNA

There is no god except Allah, Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, Imam Ali is the wali of Allah.

He who wishes to purify his heart should adopt the following four qualities:

- **VISIT THE SICK**
- **ESCORT A JANAZA**
- **ACQUIRE A KAFAN**
- **REPAY DEBTS**

8th DOOR OF JANNA

There is no god except Allah, Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, Imam Ali is the wali of Allah.

Whoever wishes to enter this door must adopt the following four qualities:

- **GENEROSITY**
- **BEST AKHLAQ**
- **GIVE SADAQA**
- **STOP ANY GRIEF/HURT DIRECTED AT A SERVANT OF ALLAH**



7 DOORS OF JAHANNAM

1st DOOR OF JAHANNAM

- **ONE WHO HOPES IN ALLAH IS HELPED**
- **ONE WHO FEARS ALLAH IS SAFE**
- **UNSUCCESSFUL IS THE DISILLUSIONED ONE WHO HOPES IN OTHER THAN ALLAH AND FEARS OTHER THAN HIM**

2nd DOOR OF JAHANNAM

- **ONE WHO DOES NOT WISH TO BE EXPOSED ON THE DAY OF QIYAMA SHOULD PROVIDE CLOTHING TO THOSE WHO DOES NOT HAVE ANY IN THE WORLD**
- **ONE WHO DOES NOT WISH TO BE THIRSTY ON THE DAY OF QIYAMA SHOULD QUENCH THE THIRSTY IN THE WORLD**
- **ONE WHO DOES NOT WISH TO BE HUNGRY ON THE DAY OF QIYAMA SHOULD PROVIDE FOR THE HUNGRY IN THE WORLD**

3rd DOOR OF JAHANNAM

- **WITHDRAWAL OF THE MERCY OF ALLAH ON THE LIARS**
- **WITHDRAWAL OF THE MERCY OF ALLAH ON THE MISERS**
- **WITHDRAWAL OF THE MERCY OF ALLAH ON THE UNJUST**

4th DOOR OF JAHANNAM

- **ALLAH WILL HUMILIATE ONE WHO MOCKS ISLAM**
- **ALLAH WILL HULILIATE ONE WHO MOCKS THE AHLULBAYT**
- **ALLAH WILL HUMILIATE ONE WHO AIDS THE UNJUST IN THEIR INJUSTICE TO CREATION**



5th DOOR OF JAHANNAM

- **DO NOT FOLLOW YOUR DESIRES, FOR DESIRES ARE AVERSE TO EIMAN**
- **DO NOT SPEAK THAT WHICH DOES NOT CONCERN YOU FOR IT DISCONNECTS ONE FROM THE RAHMA (MERCY) OF ALLAH**
- **DO NOT BE A HELPER OF THE UNJUST**

6th DOOR OF JAHANNAM

- **I (JAHANNAM) AM HARAM ON THOSE WHO DO IJTIHAD**
- **I (JAHANNAM) AM FORBIDDEN TO THOSE WHO GIVE SADAQA**
- **I (JAHANNAM) AM HARAM FOR THOSE WHO FAST**

7th DOOR OF JAHANNAM

- **TAKE ACCOUNT OF YOUR NAFS BEFORE IT IS TAKEN ACCOUNT OF**
- **SCOLD YOUR NAFS BEFORE IT IS SCOLDED**
- **CALL (DUA) ALLAH BEFORE YOU ARE RETURNED TO HIM AND DO NOT PUT A MEASURE ON THAT (DUA)**



CONTENTMENT

It is reported by Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansari that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Contentment is a wealth that never exhausts."

Contentment means to be satisfied with what one has and to make the most of it in the best possible way.

It is said that dignity and wealth went wandering about searching for a companion. They met with contentment and agreed that they made a perfect threesome.

The grass always looks greener on the other side for those who are not content. They are dissatisfied even when their circumstances are favourable. As a result, they miss Allah's best for their lives and fail to see the blessings they already have.

There is an ancient Persian legend which tells of a wealthy man called Al-Hafadh who owned a large farm.

One day a visitor at his farm told him how he could find vast amounts of diamonds in other parts of the world, and of how these would make him even wealthier.

The vision of all this wealth made him feel poor by comparison. So, instead of caring for his farm, he sold it and set out to look for these treasures.

The search proved fruitless and finally penniless and in despair, he ended his life by jumping in the sea.

Meanwhile, the man who had bought his farm one day noticed the glint of an unusual stone in a shallow stream on the farm.

To his amazement, he pulled out a large diamond and digging further found a lot more gems.

Poor Al-Hafadh had spent his life travelling to distant lands seeking the gems when they were in the very farm he had left behind.



We too search for contentment in searching for hopes and desires like wealth, relationships, power, comfort... only to be told by Allah:

"... Surely by the remembrance of Allah are the heart's content..."

Sura Al Ra'ad 13:27

The Qur'an does not ask to seek wealth, relationships, or comfort but it says that these things do not give contentment for they are not the ultimate goal.

The ultimate goal is acquiring the pleasure of Allah.

Contentment is only achieved if there is total submission to the will of Allah and total satisfaction with what He has ordered for us.



HONOUR THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

The Prophet (pbuh) has said: "Allah has made seven rights wajib upon a mu'min towards another mu'min:

1. To respect him
2. To love him
3. To share his property with him
4. To consider doing his gheebat haram
5. To visit him when he is sick
6. To escort his funeral procession
7. To say nothing but good about him after his death."

One day the Prophet (pbuh) was sitting alone in the masjid. A man came near him, and the Prophet (pbuh) moved aside to make place for him. The man said: "Ya Rasulallah! The masjid is empty and there is so much space available, why have you moved aside?"

The Prophet (pbuh) replied: "A Muslim has a right on another Muslim - when he wants to sit near him the latter should move aside as a mark of respect".

In 'Risalatul Huquq' (the charter of rights) attributed to Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh); Imam lists 51 rights.

Some of them are:

- The greatest of rights is the wajib right of Allah that He is the root of all rights. His right is that one worships Him without associating anyone with Him.--
- The right of yourself (nafs) is to utilise yourself in obeying Allah... and you must ask Allah for help in this.
- The right of salaa is that you know it is standing before Allah and that you are praying with your heart and pray it according to its rules.
- The right of sadaqa is that you know it is a saving with your Lord and a deposit for which there is no need of witnesses. You should



know that it repels afflictions and illnesses in the world and repels the fire in the next.

- The right of the one who imparts knowledge is to respect them, listen to them and attend with devotion. You should not raise your voice towards them. You should not speak whilst they are speaking nor speak ill of them. If anyone speaks ill of them, you should defend them. You should not show any enmity or show hostility in friendship. If the teacher's rights are upheld, then Allah's angels will give witness that the knowledge learnt from them was for Allah and not for the sake of the people.
- The right of a mother is that you know that she carried you where no-one carries anyone. She did not care if she went hungry and thirsty as long as you ate and drank, she gave up sleep.
- The right of the father is that you should know that he is the root. Without him, you would not be. When you see in yourself something that pleases you; know that your father is the root of that blessing.
- The right of one who is older is that they be respected because of age and honoured because they entered Islam before you.
- The right of the one who is younger is that they be shown compassion through teaching them, forgiveness, covering of their faults and help.
- The right of one through whom Allah makes you happy is that you first praise Allah and then thank the person.



ABSTAIN FROM FEELINGS OF HATRED (ENMITY)

When anger is suppressed, feelings of hatred arise. Its consequences are jealousy and breaking of relations with the person it is directed towards. It results in backbiting, slander, giving away secrets. Sometimes the hatred comes out in the open resulting in confrontation which results in the destroying of the one's nafs.

To help cure jealousy and enmity one should think over the consequences and know that it hurts the one who has it more than the one towards whom it is directed. Then one should try to be friendly towards the person even though one's emotions pull one in the other direction.

An 'aalim relates that once when in Mash'had at the haram of Imam Ridha (pbuh) he saw a youth spending all his free time at the haram engrossed in ibada. The young man approached him and asked the 'aalim to pray for him so that he may meet the Imam of the time.

The 'aalim who was then visiting Karbala asked Allah with the wasila of Ali Akber. That night he had a dream in which he saw the youth in a locked room. Outside the room was a notice which said that there were 2 qualities which prevented the young man from being freed from the room. They were the – feelings of hatred and revenge he had for his brother in eiman.

The 'aalim on returning to Mash'had related the dream to the young man who accepted his faults and endeavoured to remove the disease from his heart.



SIT WITH AHLUL KHAYR

The Ahlul Khayr are defined as the Ulema and the Fuqaha.

The companions of Prophet 'Isa (pbuh) once asked him: "When you are not there, where shall we go?"

Prophet 'Isa (pbuh) replied: "To one whom when you see, you remember Allah; and whose knowledge reminds you of the hereafter."

Two groups of Muslims were sitting in two different corners of Masjidun Nabi in Madina. The Prophet (pbuh) entered and glanced at each group. He asked what they were doing.

He was told that one group was busy in recitation of Qur'an and dua whilst the other was busy learning. They learnt how to read and write and discussed the teachings of Islam and their application to their daily lives.

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Both are striving towards Khayr (goodness). However, I am a teacher, and I shall join the group who have assembled to learn."

It is reported from Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) that to sit for an hour with an 'Aalim, Faqih (or in a learned gathering) is better than 1000 years of Ibadat.



AFFECTION TOWARDS ORPHANS

"Who so ever puts an affectionate hand on the head of an orphan will be rewarded by Allah with a radiance (light) for every hair which will pass from below his hand." Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh)

One day Prophet 'Isa (pbuh) was passing through a graveyard with his companions and when nearing one particular grave he started walking faster.

When his companions enquired, he said that the person in the grave was being punished and he did not want to be near the grave.

A year later on passing the same graveyard, the companions of Prophet 'Isa (pbuh) noticed that he was walking slowly cherishing each step when he walked past the same grave.

They asked him about the change. Prophet 'Isa (pbuh) replied: "The man had a son who has provided food and shelter to an orphan. Allah has forgiven the sins of the father on that account."

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has said: "If one looks after an orphan and meets their expenses; they will be my companion in Janna and will sit by my side."

In his last will (after being struck by Ibne Muljim) Imam Ali (pbuh) said: "Fear Allah when the question of orphans arises. You should never let them starve. So long as you are there to guard and protect them you should not let them be ruined or lost. The Prophet (pbuh) always reminded us of this responsibility so much so that we often thought that the Prophet (pbuh) might give them a share from our inheritance."



SHOW COMPASSION TO THOSE WHO ARE WIDOWED

To be bereaved of a spouse is probably one of the most difficult grief to bear. It is a unique relationship and the first relationship created by Allah was of man and wife.

When Allah created Prophet Adam (pbuh) he was the 'richest' man ever. He had Janna at his disposal, knowledge taught by Allah and Eiman; but he still felt that he was not 'complete'. It was the creation of Sayyida Hawwa that made him feel complete (content). Thus, the death of a spouse (life partner) leaves one feeling incomplete. The additional responsibilities that were previously shared also adds to the loss.

Our Aimma used to help widows by delivering food and other necessities to them in the dark of the night when no one was awake. The beneficiaries only realised the identity of their benefactor after the shahadat of the Imam in question.

It is related that once Imam Ali (pbuh) saw an old lady who was widowed in one of the battles of Islam, carrying a heavy load of firewood. On seeing her, Imam carried the firewood to her home, lit her oven and looked after her children. She did not know his identity until informed of it by a neighbour. She then realised that he who had served her like an obedient servant was none other than the Khalifa of the time.



STRIVE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF MU'MINEEN

"When one of my servants performs a good act, I award him Janna in exchange."

Prophet Dawood (pbuh) asked Allah: "Ya Allah! What is that good act?" The revelation came: "It is making a mu'min happy even if it be by offering him a date."

There was a man called Sadiq Halwani who was once approached by his friend in Masjidul Haram, to lend him two dinars. Sadiq told him he would give him the money after he had completed his tawaf. As he was just about to complete his tawaf, Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) arrived for tawaf. Imam put his hand on Sadiq's shoulder and began tawaf. Sadiq says that although he had completed his tawaf he accompanied Imam.

His friend was sitting in a corner and making signs at Sadiq. Imam asked Sadiq why the man was trying to call his attention.

Sadiq replied; "He is waiting for me so that after I complete my tawaf I can help arrange a loan for him. As you put your hand on my shoulder, I did not wish to leave you."

Imam immediately removed his hand from his shoulder and told him: "Go to meet his need."

Sadiq fulfilled his word to his friend and went to visit the Imam the next day. Imam said, "If one strives to meet the need of a mu'min it is more worthy a deed than freeing 1000 slaves and equipping 1000 people for jihad."

Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh) has said:

Strive to acquire a high position in Janna. Remember the more useful a person is to a fellow mu'min the higher their position in Janna. At times even the saying of one sentence becomes the source of becoming closer to Allah. Never consider kindness to your fellow mu'min to be insignificant for it will be these that will be useful on a day when nothing much will be of any use."



INQUIRE ABOUT AND VISIT THE NEEDY AND THE POOR

"A true Mu'min is one who maintains brotherly relations with the poor and needy and gives them a share of his wealth and behaves with them justly." Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

Imam Hasan (pbuh) and Imam Husayn (pbuh) had just buried their father and were returning to the city when they heard someone crying and calling out: "Where are you? O you who visited me and had mercy on me!"

They went to inquire and found that it was a leper for whom Imam Ali (pbuh) had provided a shelter outside the town of Kufa. Imam used to visit the leper daily, dressing his wounds and feeding him for he had lost the use of his hands.

When Imam Hasan & Husayn (pbuh) informed him of the shahadat of their father, the leper asked to be taken to the grave, where he breathed his last.

It is reported that Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh) was once with his companions when they visited one of the poor and needy of Madina. Imam gave him some money and then kissed the poor man's² hand. Imam's companions asked why he had done that to which Imam replied: "He is my Muhsin (one to whom I am obliged) for by accepting my help he is bringing me closer to Allah."

The Prophet (pbuh) has said: "Who so ever gives respect to a needy Muslim will appear on the day of Qiyama as one who has achieved the pleasure of Allah."



LESS TALK

"Khayrul Qalaam Qalla wa Dalla" (The best of speeches (talk) is short and effective) Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

Imam Ali (pbuh) has said: "Your speech is under your firm control as long as you do not speak, but if you speak you come under its control; so, guard your tongue as you guard your gold and silver, for many a word is a blessing but leads to displeasure."

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) has said that the most valuable thing Allah has given us is the tongue. None of His Messengers (Prophets) were given wealth or position through which to convey His message but they were given the eloquence of the tongue.

It is said that one must speak little with people (only that which is necessary) and speak much with Allah; perhaps then one's heart will recognise Him.

It is also said that Allah made everything with two doors, but he made four for the tongue - the two lips and the two sets of teeth.

The basic message is therefore to think before one speaks. As Imam Ali (pbuh) has said: "The tongue of a Mu'min follows his heart whilst the heart of a Munafiq follows his tongue".

"Whoever talks a lot makes many mistakes, and whoever makes many mistakes loses his modesty, and whoever loses his modesty loses his accuracy; and whoever loses his accuracy his heart dies and one whose heart is dead enters Jahannam".



LESS SLEEP

"There are three things that Allah does not like in a person; Too much sleeping, too much laughing and eating after the stomach is full"
Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh)

There are two kinds of sleep:

Beneficial sleep which is necessary for the body relaxing it and thus helping it to regain strength and energy.

Harmful sleep which causes lack of vitality, increases laziness, and obstructs normal brain activities.

The best, healthiest, most balanced, and most beneficial of sleep is the one that the Prophet (pbuh) adopted.

After praying Isha Salaa, he used to go to sleep and then wake up in the second half of the night. He would pray Salatul Layl (Namaz e Shab) and other mustahab salaa and go to the mosque for Salatul Fajr.

After dawn if he felt tired, then he would have a short rest. Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) has said that one can recognise the house of one of his Shias by the fact that the lights in their houses are switched off after Eisha and come on before Salatul Fajr.

One must never sleep on one's stomach nor on a full stomach.



LESS DESIRES

The Prophet (pbuh) has said: "Allah has said: '...When my slave prefers his desire over My wish, I put his affairs into confusion, make his life confused in the world and his heart pre-occupied with the world..."

If my slave prefers My wish over his desire, angels protect him, the earth guarantees his sustenance and I look after his affairs and bring the world to him although it may be reluctant to do so..."

It is said that the renowned Muslim scholar Abu Sina (Avicenna) once looked with disdain at a poor man who was eating leftover leaves from a grocer's shop. The man greeted him and told him: "What is the contempt for? You are the slave of my slaves!"

Abu Sina could not understand what the man was saying. The poor man explained: "O Abu Sina! You are the slave of your desires (want of good food) whilst desires are my slaves. Therefore, you are the slave of my slaves."

Abu Sina realised the wisdom of the poor man's words.

The person who is desirous (wants more all the time) is always busy in anxiety, worry and sorrow for he feels that whatever he has got is just not enough.



LESS EATING

“Do not extend your hand to food unless you are really hungry and stop eating before you are full... Being always full gives rise to various diseases” Imam Ali (pbuh)

Hazrat Luqman said to his son: “My son! When the stomach of a person is full, their faculty of thinking goes to sleep, and their tongue of wisdom becomes dumb, and their limbs fail to do the ibada of Allah”.

During the reign of the Khalifa Harun Rashid, there was a well-known Christian doctor who lived in Baghdad. He once went to visit Waqidi who was an ‘aalim and asked him about health issues in the Qur’an. Waqidi quoted aya 31 of Sura Al A’raf: “Eat and drink but do not be extravagant.”

The doctor asked whether there were any ahadith of the Prophet (pbuh) regarding health. Amongst the many, Waqidi quoted the following: “The stomach is the seat of all diseases, and the best medicine is less eating.”

The doctor commented: “Islam in a brief and basic rule has stated the prevention and cure of all diseases.”

It is recommended not to eat between breakfast and dinner – not to eat breakfast and dinner is harmful to health.



HONOUR GUESTS

“When Allah wishes to do good to a family, He sends them a gift. That gift is a guest who brings his sustenance with him and carries away with him the sins of the family” Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

“A guest is a guide who leads one to the path of Janna.”
Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

A father and son were once the guests of Imam Ali (pbuh). Imam made them comfortable sitting opposite them and talking to them. After they had finished eating, Qambar, Imam’s servant brought them a jug of water to wash their hands. Imam took the jug and asked the father to extend his hands so Imam could wash them for him. The guest said “How can I allow my Imam to serve me? It should be the other way.”

Imam replied “Here is your brother in eiman eager to serve his brother and gain the pleasure of Allah. Why do you prevent it?”

The guest extended his hands and Imam told him to take his time. When it was the son’s turn, Imam asked his son Muhammad Hanafiyya to hold the jug and told the son of his guest, “I washed your father’s hands. My son washed yours. I would have washed your hands too, but Allah loves to see that when a father and son are present in a place that the father enjoys a privilege and priority.”



HONOUR NEIGHBOURS*

"By Allah! Honour your neighbours, for surely the Prophet (pbuh) continued to say this until we thought that he might even give them the right to inherit from us." - Imam Ali (pbuh)

RIGHTS OF NEIGHBOURS from RISALATUL HUQUQ - by Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh)

1. You must protect everything about them when they are absent.
2. They must be respected when present.
3. You must help them whether they are present or absent.
4. Do not look for bad things about them.
5. If you find out something bad about them, cover their fault like a strong fort not letting anyone see it.
6. Do not sneakily listen to their conversations.
7. When they are in trouble do not leave them.
8. When they are well off and happy do not be jealous.
9. Forgive their faults.
10. If they do not behave well with you, then be patient.
11. Be their shield if anyone wants to abuse them.
12. If you know that they will listen to your advice than advise them secretly and not in front of all.

Imam Ali (pbuh) has said: "Avoid burying your dead near someone evil, for surely a good neighbour will benefit you in the next world just as he benefits you in this world."

An 'aalim knew someone in his neighbourhood who was not very pious and did not heed the advice of the 'aalim. The man died suddenly and the 'aalim was grieved thinking of the azhaab the man must be suffering in his grave. A few days later the a'lim saw the man in his dreams. He was happy and in luxurious surroundings. The man said: "What you see is a benefit I am enjoying not because of my deeds but that of a lady who was buried yesterday. Her grave has been visited by the Shuhada of Karbala and all of us around her have benefited from the mercy and blessings showered upon her."



The 'aalim, on waking up, enquired about the lady who had been buried the day before. He found out that she was a young mother and asked her husband what she had done to achieve such an honour which also benefited her neighbours in the graveyard. Her husband replied: "She was a good wife and mother. Every day after she had finished her work, she would recite Ziyarat Ashura and cry."

(She recited the Ziyara with understanding and total commitment and submission).



HONOUR PARENTS

"Allah's pleasure is the pleasure of one's parents and His anger is their anger." Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

A man once came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said: "Ya Rasulallah! I am healthy and want to take part in jihad for Islam. However, my mother does not like me being separated from her and going for battle."

The Prophet (pbuh) replied: "Go and stay with your mother. I swear by Him who has appointed me as His messenger that the thawaab for your spending one night in the service of your mother and her being happy is greater than you performing jihad for a whole year."

A man called Zakariyya once came to Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) and said: "I was a Christian but have now become a Muslim."

Imam asked him what convinced him to become a Muslim.

Zakariya replied that it was the following aya of the Qur'an: "Thus did We reveal to you our guidance by Our command; You did not know what the Book (Qur'an) was nor did you know what faith was, but We made it (the Qur'an) a light through which We guide whichever of our servants We want, and Indeed you are a guide of the right path." Sura Al Shu'ra - 42:52

Imam told Zakariyya: "Indeed Allah has guided you to Islam and illuminated your heart with its light."

Zakariyya then asked Imam about whether he could live with his parents who were still Christians. Imam asked whether they ate pork and Zakariyya said they did not.

Imam replied: "Take care of your mother. Be good and kind to her and as and when she breathes her last attend to her funeral rites."

Zakariyya said that when he returned home, he honoured his mother as he was ordered by Imam.



The mother on noticing the change in her son's behaviour asked; "What is the reason of you honouring me so much after you have become a Muslim?"

Zakariyya told her that one of the AhlulBayt of the Prophet (pbuh) had ordered him to honour her.

She said: "Your religion is better than mine. Guide me so that I may become a Muslim."

Zakariyya taught her the basis of Islam and she became a Muslim.

She offered the Zhuhr, 'Asr, Maghrib & Isha Salaa of that day as taught to her by her son and died a Muslim at midnight on that day.



SPEAK THE BEST OR REMAIN SILENT

"And say (O Muhammad) to Our servants that they should speak that which is the best....." Sura Bani Israil 17:53

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) was asked: "Yabna Rasulillah! What are the conditions of good behaviour?"

Imam replied: "Being kind and gentle, speaking only the best, and meeting mu'mineen with a cheerful face."

Imam Ali (pbuh) has said: "The best words are those that are followed by actions."

One of the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) used to put pebbles in his mouth. He only took them out when he spoke something which he knew was for the sake of Allah.

Everyone's destruction or salvation lies in speech and silence. One must strive to evaluate what one says before it is uttered. Silence has its advantages for it is one of the distinguishing marks of the knowledgeable. Whoever knows the value of speech is an expert in the company of silence.

Bibi Fizza was the servant who served the AhlulBayt. It has been reported that when she was freed, she talked only using the ayaat of Qur'an and no other speech.

Imam Zaynul Abideen (pbuh) in his treatise of rights says, "The right of the tongue is that you consider it too noble for obscenity, accustom it to good, refrain from any meddling in which there is nothing to be gained, express kindness to people, and speak well concerning them."

It has been estimated that most people speak enough in one week to fill a large 500-page book. In the average lifetime this would amount to 3000 volumes or 1,500,000 pages. It is a frightening thought that by these words we shall be either 'blessed' or 'condemned'.



There is an ancient Greek fable about a monster known as Proteus who had the power of assuming many shapes and appearances. He could become a tree or a pebble, a lion or a dove, a serpent, or a lamb. He seemed to have very little difficulty in passing from one form into another. The fabled creature reminds one of the human tongue. It can bless or curse, express praise, or whisper slander, it can spread a word of encouragement or spread vindictive hatred.

The following lines describe the power of words-

Soft words in a lullaby put a baby to sleep.

Hateful words stir violence.

Eloquent words will send armies into the face of death.

Encouraging words will fan the flame of genius of a Salman or a Jabir.

Powerful words will mould the public mind as the sculptor moulds his clay.

Words, spoken or written are a dynamic force.

Words are the swords we use in battles for success and happiness. How others react towards us depends, in a large measure, upon the words we utter to them.

Life is a great whispering gallery that sends back echoes of the words we send out.

Our words are immortal - they go marching through the years in the lives of all those with whom we come into contact. They will survive us.

So, before you speak, before you write, remember the power of words.

The commentator of Nahjul Balagha - Ibn Abil Hadeed writes about the Prophet (pbuh):

Everyone who heard him (Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)) speak became inclined towards him and developed love for him in their hearts. Thus, the Quraysh called the Muslims in Makka 'Subat' (Infatuated ones) and they said; "His speech is magic, it intoxicates more than wine."

They forbade their sons to sit with him in case they might be attracted by his speech.

Whenever the Prophet (pbuh) sat near the Ka'ba and recited the Qur'an or remembered Allah, the Quraysh would stick their fingers firmly in their ears so as not to hear and fall under 'the spell' of his speech. They



gathered their clothes over their heads and covered their faces so his radiant appearance would not draw them to him. Nevertheless, most people accepted Islam just by hearing him once or by seeing him.

Some ahadith from the Ma'sumeem:

- "A person is hidden under his tongue"
- "Do not begin a conversation without first greeting the person you are talking to."
- "Keep away from a conversation which is without an aim or object, for it lowers your position."
- "Wait to speak at the right opportunity; Many speak the truth but not at the right moment and therefore have to face disrespect."
- "Do not argue with foolish and ignorant people as they will hurt you with their nonsense."
- "Your speech is under your firm control as long as you do not speak, but if you speak you come under its control; so, guard your tongue as you guard your gold and silver, for many a word is a blessing but leads to displeasure."

The destructive force of words is summed up in the following poem.



WHO AM I?

I am more deadly than the whistling bullet from a gun.

I win without killing.

I tear down homes.

I break hearts.

I wreck lives.

I travel on the wings of the wind.

No innocence is strong enough to intimidate me,

No purity is pure enough to stop me.

I have no regard for truth,

I have no respect for justice,

Neither do I have mercy for the defenceless.

My victims are numerous as the sands of the sea and often just as innocent.

I AM GOSSIP



DO NOT DO DHULM (INJUSTICE)

"Do not do dhulm on others any more than you would like dhulm to be done to yourself." Imam Ali (pbuh)

"Whoever instigates dhulm will in the future bite his/her hands in regret." Imam Ali (pbuh)

A man wrote to Abu Dharr, who was a respected companion of the Prophet (pbuh) for some good advice. Abu Dharr asked him not to do dhulm to the one he loved the most.

When the man received the reply, he was a little disappointed. What was Abu Dharr trying to say? How would anyone do dhulm on the one he loved the most? He decided to write back to Abu Dharr asking for an explanation.

Abu Dharr replied: "The meaning is quite simple. To every living being the most loved one is the self (nafs). To you, your nafs is the most beloved and therefore I meant for you not to do dhulm on your nafs. Remember, when one commits a sin and acts against the laws of Allah, one harms oneself."

Someone asked Imam Muhammad Baqir (pbuh), "What is the smallest punishable sin (dhulm) that one commits against another person?"

Imam asked him to stretch his hand. Then Imam asked for permission to squeeze it. Imam squeezed his hand gently. The man gasped a little. Imam said: "That is the smallest punishable sin."

Bullying is a form of dhulm which must be avoided at all costs.



DO NOT ABUSE

"Indeed, Allah is angry with one who uses abusive language towards others." Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (pbuh)

A man once came to the gathering where Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh) was present. He held a grudge against Imam and started using abusive language insulting Imam in front of all the others. He then left abruptly.

After he left Imam told those who were present: "You have seen how abusive this man was towards me. Now I wish to go to him with all of you and to give him a reply to what he has said!"

All those with Imam thought Imam would deal with him harshly. However, throughout the short walk to his house Imam was reciting the following aya of Qur'an: "...And those who swallow their anger and forgive people; Indeed, Allah loves the righteous ones." Sura Ali-Imran 3:134

When they reached the man's house, they knocked on the door and called out to him. He thought Imam and his companions had come to punish him. He came out fearing the worst only to find Imam smiling at him.

Imam said: "An hour ago you came to me and used abusive language. I have now come to tell you that if you have spoken the truth and the evil that you have said I have done exists, then I pray to Allah that He may forgive me; However, if you have lied then I pray to Allah that He may overlook your sin and forgive you."

The man found himself helpless in front of such a generous attitude.

He said: "Yabna Rasulillah! None of the abusive things I said exist in you. In fact, I am more deserving of possessing them. Please forgive me."



DO NOT BELITTLE OTHERS

"Do not turn your face away from people scornfully.....Indeed Allah does not love any arrogant and boastful person." Sura Luqman 31:18

Anyone who wishes to be above others means that he wishes to humiliate and belittle others. The source of this always comes from an inferiority complex for otherwise no sensible person can imagine any difference between him and any other person. The only criterion in the eyes of Allah is taqwa.

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) has said: The only reason a person suffers from the disease of arrogance is due to an inferiority complex which he sees in himself."

A person who belittles others can identify their disease by the following symptoms:

- He does not like to be equal to others in any matter.
- He always wants to go ahead of others and sit at a higher place than others in a gathering.
- He expects others to greet him first.
- If anyone gives him advice, he gets annoyed.
- If he advises anyone it is with torment.
- If his word is not accepted, he gets angry.
- If he teaches, he belittles the students reminding them of the favour done to them and considers them to be his servants.

One day the Prophet (pbuh) was sitting in a circle with his companions when a poor man came in. His poverty was apparent by his tattered clothes. It is the akhlaq of a 'majlis' to sit where there is a vacant place and not look for a particular place to suit one's status, etc.

The poor man saw a space and sat down. It so happened that the space was near a rich man who gathered his clothes and pulled them towards himself as if to create a distance between him and the poor man. It seemed that the rich man was feeling a little uneasy.



The Prophet (pbuh) was watching the behaviour of the rich man. He addressed him saying: "Did you fear that some of his poverty might stick to you?"

The rich man replied: "No! Ya Rasulallah! "

The Prophet (pbuh) asked: "Did you fear that something out of your wealth might be transferred to him?"

The rich man replied: "No! Ya Rasulallah!"

The Prophet (pbuh) asked a further question: "Did you fear that your clothes might get dirtied by touching his clothes?"

The rich man replied: "No! Ya Rasulallah!"

"Then why did you move yourself away from him?" asked the Prophet (pbuh)

The rich man replied: "Ya Rasulallah! I admit I made a grave mistake. I would like to make amends and I would like to give half my wealth to this Muslim brother of mine."

When the poor man heard his words, he said: "Ya Rasulallah! I am not prepared to take his offer!"

The companions who were present there were surprised and said: "Why?"

The poor man replied: "I fear lest with the wealth I am offered I too may become arrogant and one day may belittle one of my brothers in Islam in the manner in which he (the rich man) has treated me today."



SAY: "LA ILAHA ILLALLAH" (There is no God except Allah)

"La ilaha illallah" is the essence of the whole message of Islam. It is the basis of all duas. Reciting it continuously renews one's bay'at to Allah. In every Adhan and Iqama, announcing our faith, we bear witness that there is no god except Allah.

It begins with 'La' meaning 'No'. We start off by saying No to all other gods. In Adhan and Iqama after takbeer we begin with "Ash hadu anla ilaha illallah" and end with "La ilaha illallah". We remind ourselves to turn away from all gods - wealth, personality, hypocrisy.... and direct towards Allah, seeking His pleasure.

The hadith of the Golden Chain:

"My father Musa Al-Kadhim narrated to me from his father Ja'fer As-Sadiq from his father Mohammed Al-Baqir from his father Ali Zaynul Abideen from his father, the martyr of Karbala from his father Ali ibn Abu Talib saying:

"My loved one, and the pleasure of my eyes, the Messenger of God (pbuh) told me once, that Jibrail told him from the Lord:

"The kalima of La Ilaha Illallah is my fort; whoever says it would enter my fort; and whoever enters my fort was safe from my punishment". Imam Ali Ridha (pbuh)

Imam narrated this hadith in the town of Nishapur in Iran on his way to Marw where Mamun had called him.

The scholars and people had lined the way and requested Imam to narrate a hadith to them. Those who wrote down the hadith numbered twenty thousand.

People started reciting the Kalima when Imam put his hand up and continued; "Yes, the Kalima is Allah's fort. It will provide you with excellent safety but on one condition only and that is that you obey and follow us, the holy Imams in the progeny of the Holy Prophet (pbuh)".



BUILD A MASJID, VISIT A MASJID, CLEAN A MASJID AND LAY A COVERING ON THE FLOOR OF A MASJID

“Indeed, those who maintain the masajid of Allah are those who believe in Allah and the last day (Qiyama) and establish salaa and pay zakaa fearing none but Allah...” Sura Al Bara’a (Tawba) 9:18

The Prophet (pbuh) has said: “One who constructs a masjid will be granted a house in Janna by Allah”

The following anecdote from the life of Bahlul* demonstrates the necessity for the right niyya (intention) when donating towards the construction of a masjid.

Bahlul once saw some people constructing a large building. On enquiring about it he was told by the owner of the land that he was building a masjid.

“Who are you building the masjid for?” Bahlul asked.

“For the sake of Allah, of course!”

That night when the owners and builders had gone home, Bahlul put a big sign in front of the masjid which read “Masjid e Bahlul”

The next morning the owner of the land was furious when he saw the sign. “Why did you do that, Bahlul?” he shouted.

Bahlul replied: “If you really are building the masjid for Allah, it should not bother you what name is put on it for He whom you are building it for is the Knower of all intentions.”

*Bahlul was originally known as Wahab bin Umru and came from Kufa. He was a student of Imam Ja’fer A-Sadiq (pbuh). He pretended to be insane to be able to do tableegh and avoid being persecuted. He lived during the time of the Khalifa Harun Rashid who was hostile towards the Ahlulbayt.



VISIT THE SICK

"One who helps a sick person in meeting his needs is forgiven of his sins whether he has been successful or not." Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) met some of his companions who were on their way to visit a sick person. Imam asked them; "Are you carrying with you an apple, or quince or some perfume?"
They replied in the negative.

Imam said: "Know that such things give peace of mind to a sick person."

Whenever one visits a sick person one must take a gift, be it small. The Prophet (pbuh) has said: "Whoever is willing to feed a sick person shall be provided the fruits of Janna by Allah."

It is also necessary that the visit should not be an inconvenience to the patient. Imam Ali (pbuh) has said: "Among those who are rewarded for visiting the sick; he is rewarded more who stays with the sick person for a short time unless he knows that the sick person wishes him to stay longer."

The Prophet (pbuh) has said: "Pray for the sick person and say, 'O Allah! Cure him with Your medicine and keep him safe from distress'."



ESCORT A JANAZA

"Whoever escorts a janaza of one of our Shias is forgiven his sins and becomes void of sins as a newly born child." Imam Ali Ridha (pbuh)

One day the Prophet (pbuh) was escorting a janaza. He heard some people praising the dead person and saying that he was a good man.

The Prophet (pbuh) on hearing this said:

"I swear by the Lord of the Ka'ba that the path of Janna has been made secure for this man (the one whose janaza was being escorted and who was being praised) because mu'mineen have witnessed his goodness and Allah does not reject their testimony."

Abu Dharr has said that the Prophet (pbuh) told him: "O Abu Dharr! When you escort a janaza remind yourself of your own death and fear it remembering that you too will meet it one day."

It is also highly recommended to visit the graves regularly and remember the dead praying for their forgiveness.

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) has said: "It is one of the rights of a Muslim that his grave should be visited."



ACQUIRE KAFAN

"One of the qualities which purify the heart is to acquire a kafan."

Acquiring a kafan is a reminder of death.

Imam Ali (pbuh) in a letter to Imam Hasan (pbuh) says: "O my son! Increase your remembrance of death, and remember what you will enter into it, and what you will be led on after your death, so that when it comes to you, you are well prepared for it. Thus, it will not come upon you suddenly and catch you unaware."

The Prophet (pbuh) once asked Jibrail: "O Jibrail! Give me some good advice, for surely to take advice is beneficial."

Jibrail replied that he would give some advice for the Umma of the Prophet (pbuh). "If anyone from your Umma wishes to be successful in this world and in the hereafter, they must remember two and forget two!"

The Prophet (pbuh) asked: "O Jibrail! What are the two to remember and what are the two to forget".

Jibrail replied: "The two to remember are Allah and Death. The two to forget are the good one has done to another; and the hurt one has suffered from another."



REPAY DEBTS

"My son! You should know that if a person takes a loan and has it in his view that he must repay it, then he is under Allah's protection until the intention is put into practise. However, if he does not care for its repayment then he is a thief." Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh)

Islam considers it necessary for debtors to repay loans at the appointed time by whatever means possible even though they may be obliged to sell their belongings. However, the necessities such as home are exempt.

It is reported that a close companion of Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) called Muhammad bin Abu Umayr became bankrupt. He lost his entire wealth and property and became extremely needy.

However, someone owed him 10,000 dirhams.

When the man heard of his need he sold his house for 10,000 dirhams and brought the money to Muhammad bin Abu Umayr as repayment of his debt.

Muhammad asked him: "Have you inherited the money?"

The man replied: "No!"

Muhammad asked: "Have you sold a garden or an orchard?"

The man replied: "No!"

Muhammad asked: "Then how were you able to get the money?"

The man replied: "I had a house which I sold to repay your debt."

Muhammad said: "I have heard from Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) that no-one should sell his house to repay a debt. Take your money for although I need it, I will not take it from the proceeds of the sale of your residence."



GENEROSITY

Generosity is nearness to the Creator and creation, and miserliness is farness from the Creator and creation." Imam Ali (pbuh)

Imam Ali (pbuh) has also said: "Generosity and giving is displayed in feeding people, not in giving them wealth. Whoever gives away a thousand while being mean with a plate of food is not generous."

In the battle of Moota, there were several companions of the Prophet (pbuh) who lay mortally wounded on the ground. They were all thirsty groaning for water.

A man seeing them took some water and offered it to one of them who pointed to another saying he was in greater need of water.

The man went to the second mujahid who pointed to a third saying he was in greater need.

When the man got to the third mujahid he found him dead.

He returned to the second mujahid, but he too was dead and so was the first man.

That is generosity - giving priority to others before oneself, one of the greatest of human values.

There are three kinds of givers:

- i) The flint - To get anything out of a flint you must hammer it. And then only you get chips and sparks.
- ii) The sponge - To get anything out of a sponge you must squeeze it. The more pressure you use the more you will get.
- iii) The honeycomb - It just overflows with its own sweetness.

Which kind of giver are you?

"Overlook and forgive the weaknesses of generous people, because if they fall down, the hands of Allah lifts them up."

Imam Ali (pbuh)



THE BEST AKHLAQ (Husnal Khulq)

"I have been sent only to raise the akhlaq of mankind to its highest station." Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

The word akhlaq is the plural of the word khulq, which means personality. It is that which is the source of all those actions, which one does spontaneously without thinking about them. It comes into existence through exercise and repetitive practise and is not easily destroyed. Even though some characteristics are inherited or acquired by the upbringing, one has a choice to overcome that which is wrong through practise and effort. Therefore, the akhlaq of an individual is through his choice.

The Prophet (pbuh) has said: "You cannot please all the people with money, but you can meet them with a cheerful face and good behaviour so that you may be liked by them. Wealth is limited but good akhlaq and cheerfulness is inexhaustible."

A man from Shaam (Damascus) once came to Madina arriving in the presence of Imam Hasan (pbuh) and started abusing Imam Ali (pbuh).

Imam Hasan (pbuh) took him to one side and said: "You must be very tired from your journey. Come with me and I shall give you food, drink, and rest. We will talk later."

The man turned to Imam Hasan (pbuh) and said: "I came to Madina as your worst enemy and now I am the best of your admirers through your akhlaq."

Imam Ali (pbuh) has said: A mu'min has a smile and cheerfulness on his face and sorrow in his heart."

Imam Ali (pbuh) was always cheerful in dealing with others so much so that some people considered it to be a weak point for a Khalifa saying that a leader must be grim, a person others should be afraid of.



Allah says about the Prophet (pbuh) in the Qur'an:

"It was by the mercy of Allah that you are gentle with them, for if you would have been stern and fierce of heart, they would have run away from you." Sura Ali-Imran 3:159



GIVE SADAQA

"If you are poor do business with Allah by giving sadaqa."

Imam Ali (pbuh)

Sadaqa is the charity given for the sake of Allah. It is a source of attaining the blessings of Allah. The best sadaqa is that which is given in secret for the Prophet (pbuh) has said it is that which puts out the flame of Allah's anger.

The Prophet (pbuh) has also said: "On the day of Qiyama everyone will rest under the shadow of his sadaqa until the matters are settled between the people."

He has also said: " Sadaqa reaches the hand of the Creator before it reaches the one you give it to."

Imam Musa Al-Kadhim (pbuh) has said: "Beware of refusing to give sadaqa and then spending twice as much in disobeying Allah."

Sayyida Fatima Zahra (pbuh) could not bear to see her two young sons Hasan and Husayn (pbuh) ill. She made a vow with Allah she will fast for three days. With her the whole family fasted.

On the first day when they were about to break their fast, there was a knock on the door. It was a poor man who was hungry. All the family gave up their bread to the man and broke their fast with water.

Similarly on the next two days, an orphan and a prisoner came who were hungry. The family gave away their food.

Allah revealed a sura of the Qur'an in honour of their sadaqa –Sura Al Dahr (Sura 76).

The criterion for sadaqa is taught by the family of Fatima Zahra (pbuh) and her family in this sura: "We feed you only for Allah's sake, we want no reward nor thanks for it. We fear from our Lord a difficult day of distress (Qiyama)." Sura Al Dahr 76:9, 10



STOP ANY GRIEF/HURT DIRECTED AT A SERVANT OF ALLAH (MU'MIN)

"One who removes the hardship of a Mu'min will have his hardships removed by Allah on Qiyama. One who hides the faults of a Mu'min will have his faults hidden by Allah on Qiyama. One who relieves the sorrow of a Mu'min will have his sorrow relieved on Qiyama. "

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

A man came up to Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh) saying that another had been abusing Imam in his absence.

He started to relate the incident.

Imam interrupted him and said: "The man who abused me in my absence threw the arrow. You picked it up and ensured it reached its target."

Whenever the people reaped their first harvest, they would bring the early fresh fruit to the Prophet (pbuh) who would distribute it to those around him.

Once a poor man brought one fruit from his small farm and gave it to the Prophet (pbuh) who tasted it and continued eating it himself whilst his companions looked on. One of the companions meekly said: "Ya Rasulallah! You have overlooked the rights of those who watch whilst you eat?"

The Prophet (pbuh) smiled and waited until the man who had brought the fruit had gone. Then he said: "I tasted the fruit, and it was not yet ripe. Had I allowed you to have some, one of you would have shown his distaste, therefore disappointing this man who brought the gift. Rather than make him feel bitter, my mouth accepted the bitterness."



ONE WHO HOPES IN ALLAH IS HELPED

Hope (Raja') is the heart's attachment to something it loves that will take place in the future, just as fear relates to what will transpire in the future.

No creature of Allah can be devoted to Allah as He deserves to be devoted to. Even the Prophet (pbuh) - the most perfect of human beings used to say in his dua: "We are not devoted to You as You deserve to be devoted to, and We do not know You as You deserve to be known"

By pondering and reflecting upon the ayaat of Qur'an and the ahadith about the promises of Allah, one can bring about complete hope in Allah.

In Sura Al Zumar - 39:53 Allah says: "Say! O My devotees who have been extravagant (committed sins) against their nafs (soul); do not despair of the rahma (mercy) of Allah; Indeed, Allah shall forgive all the sins; Surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

It is reported in some ahadith that on the day of Qiyama, Allah's rahma (mercy) shall be so abundant that even Shaytan will aspire for Allah's pardon!

However, one must be careful of differentiating between hope and delusion (false hopes), for it may be that a human being may be deluded but thinks himself to be a person with hope in Allah. If one belittles the commands of Allah, does not follow them but has hopes in Allah, then he is deluded. However, one who is committed to Allah's obedience, and has His greatness and mercy imprinted on his heart, is one with hope.

It is reported in Al-Kafi, from Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh): "There are some people who commit sins and say, 'we are hopeful.' They remain in this condition until death comes to them. They are a people who have been swept away by false hopes. They lie, they are not the hopeful ones; for indeed one who has hope in something pursues it, and one who fears something, flees from it."



ONE WHO FEARS ALLAH IS SAFE

Fear (khawf) is that which pertains to future events, as it is a fear that something undesirable may befall him or that something desirable may pass him by.

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) was asked about the contents of the will that Luqman left for his son. Imam replied: "There were some wonderful things in it; and the best of all of the things he said to his son was; 'have such a fear of Allah that were you to come to Him with the virtues of the two worlds, He would still punish you, and put such a hope in Allah that were you to come to Him with the sins of the two worlds, He would still have rahma (mercy) on you'."

Then Imam added: "My father used to say; 'there is no mu'min who does not have two lights in his heart - the light of fear and the light of hope. Were these to be measured, one would not exceed the other'."

The human being must therefore never close his eyes to his shortcomings in fulfilling the orders of Allah, nor should he ever take his eyes off the rahma (mercy) of Allah.

There are various levels and degrees of fear in accordance with the level of knowledge and eiman a mu'min has.

"...indeed, only those of His devotees (Ibaad) who have knowledge fear Allah...." Sura Al Fatir - 35:28

The first level of fear is that of His punishment. As knowledge (ma'rifa) increases, one fears His anger. When perfection is achieved, one fears separation from Him. One who fears Him only because of His punishment runs away from Him, whilst one who fears separation from Him runs towards Him.

In Dua Kumayl, we are taught by Imam Ali (pbuh) to plead:

"...and my Rabb, suppose that I am able to bear Your punishment, how can I bear separation from You...?"



That which instils fear of Allah is contemplating on the justice of Allah, death, the day of Qiyama, the accounting (hisaab) and the scales (mizaaan) in relation to his sins. Reflecting over the ayaat of Qur'an and the ahadith relating to these topics also increases one's fear of Allah.

It is reported in Al-Kafi that Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) has said: "...The mu'min stands between two dreadful things; his past sins regarding which he does not know what Allah will do (with him), and the remainder of his life, regarding which he does not know what more sins he will commit therein. So, he does not wake up except in a state of fear, and nothing keeps him righteous except fear."



UNSUCCESSFUL IS THE DISILLUSIONED ONE WHO HOPES IN OTHER THAN ALLAH AND FEARS OTHER THAN HIM

One who fears others or their opinions and in doing so disobeys Allah, will find his striving and efforts destroyed, for He for whom the striving was done will not even bear the consequences, let alone recompense for pleasing him.

Allah says in the Qur'an - Sura Ali Imraan - 3:175

"Indeed, it is the Shaytan who makes you fear his friends; but do not fear them and fear Me if you are mu'mineen."

One who hopes in anyone other than Allah for a reward or compensation for any deed is like one who hopes for water from a mirage. Even to the extent of seeking sympathy, a hadith from Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh) states:

"When you are tried by a slip, do not complain to Allah's creatures, for you would only be complaining of the Merciful to the merciless."

It is said that for one who fears something or someone other than Allah or hopes for anything from other than Him, all doors close upon him, and fear predominates upon him veiling his nafs with 70 veils, the least of which is doubt.

The human being soon realises through direct experience or indirect knowledge that all creation is immersed in possibilities, poverty and need, and that the only Provider and One with no needs is Allah.

"...Say! Everything is from Allah..." Sura Al Nisa - 4:78

The simile given of fear and hope in Allah is that of a bird. When they are equal and balanced in a mu'min, just like the wings of a bird make its flight perfect, the mu'min's ascent to Allah is perfect. When one of them is lacking, it makes the bird lose its ability to fly. When both fear and hope in Allah are missing, just like a bird without wings who falls to its death, a mu'min's striving fails.



ONE WHO DOES NOT WISH TO BE EXPOSED ON THE DAY OF QIYAMA SHOULD PROVIDE CLOTHING TO THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE ANY IN THE WORLD

It does not mean that one relieves one's obligation by going through one's wardrobe and removing all unwanted clothes to deliver to the nearest charity organisation.

It means assisting to clothe fellow human beings in the world by: Not being wasteful - Most of us who live in the Western world have far more clothes than we need. Fashion trends and whims dictate that our wardrobes are changed virtually every season. It is highly recommended to dress cleanly, and smartly but wastefulness is condemned.

Imam Ali (pbuh) has said: "Neat dress clears off worries and grief from the heart of a human being."

In the Qur'an Sura Al A'raf - 7:31 Allah says, "...Indeed, Allah does not love those who are wasteful..."

We must be aware of the needs of others in the world. Cocooned in our cosy worlds, it is hard to imagine living in the outdoors, with very little clothing for protection. All too often, the needs of others even when portrayed on the media seem a million miles away from home. One of the reasons being that we are accustomed to the world of make believe. It is incumbent to investigate and find out about the condition of other Muslims in the world and strive to assist them in whatever way possible.

The Prophet (pbuh) has said: "One who wakes up in the morning and does not show concern for other Muslims, is not one of us."

The Prophet (pbuh) has also said: "Allah has said, 'The poor are My dependents, and the rich are My agents; if My agents will not give My dependants their due, I will put them into Jahannam and I shall not care for them.'"



ONE WHO DOES NOT WISH TO BE THIRSTY ON THE DAY OF QIYAMA SHOULD QUENCH THE THIRSTY IN THE WORLD

The availability of clean, fresh water is vital to healthy human life. To keep a human body healthy, it is recommended to drink 6 - 8 glasses of water a day. Even those human beings who are classified as brain dead perceive thirst.

Dr Peter McCullagh from John Curtis School of Medical Research in Canberra (Sunday Times - 2nd June 1996) explained “...sensation of thirst can be demonstrated to persist despite very severe damage to the brain...”

Water is a human being’s basic right and Allah has provided an unlimited amount of fresh water.

However, billions of people on the earth do not have all the water they need, often because their local water supply is polluted or because in most countries water is regarded as the property of the government. It is public officials who decide who gets it, at what price and how it is used. Another factor is the wastage of water in developed countries where water is taken for granted. It was never known for a Muslim country to charge for water; the introduction of a charge for water was an innovation of the colonial powers.

Incidents in Islamic history demonstrate the basic right to water for all human beings.

When Imam Ali (pbuh) led his army to Syria to the land of Siffeen, Muawiya and his army had already occupied the bank of the Euphrates. Imam was forced to camp away from the water. Muawiya had wished to prevail against Imam using the weapon of thirst. Imam sent a message to Muawiya telling him that he did not come to fight for water but to uphold the truth and bring the Muslims together after the leaders of falsehood had divided them. Muawiya did not heed Imam’s request and Imam had to wage a battle for water. He succeeded in occupying the



bank of the Euphrates and driving Muawiya's army away from the river. The situation was reversed. When his men shouted; "Now prevent them from water as they prevented us from water!" Imam replied, "Allah has given you victory against them because of their injustice and aggression. Certainly, the issue is more important than depriving them of water." Then he sent a message to Muawiya: "We shall not treat you as you treated us. Come to the water, we are equal."

How can you help to conserve and protect valuable drinking water for the generations to come?

- Avoid running water in the sink when brushing teeth, washing up, etc. (a closed tap whilst you brush your teeth can save 5 gallons of water a minute).
- Take shorter showers.
- Do full loads of clothes and dishes in their respective washers.
- Fix leaks - A drippy tap can waste 20 gallons a day.
- Wash cars with a bucket rather than a running hose.

Remember, every little bit helps, and we are all answerable for wastage on the day of Qiyama.



ONE WHO DOES NOT WISH TO BE HUNGRY ON THE DAY OF QIYAMA SHOULD PROVIDE FOR THE HUNGRY IN THE WORLD

World food supply is defined as the ratio of food produced to world population. Other factors, however, determine the extent of hunger and malnutrition in the world. These include food demand, food distribution, food availability, food wastage, and abuse of the environment.

The persistence of hunger in a world of plenty will be a responsibility, which we will all have to answer for.

Statistics tell us that of the 5 billion human beings that reside on the earth, 1 billion are desperately poor and face food insecurity. Every day 35,000 children under the age of 5 years die of malnutrition. Millions become blind, mentally retarded or suffer other disabilities for a lack of vitamins and minerals. Hunger increases pressures that lead to refugees, migrants, political turmoil, and armed conflict.

The Prophet (pbuh) has said, “All Muslims are like part of one body. When one part is in pain, the other parts rush to its aid.”
“He is not a Muslim who eats to his fill whilst his neighbour goes hungry.”

Ending hunger in the world is an achievable goal if ALL of us have a strong commitment not to want to enter the door of Jahannam.

Abuse of the environment

Through time the human being has mismanaged his environment, thus reducing the productivity of the land. Since maximising profits was the goal in modern agricultural practices, it was not until recently that the human being realised that natural resources were being depleted and harmed. The ‘mad cow’ disease and an increase in ‘asthma’ sufferers is an example of the abuse of our resources.

Imam Ja’fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) has said, “The human being should lead his life in such a way that he should not pollute the environment, because if



he does this there will come a day when it will be difficult and perhaps impossible for the human being to survive on account of pollution.”

Exploitation of the poor by the rich

The practise in third world countries of using land to produce cash crops like cotton, sugar cane, and worst of all tobacco, for the use of multi-national companies should be condemned by one and all.

The Prophet (pbuh) encouraged agricultural production linking it with thawab. “One who plants a tree, or sows a crop for a people, animals or birds to benefit from merits thawab.”

Food Wastage

“...Eat and drink and do not be wasteful; Indeed, He does not love those who are wasteful.” Sura Al A'raf - 7:32



WITHDRAWAL OF THE MERCY OF ALLAH ON THE LIARS

The Prophet (pbuh) has said: “The worst and most indecent statement is a lie.”

“It is possible that a mu’min may be a coward or even a miser, but it is not possible that he may be a liar.”

Imam Hasan Al-Askari (pbuh) has said, “When all evils and sins invade a house, the root cause is lying.”

Even associating with a liar is discouraged. Imam Ali (pbuh) has said: “It is appropriate that a Muslim should not associate with a liar.”

It is said that everything is something, but the friendship of a liar is nothing.

Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh) said that a liar is like a mirage which shows far off things to be nearer and the things which are nearer to be far off.

The companion of the Prophet (pbuh), Abu Dharr (for whom the Prophet (pbuh) said that the sun had not shone on a person more truthful than Abu Dharr) asked whether human beings were answerable for what they spoke!

The Prophet (pbuh) replied, “O Abu Dharr! Is there anything but what they utter from their tongues which will lead them to Jahannam.... O Abu Dharr! The person who speaks a lie is destined for destruction in Jahannam... If you speak, let it be the truth. Never give utterance to anything false.”

Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh) has said, “Avoid telling lies, whether in trivial or important matters, whether as a matter of fact or out of fun. The person who tells lies in trivial matters or in jest, shall develop a boldness to tell lies in important matters as well.”

Human beings lie out of fear of others, or out of desire of gaining worldly wealth or honour. Lying is the weapon of the weak for one who possesses moral courage will never lie.



The philosopher Aristotle said: “Those who tell lies are punished in the way that even when they tell the truth nobody believes them.”

Imam Ja’fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) has said, “Lying is indecent and undesirable except in 2 cases:

- To repel the mischief of the oppressors
- To bring about reconciliation between people.”



WITHDRAWAL OF THE MERCY OF ALLAH ON THE MISERS

Bukhl (miserliness) is described as stinginess, where one should be generous. It is caused by the love of the world. A miser is one who is in essence selfish. Those who are miserly even hold on to their smiles, their salaams and their akhlaq.

Miserliness destroys the roots of affection for others in an individual. His mind becomes centred on wealth and materialism. It is the fear of imaginative poverty depriving him of comfort and ease. A miser is constantly worried and depressed.

The Prophet (pbuh) has said, “The least friendly amongst people are the misers.”

A leading psychiatrist, Doctor Karl Menninger was once asked what one should do if they felt a nervous breakdown coming on.

He replied, “If you feel a nervous breakdown coming on, I urge you to find someone else with a problem, a serious one, and get involved with that individual, helping him solve his problem.”

By giving time and energy to others, one is no longer thinking internally, no longer letting things gnaw at oneself. One is no longer getting disturbed about oneself because the outlook is towards others. Giving with a generous heart drives out the tough old miser within us. Even those who think they are poor need to give. Just the very act of letting go of wealth or any other treasure does something within us, it destroys the shaytan of bukhl.

Allah in the Qur’an says, “...those who hoard gold and silver (wealth given by Allah) and do not spend it in the way of Allah, announce to them a painful punishment.” Sura Al Tawba 9:34



Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) once said that amongst the enemies of Allah is a proud pauper. Then Imam asked those who were listening whether they understood who a proud pauper was.

They replied, "Yabna Rasulallah! It is a poor person."

Imam said, "A proud pauper is a rich person who does not take a step towards the pleasure of Allah by spending his wealth in His path."

Imam has also said, "The best amongst you are those who are generous and forgiving, and the worst are those who are miserly and narrow minded."



WITHDRAWAL OF THE MERCY OF ALLAH ON THE UNJUST

“Injustice is of three kinds:

1. The injustice that will not be forgiven.
2. The injustice that will not be overlooked.
3. The injustice that will be forgiven and overlooked.

The injustice that will not be forgiven is ascribing partners to Allah (Shirk).

“Allah will not forgive one who ascribes a partner to Him.” Sura Al Nisa - 4:48

The injustice that will not be overlooked is that which is committed by one against another.

“The injustice that will be forgiven is one that a human being commits against him/herself in minor acts of sinfulness.”

Imam Ali (pbuh) - Nahjul Balagha - Khutba No 176

1. The injustice of shirk

The shahada of eiman begins with ‘Laa’ - No. Only when one rejects other gods can one proceed to believe in Allah. Shirk originates through ignorance, when one believes that other forces besides Allah have a role in directing the affairs of the world. If one serves these forces or does any act to please or subdue them, then one is committing shirk. The opposite of shirk is Tawheed.

Shirk is caused by love of the material world and becoming forgetful about Allah. To cure oneself of this injustice to one’s nafs, one must ponder and meditate over the creation of Allah and His greatness.

Imam Ali Ridha (pbuh) has said, “Ibada (devotion to Allah) does not lie in lengthy fasting and salaa, but in the amount of contemplation in the works of Allah.”



2. The injustice towards others

“Indeed, Allah enjoins justice and the doing of good towards your family and relations....” **Sura Al Nahl 16:90**

To be just towards others is to fulfil their rights.

Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh) in ‘Risalatul Huquq’ (Charter of rights) states the rights of fellow Muslims as:

“It is the right of your fellow Muslim in general to have peaceful feelings towards them and to spread the wings of mercy for them, to be gentle towards the wrong-doers among them and to reform them by earning their love; to be grateful to those who are virtuous in character or are generous towards you, because their virtuosity of character... itself is a generosity towards you, as they have saved you from harm and spared you the effort of protecting yourself from them, and kept their troubles away from you. Therefore, pray for all of them. Keep your help ready for all of them and treat all Muslims according to their proper position - keep the elder in the position of your father, the younger in the place of your child, and the contemporaries in the position of your brother....”

3. The injustice of minor sins

A minor sin is that which is not listed as a major sin and one which is committed out of ignorance or in error and not repeated (and for which tawba is done). Imam Ali (pbuh) lists the major sins as:

1. To deny the existence of Allah.
2. To murder a respected person.
3. To be disinherited by parents.
4. To take interest after knowing it is haram.
5. To usurp the wealth of an orphan with force.
6. To run away from jihad.
7. To return to ignorance after eiman.



ALLAH WILL HUMILIATE ONE WHO MOCKS ISLAM

Mockery is to ridicule something or someone. Its opposite is respect. It arises out of ignorance, pride, or an inferiority complex. In essence it is the lack of faith and reason.

Faith and reason go hand in hand. One without the other is fatal to the nafs. Through faith we experience the essence of Allah whilst through reason we experience His expression.

To fulfil the respect due to Islam, the first step is to fulfil the orders laid down for the benefit of the human being. When one loves & respects someone (e.g., parents, spouse...), the first manifestation of that love is to be able to avoid anything, which would displease him or her. To disobey them is a mockery of that love and respect. Even to fulfil the orders unenthusiastically is a mockery, i.e., performing them lethargically.

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) has said, "Our shafa'a (intercession) does not extend to those who take salaa lightly." Note that he does not mention those who do not pray for they are likened to disbelievers, but he addresses those who pray as and when it suits them or in a way, which does not reflect, its importance.

To remain passive as a mu'min is a mockery of Islam as well. When we see danger, we need to protect ourselves; when we see need, we are not only to raise our hands in dua, but we must address that need.

Finally, the worse form of mockery is to look down upon those who do follow and respect Islam calling them backward, not with the times or extremists. It is where the love of the world (hubbud dunya) leads one to believe that respect and position lie with wealth, profession, power, or someone else other than Allah. Many similes are given in the Qur'an from the people of the past who fell into this trap but realised when it was too late. e.g., Firawn.

"...Let not the life of the world deceive you, nor let the deceiver (Shaytan) deceive you in regard to Allah..." Sura Luqman 31:33



ALLAH WILL HUMILIATE ONE WHO MOCKS THE AHLULBAYT

“...Say! I do not ask you of any reward except love for my near relations...” Sura Al Shu’ra 42:23

Love is the origin and foundation of all human interaction. The first step is to acknowledge the position of the Ahlulbayt regarding their proximity to Allah and their designations by Allah to be our leaders. To suspend our egocentric drives and follow them to the best of our ability as leaders ought to be followed. Anything less than this results in the mockery of the Ahlulbayt.

“O people! I leave amongst you two important (weighty) items- the book of Allah and my progeny, my Ahlulbayt. Should you be attached to these two, never, never shall you go astray after me, for indeed these two will never be separated from one another or until they meet me at the spring of Kawthar (in Janna).”

Hadith Thaqaalayn - Prophet (pbuh)

It is reported in Al-Kafi from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (pbuh) that when this aya was revealed - “On the day when We shall call together all human beings with their Imams” Bani Israil - 17:71, the Muslims asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Are you not the Imam of all people?’

The Prophet (pbuh) replied, ‘I am the messenger of Allah to all people, but there will be Aimma for the people appointed by Allah from my Ahlulbayt. They will stand up among mankind, but their truth will be rejected. The misguided leaders to falseness, and their followers will torment them. So, whoever loves them, follows them, and accepts their truth, shall be from me, with me and shall meet me. Be it known that those who torment them and reject them are neither from me, nor with me, and I disassociate myself from them.”

Love must also be manifested. If it does not manifest itself into actions, it is a mockery of the person whom it is directed towards. e.g., If a child was never shown love but treated with indifference all his life, would he really believe that his parents loved him?



Azadari is one form of manifestation of the love for the Ahlulbayt. Imam Khumayni said: "...Now a group of people come and tell us not to read majalis... They do not understand the meaning of Azadari. Alas! They do not know that when one weeps for Imam Husayn (pbuh), he pledges to keep the mission alive.... each droplet of a tear is a challenge to the tyrant... Let no one in the name of modern thinking and intellectualism deceive you into believing that weeping and mourning over the tragedy of Karbala is useless..."

The poem below was written about those who mock the Ahlulbayt:
I would like a little of the Ahlulbayt please,
Not enough to brighten my nafs or disturb my sleep,
but just enough to see me through my exams and problems.
I don't want enough of them to make me wear hijab,
or pray salaa or give khums,
I want fulfilment of desires not transformation.
I want the warmth of belonging to their community when I need them,
but I do not want to provide the warmth through their love.
How much of the Ahlulbayt do you want?



ALLAH WILL HUMILIATE ONE WHO AIDS THE UNJUST IN THEIR INJUSTICE TO CREATION

Freedom is a requisite for life and evolution and one of the greatest needs for all living creatures. It means the absence of obstacles in the way of growth. Human beings need both social and spiritual freedom. Social freedom is having freedom in connection with other individuals in society, so they do not hinder growth, do not imprison them, enslave them, exploit all their physical and mental powers in their own interests.

One of the greatest problems of human beings throughout history has been the abuse of power by powerful elements in subjugating others and enslaving them to enjoy the fruits of their lives and labour.

With reference to the Bani Israil, Firawn tells Musa (pbuh); "What is your answer, Musa? These are my servants and slaves." Sura M'uminoon - 23:48.

Firawn was open about his exploitation and enslavement. Today human beings deprive others of their rights and freedom under the pretext of defending peace and liberty.

Have you ever wondered where the ball you kick or the jeans you wear were made? Were they made in a factory in a third world country where a young child was forced to work for three quarters of the day and paid a minute fraction of the price you paid? These are issues where we assist the unjust in further exploiting other human beings and yet we turn a blind eye!

Exploitation is dhulm.

The great aalim, Murtaza Mutahhari writes; "Do you know what exploitation means? It means picking someone else's fruits. For each person his essence is a fruitful tree, and his labour and thoughts are the product of that tree. The crop must be his. But when others seize these fruits by one means or another, we say a person is exploited... In Islam it



is not a rat race for the survival of the fittest, but the race is for who can bend down the most to lift those who fall.

There are great lessons to be learnt from history.

Muhammad ibn Abdul Malik was a minister in the Abbasid khilafat. He had an oven made of iron in which the inside was lined with sharp rods. When a political prisoner was brought to him, he would put the person in the oven, lighting it and burn him alive.

When Mutawakkil became the Khalifa, he ordered the imprisonment of Muhammad ibn Abdul Malik in his own prison and to be meted out with the same punishment for political reasons. In prison just before his execution, Muhammad ibn Abdul Malik wrote a poem in which he wrote (to the effect) that when one does something in the world, it is punishable in the world.

When Mutawakkil read the poem he ordered freedom for ibn Abdul Malik, but the royal decree was late. Ibn Abdul Malik was dead in his own oven.



DO NOT FOLLOW YOUR DESIRES, FOR DESIRES ARE AVERSE TO EIMAN

Literally 'hawiya' means 'to love', 'to desire' and 'to become fond of' something.

The human being is by nature and instinct inclined towards 'tawheed' and to follow the truth. He is also given the powers of desire, anger, and imagination.

Since the moment of birth, the human being grows and develops along with the natural urges from these powers. If he is not instructed aright then he does no more than follow these desires.

The instinctive light of tawheed gets stifled within his personality.

However, if the right knowledge, akhlaqiyaat and righteous deeds are taught and encouraged, then the light of reason and eiman shines through.

The Prophet (pbuh) used to say about himself; "Indeed, the Shaytan within me has been converted to eiman with my hand."

In other words, the powers of anger, desire and imagination surrendered themselves to eiman - the power of justice, truth & peace.

Allah in the Qur'an says:

"...And do not follow desires for they will lead you astray from the way of Allah..." Sura Al Saad - 38:26

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (pbuh) has said; "The Prophet (pbuh) has said; "Allah said, 'By My Honour, My Glory, My Greatness, My Light, My loftiness, and by the Majesty of My position! When my devotee gives preference to his desire over My wish, I put his affairs into confusion, make his life baffling in this world and his heart pre-occupied with the world..."

If My devotee gives preference to My wish above his desire, My angels protect him, the heavens and the earth guarantee his sustenance, and I



look after his business and bring the world to him even though it may be reluctant...”

Imam Ja’fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) has said; “Be fearful of your desires in the same way as you are fearful of your enemies. For there is no greater enemy for human beings than their own desires and what their tongues reap.”

Imam Khumaini in his explanation on a hadith regarding the following of desires writes, “...remember that desires are endless and ever starved. If a human being takes one step to follow them, he will be bound to take a few more. If he submits to one of the desires, he will be forced to submit to several of them... thus a single act of submission to desires will expose you to several vices following it and through them you will fall victim to thousands of sins, until Allah forbid, all the roads to Allah are closed to you as stated by Him in the Qur’an.”



-DO NOT SPEAK THAT WHICH DOES NOT CONCERN YOU FOR IT DISCONNECTS ONE FROM THE RAHMA (MERCY) OF ALLAH

“And say to My devotees that they should speak that which is the best...” Sura Bani Israil - 17:53

Every human being’s salvation lies in speech or silence. One must strive to think before one speaks. In matters that are of no concern to one, it is a distinguishing mark of the knowledgeable to remain silent.

Just as speaking on the right occasion is among the noblest of qualities, silence at the right time represents wisdom. Imam Ali (pbuh) has said; “Since the tongue is for expressing what occurs to the self, you should not try to use it to express what does not occur to you.”

Words which appear to be said just as a pastime or those said when one is carried away in company will appear as mountains of error when we are faced with them on the day of Qiyama.

In Risalatul Huquq (Charter of Rights), Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh) says; “It is the right of the tongue, that you should-keep it silent except in time of necessity and for spiritual and material benefit, and keep it away from useless talk which may cause much harm with little benefit...”

A normal person can see a dot as small as eight-thousandths of an inch in diameter. But this is about 14,000 times larger than the smallest known virus. Yet these viruses are the cause of many human diseases, some very serious, even fatal.

Another small thing that can inflict great harm and even be fatal to the nafs is the wrong words uttered by the tongue. Unfortunately, there is no vaccine other than taqwa to bring its deadly effects under control.

Speaking where it does not concern us almost inevitably leads to gheeba (back biting) and tohma (Slander).



The Prophet (pbuh) has said; “A Muslim is one from whose hands and tongue other Muslims are safe.”

When we wish to cure ourselves of an undesirable habit, the first thing to do is to examine its evil and destructive results.

Reflect on incidents where one has become a victim of gheeba and tohma. How did it feel?

Allah in the Qur’an likens gheeba (back biting) to eating the flesh of one’s dead brother!

The Prophet (pbuh) has said; “If a person is being defamed (tohma) while you are present, be a helper of the person, condemn the one who is defaming him and depart from the group.”

“He who defends his brother’s (in Islam) honour in his absence, then it becomes his right upon Allah to safeguard him from the fire.”



DO NOT BE A HELPER OF THE UNJUST

Justice is perhaps the most important of the values of Islam. In fact, it can be said that the main purpose of Prophethood has been to establish justice.

“Indeed, We sent Our messengers (Prophets) with clear evidence, and sent down with them the book and the balance (to judge between right and wrong) so that people may live with justice...” Sura Al Hadeed -57:25

In all the practices of Islam, the fundamental principal is justice. In Salatul Jama’a, no one has precedence over another by virtue of power, wealth, or rank. To keep a place for someone is unjust.

In all dealings of life, be it family, social, or political, a Muslim is required to stand firmly for justice even if the consequences are against oneself and one’s family. All too often that which leads to injustice is love.

The Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said; “If anyone walks with a dhalim (unjust person) to strengthen him, knowing that he is a dhalim, he has gone forth from Islam.”

To remain silent and be reluctant to act or speak out at the injustices committed by others is also a form of aid to the dhalim. Silence is an affirmation that one has accepted the injustice as norm. Just as today, if we do not speak out, or even feel a need to voice our protest against the atrocities carried out in the Muslim world, then we are aiding the dhalimeen (unjust ones) by our compassion fatigue (apathy).

We continually recite in Ziyara, that had we been in Karbala on the day of ‘Ashura we would have laid down our lives for Imam. Yet, when there is ‘Ashura happening in the world today wherever we care to look, we do not even raise a voice.

History will shake us holding our collars saying, “Where were you then? Where were you?”



“We cannot even blame a lack of information, for technology delivers it to our living rooms! If we want to live like Ali (pbuh) and die like Husayn (pbuh) as we cry out and even wear on our shirts, then we must stop aiding the unjust by our silence which is deafening to those who are oppressed.



I (JAHANNAM) AM HARAM ON THOSE WHO DO IJTIHAD

The word 'ijtihad'* is derived from 'juhd' which means employment of effort or endeavour in performing a certain activity. 'Ijtihad' involves doing one's utmost whilst striving and making an effort.

*It must be noted that ijtihad in relation to the mujtahideen (fuqaha) means striving to deduce the laws of sharia' from the sources - Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma'(consensus) & Aql (reasoning).

We will therefore look at ijtihad as working with our maximum potential and its resultant productivity in life. We were created to transform this material world introducing to it a higher dimension - Godliness. So, while the ultimate and final goal of all our ijtihad is spiritual growth, the very fact that Allah placed us in a material world means that we reach the spiritual plane through physical labour.

In Nahjul Balagha, Imam Ali (pbuh) states:-“It is for you to make an effort and do ijtihad, to prepare yourselves and to supply yourselves with provision here (in this world for the next).”

Work is not merely something we do to be able to get enough money to surround ourselves with material comfort for the productivity and end of this sort of ijtihad will leave one feeling empty, not nourishing our emotional and spiritual needs. The way to perform correct ijtihad is:

1. By conducting whatever we do honestly, morally and in accordance with the laws of sharia'.
2. By making Allah a partner in everything we do.
3. Setting ourselves high standards for whatever work we undertake.
4. By being persistent and never giving up.
5. By being organised and setting a part of every day for study, reflection, and planning. Often unproductivity is a result of being unfocused and bad planning.
6. Finally, by always remembering that in every act that we do the bottom line is Allah, and not the numbers written in the profit or loss column.



At the end of each day, ask yourself, “Am I using ALL my resources and abilities to produce more than was given to me by Allah?”

Imam Ja’fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) has said; “I advise you to have taqwa, to be righteous and to do ijthihad (in fulfilling your duties).”



I (JAHANNAM) AM FORBIDDEN TO THOSE WHO GIVE SADAQA

Sadaqa is charity with the niyya of getting closer to Allah.

“...And whatever you spend (in the way of Allah), Indeed Allah knows of it.” Sura Aali Imran -3:92

We are all aware that to give sadaqa is a virtue and that a society that gives sadaqa is a healthy society. However, why do we give sadaqa? Not understanding the reason ultimately limits our generosity.

The key to sadaqa lies in understanding that it is not only a gift to the receiver but the giver as well. Sadaqa is one of the simplest ways to help spiritualise the material world, unite with fellow human beings and with Allah, thus fulfilling one aspect of our purpose of creation.

Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh) was with his companions when they met a needy person. Imam gave him what he had and then proceeded to kiss the man's hand. His companions asked regarding Imam's gesture saying that it should have been the needy person kissing Imam's hand in thanks. Imam replied, “He is my muhsin (one who has done me a favour)!”

He continued saying that the needy person had taken his money, multiplied it, and deposited it with Allah! Did not that deserve thanks?

Just as Allah continues to give, every moment of time, every day on earth, sadaqa allows us to give, thus following the akhlaq of Allah. We must remember also that the wealth we give in sadaqa is not our own, Allah has lent it to us to enable us to receive the gift of giving.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has said; “On the day of Qiyama, everyone will rest under the shadow of his or her sadaqa until the matters are settled between the people.”

Sadaqa is also a matter of adala (justice).



Can our comfort and pleasure really be more valuable than our fellow human being's most basic necessities?

Can we really pursue the highest levels of intellectual achievements when our fellow human beings need guidance in basic matters?

Can we be so engrossed in our own selfish problems that we do not notice that our fellow human being needs only a smile to make his day?

There are many forms of sadaqa, but the most powerful is money. This is because money is how most people measure their self-worth and spend so much time, energy, and labour in earning it and therefore it represents their energy of life.

When we give money in sadaqa with the niyya of Qurbatan Ilallah, we make our money eternal. The highest form of sadaqa is providing a person with an opportunity so that he will no longer need to look to others for help. One may provide a family with food and necessities for an entire year, or ten or twenty. It is indeed a charitable act but better than that is to give the head of the family a job, or a loan or another means to re-establish self-respect, to be able to stand on his own two feet.



I (JAHANNAM) AM HARAM FOR THOSE WHO FAST

Sawm or fasting means to abstain from certain actions from the break of dawn to sunset with the intention of pleasing Allah. Sawm is also known as roza in Urdu & Farsi.

The Prophet (pbuh) has said; "One who, while fasting, neither guards his tongue from telling lies nor refrains from doing bad deeds does not respect his fast, while Allah does not approve of mere abstention from food..."

When you fast, you should not speak ill of anybody, nor should you be boisterous or noisy. If anybody speaks ill of you or tries to pick a quarrel with you, do not respond to him in the same manner; rather, simply tell him that you are fasting."

Every baligh Muslim must fast during the whole month of Ramadhan.

Some of the mustahab sawm are:

- To fast on Fridays, Thursdays, and Mondays,
- To fast on the 13th, 14th & 15th of every month (ayyamul biydh)
- The fast of six days during the month of Shawwal following the month of Ramadan,
- The fast on the day of Arafat,

Imam Ali Ridha (pbuh) was asked why a mustahab fast is recommended for the entire year, and he answered by saying that it served to complement the wajib fasts.

He was then asked, "Why is there an optional fast for one day out of each ten days?" He replied: "It is in response to what Allah says in Sura Al An'aam – 6:160, 'Whoever does a good deed will be rewarded ten-fold'. Therefore, one who fasts one day in each ten days will be regarded as though he had fasted the whole time."

Imam Ali Ridha (pbuh) has said; "If it is asked why people were ordered to fast? It would be answered so that they may know the trouble of hunger and thirst, and thus get the idea about the poverty (hunger and



thirst) of the Hereafter and he may be humbled. He may get the reward of Allah and be patient in the wake of the (trouble) he may face from hunger and thirst with knowing of Allah and sincerity. So, fasting will be the cause of their getting reward. Moreover, this will bring about the control of the lustful desires and become that which admonishes in this world.”

The Prophet (pbuh) has said; “Allah has said, ‘All righteous deeds of the son of Adam are multiplied ten to seven hundred folds, except fasting (sawm) for it is Mine, and I shall reward it.’”



TAKE ACCOUNT OF YOUR NAFS BEFORE IT IS TAKEN ACCOUNT OF

"...Indeed, the hearing, and the sight and the heart, all of these shall be questioned about that."-Sura Bani Israil -17:36

Imam Musa ibn Ja'fer (pbuh) has said; "He who does not take account of himself once every day is not one of us."

To be able to take account of oneself, one needs to suspend one's senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste, & touch. Initially, it is a terrifying thought - to be left with nothing - but one is left with the self - the soul. One needs to cultivate the sense of awareness.

The first step in taking account of oneself is to assume responsibility. Each one of us has been given distinctive talents and abilities and it is our responsibility to share them in a positive way. Ask yourself at the end of each day how you have used your unique ability to improve the world.

Have you fulfilled the rights of Allah and His creation in these 24 hours?

How can you improve upon today to be able to produce a better tomorrow?

On the road map towards Him provided by Allah, where have you reached?

Find out whether your nafs is crying out for nourishment, because one is distracted through material bliss or problems. The nafs cries out in the appearance of anxiety, aimlessness & emptiness.

Take account of these and cure them before they are suppressed so much so that they cease to be heard.

Finally, have you asked for forgiveness for your shortcomings, and have you thanked Him today?



SCOLD YOUR NAFS BEFORE IT IS SCOLDED

Allah created the body and the nafs in two distinctive phases.

He took earth to create the body into which He blew His spirit. The human being must therefore always realise that there are two distinctive forces in his life – material and spiritual. The material side is lowly like the earth whilst the spiritual comes from the highest – Allah.

There is a constant conflict between the body and the nafs (in the state of nafsul lawwama).

The nafs wants to reach spiritual heights whilst the body has its survival needs of eating, drinking, etc. To the body, the nafs is a nuisance that is always limiting its behaviour.

Allah has created the potential for such a conflict so that the nafs is challenged and the body refined.

If the nafs is not scolded every time it inclines towards the body's desires, it will lose its resistance and strength, and finally lower itself to animalistic levels (nafsul ammara).



CALL (DUA) ALLAH BEFORE YOU ARE RETURNED TO HIM AND DO NOT PUT A MEASURE ON THAT (DUA)

“...Your Lord has said: Call Me that I may answer your call (dua). Indeed, those who are too proud to worship Me (devote themselves to me) will enter jahannam, disgraced.” Sura Al Mu’min 40:60

The Prophet (pbuh) said to his companions “Shall I tell you of a weapon which will defend you against your enemies and increase your sustenance?”

His companions asked what it was. The Prophet (pbuh) replied:
“The weapon is to call (dua) Allah night and day.”

Dua is our connection to Allah. It is the essence of devotion (worship) to Allah. For the devotee it is not only a request for fulfilling of needs but a way to express his longing for nearness to Allah.

In Dua Abu Hamza Thimali taught by Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh), there are various reasons Imam gives in the dua why there is a measure (limit) on our duas even if our nafs yearns to rise to talk to Him (Allah).

“...O Lord! whenever I thought I was prepared and ready and rose to pray, before Your hands, and confide to You, You cast sleep on me when I prayed, and You prevented me from confiding to You when I confided... maybe You observed my disregard of Your right on me and thus distanced me,
or maybe You saw me headed away from (Your path) and thus You withdrew me,
or maybe You found me to be in the position of the liars, so You rejected me,
or maybe You saw that I was not grateful of Your rewards, so You deprived me,
or maybe You observed my absence from the assembly of the scholars and thus put me down,
or maybe You found me to be one of the unheeding



.... or maybe You found me frequenting the assembly of the unfaithful, so between me and them You deserted me,
.... or maybe You equated me with my crime and sin....”

It is said that the dua which is most sincere and always answered immediately is the dua of the moment. It is reported that Nasiruddin Shah who was the king of Persia once visited the shrine of Imam Ali (pbuh) in Najaf. He found a blind man at the door of the shrine. On enquiring about him, the blind man said that he had been standing at the door asking for a cure to his blindness for the past year.

The king replied:-“You have been asking for the past 12 months and your dua has still not been accepted by My Lord. I doubt the purity of your dua! It seems that it is just an excuse for you to collect alms! Now look! I am going inside to pay my respects; if your eyesight is not restored by the time I return, I shall put you to death!”

The blind man fearing execution wept and implored for the return of his eyesight with sincerity.

It is reported that he gained his eyesight through his dua.



