Greater Sins, Volume 1

Ayatullah Sayyid Abdul Husayn Dastghaib

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In this text Ayatullah Dastghaib has exhaustively explained the phenomenon of sin, the classification of sins, the necessity of avoiding them, He has described fifty different types of Greater Sins such as: association with God (Shirk), fornication, drinking alcohol, gambling, disrespect towards parents and cutting ties with relatives.
See also volume 2 and 3 of this text.
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Topic Tags:

Sin [9]
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Akhlaq [11]

Dedication

Our sins strike him like arrows.
When he examines the scrolls of our deeds,
He weeps at our sins.
We dedicate the book
To this same Infallible Personality.
May Allah hasten his Reappearance.

Translator's Preface

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds and benedictions upon the Messenger of Allah and his Purified Progeny (‘a)

By the Grace of the Almighty, the first volume of “Greater Sins” has been completed in English.

The significance of Moral Science and Ethics is evident from the words of the Messenger of Allah (S) when he has described the aim of his advent. He said, “I have been sent for perfecting the morals.”

The learned Alim, Ayatullah Dastghaib was one of the greatest Muallim ul-Akhlaq (Teacher of Moral Science). Some of his important books are Gunahane Kabira, Qalbe Salim, Ma’ad, Barzakh etc. His books cover various moral and ethical issues.

The book Gunahane Kabira deals with Greater Sins. Ayatullah Dastghaib has exhaustively explained the phenomenon of sin, the classification of sins, and the necessity of avoiding them. He has also described fifty different types of Greater Sins.

Although the English translation is based on the Urdu Edition, I have relied upon the original Arabic text while translating traditions and Qur’anic verses.

Since the English equivalents of Islamic terminology do not convey the exact meaning, I have used the Arabic terms. However those who are not conversant with Arabic words may refer to the Glossary of Islamic Terms.

Wassalam.
Sayyid Athar Husain S.H.Rizvi

A Short Biography Of Ayatullah Dastaghaib Shirazi

Martyr Ayatullah Abul-Husayn Dastghaib Shirazi was a nobleman from a highly religious family that was known for its intellectual heritage going back to 800 years. Due to religious and spiritual atmosphere, resulting from such a sound Islamic background he had a natural and spontaneous tendency towards acquiring knowledge. After obtaining elmentary education in his hometown, he moved towards Najaf al-

Ashraf (Iraq) in pursuit of higher knowledge.

In the town of the abode of the Chief of the believers, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a), he continued his studies associating with the various scholars and teachers. Soon his knowledge reached a stage such that, he was granted permission by the Maraja of that time to practise Ijtehad. He then returned to his native town of Shiraz.

In Shiraz he spent thousands of tumans for the construction of the Jame Masjid Ateq which was in a highly dilapidated condition. There, he began to lecture on the exegesis of the Qur'an and ethics. His persistent efforts raised the standard of education of the Hauz al-Ilmia of Shiraz in the various fields of Fiqh, Beliefs and Moral science. The irreligious and tyrannical Shah imposed restrictions upon him and he was arrested many times. He was also put under house arrest by the autocratic ruler. After the success of the Islamic revolution, he was elected a representative at the Majlis (Iranian Parliament).

At the instance of the people of Shiraz he was designated as the representative of Imam Khomeini. The post of Imam of Jame Masjid of Shiraz was also bestowed upon him.

Martyr Dastghaib has left behind innumerable works. The most remarkable of these are: Gunahane Kabira (Greater Sins), Qalb al-Salim, Salatal Khashain, Ma'ad, at-Tawba, Zindagani al-Hazrat Zahra and Zainab al-Kubra.

Apart from these he has penned dozens of books on the improvement of morals, Fiqh and the exegesis of Qur'an. Hence, he was an excellent model of spirituality with a lofty character and a loving nature.

On that fateful day (in the year 1984) as he was proceeding to lead the Friday congregation, he was brutally killed in a bomb explosion by the hypocrites (the Capitalist agents).

Taqwa

The Reality Of Taqwa

The word 'Taqwa' is derived from the root 'waqaya' which means 'to safeguard' or 'to abstain'. In the Islamic terminology it is defined as the action of restraining oneself from disobeying the commands of Allah (S.w.T.). When Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) was asked to elaborate on the meaning of the word, 'Taqwa' he replied, "Submit to the command {of Allah (S.w.T.)} and do not go near the prohibited." It means that one should endeavor to fulfill all the commands of Allah and abstain from the prohibited things. On the basis of this, Taqwa is classified into two types:

The first type of Taqwa consists of compulsory obedience to Allah (S.w.T.) in fulfilling the compulsory

duties (Wajibat) and not leaving even a single duty unperformed. The obligatory commands (Wajibat) are those which, if not carried out, invite the wrath of Allah (S.w.T.). Also, as far as possible one should try not to forgo the recommended acts (Mustahabbat). The recommended acts are those, which if performed earn blessings but if not carried out do not make one liable for punishment.

Sin Obliterates The Good Deeds

Certain Greater Sins (Gunah al-kabira) render the good deeds void, the details of which will follow in the coming discussions. In brief, it must be mentioned that to refrain from sins is more important than performing good deeds. The following narrations are quoted in support of this statement:

The Importance Of Abstaining From The Prohibited

First Tradition

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) said,

"To refrain from eating a single morsel of Haram is, near Allah, more valued than the performance of two thousand rakats of recommended prayer."[1]

Second Tradition

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) said,

"To forgo a single dirham of prohibited money, is equal near Allah, to seventy accepted Hajjs."[2]

Third Tradition

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) continued:

"Strive more to perform good deeds. However if you cannot perform a good act (at least) do not disobey (the commands of Allah). Because if one lays the foundation of a building and does not spoil it, then, even if the progress is slow, the building will definitely rise. (Conversely) The person who lays the foundation and at the same time spoils it, then it is sure that the walls of this building will never be raised."[3]

Fourth Tradition

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"For the person who recites 'Subhanallah', Allah plants a tree in Paradise."

On hearing this a man from Quraish stood up and said, "If it is this way, then there must be many trees

for us in the Paradise?" The Holy Prophet (S) replied,

"Yes, but you must beware that you don't set fire from here to burn them all down."[4]

Fifth Tradition

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"Jealousy devours belief, like fire devours wood."[5]

Ill-Gotten Wealth Burns Down The Acts Of Worship

Sixth Tradition

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"On the Day of Judgement there would be people whose good deeds will be as heavy as the mountains of Tahama. Inspite of this it would be ordered that they be tossed into the fire of Hell."

Upon this someone said, "O! the Prophet of Allah (S), were these people performing Salat (prayers)?",

"Yes, they used to pray, and fast, and also spend a part of the night in worship. But, whenever they chanced upon something which gave them pleasure, they used to rush to it without thinking whether it was right or wrong."

Not Giving The Rights Of The People: A Barrier For The Acceptance Of Good Deeds

Seventh Tradition

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"I have been commanded by Allah to warn my people and say, 'Do not go from one mosque to another while someones rights are upon you. If such a person stands up for prayers in that condition, I send my curses upon him till he restores the rights to its owner."[6]

Eighth Tradition

The Holy Prophet (S) said,

"There is an angel of Allah who raises the call every night from 'Baitul Muqaddas': "Whoever partakes of the prohibited things, Allah does not accept any of his deeds be they obligatory or recommended."[7]

Good Deeds Are Accepted Only If Accompanied By Piety

Good Deeds Are Accepted Only If Accompanied By Piety (Abstinence From The Prohibited Things)

Ninth Tradition

"Even if you stand for prayers like a tent peg planted on the ground and keep fasting till you resemble a dried stick and stoop like a bow, Allah will not accept any of your deeds till you have the piety to guard against the evil deeds."[8]

Sin Is A Barrier To The Acceptance Of Invocation (Du'a)

Tenth Tradition

Hazrat Musa ('a) passed by a person from his followers who was in prostration. After completing his chore Musa ('a) returned to find him still in prostration. He said, "If I had the power to grant your wish I would surely have granted it." Allah (S.w.T.) revealed to Musa ('a) that, "Even if this man prostrates for Me till his head gets detached from his neck, I will not accept his deeds, till he abstains from that which I dislike and does that which pleases Me. Otherwise sin hinders the supplications from acceptance."[9]

Refraining From Sins Is Genuine Worship

Eleventh Tradition

"Abstaining from sins is the basis of religion. Hence, refrain from sins in order to become the most pious worshipper. Adorn yourself with piety. Do not perform a single good deed without piety. Surely that deed is most acceptable by Allah which is accompanied by piety, even though it may be trifle. As Allah says, "Allah accepts the good deeds only from the pious people."[10]

Hence if you succeed in remaining aloof from sins, then even if your good deeds are paltry, they would be accepted by the Lord. And when the Lord of the Worlds accepts a deed it cannot be termed as trifle or paltry.

Avoidance Of Sins Is A Must

Considering the tradition quoted above one is compelled to conclude that it is necessary to dread sinful acts and to be ever cautious of the vices. Only then are the good actions of any consequences. The good deeds must also be performed in such a manner that we strive to emulate as closely as possible the examples set by the high ideals of our Ahl ul-Bayt ('a). It should not be that good actions are rendered null and void due to sins. It is necessary to be careful of such an impending loss and disaster

for which we ourselves would be responsible.

Good Actions Could Be Blown Away Like Dust

Sulaiman bin Khalid says; “I asked Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) regarding the Qur’anic verse

And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them as scattered floating dust. (***Surah al-Furqan 25:23***).

He said,

“By Allah, even if their deeds are as white as Egyptian cotton, but if they find sin and lewdness they do not abstain from it.”11

In other words, their good deeds are scattered like dust due to the lack of piety, and hence are of no value at all. Allama Majlisi (r.a.) writes in the explanation of this tradition, “Worship and obedience is rendered null due to sin.”

A Large Number Of Pious People Will Enter Paradise

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) said,

“Allah revealed to Hazrat Musa (‘a), “Verily, My slave cannot achieve nearness to Me without the Three things which I like.” Musa (‘a) asked with reverence, “My Lord what are those Three things?” Allah replied, “O! Musa those Three things are: To practice piety in this world, to abstain from sins and to weep due to fear.” Musa (‘a) asked, “Does one who fulfills the Three things gets compensation and reward?”

Allah replied, “One who practices piety in this world will get Paradise. One who weeps due to My fear will be accorded such a high position that no else would be able to reach it. The deeds of all the creatures shall be accounted. But one who abstains from that which I have forbidden, then accounting of his deeds will not be carried out; he would be admitted to Heaven directly.”

1. ‘Uddat ‘ud-Dai.
2. ‘Uddat ‘ud-Dai.
3. ‘Uddat ‘ud-Dai, page 235.
4. ‘Uddat ‘ud-Dai page 235.
5. Usul al-Kafi.
6. ‘Uddat ‘ud-Dai page 236.
7. ‘Uddat ‘ud-Dai.
8. ‘Uddat ‘ud-Dai.
9. Uddat ‘ud-Dai , page. 125.
10. ‘Uddat ‘ud-Dai.
11. ‘Uddat ‘ud-Dai

Greater Sins And Smaller Sins

Abstaining From The Greater Sins Cause The Lesser Sins To Be Overlooked

If one avoids the Greater Sins, the Lesser sins shall be overlooked. Allah, the Almighty, by His grace, excuses the Lesser sins. As it is mentioned in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an :

"If you shun the Greater Sins which you are forbidden, We will do away with your smaller sins and cause you to enter an honourable place of entering." **(*Surah an-Nisa' 4:31*).**

The Gates Of Paradise Are Open For The Pious

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

"I swear by Allah, in Whose power is my life, there is not a single person who prays five times a day, fasts during the month of Ramadhan and abstains from sins that the gates of Paradise will not be opened for him."

After this he recited the Qur'anic verse quoted above.[1]

Intercession

A person who commits a Greater Sin and does not repent for it, is a transgressor. Salat is not allowed behind him (he cannot lead a prayer assembly). His testimony is unacceptable. After death, he is liable for Divine punishment. By the Grace of Allah (S.w.T.) such a person may yet get salvation; and the Grace of Allah (S.w.T.) that can make this possible is the intercession of Muhammad (S) and his Progeny ('a).

As the Holy Prophet (S) says in one of his traditions:

"My intercession has been kept for the sinful among my followers."[2]

He (S) also said,

"My intercession is especially for the sinful ones among my followers. But those who abstain from the Greater Sins, for them there is no accounting (of deeds)."

That is, they would be admitted to Paradise right away.

Intercession Should Not Prompt One To Commit Sins

There is hardly any doubt regarding the reality of Shafa'at (intercession). Actually it is the right bestowed upon the Holy Prophet (S) and the purified Imams ('a), by Allah (S.w.T.), to show their greatness and position. The other aim of intercession is to make their respect evident. The people who have committed Greater Sins shall be entrusted to them. By the grace of their intercession the sinful people will be able to ascend the heights like other groups of people. All this is evident from the Holy Qur'an and the authentic reports. It is also clear from Mutawatir (most frequently related) traditions. It would be needless to relate all such traditions for such a short discussion.

Only one point must be stressed at this stage. Intercession should not be taken as a license for committing sins nor should it make one heedless of repentance.

Suicide In The Hope Of Salvation

To sin and not to repent in the hope of intercession is akin to consuming poison or putting ones hand in the snake's mouth with the hope that a doctor would arrive and cure you. It is against logic, because after consuming poison it cannot be taken for granted that medical assistance would be available. Even if a doctor and medicines arrive on time it is still difficult to say that life would be saved. Before the medicine could have any effect the poison may spread to the whole body and death may occur.

In the same way, one who performs lewd actions in the hope that he would be interceded after death; cannot be sure that intercession will come to the rescue immediately.

Death Is Of Three Types

Imam Muhammad al-Taqi ('a) has related from his forefathers that Amir ul-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) was queried by someone about death. He replied,

"You have come to the knowledgeable (personality)." "Death occurs to a person in one of the Three ways:

He is given the good news of everlasting bounties, or informed of the never-ending retribution or he remains in a perpetual state of terror and fear.

His affair remains undecided and unpredictable, and it is not known about the kind of future that awaits him. Then (you must know) that our devotee who is obedient of our command and does not sin, is given the good news of everlasting bounties. But our opponent shall forever be involved in Divine punishment. And the person who has been unjust to his soul and who has abused it will be found in an unsure condition. Unaware of what the future will hold. Such a person is a sinner whose death will be accompanied with terror and fear. But Allah will not consider him on the same level as our enemy.

Rather he would be removed from Hell because of our intercession.

Then, act (rightly) and obey the commandments of Allah. Do not consider the Divine punishment to be trifle, and certainly there are such people who would not be able to receive our intercession till after 3,000,000 years."[3]

I Am Concerned About You Regarding Barzakh

Umar Ibn Yazid says that, "I asked Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a), "I have heard you saying that all our Shi'a's will enter Heaven however sinful they may be?" Imam replied,

"By Allah I had truly said, they shall all belong to Heaven."

Then I asked, "May my life be sacrificed upon you, even if their sins are great and in large number?" Imam said,

"All of you (Shi'as) shall enter Paradise by the intercession of the Holy Prophet (S) or his successors on the Day of Judgement. But, by Allah I fear for you the Barzakh."

I asked,"What is Barzakh?"

He replied,

"Barzakh is the grave. Its duration commences from the time of death until the Day of Judgement."[4]

Tears Of Blood

The Holy Prophet (S) called the attention of Ibn Masud and imparted some advice to him. He said in this regard.

"Never imagine a sin to be trifle and small and abstain from the Greater Sins, because, on the Day of Judgement, when the slave beholds his sins, tears of blood and puss shall flow from his eyes. At that moment Allah shall say, "This is the day when everyone shall see his good or bad deeds, and wish there be a great distance between them and their sins."[5]

It is also related from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said,

"Verily, a person shall be kept imprisoned in Hell for a hundred years for each of the sins (that he commits)."[6]

No Intercession For Those Who Regard Salat Unimportant

Making light of Salat is counted among the Greater Sins. It is mentioned in some reports that the one

who considers the prayers unimportant is not eligible for intercession.

Thus Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) said:

"Our intercession is not for those who consider the Prayers unimportant."

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) said:

"Our intercession is not for those who considered the Prayers lightly."[7]

It is related from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said:

"One who considers prayers unimportant is not from me. By Allah, he is not from me. By Allah, he cannot reach near me at the Haudh al-Kauthar." (the cistern in Paradise)[8]

The above discussion makes it evident that not avoiding sins, committing sins blatantly and then repenting in the hope of intercession is foolishness and a sign of arrogance and negligence.

Excessive Sins Destroy The Faith (Belief)

Whatever has been mentioned in the discussion of intercession states that intercession comes to the rescue when the person concerned has died with correct belief. It happens, sometimes that, due to excessive involvement in sins and delay in repentance, faith in religion is erased from the heart. Subsequently he enters the limit of doubt and reaches the point of denial (Kufr). At this time if he is taken away by death, such a person is similar to the one who had consumed poison in the false hope that the doctor would save his life. But when the doctor arrives, death had already preceded him. What can the doctor do to cure him. In the same way the request of the intercessors is ineffective for the one who has died as an unbeliever.

***"So the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them."*(*Surah al-Muddaththir 74:48*).**

In order to prove my statement I propose to quote one verse from the Holy Qur'an and two traditions:

***"Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the communications of Allah and used to mock them."*(*Surah ar-Rum 30:10*).**

Sins Blacken The Heart

The first tradition is reported from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a): He said,

"There is no man who does not have a white spot in his heart. When he commits a sin a black spot emerges from this spot. If he repents, the blackness goes away but if he sinks in sin and continues to sin the blackness keeps on increasing till it surrounds the whiteness of the heart completely. When the white

spot is totally covered by the blackness, the owner of this heart will never revert towards goodness. This tradition is in consonance with the utterance of Allah:

***"By no means! But on their hearts is the stain of the (ill) which they do."* (*Surah al-Mu□affifin 83: 14*).**

The Blackened Heart Is Immune To Advice And Counsel

The people with the 'blackened heart' are totally unaffected by any counsel because their sins have caused the darkness to spread all over their heart. The loss of the inner eye prevents them from perceiving truths nor can they recognise the truth when they see it. They cannot accept any exhortation and revert to the path of virtue. It is in this connection that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) explains:

"A man resolves to perform a sinful action but does not act upon it, but sometimes does commit it; Allah sees him and says: "By My Glory, after this I shall never forgive you."

According to another report, the (sinner) person is kept away from the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.) due to his sin. He also does not get the impetus to seek repentance, hence his sin is never forgiven. Allama Majlisi (r.a.) writes in the explanatory note of the above tradition: "The purport of this tradition of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) is that, the Imam has commanded us to fear all types of sins because every sin seems to be such that it may not qualify being overlooked.

To Be Fearful Of The Past Sins

The believing people should always be fearful of the sins committed in the past and should weep for them since we do not know which of our sins can bring about out destruction. The Imam ('a) has not informed us of any sin that we can ignore and remain bereft of the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.). However, it is certain that the sin for which we have not repented would be sure to prevent our salvation. So we must enter the domain of Allah (S.w.T.)'s grace through the door of repentance. We should sincerely repent for those sins, which are forgotten by us and especially seek forgiveness of those sins that we remember. The method of repenting shall be explained later insha'Allah.

Intercession Should Neither Raise False Hope, Nor Be A Cause To Be Arrogant

The preceding discussion has shown that the element of intercession does not become the cause of arrogance and disobedience. Rather, intercession imparts strength to the sinner in a state of despair. It creates in him the habit of repenting with fervour. Consequently, he would be able to reach a high position and achieve nearness to the Lord of the Worlds.

The Fear And Dread Of Sins Is Still Necessary

It should not be so, that a person is hopeful of intercession and is negligent at the same time. Along with the hope of intercession the fear of Allah (S.w.T.) is also a must. Because fear is not contrary to intercession. The one who is hopeful of the grace and mercy of the Almighty Lord may also experience fear. Otherwise he may not be able to obtain intercession of his masters {The Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams ('a)} for a very long time.

In other words, such a person would be able to receive intercession only after being afflicted with the punishment of the grave for a long period of time. In the meantime the fear, awe, agony, suffering and misery that he is experiencing, may become the cause for him to receive intercession of the purified Ahl ul-Bayt ('a). It may also spur him to be attached to them steadily.

The Shi'as Of Ahl ul-Bayt ('A)

One of the traditions concerning the position of the Shi'as and the lovers of Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) states that the fire of Hell cannot scorch them. Thus, these types of traditions impart strength to our hope. Our love for the Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) is certainly a surety for us but it should not tempt us to commit sins blatantly.

Shi'a And Mohib

The traditions regarding this subject are based on two important points. The first is concerned with 'Shi'a' and the second 'Mohibs' (Admirers) of the Holy Ahl ul-Bayt ('a). The position and status of those Shi'as who have achieved excellence in the field of knowledge and good deeds is definitely higher. Even so, such people did not consider themselves fit to be called the Shi'as of Ahl ul-Bayt ('a). Take the example of Muhammad bin Muslim Thaqafi. He was the honourable companion (Sahabi) of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a).

Both the Holy Imams ('a) have recommended him to the Shi'as for solving their religious problems. Muhammad bin Muslim Thaqafi has also been mentioned as the greatest Jurist of his time in the books of Rijal (Chain of narrators).

On one occasion Muhammad bin Muslim along with Abu Karibatul Azdi went to see Qazi Sharik. Sharik glared at him in anger and said, "These two are Ja'fari and Fatimi!" [Shi'as of Ahl ul-Bayt ('a)]. Upon hearing this, both of them began to cry bitterly. When the Qazi enquired the reason for their lamentation, they replied, "You have associated us with such a lofty personality [Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a)]! Are people like us who lack in piety and abstinence to be compared with such an exalted person? What connection does the dust have with the Divine existence? (A Persian saying). We shall be highly obliged to you if you can accept our request (and give us not the title that we do not deserve)."

The True Shi'as Are Those Who Follow (Obey) The Imams ('A)

Yes, we can give the title of 'Shi'a' to that individual who follows the Imams ('a) in all aspects of character and speech. Thus, Bab-ul-Hawaij Imam Musa al-Kadhim ('a) says:

"Our Shi'as are only those who follow us (in every respect), walk in our footsteps and imitate our actions."[9]

Conversation Of 'Ali ('A) With Some Shi'as

On a certain evening 'Ali ('a) was departing from the mosque. The surroundings were bright due to the moonlight. He saw behind him a group of people walking towards him. He enquired as to who they were? They said: "We are your Shi'as." 'Ali ('a) looked at their faces carefully and said.

"Why is it that your faces do not exhibit any sign of you being a Shi'a?".

"Master, what are the signs of a Shi'a?"

"Their faces are pale due to excessive worship and the fear of Allah, their backs are bent due to prolonged prayers, too much fasting causes their abdomen to touch their backbones, their lips become dry be repeating endless invocations, and their hearts are filled with the fear of Allah."[10]

Now I will quote three traditions for the benefit of the readers.

Mere Claim Is Not Sufficient

1) Jabir (a.r.) relates from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) that he said,

"Is it sufficient for one to associate himself with Shi'aism and say that, "I am a lover of Ahl ul-Bayt ('a)? By Allah, our Shi'a is not, but the one who fears Allah and obeys His Commands."[11]

2) Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) told Mufazzal bin Umar,

"If you wish to see one of our devotees then look for that person who abstains from sins and fears more His Creator and remains hopeful of His reward. Whenever you find such an individual then take it for granted that he is one of my devotees."

3) Isa bin Abdullah Qummi entered in the presence of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a). The Imam said,

"That person is not from us nor do we hold him in esteem, the one who, if he lives in a town of a population of hundred thousand and there is even one non-Shi'a who is more pious than him."[12]

Thus the belief, actions and the piety of the Shi'as of Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) should be such that they should be

the best and none should excel them. Allah (S.w.T.) has defined such people 'Khairul Bariya' in the Holy Qur'an:

"(As For) those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men." (Surah al-Bayyina 98:7).

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have explained that 'Khairul Bariya' connotes the Shi'as of 'Ali ('a):

"O 'Ali, 'Khairul Bariya' means you and your Shi'as. On the Day of Judgement, they would be satisfied with what Allah has bestowed upon them and they shall be liked by Allah.[13]

Wilayat

There is not an iota of doubt that the one who possesses the Wilayat of Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) would be deserving of salvation. In fact, he shall be with the Prophets (S) and the Pure Imams ('a). Imam al-Ridha' ('a) said:

"Allah shall collect our Shi'as on the Day of Judgement in such a condition that their faces shall be aglow with (radiance). His arguments would be lighted (manifest) and his proof shall be obvious before Allah. It is upon Allah to collect our Shi'as with the Prophets, the martyrs and the truthful ones on the Day of Judgement. These personalities are the best of the loyalists."[14]

The Meaning Of Wilayat

It is written in the book Majmaul Bahraen regarding the meaning of the word 'Wilayat': "Wilayat is the love for Ahl ul-Bayt ('a), the natural consequence of which is to follow them in religious matters, to fulfil the obligations laid down on us and to abstain from the things prohibited. Wilayat is to walk in the footsteps of the Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) following their ways in deeds, behaviour and manner of speech."

Wilayat therefore means love and obedience. This idea is supported by a tradition from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) wherein the Holy Imam ('a) has related love with obedience.

Wilayat Of 'Ali ('A) Is A Strong Fort Of Allah (S.W.T.)

The tradition explaining this concept is to be found in the tradition of Silsilatuz Zahab. It is related by Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) from Imam al-Ridha' ('a). It is as follows:

"Allah says, "The Wilayat of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib is My fort. Then one who enters My Fort is safe from My wrath (Ghazab)."[15]

There is no doubt that entering the Wilayat of the purified Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) implies taking refuge with the Ahl ul-Bayt ('a), to abstain from all unlawful acts and to remain aloof from their enemies. The word "Tahassum" denotes 'taking refuge in an established fort' and it also suggests that the refuge is not only

physical in nature but of a moral form (in spirit) as well. It is therefore imperative to take refuge with these exalted personalities and to follow their superior examples in all aspects of speech and behaviour. In short one who follows them has actually taken refuge in their fort.

Verbal Claim Unaccompanied By Actions Is Insufficient

After describing the qualities of the Shi'as, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) observed;

"O Jabir, is it enough for one, to say that 'I love 'Ali ('a) and I have achieved his Wilayat,' whereas he does not act upon it?"

"If someone says, "Surely, I love the Holy Prophet (S) because he was superior to 'Ali ('a) and I am Shi'a al-Muhammad." Inspite of this claim he does not follow the Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) whom the Holy Prophet (S) had ordered to follow. It is surprising that even after claiming to love the Prophet they do not follow his Purified Progeny (Ahl ul-Bayt - 'a). Mere claim of love is not sufficient."

Success Is Through Actions Alone

The tradition continues,

"O Jabir, the nearness of Allah is not achieved without His obedience. When our Shi'as do not have obedience and action (to their credit) we have no authority to free them from Hell. Merely a verbal claim, "I am a Shi'a" is not sufficient argument for Allah. (If Allah wills he can involve him in punishment; Allah has not promised to bestow salvation upon the claimants of Shi'aism- the criteria are obedience and good actions). Then, only one who obeys Allah is our Wali (lover) and the one who is a sinner is our enemy and our Wilayat cannot be achieved but by piety and good deeds."[16]

Types Of Taqwa According To Allama Majlisi

According to Allama Majlisi (r.a.) there are four types of 'Taqwa':

1. "Wara at-Ta'biri", which means to abstain from the prohibited things.

2. "Wara as-Salihin", to abstain from doubtful things so that one may not commit a Haram act.

3. "Wara al-Muttaqin", to abstain from permissible things so that one is absolutely protected from 'Haram'.

4. "Wara al-Sadiqin", to avoid everything that is not religious so that one may not waste precious time in useless acts, even though there may not be any risk of committing a sin.

Love

According to traditions, both from the Shi'a and the Sunni sources, it is established that love protects one from being a slave of one's desires and Shaitan. This is because the love of an exalted personality entails that we also love his friends and hate his enemies. The friendship of Shaitan and the following of one's evil desires are two of the biggest hurdles in one's love for Allah (S.w.T.) and the Ahl ul-Bayt ('a).

Insha'Allah the followers of 'Ali ('a), by the blessing of his love will remain away from the path of Shaitan. Thus, love (for Ahl ul-Bayt) protects one from evil rather than make him susceptible to sins. In order to explain this idea a few traditions are mentioned below:

Love Makes A Man Steadfast

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) has said,

"Whoever has been bestowed the love of 'Ali ('a) in his heart by Allah, is not prone to wavering (from his path) but he becomes steadfast (on the path of Allah) and also towards other (matters)."[17]

The Testimony Of Jabir Ibn Abdullah al-Ansari (R.A.)

Hazrat Jabir Ibn Abdullah al-Ansari (r.a.) says: If the first step of the lovers of Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) is in the wrong direction due to excess sins the next step is guided aright by (the grace of) their love.[18]

The Angels Seek Forgiveness For The Partisans Of 'Ali ('A)

According to the traditions of the Ahl ul-Bayt ('a), it is an established fact that even the angels ask forgiveness (on behalf) of the followers of 'Ali ('a). A tradition is quoted in Bihar al-Anwar from the Sunni sources in this regard. Anas relates from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said,

"Allah has created seventy thousand angels from the light of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib's face. These angels will (continue to) ask forgiveness (on his behalf and on the behalf of his devotees) till the Day of Judgement."

Devotion For 'Ali ('A) Consumes Our Sins

The love and devotion for Hazrat 'Ali ('a) destroys one's sins as is proved by the numerous reports. Bihar al-Anwar has the following tradition related from the Holy Prophet (S) by Ibn Abbas (r.a.):

"Love of 'Ali ('a) consumes the sins like fire consumes wood."

There is a Persian 'Qata' (four-line poem) which summarises this discussion as follows:

The love of ‘Ali (‘a) removes the darkness of the heart like the moon and the stars illuminate the night. Salvation will be based on ones love for him and not ones worship deeds.

But those who are his devotees, must also rely upon the Merciful (God). We should not be satisfied only with this devotion and forget Allah (S.w.T.).

Difficulties And Calamities Nullify The Sins

The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) imposes difficulties and sends calamities to the sinful people among the followers of Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a) This is because He wishes to cleanse them of their sins so that they are not liable to any punishment after death. If the sins are more, then he gets a difficult death and if the sins are still in excess then he is punished in Barzakh (grave) upto the Day of Judgement.

It is also stated in the traditions that if there is a sinner whose sins are so much that even after all the punishment they are not expiated; then that person will be interned in the Hell-fire till he has recompensed for the remaining sins. The devotee of Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a) shall not remain in the fire forever. The everlasting punishment is only for the unbelievers and the enemies of Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a)

The Rewards Are Proportionate To The Intensity Of Love

Another point to be remembered is that, the intensity of one’s devotion is the means for the early forgiveness of ones sins. If love is more, the intercession is swift. Even the painful moments of death are converted into comfort by the help of Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a). There was a poet by the name of Sayyid Himyari who died in 173 A.H. He was an ardent devotee of Hazrat ‘Ali (‘a) and has composed a Qasida (panegyric) on each and every quality of this exalted personality. Whenever there was a Majlis (gathering) in the honour of Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a) he always insisted upon reciting one of his poems. Various books of the Shi’as and Sunnis, like Al-Ghadir (vol.3), Kitab Aghani, Manaqib Sarwari, Kashful Ghumma, Amali of Shaikh Saduq, Basharatul Mustafa and Rijal Kashi mention about him. The following is the gist of the miraculous happenings at the time of his death.

Sayyid was very handsome and fair. At the time of his death he was surrounded by people. Among them were also those who were opposed to the Shi’as. The condition of the Sayyid deteriorated and all of a sudden a black spot appeared on his face. The stain spread on his face and his complete face turned charcoal black. The opponents were pleased to see his discomfort. The pain caused the Sayyid to lose his consciousness. When he regained his senses he turned towards Najaf al-Ashraf and pleaded: “O Amir ul-Mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a). O the centre of the hope for helpless people. Do you deal with your devotees in this way?” He repeated this phrase twice more. No sooner did he complete his entreaty that a spot of whiteness became visible on his face. It spread upon his face and soon his face became radiant once again like a full moon. Sayyid was filled with joy, and recited the following couplets extemporaneously.

“Who said ‘Ali (‘a) could not save his followers from difficulties lied. I swear upon my Creator that I have

entered Paradise with my sins all forgiven. I give this good news to those who are devoted to ‘Ali (‘a) till death. And after him revere his eleven descendants who are the Imams.”

After reciting these couplets he confessed to the Oneness of Allah (S.w.T.) and the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Wilayat of Amir ul-Mu’minin (‘a). Then he closed his eyes and departed from this world.

Evil Desires Are A Barrier To Devotion

Sometimes the desire of this world and its material comforts can cause the love of Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a) in ones heart to decrease. An excess of such desires may even make the heart bereft of the love of Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a). Such a person when he approaches his last moments will obviously not get any help from the material he had cherished in his life but he will be so unfortunate as to forfeit the intervention of Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a) to save him from a painful death. Several traditions to this effect are present in the books. It would be too lengthy to relate these here, as also it would be straying from our point. Only a casual mention of some traditions would suffice for our purpose.

A Persian Saying

There is a saying in Persian which means that, “Those who believe should try to develop as much as possible the love for the Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a) in their hearts.” It could be further explained that one should also remove all other objects of desire from the heart and especially refrain from the Greater Sins so that (Insha’Allah) they are safe from a dreadful death and the horrors of the Hereafter.

Do Not Use The Bounties For Committing Sins

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) wrote a letter to certain friends of his:

If you wish that your life and the hereafter be accomplished with the best of the deeds and that your soul be captured (death occurs) in this condition, then acknowledge the supremacy of Allah. Do not misuse the bounties and gifts granted to you by Allah in committing acts that are forbidden by Him and become disobedient to Him. Respect all those who remember us, Ahl ul-Bayt, and claim to love us. It is immaterial (for you) whether he is truthful or not. For you will be rewarded according to your intention and they (the liars) will be punished for their sins.[19]

The Gloom Of Sins And The Glow Of Repentance

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) was explaining the following verse of the Holy Qur’an:

“Allah is the guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light.” (***Surah al-Baqarah 2:257***).

He said,

“It means Allah takes them away from the darkness of the sins to the light of repentance. Because they were having ‘Wilayat’ of all the just Imams (all twelve of whom are appointed by Allah). The next portion of the same verse is, “and (as to) those who disbelieve, their guardians are Shaitans who take them out of the light into the darkness.”

The Imam further explained,

“It only means those who followed the light of Islam initially but later started following each an every usurper (leader) not authorised by Allah. They left the light of Islam and entered into the darkness of disbelief (Kufr). Thus Allah ordained upon the disbelievers the fire of Hell.

Greater Sin And Lesser Sin

The foregoing discussion has made it clear that sins are of two types– The Greater and the Lesser. The characteristics of the Greater Sins and their evil effects have also been explained. Now we shall enumerate various Greater Sins. The traditions regarding the number of Greater Sins are sometimes in disagreement with each other. It is not possible to study all such traditions due to their voluminous nature. It is also beyond the scope of the present book. Those who wish a detailed study may refer to the Exegesis of al–Kafi or ‘Arbain’ of Shaikh Bahai (a.r.).

All the scholars and the jurists agree that the most authentic tradition is the one quoted by the eminent jurist of the school of Ahl ul–Bayt, Sayyid Muhammad al–Kadhim Tabatabai Yazdi. He mentions four ways of recognising a Greater sin:

What Is A Greater Sin?

1) All those sins are Greater which have been specifically termed as Greater in the Holy Qur’an and the traditions. The number of such sins exceeds forty and they all have been explained in the traditions of the Holy Ahl ul–Bayt (‘a). The explanation of these traditions will follow later.

2) All those sins are Greater about which the Qur’an and Hadith explicitly state that those who commit these sins will enter Hell. Or if it is not explicit then it should purport to mean the same. For example the tradition of the Holy Prophet (S):

“Certainly the Almighty Allah and His messenger disown such a person who willfully neglects prayers.”

In this tradition the punishment of Hell is not named specifically but it amounts to the same thing. Another report corroborates this assertion. Imam Muhammad al–Baqir (‘a) and Imam Ja’far al–Sadiq (‘a) said,

“All those sins are Greater (the doer of which) is promised the fire (Hell).”

There is another tradition from Imam Zadeh Abdul Azim Hasani, which shall be quoted later. Thus we understand that there is no difference whether the promise of the Divine punishment is given in the Qur’an or in a hadith.

3) Any sin, which is clearly Greater than a sin specified as a Greater one in the Qur’an and hadith; is also Greater. For example the killing of a person is a sin and it is clear from the Qur’an and hadith. Thus the tradition from Ibn Mahbub clearly states that the killing of a ‘soul’ is a Greater sin. The Qur’an has promised Divine punishment for murder. Then if any other sin is proved to be more than the killing of a person, by the verses of Qur’an or authentic reports then this sin will also be considered as a Greater sin. For example the Holy Qur’an says that to spread corruption in the world is worse than murder:

“And the (spreading of) mischief is Greater than murder.”(Surah al-Baqarah 2:191).

Hence we can conclude that the spreading of disturbance must also be counted among the Greater Sins.

4) Any sin which has all along been regarded as a Greater one by the scholars and the jurists should also be considered as ‘Greater’. But it should be ascertained that such a sin has been regarded as Greater from the present time right upto the time of the Ma’sumin (‘a). Examples of these types of sins are to descerate the Holy Ka’ba, or a mosque or to throw away a copy of the Qur’an. All such acts have been regarded as the Greater Sins. Now we shall mention the traditions that explain the Greater Sins.

First Tradition

1) Saduq (a.r.) has recorded in Oyune Akhbar that Imam Zadeh Hazrat Abdul Azim the son of Abdullah Hasani said, “I heard from Abu Ja’far the second, Imam Muhammad al-Taqi (‘a) who heard from his respected father Imam al-Ridha’ (‘a) who quotes Imam Musa al-Kadhim (‘a) that he said,

“A person by the name of Umru bin Abid entered into the presence of Abu Abdillah Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a). After taking his seat he recited the following verse of the Qur’an:

“And those who shun the great sins and indecencies…” (Surah ash-Shura 42:37).

Then he (Umru bin Abid) paused.

“Why have you become silent?” asked the Imam (‘a),

“I would like to derive the Greater Sins from the Holy Qur’an.” he replied.

The Imam said,

“O Umru, the Greatest of the Greater Sins is Shirk (to attribute partners) with Allah. The Almighty Allah

says,

***"Certainly whoever associates* (*others*) *with Allah, then Allah has forbidden to him the Garden* (*Paradise*)*..."* (*Surah al-Ma'ida 5:72*).**

2) After this, is "to despair from the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.)." As the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says,

***"Surely none despairs of Allah's mercy except the unbelieving people..."*(*Surah Yusuf 12:87*).**

3) Then, "not fearing the retribution of Allah (S.w.T.)." The High and the Mighty Allah (S.w.T.) remarks,

***"But none feels secure from Allah's plan except the people who shall perish."*(*Surah al-Ar'af 7:99*).**

4) One of the Greater Sins is to disobey ones parents because the Glorified Allah (S.w.T.) has said,

***"And dutiful to his parents, and he was not insolent, disobedient."* (*Surah Maryam 19:14*).**

Here the disobedience of the parents is considered a form of insolence or transgression.

5) To kill a believer is prohibited by Allah (S.w.T.). Because Allah (S.w.T.) has informed,

***"And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is Hell; he shall abide in it, and Allah will send His Wrath on him and curse him and prepare for him a painful chastisement."* (*Surah an-Nisa' 4:93*).**

6) To slander a believing man or a woman of adultery (or sodomy) is a Greater sin as is proved by the statement of Allah (S.w.T.).

***"Surely those who accuse chaste believing woman, unaware* (*of the evil*)*, are cursed in this world and the hereafter, and they shall have a grievous chastisement."* (*Surah an-Nur 24:23*).**

7) The usurpation of an orphan's property is a Greater sin, as is clear from the following verse:

***"*(*As for*) *those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and they shall enter burning fire."*(*Surah an-Nisa' 4:10*).**

8) It is a Greater sin to retreat from Jihad (Holy war) as the Divine verse says:

***"And whoever shall turn his back to them on that day- unless he turn aside for the sake of fighting or withdraws to a company- then he, indeed becomes deserving of Allah's wrath, and his abode is Hell; and an evil destination shall it be."* (*Surah al-Anfal 8:16*).**

9) One of the Greater Sins is to take "interest." Allah (S.w.T.), the Almighty informs:

***"One who swallows down usury cannot arise except as one whom Shaitan has prostrated by (his) touch does rise. This is because they say, trading is only like usury; and Allah has allowed trading and forbidden usury."* (*Surah al-Baqarah 2:275*).**

{Explanation: Some people say that taking interest is same as any other business. But this verse clearly says that usury is different from trade. Secondly, usury is forbidden whereas trading is permitted.}

10) And magic is a Greater sin. Thus Allah (S.w.T.) says,

***"and certainly they know that he who bought it (the magic) should have no share of good in the hereafter and evil was the price for which they sold their souls; had they but known this."* (*Surah al-Baqarah 2:102*).**

11) Among the Greater Sins is Adultery (fornication). Allah (S.w.T.) says in the Holy Qur'an,

***"And they who do not call upon another god with Allah and do not slay a soul which Allah has forbidden except in the requirements of justice, and (who) do not commit fornication. And he who does this shall find a requital of sin. The punishment shall be doubled to him on the Day of Resurrection, and he shall abide therein in abasement.* (*Surah al-Furqan 25:68-69*).**

12) One of the Greater Sins is taking a false oath. Allah (S.w.T.) says about it.

***"(As for) those who take a small price for the covenant of Allah and their own oaths-Surely they shall have no portion in the hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them, nor will He look upon them on the day of resurrection nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful chastisement."* (*Surah Ali- 'Imran 3:76*).**

13) Among the sins which are specifically graded as Greater is a sin of "betrayal of trust, or to act unfaithfully. Allah (S.w.T.) has informed thus:

***"And it is not attributable that he should act unfaithfully; and he who acts unfaithfully shall bring that in respect of which he has acted unfaithfully on the day of resurrection; then shall every soul be paid back fully what it has earned, and they shall not be dealt unjustly. Is then he who follows the pleasure of Allah like him who has made himself deserving of displeasure from Allah, and his abode is Hell; and it is an evil destination."* (*Surah Ali- 'Imran 3:161-162*).**

14) Failure to pay the Zakat is a Greater sin. Allah (S.w.T.) says regarding it:

***"and (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's ways, announce to them a painful chastisement.* (*Surah at-Tawba 9:34*).**

15) To bear a false witness is also a Greater sin. Allah (S.w.T.) says

***"...and avoid false words."* (*Surah Hajj 22:30*).**

16) Do not conceal evidence as it is a Greater sin. Allah (S.w.T.) says:

"...and do not conceal testimony and whoever conceals it, his heart is surely sinful; and Allah knows what you do." (***Surah al-Baqarah 2:283***).

17) Drinking of wine is a Greater sin. As it is prohibited by Allah (S.w.T.) in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

"They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: In both of them there is great sin and means of profit for men, and their sin is greater than their profit." (***Surah al-Baqarah 2:219***).

18) To wilfully avoid the prayers is a Greater sin.

19) The failure to perform any obligatory religious act is a Greater sin. The Holy Prophet (S) says:

"One who wilfully avoids the prayers is away from the protection of Allah and His Messenger."

20) Breaking an oath is also a Greater sin. Allah (S.w.T.) has stated:

"Who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut as under what Allah has ordered to be joined, (***that is mutual relationships***) ***and make mischief in the land; these it is that are the losers."*** (***Surah al-Baqarah 2:27***).

21) To break ties with the relatives is one of the Greater Sins. In the Qur'anic verse quoted below, Allah (S.w.T.) says,

"and cut asunder what Allah has ordained....."(***Surah ar-Ra'd 13:25***).

When Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) concluded his hadith the narrator, Umru bin Abid rose up and while going out stopped and said: "Certainly, one who does not follow the guidance of the Imams ('a) and gives his own opinion is doomed." It means that those who refuse to follow the Imams ('a) are on the wrong path.

Second Tradition

Ibn Mehbub has mentioned in his 'Sahih' that he and his companions had written a letter to Imam al-Ridha' ('a) enquiring about the number of the Greater Sins. Also the method of determining their "greatness". The respected Imam ('a) replied thus:

"The Greater Sins are those, the performers of which have been promised (Hell) fire. If any believer abstains from these or repents for the same Allah will forgive these sins. There are seven such sins, which have been promised (Divine) punishment.

- To kill one whose murder is prohibited.

- To disobey parents.
- To accept usury.
- To return to ignorance after migration (Hijrat).
- To accuse a chaste woman of adultery.
- To consume wrongfully the property of orphans.
- To flee from the battlefield.[20]

Third Tradition

Abu Samit has narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) that he said:

The Greater Sins are;

- To associate others (attribute partners) to Allah.
- Killing anyone whose killing is prohibited by Shari’a.
- Wrongfully acquiring the property of orphans.
- To disobey parents.
- To accuse falsely a chaste woman of adultery.
- To flee (cowardly) from the battlefield.
- To deny any of the obligations of religion promulgated by Allah.

Abdur Rahman Ibn Kathir has narrated from the same Masum (‘a) that he said:

“Not acknowledging the rights of us (Ahl ul-Bayt) is a Greater sin.”

Abi Khadija has quoted a tradition that:

“To attribute falsehood to the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Imams (‘a) is counted among the Greater Sins.”

Saduq (r.a.) has quoted that: “To deprive anyone of his rights (What he rightfully deserves) by not mentioning him in one’s will is a Greater sin.”

The book Kanzul Ummal has mentioned in a tradition:

“Shedding blood in the precincts of the Holy Ka’ba is a Greater sin.”

This is because Allah (S.w.T.) has ordained it to be a protected sanctuary.

Fourth Tradition

In the *Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha'* ('a) there is a tradition quoted by Fazl Ibn Shazan. He quotes from reliable authorities that Imam al-Ridha' ('a) wrote to Mamun a letter prohibiting the following sinful acts, as they were Greater Sins:

1) To kill those whose murder is prohibited by Allah (S.w.T.).

2) Adultery.

3) Stealing.

4) Drinking of Wine.

5) To disobey the parents.

6) Fleeing from the battlefield (in Jihad).

7) Usurping property of the orphans.

8) Eating dead animals (animals not slaughtered in the Islamic way) blood and pigs without any compulsion.

9) Accepting usury when it is obvious.

10) Consuming prohibited (Haram) wealth.

11) Gambling.

12) Cheating in business by under-weighing.

13) To accuse chaste women of adultery.

14) Homosexuality.

15) To despair of the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.).

16) Not fearing the Divine retribution.

17) Not acknowledging the bounties of Allah (S.w.T.).

18) Cooperating with oppressors.

19) To associate with the oppressors.

20) Taking a false oath.

21) To obstruct the rights (of someone) without (any valid reason or compulsion).

22) Lying.

23) Pride (arrogance).

24) Squandering wealth.

25) Expenditure in ways not permitted by Allah (S.w.T.).

26) To betray trust.

27) To consider Hajj of the Holy Kaba unimportant.

28) To fight the friends (devotees) of Allah (S.w.T.).

29) To enjoy vain poccupations (like music).

30) To persist in sins.

Insha'Allah these traditions shall be explained at the appropriate places.

A Difficult Problem And Its Solution

Some people raise the following objections regarding the subject of Greater Sins: –

1. Why does the Qur'an not explain in detail such an important subject as the Greater Sins?

2. Why are there conflicting reports from Ma'sumin ('a) with regard to the Greater Sins?

Some traditions mention that the Greater Sins are five, some give the figure as seven, nine, twenty one and thirty one. One of the traditions reported from Ibn Abbas says that the total number of Greater Sins are seven hundred and seven. Let us now consider these objections so that appropriate replies can be provided.

Reply To The First Objection

It is Allah (S.w.T.)'s grace that He has not mentioned the total number of Greater Sins in the Holy Qur'an. There is hidden wisdom in this. Let us suppose that the fixed number of Greater Sins had been given in the Qur'an. Then the people would have abstained only from these sins.

They would have freely committed other sins thinking that they are not doing anything against the Holy Book. In this way they would, be emboldened to perform all other types of misdeeds. Thus Allah (S.w.T.)

has prohibited his creatures to avoid even the lesser sins. This is because if one becomes unmindful of the lesser sins, he will slowly be attracted to the Greater Sins too.

To Persist In Lesser Sins Is Equivalent To Committing A Greater Sin

It is an established fact that if one repeatedly commits a lesser sin he eventually becomes liable for a Greater punishment. Insha'Allah we shall explain in detail the lesser sins in the chapter of "Persistence in Lesser Sins."

By not specifying the number of Greater Sins the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) has bestowed a favour upon the people. Had such a number been fixed, the people would have the tendency to abstain mainly from these sins. They would be inclined to regard other sins lightly and indulge in them, underestimating their seriousness. Such indulgence over a period of time makes an individual bold enough to perform other types of misdeeds. It is for this reason that Allah (S.w.T.) has commanded His creatures to avoid all types of sins, because, being unmindful of minor sins will gradually attract them towards Greater ones. It is indeed Allah (S.w.T.)'s Grace that by encouraging us to abstain from all types of sins, He keeps us safe from the most dreadful ones.

Another important and subtle point that should be stressed is the fact that considering a minor sin to be minor is itself a Greater sin. No sin is to be considered insignificant and trivial. This point shall also be explained in the future.

Deprived Of Divine Rewards (Tawab)

He who commits a minor sin is deprived of the *Tawab*, he would have deserved, had he abstained from it. Also every sinful act has some evil repercussion or the other; so it happens that one who repeatedly commits minor sins slowly becomes susceptible to the Greater ones. On the other hand, he who refrains from such acts becomes the recipient of Allah (S.w.T.)'s blessings. Besides he who avoids Greater Sins has his minor sins spontaneously forgiven. Thus one who persists in minor sins will be doubly unfortunate. He will not derive the Tawab that is reserved for avoiding these sins –and secondly he will be disqualified from Allah (S.w.T.)'s forgiveness for these sins.

This idea has been presented in the following tradition from the Masum ('a):

"May Allah forgive the sins of the sinners. These people have surely been deprived of the Tawab of good deeds."

It Is Necessary To Refer To The Holy Ahl Ul-Bayt ('A)

It may be mentioned here that another subject also dealt with briefly in the Qur'an but elaborated by the Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams ('a) concerns the absolute authority of the Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) as the representatives of Allah (S.w.T.) upon the Earth, to teach and demonstrate to mankind the laws of Allah (S.w.T.) about the right and the wrong.

Allah the Almighty Himself says:

"And We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect." (***Surah an-Nahl 16:44***)

Allah (S.w.T.) makes it obligatory for the people to refer to the Ahl ul-Bayt ('a). He orders in the Holy Qur'an:

"So ask the followers of the Reminder if you do not know." (***Surah an-Nahl 16:43***)

How The Ahl Ul-Bayt ('A) Are The People Of Remembrance (Ahl 'Ul-Dhikr)

Numerous traditions have reached us which explicitly state that the 'Ahl 'ul-Dhikr' mentioned in the Qur'an are the Holy Ahl ul-Bayt ('a). One such tradition is the statement of Imam al-Ridha' ('a) in the court of Mamun:

"We are Ahl 'ul-Dhikr."

Sunni scholars present at the meeting objected to this statement and maintained that Ahl 'ul-Dhikr in the Qur'an means the Christain and the Jews; and Dhikr refers to the Injil (Bible) and Taurat (Torah). Imam al-Ridha' ('a) replied:

"Glory be to Allah! How is it possible? How could Allah command the Muslims to refer to the Christians and the Jewish Scholars? If we refer to them they will consider their religion to be the true one and better than Islam, and will invite us to their point of view. Will you accept this invitation?"21

Mamun interjected, "Can you support your claim with the Qur'anic proof?" The Imam said,

"Yes, Dhikr means the Holy Prophet and we are his people (Ahl). To prove my point I quote the following ayat:

"O (***those***) ***who believe! Allah has indeed revealed to you a reminder*** (***zikr***)***, an apostle who recites to you the clear communications of Allah."*** (***Surah at-Talaq 65:10-11***).

Shahristani a Sunni scholar has reported that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) and Hazrat 'Ali ('a) said:

"We are the People of remembrance (Ahl 'ul-Dhikr)".

Another argument is that since Allah (S.w.T.) has mentioned only in brief many of the important subjects in Qur'an, He must have appointed a point of reference for the guidance of the people, which would provide a detailed explanation to the subject. And this reference point is undoubtedly the Progeny of Muhammad (Ali Muhammad) in whom Allah (S.w.T.) has reposed His Knowledge and His secrets, not known to any of His other creatures. Those who desire knowledge and truth will forever be dependent on Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) and remain attached to them with love and devotion. And this devotion for the Ahl ul-

Bayt itself is a blessing, which fetches Allah (S.w.T.)'s rewards and Mercy.

Reply To The Second Objection

From the traditions of the Pure Imams ('a) it is clear that they are not in favour of mentioning the exact number of Greater Sins, nor do they describe in detail the Greater Sins. Although time and again they do indicate the method of determining whether an act is a Greater Sin or not is exemplified by the already quoted tradition from Imam al-Sadiq ('a):

"The Greater Sins are those (sins) the doer of (those who commit them) are promised the fire of Hell by Allah."

The reason for the Imam ('a) not to be specific is the same as stated above in the reply to the First objection.

Some Of The Greater Sins Are Included In Others

The Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) did not specify some of the sins because they come under a broad classification of a sin they have stated to be a Greater one. Hence they are not mentioned separately. Abid bin Zorara relates from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) that he said:

"The Greater Sins as mentioned in the book of 'Ali ('a) are seven:

- To disbelieve in the existence of Allah (S.w.T.).
- To kill a believer wrongfully.
- To disobey parents
- Accepting usury when it is clear (obvious).
- To wrongfully acquire any property belonging to orphans.
- To flee from the battlefield in Jihad.
- Reverting to disbelief after accepting Islam.

The narrator asked, "Are all these the Greater types of sins? "Yes", The Imam ('a) replied. Then asked the narrator, "Which is the Greater sin, acquiring of a single Dirham (silver coin) from an orphan forcefully or neglecting prayers?" Imam ('a) replied,

"Neglecting prayers is comparatively a Greater sin."

"Why did you not include the neglecting of prayers among the Greater Sins?" In reply Imam ('a) asked,

“What was the first Greater sin that I mentioned?” Disbelief in Allah.”

He said,

“The leaving of the prayers unattended is the same as disbelief.”

Hence he had not mentioned the neglecting of prayers as a separate Greater sin.22

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that there is no tradition from the Ma’sumin (‘a) which limits the number of Greater Sins. Hence we can say that none of the traditions are fully comprehensive in listing the total number of Greater Sins.

However if we study the Sahifa of Abdul Azim Hasani carefully we can conclude that in the tradition related by Umru bin Abid, Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) has told about twenty one Greater Sins from the Holy Qur’an. Umru ibn Abid left the Imam’s assembly suddenly. Had he listened more patiently the Imam might have proceeded on the subject and enlightened him further.

I would like to inform the readers that I have explained in detail only those sins, which are the confirmed Greater ones. However it does not mean that all those sins which are not mentioned in this book are not Greater. Rather those sins, which are not established as the Greater ones are mentioned briefly.

It is not even confirmed that these are among the lesser sins. Hence pious people should exercise precaution and abstain even from these sins. There is always a possibility that the sin which we think to be small maybe a Greater one. We would be deceived only because its seriousness is not proved to us. We will now proceed towards the detailed explanation of the various sins that are confirmed as Greater Sins.

1. Tafsir Minhajus Sadiqin.
2. Bihar al-Anwar vol.3.
3. Bihar al-Anwar vol.3 quoted from Ma’aniul Akhbar.
4. al-Kafi.
5. Bihar al-Anwar vol.17.
6. al-Kafi.
7. Bihar al-Anwar vol.3.
8. Bihar al-Anwar.
9. Bihar al-Anwar.
10. Bihar al-Anwar, Al-Irshad.
11. al-Kafi.
12. al-Kafi.
13. Tafsir Tabarsi, Manaqib Khwarazmi, Ibn Hajar.
14. Bihar al-Anwar.
15. Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha’.
16. al-Kafi.
17. Bihar al-Anwar.
18. Safinat ul-Bihar.

19. Bihar al-Anwar.
20. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
21. Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha'.
22. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.

First Greater Sin: Shirk (Polytheism)

Shirk – Polytheism

Shirk (Polytheism: To Associate Anyone Or Anything With Allah (S.W.T.))

The first of the Greater Sins is to associate anyone or anything with Allah (S.w.T.). That is to attribute partners to Allah (S.w.T.). Regarding Shirk we have received clear traditions from the Holy Prophet (S) as well as Hazrat 'Ali ('a), Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a), Imam al-Kadhim ('a), Imam al-Ridha' ('a) and Imam al-Jawad ('a).

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) says:

"The greatest of the Greater Sins is to attribute partners to Allah."1

The following verse of the Holy Qur'an asserts:

***"Surely Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases, and whoever associates anything with Allah, he devises indeed a great sin."* (*Surah an-Nisa' 4:48*).**

It means that whoever dies as a polytheist, there is no chance of his salvation. Although Allah (S.w.T.) may forgive any of those who have committed any other sin. Allah (S.w.T.) says:

***"Surely whoever associates* (*others*) *with Allah, then Allah has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust."* (*Surah al-Ma'ida 5:72*).**

Also the Holy Qur'an states:

***"Do not associate aught with Allah; most surely polytheism is a grievous inequity."* (*Surah Luqman 31:13*).**

***"And whoever associates anything with Allah, he devises indeed a great sin."* (*Surah an-Nisa' 4:48*).**

Every Muslim knows fully well that Shirk is a Greater Sin. So it does not seem necessary to quote the

Qur'anic ayats and the traditions of Ma'sumin (‘a) in this regard. However, since it is important to understand the true meaning of Shirk we shall quote the relevant statements in order that people may keep aloof from this infamy. The Holy Qur'an says,

***"And worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him."* (*Surah an-Nisa' 4:36*).**

Mushrik (Polythiest) is the opposite of Muwahhid (Monotheist). Tawhid is the primary pillar of faith. It has various aspects. In the same way Shirk also consists of different types:

1) Tawhid and Shirk with regard to the Essence of Allah (S.w.T.)

2) Tawhid and Shirk with regard to the Attributes of Allah (S.w.T.)

3) Tawhid and Shirk in actions

4) Tawhid and Shirk in Obedience

5) Tawhid and Shirk in worship

May Allah (S.w.T.) provide us the Tawfiq to discuss these different aspects in detail.

Tawhid In The Essence Of Allah (S.W.T.)

Tawhid with regard to the Essence of Allah (S.w.T.) denotes confessing that the Essence of the Lord of the worlds is one, and that He is Eternal. He is the Orignator of every action and phenomenon, whether perceptible through senses or not. There is no other cause except Him. Belief in multiple causes is Shirk. The Zoroastrians believe in the existence of two powerful forces in the Universe, both being equal and eternal. One is good, the other, evil. The god of good is Yazdan and the god of evil is Ahriman. The following ayat of the Holy Qur'an is a clear refutation of this false hypothesis.

***"Say* (*O Muhammad*)*: All is from Allah."* (*Surah an-Nisa' 4:78*).**

The claim of the Dualists can be refuted with a simple statement that there is no one except Allah (S.w.T.), who has been in existence since eternity. Whatever was in past, present or future is nothing but good. Or, at least we can say that good exceeds evil and that evil does not hold sway over good.

However if we go on to explain all this in detail it would lead us away from the topic of our discussion.

Christians Are Polytheists Too

The Christians believe in the trinity of the Godhead. The Father (God), The Son (Jesus) and the Holy Ghost (Jibril). They believe that each of them have a special quality and that together they constitute the Godhead. The Qur'an flays their assertion thus:

***"Certainly they disbelieve who say, 'Surely Allah is the third (person) of Three'; and there is no god but One God."* (*Surah al-Ma'ida 5:73*).**

The Holy Qur'an clearly states that Allah (S.w.T.) is not one-third of a god. He is the One and only One God.

The belief in Trinity is not exclusive to the Christians. Hindus and Buddhists also ascribe to it.

Idol Worship Is Polytheism

Some people allege that there are separate gods for every phenomenon. That is, god of wind, god of sea, etc. This is another form of Polytheism. These people consider different creations to be the handiwork of different gods. These idolaters and polytheists worship multiple deities. Their polytheistic belief has also been denounced in the Holy Qur'an:

***"Are sundry lords better or Allah, the One, the Supreme?"* (*Surah Yusuf 12:39*).**

Tawhid In The Attributes Of Allah (S.W.T.)

Tawhid with regards to the attributes of Allah (S.w.T.) means the realization that the positive attributes of Allah (S.w.T.) and His Essence have only one and the same sense, and not any multiple and diverse sense. Divine attributes like Divine Eternity, Divine Knowledge and Divine Power, are the same as his Essence without any duality between His Essence and His attributes.

This concept must be clearly distinguished from the fact that Allah, the Almighty and the Exalted has applied some of His names to His creatures, and although the names are common to both the Creator and the created, the connotation is quite different; For example Zaid2 has knowledge, so the name "one who knows" is common to both the creator and the created.

But in Zaid's case, it is implicit that this quality in a limited measure was acquired by him (by Allah (S.w.T.)'s Grace) at a certain stage prior to which he did not have it; and it is also possible that he may also lose this quality at a later stage, but for Allah (S.w.T.) this attribute signifies that He is the knower of all things, past, present and future. He knows what is in the Heavens and the Earth and not an atom weight, or less than that or greater escapes Him. His knowledge is all encompassing. If we consider the Attributes of Allah (S.w.T.) as being qualities independent of Allah (S.w.T.) as we know them to be with His creatures, then we have committed Shirk. Accordingly the belief of the Ashairas is absolutely false.

All The Good Qualities Of The Creatures Are From The Creator

(Allah (S.W.T.))

To consider all the good qualities of the created to be from Allah (S.w.T.), the creator, is true Tawhid. It is our belief that all the qualities possessed by the Prophets and the Imams (‘a) were given to them by Allah (S.w.T.)’s Grace. They did not come to acquire any of these qualities on their own. Rather Allah (S.w.T.) bestowed upon them superior knowledge, character, power and perfect morals and exalted their position.

Consequently all that exists has not come into existence on its own. But everything is dependent upon the Creator of the Universe. All the good qualities have also been given to them by Allah (S.w.T.). If Allah (S.w.T.) so desires, He increases their good qualities and gives them sustenance.

Praising Ourselves Unknowingly

A discerning person realizes that our qualities are not our own and that we are not capable of acquiring such qualities without Divine assistance. Yet at times we mistakenly introduce our qualifications as, “my knowledge, my strength, my intention, my wealth etc. Rather one should say, my knowledge, which is bestowed upon me by Allah (S.w.T.), my strength which is imparted to me by Allah (S.w.T.), my intention that is assisted by Allah (S.w.T.), my wealth which is from Allah (S.w.T.).” This constant realization that all which we have is because of Allah (S.w.T.)’s Grace; is true Tawhid.

One can be a true believer in the Oneness of Allah (S.w.T.) if his words and actions both are in consonance with each other. Such a person is more humble and lowly when he addresses his Creator and is in constant dread of the sin of thanklessness. Another distinguishing characteristic of such a person is that he is never pleased when others praise him.

The Pious Ones Dread Praise

The Chief of the Believers, ‘Ali (‘a) while describing the qualities of the pious says, in one of his sermons:

“When any one of them is spoken of highly, he says: ‘I know myself better than others, and my Lord knows me better than I know myself. O Allah do not deal with me according to what they say, and make me better than what they think of me and forgive me (those shortcomings) which they do not know.’[3]

There Is No Partner In The Divine Attributes

A true believer in Tawhid does not attribute any partners to Allah (S.w.T.), nor does he praise anyone in the manner that Allah (S.w.T.) is praised. Everyday he repeats, “SubhanAllah” [Glory be (only) to Allah]. This implies that he does not deem it fit to praise anyone or anything except Allah (S.w.T.). When he says “Alhamdu lil-Lah” (Praise is only for Allah (S.w.T.)), he implies that all praise is exclusive to Allah (S.w.T.) only. No one is more deserving of praise and glorification but the one and only Allah (S.w.T.).

Explanations

When a person becomes a true Muwahhid (a believer in the Oneness of Allah (S.w.T.)) he does not consider anyone the true possessor of perfect qualities. All of these are dependent upon Allah (S.w.T.) who is only one, absolutely independent. The Holy Qur'an says:

"O men! you are they who stand in need of Allah. And Allah is He who is self-sufficient, the praised one." **(*Surah Fat'ir 35:15*).**

That is the reason why pious people refrain from praising themselves and also fear the praise of others for them. 'Ali ('a) has mentioned this in the sermon quoted above. We must also refrain from words, which imply the independence of man from Allah (S.w.T.) and instead attribute uniqueness to him. For example one should not say, "I possess such and such quality."

A Saying Of The Holy Prophet (S)

Once a man approached the door of the exalted Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (S) and knocked. The Holy Prophet (S) enquired who he was. The person replied, "I" The Prophet came out and said, "Who was the one to say 'I'? Let it be known that except Allah (S.w.T.) no one is qualified to use this word. Allah (S.w.T.) says about Himself, I am the Powerful, I am the Punisher.'

Qarun Became A Polythiest

Qarun became a polytheist because he dared to say that all he had come to possess was due to his knowledge of alchemy. Thus, when Qarun made himself an accomplice of the One and only God in possessing the Divine attributes, Allah (S.w.T.) replied,

"Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him the generations who were mightier in strength than he, and Greater in assemblage?" **(*Surah al-Qasas 28:78*).**

Later, we see that Qarun was not able to save himself from destruction even though he claimed to possess strength and power. Thus we must understand that any qualities of the creatures are not of their own but given to them by the Most Powerful Almighty Allah.

Tawhid And Shirk In Acts Of Allah (S.W.T.)

Tawhid in deeds construe that we have conviction that the Lord and Master of every form of life whether material or spiritual is Allah (S.w.T.). He alone controls and regulates life. We must also have the conviction that Allah (S.w.T.) does not have anyone to share in His Lordship and control. His authority extends over the entire earth and the skies. No one is an accomplice of Him in this regard.

As the Qur'an says:

"Allah is He who created seven Heavens, and of the earth the like of them; the decree continues to descend among them, that you may know that Allah has power over all things and that Allah indeed encompasses all things in (His) knowledge."(Surah at-Talaq 65:12).

We must acknowledge that Allah (S.w.T.) is the creator of the Heavens. We must have a firm belief that He has created the countless stars. Their number has not been ascertained till today. Modern science has computed that there are approximately ten million stars, each of them capable of having a habitation similar to the earth. Each one of them possess a different light and they revolve in their own orbits without clashing with the other Heavenly bodies.

"And the stars are made subservient by His commands." (Surah an-Nahl 16:12).

One of such stars is the Sun, the volume of which is 1.3 million times more than our Earth. It has been bestowed with such a powerful light that within seconds it traverses the distance between the Sun and the Earth. The Earth is illuminated by solar light and the life on Earth is sustained by the nourishment received from this light. "Glory be only to Allah the Mighty Creator."

Myriad Colours From Colourless Water

It is the Unique Allah (S.w.T.) who has caused the growth of plants and trees from the bosom of the earth. These plants bear flowers with color and fragrance. The green leaves of the trees and the colourful vegetation is but by the uncomparable power of Creator. The Creator has also given to the human beings the ability to see and appreciate the colourful herbage and the floral outgrowths.

Hence man must contemplate upon the Creator who has caused all this to come into existence. He must also acknowledge the One who has created him.

Who Splits The Ovum And The Seed?

The Master of the Universe is one who causes the seed to split. A part of it grows towards the depths of the earth and becomes the root. The root absorbs nourishment from the earth and supplies it to the main body. The plumule develops into stem and bears leaves. These leaves help in processing of the food which is supplied by the roots. Gradually the plant puts forth colourful and fragrant flowers and tasty fruits. All this is made to come in existence by the combination of the earth, air and water, all Three of which combine to provide different kinds of tastes, smells and colours. The human beings are made capable of discerning the myriad tastes and colours so that they can appreciate the bounties of Allah (S.w.T.) and know their Creator.

In Three Darknesses

Allah (S.w.T.) is that uncomparable Being who has caused the creation of every animal from the unclean

sperm. The human being is conceived in the triple covering of the womb. Later, he is bestowed with the discriminating intellect which enables him to ponder upon the qualities and the signs of Allah (S.w.T.) and also so that he may compare his ownself with other creatures by the help of his inward eye.

Nutritious Milk From Dirty Blood

Allah (S.w.T.) is the One who created milk from the dirty red blood and caused it to flow from the mammary glands of the animals and humans so that it may reach the gullets of infants.

"And most surely there is a lesson for you in cattle; We give to drink of what is in their bellies from betwixt the faeces and the blood -pure milk, easy and agreeable to swallow for those who drink." **(*Surah an-Nahl 16:66*).**

When the young ones are not yet capable of digesting solid food it is only milk which nourishes them. And the provider of this milk is Allah (S.w.T.). He is the bestower of every benefit.

"Say: All is from Allah..." **(*Surah an-Nisa' 4:78*).**

Bestows Sustenance: Accepts Deeds

Allah (S.w.T.) is the sustainer of all living creatures. He distributes His bounties freely to one and all. He gives sustenance to whom He chooses without measure. His unlimited Mercy spreads over His entire creation. He accepts the invocation of all those who plead to Him and removes the difficulties of whomsoever He wishes.

The absolute belief in Tawhid implies that one should understand fully, the meaning of the phrase, **"There is no Power or Might except By Allah."** In other words it is the essence of the Kalima **"La ilaha illa Allah."** (There is no god except Allah (S.w.T.)).

Allah (S.W.T.) Is The Cause Of Every Phenomenon

Allah (S.w.T.) is the origin of every life. He is the origin of the characteristics of life imparted to each and every creature. The characteristics of all creation are manifested by the Will of Allah (S.w.T.). Therefore it is no wonder if the established quality of a particular thing may undergo a sudden change if Allah (S.w.T.) so wishes; as it happened in the case of fire lighted by Namrud, which became cool by the Will of Allah (S.w.T.). The details of such phenomena shall be explained in the following pages.

No Limit To The Splendour Of Allah (S.W.T.)'S Might

Allah (S.w.T.), the Almighty is the One who brings assistance to the needy beseechers, provides relief to the afflicted who cry out for help and in His hands is all the good. "*He is Allah the Creator, the Maker,*

the Fashioner, the Sustainer, the Giver of life and death the Bestower of benefits, the Punisher, the Acceptor of prayers, the Obeyed One and the Praised." The names and attributes of Allah manifest His greatness. The phrase 'Rabbul Alamin' (Lord of the worlds) is central to the Divine names. But intellect and reason is bewildered in understanding His attributes, and speech and expression is dumbfounded by His greatness.[4]

The Holy Qur'an says:

"Say, if the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted, though we were to bring the like of that (sea) to add thereto." **(*Surah al-Kahf 18:109*).**

Human Strength

Whatever a human being is able to achieve, is by the strength, the capacity, intellect and will power bestowed on him by Allah (S.w.T.). By thought and perseverance, he can make use of these favours to distinguish between good and evil and perform his deeds. Anyone who does not ponder upon the designs which embellish the doors and walls of this world is himself lifeless like the walls. The observation of the creations around him offer enlightenment to the intelligent mind. But one who does not deliberate (ponder), cannot know Allah (S.w.T.) through His creations and thus he rejects the existence of Allah (S.w.T.).

Is there anyone who could produce sweet fruits from woods (of trees)? Does anyone possess the miraculous capability of growing colourful flowers from (among) the thorns? He is that Pure and Flawless God who by His Divine plan and order created the day and the night and gave the light to the sun and the moon.

He is an incomparable king who neither requires a constitution nor a treasure. He is that designer who does not need paints or the tools of designing.

He causes the water springs to erupt from the stones and makes the rain to descend from the clouds. He creates honey from the bee and silk from the silkworm.

If all the creatures come together to discuss the bounties of Allah (S.w.T.) and continue upto the Day of Qiyama, they will not have accomplished even a thousandth fraction of their task.

"And if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them; most surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." **(*Surah an-Nahl 16:18*).**

Human Strength Is Limited By Divine Will

The strength and the capacity of all the human beings is surrounded by the Divine decree and Allah (S.w.T.)'s will. As we see that a person makes an intention to do something but at the last moment his plans are foiled.

He is unable to complete the task that he had initiated due to the loss of capacity. Actually, what he intended to do was against the Divine will and thus he is hindered from the task. A person inquired from Amir ul-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a), "My Master! How did you recognise (realize) Allah?" He replied, "I recognised Him by witnessing the abrogation of intention and the failures of strengths." Allah, undoubtedly is the initiator of all that moves in the Universe and He is the original cause of the various effects in the created world. To acknowledge Allah as the base of everything and to have a firm belief in this is the pinnacle of Tawhid (Belief in the Oneness of Allah).

However very few people are able to achieve this stage of Tawhid. But if one develops a firm conviction that the cause of every effect, whether material or spiritual is Allah, alone, he develops some peculiar characteristics. One of such characteristics is the Fear of Allah (S.w.T.).

Fear Of Allah (S.W.T.)

A believer who has reached the highest stage of belief fears nothing but the Might of Allah (S.w.T.) and his own sins. It is because he has realized that all the creatures from Adam ('a) to the angels and all the animals, birds and insects are the obedient soldiers of Allah (S.w.T.). None of them move a step without His command. Hence they could not cause any harm or benefit without Allah (S.w.T.)'s permission. When a person develops this belief he is not fearful of anything. Even if all the swords of the world come to attack. If Allah (S.w.T.) wills, not a single nerve could be cut by them.

The opposition of both the friend and the foe is from Allah (S.w.T.). Because the hearts of both are in the control of Allah (S.w.T.). However evil the claimant may intend, only that which Allah (S.w.T.) permits comes to pass. There is a tradition that,

"The extreme kind of belief consists of not fearing anything except Allah."

The Holy Prophet (S) used to recite this in prostration.

"O Allah if Your anger is not upon me then there is nothing I care for."

Reliance Upon Allah (S.W.T.)

When a believer has developed a firm and complete conviction that apart from Allah (S.w.T.) no one is the Lord of the creation and none is the cause of all the causes except Him, He does not repose hope in

anyone except Allah (S.w.T.). Hazrat 'Ali ('a) states:

"You must not rely upon anyone except the Lord."[5]

As we have mentioned before, the origin of everything is Allah (S.w.T.) and the centre of all creation is He alone. In the same way every goodness of man for his fellowbeings also originates from Allah (S.w.T.). As it is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, "good actions are only from His (Allah's) hands."At the end of Surah Yunus, Allah (S.w.T.) says,

***"And if Allah should afflict you with harm, then there is none to remove it but He, and if He intends good to you there is none to repel His grace; He brings it to whom He pleases of His servants; and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."* (*Surah Yunus 10:107*).**

***At another place the Qur'an says, "And whatever favour is* (*bestowed*) *on you, it is from Allah..."* (*Surah an-Nahl 16:53*).**

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Thus, it is clear from the above discussion that all that is present in the material and the ethereal spheres is subservient to Allah (S.w.T.).

***"There is no one in the heavens and the earth but will come to the Beneficient God as a servant."* (*Surah Maryam 19:93*).**

If someone reposes hope in anyone except Allah (S.w.T.) his hopes are extinguished so that he can realize his true master, i.e. Allah (S.w.T.).

"I will severe the ties of hope of those who repose hope in others."

Thankfulness To The Provider Of Bounties

The master of the Universe is Allah (S.w.T.) and He bestows all the bounties, hence He must be thanked for these. Because all the good deeds are only through His hands. He gives whatever goodness He likes to anyone of His choice. That is why we say with a firm belief, "Al-hamdu lil-Lah" (The praise is only for Allah (S.w.T.)).

Thankfulness For Capability (Or Means) Is Also Necessary

If we are receiving sustenance or help from some means, we must be thankful for these too. However we should not consider these means or intermediaries to be independent of Allah (S.w.T.). We must accept them only as the agents through whom Allah (S.w.T.) is causing His Mercy to reach us. These agents only act as a medium of passing the bounties of Allah (S.w.T.) and hence they must also be acknowledged; as ordered by the Masum ('a).

"One who does not thank his apparent giver (the agent or the means), it is as if he has not thanked his

real giver (Allah (S.w.T.))."[6]

"The most thankful amongst you towards Allah is the one who is most thankful to the people (who have helped you)."[7]

There is no doubt that if one considers his helper to be the original doer of good (independent from Allah (S.w.T.)), he has surely committed Shirk.

Hidden Shirk In The Praise Of The Creature

"And most of them do not believe in Allah without associating others (with Him)." (Surah Yusuf 12: 106).

While explaining this verse, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) informed that one form of Shirk is,

"Like the saying of someone that if so and so had not been there I would have been destroyed. If so and so had not been there I would have got that thing. In the same way is to say that if so and so had not been there my children would have perished."[8]

Such utterances signify the type of belief the speaker possesses. If he really has such a belief then he is surely a polytheists (mushrik). After this Imam ('a) said,

"If one says, 'If Allah had not helped me through such and such person I would have perished,' there is no harm in it." In fact this is the essence of Tawhid.

Hazrat Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq ('A) And The Thankful Beggar

Masma bin Abdul Malik relates that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) was at Mina (in Makkah) when a beggar approached him. Imam ('a) ordered that a bunch of grapes be given to him. The beggar said, "I do not need these, if possible give me money." Imam ('a) did not give him anything but said, "May Allah make you self-sufficient." After this another beggar approached. Imam ('a) picked up three grapes from the bunch and offered them to him. The beggar picked them up and said, "All Praise is for Allah (only) who has given me sustenance." Imam ('a) said, "Wait", and he placed as many grapes as his hands could hold. Twice again he gave him the same quantity. The beggar thanked Allah (S.w.T.) again. Imam ('a) again stopped him and asked his slave how much money he had.

The slave replied, "Twenty dirhams." Imam ('a) ordered him to give these to the beggar. The beggar took the money and said, "All praise is for Allah alone. O Allah You are the sustainer, You are One, there is no partner for You. Imam ('a) again stopped him. Then the Imam ('a) removed his shirt and gave it to the beggar and said, "Wear it." The beggar put the shirt on and thanked Allah who had bestowed him with the dress and made him happy. At this stage the beggar turned towards Imam ('a) and said, "O slave of Allah may Allah reward you for this." After this he went his way. The narrator says that if the beggar had not addressed the Imam ('a) as such, Imam ('a) would have continued to give him gifts for

his thankfulness to Allah.[9]

Tawhid And Tawakkul (Reliance)

It must be remembered that all the causes are in the hands of the One who is the final cause. Those who believe in the Oneness of Allah (S.w.T.) should rely only upon the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) for all their affairs. They must realize that all the effects owe their cause to Allah (S.w.T.). Even if all the venues for his success are open he will not achieve success if Allah (S.w.T.)'s will is contrary to it. On the other hand if all the ways of success are closed he will definitely succeed if Allah (S.w.T.) wills. Even if all the means of causing him injury come together no harm shall come if Allah (S.w.T.) intends to protect him.

Tawhid And Acceptance (Taslim)

One who believes in Tawhid should accept all the Divine decrees with humility. He should believe that various factors like honour and dishonour, health and ailments, richness and poverty, death and life are all according to the Divine decree. He should not oppose any of these either by speech or by actions. He should not even express his opinion in such affairs. For example, "Why has this happened? It should have been like this." Or to say, "Why did it not rain? Why is it so hot?" One should not say, "Why has Allah (S.w.T.) not given me wealth or children?" "Why did such and such person die in his youth and why did the other attained old age?" "Why has Allah (S.w.T.) prohibited this and made obligatory that?"

One who utters such things makes himself a partner in the absolute authority of the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.).

There maybe people who worship the One and only God, establish prayers, pay the Zakat, perform Hajj and also fast during the month of Ramadhan. But if they have any objection against those obligations prescribed by Allah (S.w.T.) or His Prophet (S) and say, "Why was it not this way?" or even if they have such thoughts and do not express them in words, still they are polytheists (mushrikun).

***"But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with entire submission."* (*Surah an-Nisa' 4:65*).**

Allama Majlisi comments, "...any objection against the Divine decree and the utterances of the Pure Imams ('a) is tantamount to Shirk."

Thus it is obligatory for the believers of Tawhid that when they fall into misfortune and calamities they should restrain their tongues and hearts from objecting against the Divine decree. However the weeping and expression of grief at the death of friends and relative is allowed and rather recommended. What is not permitted is to say, "Why has this happened? It should not have happened."

Tawhid And Love

The worshippers of the unique God should accept that Allah (S.w.T.) is the provider of him and all the existing things. Whatever he gets is due to the beneficence of the Almighty. The apparent causes and the effects are also in control of Allah (S.w.T.). Then it is Him only who deserves unlimited love and attachment. If someone else deserves to be loved it is only due to his being the beloved of Allah (S.w.T.). This is because such a love is itself commanded by Allah (S.w.T.). Divine personalities like the Holy Prophets (‘a), Imams (‘a), the angels and the true believers are those whose love is commanded by Allah (S.w.T.).

In the same way, to show attachment to the gifts of Allah (S.w.T.) is allowed if such an attachment would exhibit our thankfulness for the bounties. To love our family, possessions and the worldly life is also worship in this way. However, to love all such things without considering the divine aspect renders one to be a mushrik (polytheist). If one loves something more than he loves Allah (S.w.T.), then it is a kind of Shirk. If he prefers something above the love of Allah (S.w.T.) it is totally Haram. Consequently he becomes liable for punishment. For example if someone loves monetary wealth more than Allah (S.w.T.) then it would be difficult for him to fulfill the religious obligation of Zakat etc. Various ayats of the Qur’an and traditions mention this fact.

1) Someone inquired from Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) the meaning of the following verse:

“The day on which property will not avail, nor sons. Except him who comes to Allah with a heart, free (from evil).” (Surah ash-Shura 26: 88-89).

Imam (‘a) replied,

“The heart free (from evil) is the one when it meets Allah it does not have the love of anyone but Allah. Every heart which has Shirk and doubt is condemned to be destroyed. (al-Kafi)

2) Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) states,

“By Allah the Iman (faith) of a person cannot be pure till he loves Allah more than his near ones; his mother, his father, children, wife, other people and wealth.”10

3) During the rule of Prophet Sulaiman (‘a) a male sparrow told its mate,

“Why do you stop me from mating? I possess such might that if I want I could pick up the dome of (the palace) of Hazrat Sulaiman (‘a) and drop it in the river.” When Hazrat Sulaiman (‘a) came to know of this, he summoned both the birds and asked the male bird if he could substantiate his claim by putting it into practice. The bird replied that he had only tried to impress his mate by the false claim. He said that he loved his companion hence could not afford to lose her. When Hazrat Sulaiman (‘a) asked the female bird for her opinion she said that her suitor did not love her and his affections were for someone else.

Upon hearing her grievance Hazrat Sulaiman (‘a) became remorseful. He retired into his prayer niche and did not come out for forty days. He prayed, “O Allah purify the heart of this male bird from the love of everything except his own mate.”[11]

Tawhid And Shirk In Obedience

A believer knows that the creator of all is the one and only Allah (S.w.T.) and He also is the only sustainer of all His creatures. He does not have any partner in his Lordship and authority. Such a believer does not regard anyone else fit for obedience, except Allah (S.w.T.). This believer knows that apart from Allah (S.w.T.) none of the existing things could command obedience. They are all helpless before the Might of Allah (S.w.T.). All the creatures are incapable of benefitting themselves, nor can they protect themselves from harm. They do not have any power upon their death and life and neither upon the Day of Judgement and the reckoning

“…they control not for themselves any harm or profit, and they control not death, nor life, nor raising (the dead) to life.” (Surah al-Furqan 25:3).

Thus total obedience and Wilayat is reserved for Allah (S.w.T.) only. However if Allah (S.w.T.) Himself designates someone to be the center of authority then His obedience is also obligatory due to the Divine command.

Authorities Whose Obedience Is Commanded By Allah (S.W.T.)

The chain of the Divine Wilayat extends from the noble Prophets (‘a), the Imams (‘a) and also consist of the Nawwab ul Khassa[12] during the period of Minor occultation. Discussing this the Qur’an says,

“Whoever obeys the Apostle, he indeed obeys Allah…” (Surah an-Nisa’ 4:80).

And also,

“and whatever the Apostle gives you, accept it and from whatever he forbids you, keep back, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is severe in retributing (evil).” (Surah al-Hashr 59:7).

Further Allah (S.w.T.) says,

“O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those who have authority among you.” (Surah an-Nisa’ 4:59).

Who Are The “Uli’ L-’Amr”?

Concerning the “Uli’ l-’Amr” the opinion of the Ahl ul-Sunna is unsupported by proofs. They claim that

Uli' l–'Amr means the ruler! What if the ruler is unjust? What if he is not an expert in religious affairs? What if he is a slave of material desires? Is obedience obligatory towards him even if he himself disobeys his Lord? Such a situation creates contradictions. However, all these things are beyond the scope of our discussion.

As Umar ibn al–Khattab said, "Two muta'as (Muta'a of Hajj and Muta'a of women) were permitted in the time of the Holy Prophet (S), I prohibit both." Hence those who consider Allah (S.w.T.) and the Prophet (S) as Uli' l–'Amr would regard Muta'a as Halal. But if they also wish to obey Umar ibn al–Khattab, it will create a contradiction.

Love Of 'Ali ('A) Commanded By Allah (S.W.T.), And Muawiya's Stance

Muawiya considered it obligatory to fight 'Ali ('a) whereas the Holy Prophet (S) had made it Haram. The Prophet (S) said, "War against 'Ali ('a) is war against me." Muawiya used to order people to hate 'Ali ('a) while the Holy Prophet (S) made 'Ali's love obligatory and Allah (S.w.T.) made the love of 'Ali ('a) the compensation of the Prophetic message. The Holy Qur'an says,

"Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but the love of my near relatives." **(*Surah Ash–Shura 42:23*).**

On the basis of this, the result of the obedience of Allah (S.w.T.) and His Prophet (S) would be love for 'Ali ('a). To consider Muawiya as Uli' l–'Amr would necessitate hatred for 'Ali ('a), and in this case too a contradictory situation would arise.

The Term 'Uli' l–'Amr' Is Not Restricted To A Particular Group

To consider the command of obedience of Uli' l–'Amr to be restricted to a particular group is against the import of the Qur'anic ayat. This is because Allah (S.w.T.) has not ordered the obedience of Uli' l–'Amr separately. He has included the obedience of Uli' l–'Amr alongwith that of the Holy Prophet (S). Thus the obedience of Uli' l–'Amr is the obedience of the Holy Prophet (S). There is no difference between the obedience of the Prophet (S) and the obedience of Uli' l–'Amr. The obedience of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Uli' l–'Amr is compulsory upon everyone. It is not restricted to a few people. If we consider Uli' l–'Amr to include all types of rulers it would not be correct. Uli' l–'Amr are those who are purified from every kind of mistakes and sins. So that they could be obeyed without any reservations.

Are The Religious Scholars Uli' l–'Amr?

Some scholars claim that by Uli' l–'Amr is meant the religious leaders (Alims). But, the Alims are not infallible (Masum). All the Alims are prone to commit mistakes. That is the reason why there are differences in the religious rulings. Secondly infallibility is an inward quality which cannot be perceived by the people. That is the reason why the Uli' l–'Amr could only be designated by Allah (S.w.T.) and appointed by the Holy Prophet (S).

The Twelve Imams Are Uli' l–'Amr

Numerous books of the Sunnis as well as Shi'a record traditions that the Uli' l–'Amr are the Twelve Imams. The following tradition is regarded as authentic by the Sunnis as well as the Shi'as.

What The Holy Prophet (S) Says Regarding Uli' l–'Amr

Jabir ibn Abdullah al–Ansari (a.r.) reports, "I asked the Holy Prophet (S) that I know Allah (S.w.T.) and His Prophet (S), but I do not know the Uli' l–'Amr." The Holy Prophet (S) replied,

"They are my Caliphs, O! Jabir, and Imams of the Muslims after me. The first of them is 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a), then Hasan, then Husain, then 'Ali ibn Husain, then Muhammad bin 'Ali known in the Tawrat as Al–Baqir, thou wilt shortly meet him O Jabir; so when you meet him, convey to him my Salam; then Ja'far ibn Muhammad, then Musa bin Ja'far, then 'Ali bin Musa, then Muhammad bin 'Ali, then 'Ali ibn Muhammad, then Hasan bin 'Ali, then my name sake and one having my kunniyat. They are the decisive argument of Allah on this earth and the mainstay of His religion among mankind. The last of them is the one whom Allah will give victory over the east of the earth and the west; and it is he who will disappear from his Shi'as and friends. A long concealment, during which no one will remain firm in the belief of his Imamat except those whose hearts Allah has tested for faith." Jabir (a.r.) asked, "Will his Shi'as derive benefit from him during his concealment?" "Yes", said the Apostle of Allah, "By him Who raised me up with Prophethood,verily they will obtain light from his 'Nur' and will benefit by his Wilayat during his concealment, like people derive benefit from the sun when it is covered with clouds."[13]

So, it could be concluded from this tradition that the obedience of the Holy Ahl ul–Bayt ('a) is equivalent to the obedience of Allah (S.w.T.). Those interested in more details can refer to the book 'Ghayatul Maram'. In the fifty–ninth chapter of this book, four traditions from the Sunni sources and fourteen from the Shi'a sources are mentioned. In the same book, in the 121st chapter, four traditions from the Sunni books and twenty–eight from the Shi'a sources are recorded.

Obedience Of The Just Mujtahid

Now we can say that during the Major occultation the obedience of a qualified Mujtahid is also compulsory. His obedience is actually the obedience of Imam az–Zaman ('a). Imam ('a) says,

"Look carefully at those people who relate our traditions with deliberation upon our permitted and prohibited things, and know our precepts and commandments. Select one of them for adjudication, since I have appointed such a person for the said task. If his verdict is rejected then it is as if the command of Allah is deemed light and our ordinance refuted. Certainly the one who refutes our ordinance has refuted the ordinance of Allah. Verily such a person has stepped into the boundary of Shirk (Polytheism)."[14]

The Faqih Who Deserves To Be Followed

One of the conditions of a Faqih is that he should be free from worldly desires. He should not be in pursuit of material benefits and worldly honour. The Faqih who is free from such weaknesses is fit to be followed even if there are people more pious (in performing good deeds) than him. In this regard the great scholar Shaykh al-Ansari quotes a tradition from Imam al-Hasan Askari ('a) in his book 'Ihtijaj'.

"And among jurists (Fuqaha) those who protect themselves (from sins), guard their religion, defy their carnal desires and are obedient to their Master, it is incumbent upon the people to follow them. Such characteristics are found only in a few of them and not all."

Obeying Parents Is Obeying Allah (S.W.T.)

Obedience to parents is obedience to Allah (S.w.T.). To obey parents and not to cause them any kind of distress or discomfort is of extreme importance. This importance can be judged by the fact that in the Holy Qur'an, Allah (S.w.T.)'s command to serve Him is immediately followed by His command to treat parents with gentleness and humility.

"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him; and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) 'Uff' nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! Have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little." (Surah al-'Isra', 17:23-24).

Parents Cannot Restrain From Obligatory Acts Nor Can They Compel You To Commit The Prohibited

It should be known that the parents are not the absolute authority upon all the affairs of Haram and Halal. Their authority is restricted by the dual dictum, that they must not prohibit a Wajib thing and nor should order something Haram. If a situation demands the parents have to be disobeyed in absolute obedience to the commands of Allah (S.w.T.) and His Prophet (S).

"And We have enjoined on man goodness to his parents, and if they contend with you that you should associate (others) with Me, of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them; to Me is your return, so I will inform you of what you did." (Surah Al-'Ankabut 29:8).

Obedience to parents is highly stressed so that they may not be caused even the slightest discomfort by the disobedience of their children. It is totally prohibited by the Qur'an. Thus if the disobedience of the parents would incur their wrath then it is compulsory for the children to obey them.

Further Details Regarding Obedience To Parents

Sometimes the parents may disallow something or order their children to do something. But if the child does not obey they are not angry. In such cases it is permitted for the child to follow his choice. For example the parents refrain their son to proceed on a journey that would cause hardship. But they do not mind if he insists on it. In this case it is Mubah for the son to go on this journey. However if this journey would cause the anger of one's parents, it is a journey of sin and during this journey one has to pray Salat as complete (not Qasr) and also observe the obligatory fasts.

Obedience Of The Husband Is Wajib Upon The Wife

The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) and the Holy Prophet (S) have commanded the wife to obey her husband. The Holy Qur'an informs,

"Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded." **(*Surah an-Nisa' 4:34*).**

Allah, the Almighty has given men superiority over women and appointed them as the protectors of women. This is due to the fact that men have been provided by Allah (S.w.T.) with many qualities in great measure as compared to women, like strength, bravery etc. Further they spend their wealth upon their women. So the best women are those who are loyal to their husbands and obedient to their commands. They protect his property and their own chastity in the absence of their husbands.

The Holy Prophet (S) has also said,

"Prostration of a human for another human being is not permitted. (If it had been) I would have ordered the wife to prostrate before her husband."[15]

Dignity In The Marital Affairs

Numerous traditions emphasise that women should be obedient to their husbands. Apart from this, women should know that it is highly recommended that they please their husbands in all matters. It is the best worship of a woman. However to satisfy the sexual desires of the husband is absolutely Wajib according to the consensus of the scholars.

Similarly the husbands permission is required by the wife if she intends to go out. Even if she goes to visit her relatives or parents it is obligatory for her to seek the husbands permission. If she leaves the husband's house without his permission, the angels curse her till she returns.

Non-Essential Expenses Should Have The Prior Sanction Of The Husband

Apart from the necessary expenses, the wife should obtain the husband's permission for other things even if she wants to spend from her personal wealth. But in case of obligatory expenses she does not need the husband's permission. For example, Hajj, Zakat, Khums and even for spending upon her parents. Even if the husband restrains her she must carry out these obligations. If a woman obeys her husband to please Allah (S.w.T.), she has undoubtedly obeyed the Divine commands and the instructions of the Holy Prophet (S). It is certainly the best worship for a woman.

Referring To The Unjust Ruler Is Not Allowed

So far, we have seen that obedience to Allah (S.w.T.) is obligatory and so is the obedience to the Holy Prophet (S) and his Twelve Successors (Imams – 'a), and whoever else Allah (S.w.T.) has ordered to obey. Their obedience is also a must i.e. of the Fuqaha, in case of religious matters. It is absolutely 'Haram' to appeal for justice in the courts of the unjust rulers. Referring to them is the same as seeking the help of Satan. Whatever benefit is derived through such cases is also Haram even if one is the rightful claimant. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) says,

"If one files a suit of law in the court of a ruler, even if the plaintiff is on the right, his claim would tantamount to his making Satan (false deity) his judge. And whatever he gets through this Judgement is Haram even though it was from his rights."

"…then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle…" **(*Surah an-Nisa' 4:59*).**

The Religious Scholar Who Does Not Practise Piety Is Not To Be Followed

Like it is prohibited to seek the counsel of the unjust ruler even if one is on the right; in the same way it is not allowed to seek religious advice from the scholars who pursue material wealth and worldly honour. The qualifications of a Faqih have been mentioned in the foregoing pages. Anyone who does not fulfill these qualities is not to be followed. It is Haram to refer to them. A couple of traditions are quoted below in this regard.

Religious Leaders Who Worship The World Are Bandits On The Highway To Allah (S.W.T.)

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a): "*When you see a religious scholar in love of this world, do not consider him religious. Certainly one who loves an object, his condition and disposition is like that of*

his beloved. (It means that one who loves this world will not care for the Hereafter). Allah revealed upon Hazrat Dawud ('a):

"O Dawud do not make an Alim an intermediary between you and Me, who is involved in the love of this world. He will hinder you from My path (i.e. he will make you too a worshipper of the world like himself). Certainly such Alims are bandits who waylay the people approaching My abode. The least that I would do to them is that I shall remove from their hearts the love of conversation with Me and sweetness too."[16]

A Faqih Should Only Be For Allah (S.W.T.)

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) states,

"If one obtains knowledge in order to become conceited or to argue with the foolish people or to obtain wealth or to attract people towards himself then he has certainly made the Fire his abode. Verily, acquisition of wealth is not permitted but for ones own family (needs)."[17]

The Common People Are 'Deficient'

People who leave aside the scholars of Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) and refer to others in order to satisfy their selfish desires, are termed as 'deficient' (which means those who willfully neglect the Divine commands). They are mentioned in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

***"Have you then considered him who takes his low desire for his god."* (Surah al-Jathiya 45:23).**

Tawhid And Shirk In Worship

The Almighty Allah has invited all the creatures to pay obeisance to Him in order that His Majesty may become manifest. The people can obtain numerous blessings and unlimited mercy and achieve such a position which even imagination cannot visualise.

***"So no soul knows what is hidden for them of that which will refresh the eyes; a reward for what they did."* (Surah as-Sajda 32:17).**

The Lord Of The Worlds And The Lowly Man

The human being is a lowly creature. So lowly that he cannot even seek nearness to the Almighty, let alone achieve it. That is why Allah (S.w.T.), by his unsurpassed Wisdom and infinite Mercy appointed the Last Prophet (S) as an intermediary to form a firm link between the lowly man and the Almighty Allah.

Due to the presence of this Wasilah (intermediary) the soul of man is affected to such a degree that it

undergoes a transformation. Just as alchemy changes the base metal into pure gold, the heart of the worshipper become pure and is filled by the light of the Creator, repelling the darkness of Ignorance. Gradually he rises in status as his worship enables him to rise up towards the Divine. He thus achieves the best of both the worlds.

Purity Of Intention

There are some conditions for acceptance of the acts of worship. The most important condition is purity of intention (Niyyat). Purity of intention with respect to a deed has the same significance that the soul has for the body. Absence of the purity of intention during worship takes man further away from Allah (S.w.T.).

The Holy Qur'an contains numerous verses in this regard. A few of them are quoted below:

***1*) *"And they were not enjoined anything except that they should serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience."* (*Surah al-Bayyina 98:5*).**

***2*) *"Say: I am commanded that I should serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience."* (*Surah az-Zumar 39:11*).**

***3*) *"Say: My Lord has enjoined justice, and set upright your faces at every time of prayer and call on Him, being sincere to Him in obedience."* (*Surah al-Ar'af 7:29*).**

***4*) *"Say: I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your god is One God, therefore whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and not join anyone in the service of His Lord."* (*Surah al-Kahf 18:110*).**

One Who "Shows-Off" Is A Mushrik

It is concluded from the authentic traditions that one who tries to show-off in religious matters is a mushrik and a hypocrite. He is inevitably condemned to Divine punishment. It is one and the same whether his show-off concerns the obligatory acts or the recommended acts.

Similarly he may simply exhibit outward piety or his aim may be to acquire honour and respect among the people. Even if he has a dual aim (of showing off and fulfilling his obligation) his act is classified as Shirk. A few Qur'anic verses are quoted for the benefit of the readers:

***1*) *"Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allah, and He shall requite their deceit to them, and when they stand up sluggishly; they do it only to be seen of men and do not remember Allah save a little. Wavering between that* (*and this*), (*belonging*) *neither to these nor to those."* (*Surah an-Nisa' 4:142*).**

***2*) *"So woe to the praying ones, who are unmindful of their prayers, who do* (*good*) *to be seen."* (*Surah Ma'un 107:4-6*).**

Outward Piety (Riyah) Is The Lesser Shirk

The Holy Prophet (S) said,

"Certainly what I fear for you most is the lesser Shirk."

Someone enquired, "O Prophet (S), what is meant by lesser Shirk?" He replied,

"It is Riyah when Allah would reward His creatures for their deeds on the Day of Judgement He would address those who committed Riyah thus, 'you approach those, to please whom you had performed all the deeds in the world. And obtain your rewards for your deeds from them.'[18]

Is it possible to receive rewards from them? Absolutely not!

The Deceitful Person Deceives Himself Alone

Someone enquired from the Holy Prophet (S) as to how could salvation be attained on the Day of Judgement? He replied,

"It could only be possible if one does not deceive Allah. Certainly if anyone tries to deceive Allah he is himself deceived by Allah (i.e. he is repaid for his deceit) and Allah takes away belief from him. If he possesses reason he should know that in trying to deceive Allah, he is only deceiving himself."

"How can Allah be deceived and defrauded?" a person asked. The Prophet (S) continued,

"The person fulfills all his religious obligations but his aim is to please someone other than Allah. Fear Allah and restrain from 'Riyah'. On the Day of Judgement the deceiver (Riyakar) will be addressed by four titles, 'O Kafir, O Sinful, O Crafty one, O Loser, your deeds are nullified and the reward of your deeds is lost. Today you have no worth whatsoever. Go and seek the reward of your deeds from those, to please whom you performed your acts.'[19]

The Fire Of Hell Weeps Due To The Deceitful Ones (Riyakar)

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a):

"If a person performs a good deed to achieve Allah's pleasure and the reward in the hereafter; but also intends to please other people, then he will be termed as a Mushrik."[20]

The Holy Prophet (S) has informed,

“Certainly the fire of Hell and the people of Hell would cry for help due to the deceitful ones.”

Someone asked, “O Prophet of Allah (S). How would the fire cry?” He replied,

“The fire would scream and cry for help due to the intensity of the heat of that fire in which the Riyakar people would be burning.”

Amir ul-Mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a) says,

“Certainly, Allah sent His messenger, so that He may extricate the humankind from the worship of people and direct them to the worship of Allah.”

Sometimes Worship Leads The Worshipper To The Fire (Of Hell)

Abu Basir has narrated from Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) that he said,

“On the Day of Judgement a person would be brought forward. He had performed Salat in his life. He would be told that you have prayed but your intention had been to show-off, so that people may appreciate your worship. This person would be cast into the fire. Then a reciter of the Qur’an would be brought. He would be told, ‘at the time of reciting the Qur’an, your intention had been to exhibit your sweet voice so that people may appreciate your tone.’ This one shall also be tossed into the fire. The third person to be presented shall be one who had died a martyr in Jihad. He would be told that, ‘Your intention while fighting was to make a show-off your strength and valour.” He shall also be led towards the fire. The fourth person had been a charitable man. He would be told, ‘your intention in giving charity was that people may call you generous.’ Then he would also be led towards Hell.[21]

Numerous traditions confirm that the Riyakar person is a Mushrik. This is sufficient for the believing and the thoughtful people.

The Merits Of Pure Intentions And The Censure Of Riyah

Apart from the punishment in the Hereafter and cancellation of good deeds the Riyakar person will also fail to achieve his aim in this world. In the world it had been his intention to achieve honour among the people but instead he would have to face humiliation and shame. The noble Qur’an tells us,

“…he loses this world as well as the hereafter; that is a manifest loss.” **(*Surah al-Hajj 22:11*).**

On the contrary, one who performs good deeds for the Hereafter will achieve honour in this world too. The following verse of Surah al-Kahf says:

“…therefore whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and not join anyone in the service of his Lord.” **(*Surah al-Kahf 18:110*).**

The tafsir of this ayat is as follows: *“Someone performs a good deed not for seeking Allah’s pleasure, but to obtain praise and admiration from people, so that people may see and hear him and he may become famous. He is like the one who has an associate with Allah in his worship. One who conceals his worship acts from the people (and reserve them solely for Allah would finally be given an honourable position among the people, by Allah. While one who exhibits his worship; his weaknesses are exposed by Allah and consequently he is degraded.”*[22]

True Deeds Are Surely Manifested

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) says,

“If one intends to do a small act with the sole intention of pleasing Allah, Allah causes this small deed of his to be manifested on a greater scale upon the people. (On the contrary) if someone performs the greatest of deeds which causes him physical tiredness and exhaustion due to wakeful nights, while his intention had been to acquire the praise of people, his deed would be reduced to a trifle by Allah and manifested on the people.” (till the people begin to dislike him.)[23]

Outward Piety And The Legal Point Of View

If someone has committed Shirk with regard to the acts of worship, he must repent sincerely and have a firm determination not to repeat his mistake. He should intend to perform all his deeds in the future for the sole purpose of achieving Allah (S.w.T.)’s pleasure. First of all it is Wajib upon him to seek forgiveness of his past sins. Secondly he must repeat all the worship acts in which he had committed Riyah, even if a part of that worship had been contaminated with the intention of showing off. Suppose he had begun his act with pure intention but later he was involved in Riyah, even so his deed is nullified. Like the person who gives Zakat to a needy man but later tries to obtain some benefit in return. In this case he has to first repent for his sin and then again give Zakat with the sole intention of achieving Allah (S.w.T.)’s pleasure.

Similarly in the case of Salat the person may exhibit a part of it (Be it a *mustahab* part) e.g. Qunut or he may perform Salat in congregation or sit in the front row to show-off. In all such cases he has to perform this Salat again.

Riyah In The Acts Of Worship

There is no firm proof that Riyah is Haram in the pure worldly acts, which are not considered acts of worship. Consequently the Fuqaha have not given any verdict concerning this. But the true believers refrain from all types of Riyah; even with the worldly acts and the mubah actions. The root of Riyakari is the love of this world. Hence if one falls into this habit, he may even begin to make it a part of his worship.

The respected scholar, Faiz al-Kashani writes in his book, 'Muhajjatul Baidha', "People resort to Riyakari in five types of actions.

(1) Bodily Riyah

(2) Riyah of beauty and dress

(3) Riyah of speech

(4) Riyah of actions

(5) Riyah of the outward kind."

The above types of Riyah are explained below.

Bodily Riyah

Bodily Riyah with regard to the actions pertaining to the hereafter is that someone tries to show that his body has become weak due to excessive fasting and night worship. Or he may keep his lips dry so that people think that he is fasting. Or he may show himself to be pious so that people praise him, and day and night he remains busy in religious acts. Bodily Riyah with regard to worldly matters is that he displays his body and tries to create a position in the eyes of the people.

2) Riyah Of Beauty And Dress

This type of Riyah with regard to the hereafter consists of shaving ones moustache so that people think that he is following the recommended acts or walking slowly with head turned downwards or wearing dirty clothes to show that one has disregard for the world.

The riya of beauty and dress with regard to this world is to show off ones dress and handsome appearance so that people are attracted towards the person.

3) Riyah Of Speech

Riyah of speech with regard to the hereafter is for example uttering Dhikr (i.e. Alhamdu lil-Lah) to show-off to the people. To exhibit one's knowledge and greatness by preaching to the people in assemblies. To forbid evil and enjoin good to the audience by making people fearful of Divine wrath without having any pure intention.

In the worldly connection this Riyah could take the form of boasting of ones achievements and capabilities so that the people adore him. To be extremely social and greet beyond limit, even strangers, to achieve popularity, etc.

4) Riyah Of Actions

In connection with actions of the hereafter Riyah consists of praying Salat to show–off. For example reciting lengthy chapters or remaining for a long time in Ruku or as–Sajda. To pray Salat extremely slowly. Performing the Wajib and the mustahab fast, Hajj and Ziarat, giving charity and feeding people so that one is regarded as pious.

With regard to the worldly actions, it is to behave with people in consonance with their way of thinking and to spend in similar ways. That is, to strive to become honourable in the eyes of these people. To spend lavishly upon people by inviting them in large numbers for dinner etc.

5) Riyah Of The External Kind

All the four types of Riyah explained above are concerned with the person himself. The fifth type of Riyah is that which is connected with the external affairs. This type of Riyah also is with regard to the Hereafter as well as this world. With regard to the Hereafter it consists of a person sitting in the assembly of the learned people without any pure intention; just to exhibit his interest in religion etc. Or to go out to meet pious people or invite the learned scholars to his home for dinner so that people consider him to be religious. In the same way Riyah is prohibited with regard to the worldly actions. For example visiting frequently the courts of Kings and rulers so that people realize his influence and reputation and the gullible people are deceived by his outward show.

Riyah Is Associated With Intention

It must be understood that Riyah of a person depends upon his intention. In other words all such actions which a person performs to show off are Riyah whether those actions are related to the hereafter or this world. In all types of actions related above, riyah is not committed till one has the intention to show–off. But if one performs an action solely for the pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.) it is worship. For example if one dresses up nicely or decorates his house with the intention of fully expressing the bounties of Allah (S.w.T.); this action is worship. However if his intention is to show–off to people it is Riyah.

Anyone who wishes to study this topic in detail should refer to the book Qalbe Salim by the same author.

1. Wasa'il ul–Shi'a.
2. A person.
3. Nahjul Balagha Sermon 192.
4. Almanac page 149.
5. Nahjul Balagha.
6. Bihar al–Anwar.
7. Safinat ul–Bihar.
8. Bihar al–Anwar.
9. al–Kafi.
10. Safinat ul–Bihar.

11. Safinat ul-Bihar.
12. The four special Deputies of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).
13. Yanabiul Mawaddah.
14. al-Kafi.
15. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
16. al-Kafi.
17. al-Kafi.
18. Bihar al-Anwar.
19. Muhajjatul Baidha, Bihar al-Anwar.
20. Bihar al-Anwar.
21. Layali Akhbar.
22. al-Kafi.
23. al-Kafi.

Second Greater Sin: Yas (Deaspair)

Despair

The second Greater Sin is to despair of the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.). "Al-ya-so Min Ruhallah" (To despair of the Ruh of Allah) Ruh: according to the dictionary means a breeze that pleases and comforts. Those who do not believe in the Power, the Mercy and Bounty of Allah (S.w.T.), develop a kind of despair. The Holy Qur'an has termed such people as Unbelievers (Kafir).

"...and despair not of Allah's Mercy; surely none despairs of Allah's Mercy except the unbelieving people." (***Surah Yusuf 12:87***).

The Holy Imams, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a), Imam Musa al-Kadhim ('a), Imam Muhammad al-Taqi ('a) have classified "despairing of the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.)", to be a Greater Sin; as we have mentioned at the beginning.

The Greatest Sin After 'Shirk'

After 'Shirk' no sin could be greater than to despair of Allah (S.w.T.)'s mercy and benevolence. This attitude reduces a person to a state of utter hopelessness. He imagines himself to be destined for Hell, and therefore he sees no benefit in doing good and avoiding evil. Consequently he tries to achieve as much worldly pleasure as possible and thus gets further involved in all kinds of sinful acts. Any other type of sinner could be pardoned if he repents. But the one who despairs does not deserve to be pardoned because the mental condition of such a person does not lead him towards repentance, but instead, induces him to continue to commit further acts of transgression against Allah (S.w.T.)'s commands.

Hence it means that despair is the greatest of the sins. It is appropriate therefore that all the different kinds of despair may be explained and also their cures, so that the believers can keep themselves away from them.

The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) has created a cause of all the phenomena of this world by His unlimited power and absolute strength. For example, in the physical affairs food is needed for satiation of hunger, water for quenching thirst, doctor and medicine for curing diseases and work for removing poverty.

In the same way the spiritual phenomena also depend upon various causes. The salvation of a sinner depends upon his repentance, the achievement of absolute belief needs the guidance of an infallible guide (Imam), and the attainment of grades in piety and the high stages of the hereafter depend upon the purity of intention in the deeds performed. The aim of creating man was to make him think and recognise Allah (S.w.T.) in the proper way. But the complete recognition or belief is not possible till man realizes that the Creator of causes as well as effects is Allah (S.w.T.). The causes by themselves cannot bring out an effect till the One who has created these causes gives the capability to the cause to bring out such effect. Therefore one should not be pleased at the apparent causes or be aggrieved due to their absence.

Cause Is Not Independent

When causes that would fulfill needs or desires appear, man becomes happy and he believes in the Might of Allah (S.w.T.). But when these causes fail to have any effect he becomes sorrowful. In order to avoid such a situation Allah (S.w.T.) has laid down a procedure. Firstly he renders the causes ineffective so that the believer may not consider these to be originally having the effective properties. On the other hand he creates the factors which were hereto non-existent, so that the believing people may not fall into despair. A few examples are mentioned to explain this fact.

First Example: Fire Did Not Burn: Knife Did Not Cut

The fire ignited by the order of Namrud to burn Ibrahim (‘a) was made bereft of its burning property, by Allah (S.w.T.). It is said, that the fire was so intense that birds flying at a height of Three miles used to be scorched by the heat and drop dead.

So they threw Hazrat Ibrahim (‘a) into the fire with the help of a catapult from far away. In the Holy Qur’an Allah (S.w.T.) says:

“We said: O fire! be coolness and peace to Ibrahim.” **(*Surah al-’Anbiya’ 21:69*).**

The fire immediately lost its essential property of burning, and cooled down; and if Allah (S.w.T.) had not ordered it to be peaceful (safe) for Ibrahim (‘a) it would have become colder and may have frozen Ibrahim (‘a) to death.

In the same way when Ibrahim (‘a) proceeded to slaughter his son Ismail (‘a) the knife was blunted by Allah (S.w.T.)’s command. Ibrahim (‘a) threw the knife away and a voice emerged from it. “The Khalil (friend) of Allah (S.w.T.) commands me to cut and the Lord of the Khalil restrains me from it.”

Second Example: Musa (‘A) And Fir’on

History records that the tyrant rulers have always oppressed Allah (S.w.T.)’s representative on earth, the Prophets and the Imams. These rulers have made relentless use of all the might and power at their command to pursue the Prophets and terminate their lives. But the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) used to render their efforts null and void. The life of Musa (‘a) during the reign of Fir’on is full of such instances from the beginning to end.

A powerful king like Fir’on wanted to kill Hazrat Musa (‘a) while he was still in his mother’s womb, but he did not succeed and Musa (‘a) was born. Fir’on continued in his efforts to murder him but all his plans were foiled by Allah (S.w.T.). Physical and spiritual causes are of no significance in comparison to the Divine decree. Thus Musa (‘a) was not only born safely but grew up in Fir’on’s own palace and in his own lap.

“And Fir’on’s wife said: A refreshment of the eye to me and to you; do not slay him; maybe he will be useful to us, or we may take him for a son; and they did not perceive.” (***Surah al-Qasas 28:9***).

Third Example:The Attack Of Abraha On The Ka’ba

In the year of the birth of Holy Prophet (S) the army of Najjashi came to attack the Holy Ka’ba. It was led by the commander Abraha. The army consisted of elephants and possessed all the armaments of war. Abraha, proud of his large army and weapons was confident of success. But the creator of all causes weakened their efforts. When Allah (S.w.T.) willed all the human and animals in the army came to a standstill. However much they tried, the elephants refused to move towards the sacred house.

On the other hand ‘Ababil’ appeared on the horizon. Each of these birds carried Three pebbles; one in the beak and one each in their claws. They surrounded the complete army and began to pelt them with pebbles. Each pebble fell on the head of the soldiers and pierced through their body to reach the ground and sank into it. Consequently the entire army perished, except one soldier. This soldier retreated to king Najjashi and related the episode in detail. This incident gained so much importance that the year began to be referred to as ‘Amul Feel’, or the year of the Elephant. Thus the history of Arabs record the birth of the Holy Prophet (S) to be in the year 1st Amul Feel and the year of his Be’sat (declaration of Prophethood) to be 40th Amul Feel.

Fourth Example: The Holy Prophet (S) And How His Life Was Saved

The protection of the Holy Prophet (S) from the blood-thirsty people of Makkah and later his being shielded from death in the various battles is considered to be a sign of Allah (S.w.T.). All the polytheists

had united to martyr the Holy Prophet (S) right from the day he declared his Prophethood. They had all the means to achieve their purpose but as a Persian couplet says: “Who can extinguish the lamp lighted by Allah (S.w.T.).”

Fifth Example: He Creates Without An Apparent Cause

Even if the apparent causes, both material and non-material ones, are absent, Allah (S.w.T.) creates them by His unsurpassed power. There are numerous examples of such a phenomenon. The foremost example is that of the father of man, Hazrat Adam (‘a) whom Allah (S.w.T.) created without the union of a male and a female. Adam (‘a) came into existence from non-existence. Similarly Prophet Isa (‘a) was born to the chaste maid, Janabe Maryam (‘a) even though a man had not touched her.

Hazrat Yahya (‘a) was born to Hazrat Zakaria (‘a) when he had reached an extremely old age and when his wife had lost all hopes of conceiving. Hazrat Ishaq (‘a) was born to Hazrat Ibrahim (‘a) when Hazrat Ibrahim was aged and inspite of his wife Janabe Sarah being barren previously.

The Holy Prophet (S) And His Knowledge

The Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad (S) did not attend any school nor did he learn from any teacher. He was not trained to read and write by any mortal. Yet, he was the teacher of humanity and was having command upon the Qur’anic sciences. In fact his personality was a conglomeration of the qualities of all the previous prophets. The presence of such outstanding qualities in one person without any apparent causes, can only be understood to be the Divine will.

Invocations Are Answered Without The Presence Of Apparent Means

The Beneficial God listens to the invocations of His creatures and fulfills their desires. Many a times we see that people who have no means whatsoever are able to get rid of their afflictions and distress. Due to the grace of Sadaqah, incurable diseases are cured and destitutes become rich. People surrounded by calamities are saved in ways they could not have even imagined.

The traditional reports are replete with such instances. The unlimited beneficence and grace of the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) has been described by Amir ul-Mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a) in the following couplets:

“Only the wise could estimate, the unlimited Grace of the Almighty Allah who releases us from calamities, and removes grief from the defeated hearts. On numerous occasions, man is sorrowful in the morning. But by evening his disposition changes into happiness. So when you are surrounded by difficulties, repose absolute hope in the Unique God.”

Love Of ‘Ali (‘A)

Imam Yafai writes in his book, ‘Rawzatul Rehayin’ the explanation of Diwan al–Mubidi and says, “A certain king gave a pearl to his jeweller. The jeweller’s child somehow got hold of this pearl and broke it into two pieces. The jeweller was in agony. He was asked by some person to recite the above mentioned couplets of Imam ‘Ali (‘a) with sincerity. Hardly had he begun to recite that a messenger from the king arrived. He told him that physicians have suggested that if his pearl is powered and given to the sick princess she would be cured of her malady. The King has sent orders to the jeweller to powder that pearl at once and take it to the palace.

The Destiny Of Man

The spiritual factors which are connected with the hereafter have some causes, the affect of which is kept in abeyance by the Will of Allah (S.w.T.). For example those who perform Jihad against their ownselves achieve for themselves a high position in the Hereafter. Those who do not believe in the prophets, the deeds of such people are nullified.

Balam Baur And His Eternal Damnation

Balam Baur had achieved a high stage of perfection. But in order to please the ruler he started opposing the prophet of his time. Consequently he became involved in a life of sin from which it was not possible to extricate himself. He was doomed to Hell, to the seventh stage of the fire that is the worst of the stages of Hell. He is compared to a dog in the holy Qur’an,

“And if We had pleased, We would certainly have exalted him thereby; but he clung to the earth and followed his low desire, so his parable is as the parable of the dog; if you attack him he lolls out his tongue; this is the parable of the people who reject our communications; therefore relate the narrative that they may reflect.” (***Surah al–Ar’af 7:176***).

A Warning

Believing people are those who have realized Allah (S.w.T.). The believing people should be particularly careful not to confuse the apparent causes as the basis of all phenomena. Inspite of realising the supreme authority of Allah (S.w.T.) and His creations, a public misconception in this regard can damn them to perdition. They should know that they could be damned to perdition if they depend upon the apparent causes and consider them to be the basis of all phenomena because the centre of all phenomena is Allah (S.w.T.). He is capable of making all the causes ineffective.

Beauty of the Hereafter

When all the means of salvation are annihilated, the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) creates a cause due to his unlimited Mercy. Numerous traditions report incidents where people who had been involved in calamities and damned for destruction were, in the last moments, saved by Allah (S.w.T.). They had been completely lost in the darkness of sins but were summoned towards their Lord by His limitless Mercy. The desolate deserts of their life were once again green and fertile. The bounties of Allah (S.w.T.) bestowed upon them surprised all the intelligent witnesses of these incidents.

The Magicians Of Fir'on

Magic is a Great Sin and the worst of the professions. A magician is destined to Divine punishment, and Hell will be his abode. The magicians of Fir'on, were ordered to challenge Hazrat Musa ('a) and belittle him. But their wicked craft was of no avail, and they failed miserably. At that moment Divine Grace descended. The magicians intuitively sensed the power of Allah (S.w.T.) that gave Hazrat Musa ('a) superiority over them. Neither the lure of wealth nor the warning of torture and death by Fir'on could shake their belief. They were redeemed.

"Certainly I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and certainly I will crucify you all. They said: No Harm; surely to our Lord we go back." (***Surah Ash-Shura 26:49-50***).

Asiya Was A Believing Woman

Upon whomsoever He wishes, Allah (S.w.T.) bestows a respectable position in this world, as well as the hereafter. Asiya, Fir'on's wife was leading a life of affluence and material comforts, when her heart became illuminated by the light of belief. Even though she had to go through untold hardships because of her husband Fir'on, she did not flinch. She declared her belief in Allah (S.w.T.) and His Prophet, Musa ('a), without any fear. At the time of her death, when she was being martyred, she prayed to her Lord.

"...she said: My Lord! build for me a house with Thee in the Garden and deliver me from Fir'on and his doings, and deliver me from the unjust people." (***Surah at-Tahrim 66:11***).

People Of The Cave

The people of the cave whose number is said to be seven were living during the reign of the tyrant king Daqiyanus. Daqiyanus had claimed divinity and people used to follow him. But suddenly the hearts of these seven people became illuminated with true belief.

They set aside the false claims of Daqiyanus and in order to tread the path of true beliefs, renounced the worldly power and headed for the mountains and hid themselves in a cave.

This incident is described in detail in Surah al-Kahf. Their example is preserved in history till the Day of the Judgement.

Realization Before Death

It is known that there have been people so much involved in sins that their salvation appeared impossible. But in their last moments, realization dawned on them and they prayed for pardon. Due to their sincere repentance all their sins were pardoned and the Mercy of the Merciful Allah (S.w.T.) came to their rescue. Thus, they were able to achieve salvation and happiness in the hereafter. They shall be among the successful ones on the Day of the Judgement.

Immediate Death On Embracing Islam

One such fortunate person was a Jew at the battle of Uhud. His name was 'Makhriq'. He addressed his tribesmen as follows: "You are not aware that Muhammad (S) is the truthful and the promised Prophet." They replied, "How do you know we are not aware?" "Then why don't you come for his help?" he asked. The tribe said. "Today is Saturday (sabbath)."

He said, "But that was at the time of Hazrat Musa ('a), it is abrogated by the Holy Prophet (S) and is not acceptable to him." When he did not receive any response from the people of his tribe he went to the Holy Prophet (S) and became a Muslim. He was extremely wealthy. He entrusted all his wealth to the Holy Prophet (S) and himself entered the battlefield to face the unbelievers. He was soon martyred. It is said that the Holy Prophet (S) often gave charity from the property of Makhriq, the martyr.

Eternal Bliss

Hur ibn Yazid Riyahi was the commander of Ibn Ziyad. He had obstructed the way of Imam Husain ('a) and forced him to halt at Karbala. This despicable act would have condemned him to eternal damnation. But when he heard the sermon of Imam Husain ('a) on the day of Aash-Shura and also his Isteghasa, (call for help) his heart underwent a transformation. The Mercy and the Grace of Allah (S.w.T.) came to his rescue. He repented sincerely and aligned himself with the martyrs of Karbala. In this way he was able to achieve eternal bliss. In the last moments of his life Imam Husain ('a) gave him the good news, "You are 'Hur' (Free) as your mother has named you."

Wise People Never Lose Hope

One should never lose hope of achieving high moral traits and perfection in one's faith. In fact one should not even doubt the possibility of achieving it. Even though this type of deficiency in hope is not totally Haram, yet the true believer should refrain from it. On the other hand he should not consider his apparent capabilities; like youth, strength, wisdom, capacity to think, ability to work, enthusiasm, love etc.

to be sufficient for success in the hereafter

Many a people had lacked the above qualities but when the Mercy and Grace of Allah (S.w.T.) came to their aid, they were raised to a high position. For example people like Fuzail ibn Ayaz, Imran Sabi, Barham Nasrani and Sahib Riyaz who received the Tawfiq from Allah (S.w.T.) when had become weak due to old age and were incapable of hardwork and active life, yet they achieved an exalted position.

Hopelessness Is A Great Sin

Hopelessness is a Greater Sin because it implies negation of the Absolute Sovereignty of the Almighty. A heart illumined with the knowledge that Allah (S.w.T.) the Creator of all existing things is the best Planner, the best Executor and the best Protector; a person who has the knowledge that it is Allah (S.w.T.) who bestows a super–abundance of sustenance, security and welfare on His creatures because of His boundless Mercy, limitless Generosity and unsurpassed Knowledge, will be comforted and reassured. The heart of such a person will be calm and peaceful and the question of feeling sorrowful and aggrieved will just not arise. The creator is not unmindful of the needs of a child in its mother's womb. Nourishment is supplied to him through the umbilical cord. When the child is born, Allah (S.w.T.) provides him through his mother, wholesome and easily digestible milk. Gradually Allah (S.w.T.) develops in him various capabilities needed for the different stages of his growth.

To ensure the security and happiness of the child Allah (S.w.T.) creates deep and abiding affection in the heart of the mother for the child; and she is prepared to sacrifice all her comforts and pleasures for the child's sake.

After having the awareness, discussed above, is it possible for one to lose hope in his Lord? No! In fact it makes it easy to repose faith in the Creator and go through all the ups and downs of life with resignation and fortitude.

Hopelessness Is A Sign Of Disbelief And Lack Of Knowledge

Despair is a form of hidden disbelief. It is the result of ignorance about the greatness of one's Lord (Allah (S.w.T.)). Giving in to despair is equivalent to disbelieving in one's Lord (Allah (S.w.T.)), which is a Greater Sin. One should therefore be extremely cautious and guard against putting oneself in such a woeful state. The noble Qur'an explains this in the verse,

***"… Surely none despairs of Allah's Mercy except the unbelieving people."* (*Surah Yusuf 12:87*).**

Hope Is Embedded In Human Psychology

The Almighty in His infinite Mercy, has embedded hope in human psychology. Even in the worst of circumstances, there is a faint glimmer of hope in the human heart, and this helps him to overcome his

feeling of hopelessness. He therefore turns to his Lord and supplicates for Mercy, forgiveness and redress, and Allah (S.w.T.) never turns away a supplicant.

The Cure Of Hopelessness

1. Power Of Allah (S.W.T.)

Praise be to Allah (S.w.T.) for His supreme and absolute authority over the vast universe; the earth and the seven skies. He sets the course of the stars and the planets; and not a leaf falls without His permission. He is able to do what He wills. Intellect and reason get bewildered in trying to understand His Might and Greatness. Can such an Almighty be unable to fulfill the meagre needs of his creatures. Certainly not! So how can hopelessness be justified.

2. Personal Experiences

One must ponder upon the various blessings Allah (S.w.T.) bestowed on us in the past and which we had taken for granted. The Almighty has brought us safely out of the darkness of the womb. He is thoughtful of our needs and He knows them better than our ownselves, and fulfills them without our asking. He has rescued us from many a dangerous situations, disease and calamities. He has bestowed numerous blessings, physical, material, mental, social and spiritual upon us yet we become confident of our standing as individuals. Then why should there be hopelessness? Is He unaware of our condition? I seek forgiveness from the Almighty Allah! Allah (S.w.T.) is far too exalted.

3.Outward Examples

Let us study the situation of those who were in extremely difficult times but were hopeful of the Lord's Benevolence and Mercy. They continued to entreat Allah (S.w.T.) till He accepted their prayers and redressed them.

Hazrat Ibrahim ('A) And His Male Child

Hazrat Ibrahim ('a) was one hundred and twelve years and according to another report one hundred and twenty years. His respected wife Hazrat Sarah was ninety–seven years. They did not have any children. Allah (S.w.T.) sent to them an Angel to inform them that they would be gifted with a son.

***"And his wife was standing (by), so she laughed, then We gave her the good news of Ishaq and after Ishaq of (a son's son) Yaqub."* (Surah Hud 11:71).**

***"She said: O wonder! Shall I bear a son when I am an extremely old woman and this my husband an extremely old man? Most surely this is a wonderful thing."* (Surah Hud 11:72).**

"They said: Do you wonder at Allah's bidding? The Mercy of Allah and His blessings are on you,

O People of the house, surely He is Praised, Glorious." **(*Surah Hud 11:73*).**

In brief, the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.) blessed Hazrat Ibrahim ('a) and Janabe Sarah with a son, Ishaq, at an age when it could never have been expected.

Hazrat Zakaria ('A) And His Son Yahya ('A)

The age of Hazrat Zakaria ('a) was ninety-nine years and that of his wife eighty nine. Yet, he was hopeful of the Grace of Allah (S.w.T.) and he prayed with sincerity, "He said My Lord! Surely my bones are weakened and my head flares with hoariness, and my Lord! I have never been unsuccessful in my prayer to Thee: And surely I fear my cousins after me, and my wife is barren, therefore grant me from Thyself an heir, who would inherit me and inherit from the children of Yaqub, and make him, my Lord, one in whom Thou art well pleased."

O Zakaria! Surely We give you good news of a boy whose name shall be Yahya: We have not made before anyone his equal. He said, "O my Lord! When shall I have a son, and my wife is barren, and I myself have reached the extreme degree of old age? He said: "So shall It be, your Lord says: It is easy to Me, and indeed I created you before, when you were nothing." **(*Surah Maryam 19:4-9*).**

Thus Allah (S.w.T.) accepted the invocation of Hazrat Zakaria ('a) and Hazrat Yahya ('a) was born to him.

If one is suffering from some disease for a long time and there seems to be no hope of curing it, one must consider this disease to be a penalty for his sins (kaffara).

On the other hand if due to his prayers and Sadaqah the disease is cured it becomes a mean of salvation.

Hazrat Ayyub ('A) And Tribulations

If one intends to achieve humility and insight, he must study the life of Hazrat Ayyub ('a). After being inflicted with a horrible disease for seven years and according to other reports for eighteen years, he prayed to Allah (S.w.T.).

"And Ayyub, when he cried to his Lord, **(*saying*)*: Harm has afflicted me, and Thou art the most Merciful of the Mercifuls."*** **(*Surah al-'Anbiya' 21:83*).**

Allah (S.w.T.) responded to his entreaty by curing his malady and also gave him wealth as before.

Hidden Wisdom In Poverty And Destitution

If one is afflicted with poverty for a long time and is unable to see a way out, then this situation can be viewed in two ways: First, it is possible that there may be a hidden wisdom in his poverty, and if he had access to this knowledge he may himself choose this state for himself and be happy in the bargain.

Secondly, those who spend the earlier part of life in poverty usually become enriched at a later stage and therefore have a comfortable time in their old age.

Wealth In The Empty Hands

As an example an incident is quoted from the book “Faraz Badashshuda”:

A rich businessman says, ‘I was travelling for Hajj and had 3000 dinars and gold and silver ornaments with me. I had tied them up in a bag attached to my cummerbund. But I dropped this bag when I went to answer the call of nature. I had proceeded many miles further, when I realized my bag was missing. I had a lot of wealth so I did not find it imperative to go back and look for my money nor was it possible to return. When I came back to my native place one calamity upon another befell me. Gradually all my wealth disappeared. My public respect began to change into shame. Due to embarrassment before friends, gossip of the enemies and further destitution I was compelled to leave my native village. During this journey I spent a night in a hamlet. At this time, all the money I had was one-sixth of a silver coin. It was a dark, rainy night. I took my wife to a cheap hostel for the night. All of a sudden my wife began to have labour pains and a child was born. My wife said that she needed something to eat, otherwise she may starve to death. I took the small silver coin and knocked at the door of a vegetable seller. After repeated requests he opened the door. I explained to him my circumstances and gave him the coin. He brought some curd and ghee in an earthen bowl. As I turned back and walked a few paces, I slipped and the earthen bowl dropped from my hands and broke. I was struck with grief and could not control myself.

I began to slap my face and yelled loudly. The window of a nearby house opened and someone enquired as to who I was and why was I creating a din and disturbing the neighbourhood. I explained my circumstances in brief and added that I, my wife and the child were starving of hunger, and this misfortune has befallen me. The man asked, “Is your hue and cry only for a piece of silver.” ‘No’, I said, “I had never been so miserly.” Then I told him about the year when I had lost my bag of 3000 dinars and ornaments. He asked me if there were any distinguishing marks on my moneybag. I thought he was trying to fool me, so I protested. But he insisted and I told him. Then he called me in his house and sent his slave to get my wife and child. The slave returned with my wife and child, and our host put us up for the night. In the morning he gave some dinars and said that till my wife recovers, we must stay in his house.

Ten days passed in this manner. Everyday he used to give us some dinars. Then one day he asked me about my profession. When I told him that I was an expert trader, he gave me some money and told me

to start a business. After conducting the business for some months, I offered him his share of the profits. He went into the other room and returned with the moneybag that I had lost years ago. I was overjoyed to see it and became unconscious due to the excitement. I thanked Allah (S.w.T.) and returned to my native village. Gradually my economic conditions began to change and once more I was a rich man.

" It may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, maybe that you love a thing while it is evil for you." (***Surah al-Baqarah 2:216***).

"Allah brings about ease after difficulty." (***Surah at-Talaq 65:7***).

Cure For Hopelessness In Difficult Times

If a person is involved in worldly problems he should turn towards two realities. Firstly, this world is a place of test and trial for everyone. There is no one who could escape its clutches. Secondly, one must look at the conditions of people who are worse off than us. In this way one can get peace and solace by comparing ones condition with that of others. Even in the greatest calamities, we should continue to rely upon the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.). Many a people of the past had been afflicted with tribulations with no relief in sight. But the Merciful Allah (S.w.T.) gave them success.

In the book "Faraj Bad as Shiddah" the respected author, Husain bin Said Dabistani has recorded more than 500 incidents where people, surrounded by troubles from all sides were given relief by Allah (S.w.T.) after all hopes were shattered. Further we ourselves witness many cases where the invocations and Sadaqah of the religious personalities help the people out of difficult situations. In the same book there is an incident where a resident of Madinah says, "I was rich and had all the good things in life. Eventually I became poor and destitute. So I went to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) and told him of my problems. He expressed pity upon my condition and recited the following couplets for my sake, "If you fall into difficult times do not be impatient. Because for a long time you have experienced comfort.

Then after every discomfort is comfort and consolation. And the saying of Allah (S.w.T.) is the most truthful. 'So do not despair, certainly despair is disbelief.' Allah (S.w.T.) may enrich you in a short while. After that do not forget your Lord. Certainly Allah (S.w.T.) fulfills His promise. If the intellect had the capacity to produce food the wealth of the world would be only with the intellectuals. Beware, do not lose hope when you face calamities. Behind the curtains are concealed astounding candles (of hope)."

The narrator says, "When I heard these lines my grief changed into happiness and hopelessness turned into optimism. Very soon the doors of Mercy opened upon me and my bad times changed for the good."

A Reminder

This book relates from the Holy Prophet (S) that to ward off calamities this Qur'anic verse should be recited.

"There is no God but Thou, glory be to Thee, surely I am of those who make themselves to suffer loss." (***Surah al-'Anbiya' 21:87***) .

"Allah (S.w.T.) is my Lord, and I do not associate him with anything."

We should remember that despair is the worst of the sins, because it implies that the connection between Allah (S.w.T.) and his creature has been severed. It signifies turning away from the Divine nature. Because even if an iota of belief remains in a person's heart, he could not severe relations with his Nourisher and Cherisher. It may be that sometimes a sort of hopelessness pervades his imagination but he soon recovers and repents of his sin.

Every Sin Is Pardonable

According to the verse of the Holy Qur'an and Mutawatir (widely related) traditions all the sins which man commits are pardonable if he repents sincerely. It is wrong to say that such a sin can never be pardoned. The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says in the Glorious Qur'an,

"And He it is who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons the evil deeds and He knows what you do." (***Surah Ash-Shura 42:25***).

Allah (S.w.T.) has mentioned His names as:

1) Tawwabun (one who accepts Tawba)

2) Gaffarun (one who pardons)

3) Ghafurun (one who forgives totally)

4) Ghafir udh-Dhunuba (Pardoner of sins)

5) Qabil ut-Tawba (one who accepts repentance)

Allah (S.w.T.) has given a general invitation to all the people to turn towards Him and seek forgiveness for their sins. If we study the meaning of the 54th verse of Surah az-Zumar we find that sinners have no cause to loose hope. This Ayat is also known as Ayat al-Rahma (The verse of Mercy).

"Say: O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the Mercy of Allah ; Surely Allah forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful." (***Surah az-Zumar 39:53***).

Unlimited Grace

A few points must be noted from the above verse.

Firstly, Allah (S.w.T.) says, 'O my servant' and not 'O sinners!' Even though he is addressing the sinners he addresses them as 'my servants'. So that the hopelessness of the servants may be transformed into hope in His Mercy.

Secondly, he says, "Who have acted extravagantly." This denotes a soft approach. Allah (S.w.T.) does not say 'O you who have acted blatantly,' So that the sinners may not lose hope of obtaining pardon.

Hopelessness Is Haram

The third point to be noted is that the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) has told the sinners, "Do not despair of the Divine Mercy." The use of a negative term signifies the prohibition of hopelessness. Also it means that to lose hope regarding salvation is Haram.

The fourth point is that Allah (S.w.T.) did not stop at this, He further adds, "Surely Allah (S.w.T.) forgives the faults altogether," signifying that the statement covers all the sins.

Fifth Point: The addition of the word 'altogether' at the end signifies that the statement includes all sins without any exception.

Sixth Point: The last point is that at the end of the verse, Allah (S.w.T.) repeats, "Surely He is the forgiving, the merciful," to stress upon the fact that Allah (S.w.T.) desires and wishes to forgive those who repent.

Repentance Of The Killer Of A Prophet Is Also Acceptable

Jabir Ibn Abdullah al-Ansari (r.a.) relates that a woman came to the Holy Prophet (S) and asked, "If a woman kills her child can she seek pardon?" The Holy Prophet (S) replied,

"By Allah in whose control is the life of Muhammad (S) even if this woman has killed seventy Prophets and then feels remorse and repents and Allah is convinced of her sincerity and the truth of her statement, upon the condition that she does not repeat the sin, her repentance shall be accepted. And her sins would be pardoned. Surely Allah is oft forgiving and forgives, ever so beyond measure. Verily one who repents (sincerely) is; as if he has never committed that sin."[1]

Despair In The Acceptance Of Prayers Is Also Improper

If we pray to Allah (S.w.T.) for some worldly benefits or the Hereafter and our prayer is not answered it raises two noteworthy points. Firstly, we must know that Allah (S.w.T.) has promised to accept all prayers and Allah (S.w.T.) never goes back on His word.

As it is mentioned in the Holy book,

"And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me." **(*Surah al-Baqarah 2:186*).**

At another place Allah (S.w.T.) says,

"And your Lord says: Call upon Me, I will answer you." **(*Surah Ghafir, 40:60*).**

The second point is that due to His unlimited wisdom He may delay the acceptance of some prayer. So if we do not get immediate gratification we should not lose hope of having our prayers accepted.

Prayers May Not Be Accepted Due To Sins

Sometimes the sins of a person come in the way of the acceptance of his prayers. At other times Allah (S.w.T.) may delay the acceptance due to some hidden wisdom. This would compel the person to repeat his prayers and thus he would be entitled for additional Tawab. The opportunity to invocate is itself a blessing of Allah (S.w.T.).

Another possibility is that Allah (S.w.T.) wishes to hear the entreaties of His creature many times before He fulfills his wishes.

Delay In The Acceptance Of Prayers Causes Nearness To Allah (S.W.T.)

Sometimes there is a delay in the acceptance of prayers because, to supplicate Allah (S.w.T.) continuously is the best of worship. It is the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.) that he may want us to continue to pray to Him. It is a means of seeking nearness to Him. For whomsoever He wishes good, He gives him the Tawfiq of supplicating Him by delaying the acceptance of his prayers.

Allama Majlisi (r.a.) writes in the book 'Hayatul Qulub' that Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) says in a reliable tradition, "Hazrat Ibrahim ('a) used to visit the populated cities and the desolate forests so that he could derive lessons from the creatures of Allah (S.w.T.). One day he saw a worshipper busy in prayers. His dress was made of fur and the surroundings filled with his intonation. Hazrat Ibrahim ('a) was astonished at his appearance. He went towards him, sat down and waited for him to conclude his prayers. When he finished his prayers, Hazrat Ibrahim ('a) said, "I appreciate your way and want to befriend you. Tell me where do you stay so that I could come to meet you whenever I want." He said, "You will not be able to travel on my path."

"Why?"

"I walk on the surface of the water."

Hazrat Ibrahim ('a) said, "The Almighty Allah who has given you the capacity to walk on water, can also

enable me to do so. Come, arise, today I shall spend the night with you at your residence.

When they reached the bank of the river the man uttered “Bismillah” and stepped in the river and was soon on the other side of it. Hazrat Ibrahim (‘a) also recited Bismillah and crossed the river. This man was astounded. Then both of them entered his house.

Ibrahim (‘a) asked him, “Which is the most difficult day?” He replied, “The day Allah will reward and punish all His creatures according to their deeds.” Ibrahim (‘a) said, “Let us together pray that Allah may protect us from the hardships of this day.”

According to another report Hazrat Ibrahim (‘a) said, “Let us pray together for the sinful believers.” The worshipper said, “I will not participate in this prayer because I have been praying for something for the past thirty years and till date it has not been fulfilled, so there is no scope in praying for something else.”

Hazrat Ibrahim (‘a) said, “O worshipper! when Allah holds a creature dear He delays the acceptance of his prayers so that he may continue to plead and supplicate Him. On the other hand when He dislikes a person He answers his prayers immediately or creates hopelessness in his heart so that he would stop praying.”

Then he asked the worshipper about his prayer which has not been accepted till then. He said, “One day I was busy in my prayers when I saw a handsome boy grazing a herd of sheep and goats. I asked him whose animals were those. He said they belonged to him. Then I asked him who he was. He said that he was the son of Khalilullah (Friend of Allah) Ibrahim (‘a) and that his name was Ismail. At that moment I prayed to Allah to let me see my ‘Khalil’ Ibrahim (‘a).” Ibrahim (‘a) said, “Now your prayer has been answered. I am that Ibrahim (‘a).” The worshipper became extremely overjoyed and embraced Ibrahim (‘a). He kissed his head, eyes and hands and thanked the Almighty Allah with sincerity. After this both of them together prayed for the believing men and women.

1. Liyali Akhbar.

Third Greater Sin: Qunut (Despondence)

In the tradition from Imam al-Ridha’ (‘a) where he has listed the Greater Sins, despondence is mentioned after despair (Yas). Qunut (despondence) is described as the condition where one’s heart loses hope of Allah (S.w.T.)’s Mercy and that person does not even dislike the hopelessness. According to the religious scholars the difference between Yas and Qunut is that the term ‘Yas’ is used in general cases and ‘Qunut’ in special cases. It means that ‘Yas’ describes the internal condition of one’s heart. When this internal hopelessness intensifies to a degree whereby its effect becomes manifest outwardly and seem obvious to the common people, it is called ‘Qunut’.

In short whoever expresses hopelessness by his speech or actions is actually a victim of ‘Qunut’.

Hopelessness In Du’a Is Yas

Many scholars believe that to discontinue invocation is a sign of despair. The hopeless person believes that he will not reach his destination through Du’a.

‘Qunut’ means that one accuses Allah (S.w.T.) of not being merciful and for not accepting his repentance. He thinks that whatever difficulties he suffers, are the retribution of his sins. Thus Imam al-Sajjad (‘a) says in the 39th Du’a of Sahifat’ul-Sajjadiya, “I neither despair of Your Mercy nor am I in despondence regarding you. But I am aggrieved because my good deeds are less in number and bad deeds numerous. Otherwise Your position is so high that not a single creature turns away dejected from you.”

There is no doubt that despondence with regard to Allah (S.w.T.) is a Greater Sin. It is one of the characteristics of the polytheists and hypocrites as mentioned by Allah (S.w.T.) in Surah al-Fath.

***“And (that) He may punish the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women, and the polytheistic men and the polytheistic women, the entertainers of evil thoughts about Allah…”* (*Surah al-Fath 48:6*).**

Skepticism Invites Punishment

The Holy Prophet (S) announced from the pulpit

“By Allah who has no partner, He does not deprive any of the people from the blessings of this world and the hereafter. But he should not harbour doubts (about Him). He should have hope in Him and possess good morals. He should refrain from backbiting about the believers. I swear by Allah Who is the One and without partners,

He does not punish a believer after he had repented and asked for forgiveness. Except those who are skeptical about Allah and lack in hope, have evil behaviour and indulge in backbiting about the believers. I swear by Allah except Whom no one is fit to be worshipped. When someone expresses reliance and trust in Allah; Allah who is extremely graceful, will not deem it fit to order anything contrary to the faith that the believer has reposed in him. Then you must have good thoughts regarding Allah and must always depend upon Him.”[1]

Hope For Forgiveness And The Acceptance Of Du’a

Having good thoughts about Allah (S.w.T.) means that one should have the conviction that if he repents for a sin, Allah (S.w.T.) would forgive him. If he invocates, his prayer would be answered. If he does a

good action, it is certain that Allah (S.w.T.) would accept it and reward him for the same. To hope in salvation is beneficial, and it is obligatory. However to hope for rewards without performing good actions is ignorance and conceit.

Hopelessness In The Affairs Of This World And The Hereafter

Some scholars of religion explain that the distinguishing feature of 'Qunut' and 'Yas' is that 'Qunut' denotes hopelessness with regard to the worldly blessings.

The Holy Qur'an says concerning this,

"And He it is who sends down rain after they have despaired, and He unfolds His Mercy; and He is the Guardian, the Praised One." (***Surah Ash-Shura 42:28***).

Concerning 'Yas' the scholars maintain that it is with regard to the affairs of the Hereafter, as mentioned in the verse:

"...indeed they despair of the Hereafter..." (***Surah Mumtahana 60:13***).

Qunut Is Worse Than Yas

To be despondent of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Mercy results in the person being deprived of eternal blessings, because 'Qunut' causes the severance of the relation between the creature and Allah (S.w.T.). The cause for this despondence is the extinguishing of the original flame of creation that had been alive in his heart. Even if a little of the light had remained, he would not have lost hope completely. It is possible that he may be involved in vain pursuits. If that is so then he has receded into the age of ignorance from the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.). But 'Yas' denotes that the connection between the creature and Allah (S.w.T.) still remains even though separated by the curtain of sins. But behind the curtain the light of the original nature endures. He still believes in some connection with Allah (S.w.T.). In such a case the dividing curtain could be removed.

'Yas' can be forgiven but 'Qunut' does not deserve forgiveness. Thus 'Qunut' is included in the title of Shirk and becomes the greatest danger for man.[2]

1. al-Kafi.
2. Quoted from Tafsir Ruhul Bayan.

Fourth Greater Sin: Al-Amno Min Makrillah (Disregard Of Allah (S.W.T.)'S Punishment)

Heedlessness To Allah (S.W.T.)'S Anger And Retribution

One of the Greater Sins is a total disregard for Divine punishment. The person is fearless of the unseen retribution and scoffs at the idea of being punished for his actions. He lives blissfully in a world of material comforts and does not realize that he is fettered down by his sins. This is a Greater Sin. The Holy Imams, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a), Imam Musa al-Kadhim ('a) and Imam al-Ridha' ('a) have classified the fearlessness of Allah (S.w.T.)'s punishment among the Greater Sins. The Qur'an announces:

"What! do the people of the towns then feel secure from Our punishment coming to them by night while they are asleep?" **(*Surah al-Ar'af 7:97*).**

"What! do the people of the towns feel secure from Our punishment coming to them in the morning while they play?" **(*Surah al-Ar'af 7:98*).**

"What! do they feel secure from Allah's plan? But none feels secure from Allah's plan except the people who shall perish." **(*Surah al-Ar'af 7:99*).**

These Three verses clearly prohibit the fearlessness of the punishment of Allah (S.w.T.). The last verse mentions that those who do not fear Allah (S.w.T.)'s punishment would be losers in the hereafter. Divine retribution will be their lot on the Day of Judgement, as will be the fate of the unbelievers and the non-repentant sinners.

It is clear from the Qur'an that to remain heedless of Allah (S.w.T.)'s plan is a Greater Sin. Hence carelessness about the punishment and warnings of Allah (S.w.T.) is equivalent to disregard of His orders and prohibitions and an abject ignorance of His Supremacy. How can a lowly and insignificant being, now dare to oppose the Lord of the two worlds. This heedlessness and disregard is a Greater Sin that does not merit pardon, except that the sinner feels remorse and asks for forgiveness. It would appear from the above discussion that whether a sin is pardonable or not depends more on the attitude of the sinner, rather than the sin itself. If in the innermost recesses of his heart, the transgressor is fearful of Allah (S.w.T.), he is deserving of forgiveness, but if he is brazenly fearless of Allah (S.w.T.)'s punishment, he is most unfit for pardon and mercy.

The plan of Allah (S.w.T.) means a sudden punishment that descends upon the sinners, as mentioned in the Divine book,

***"Does man think that he is to be left to wander without an aim?"* (*Surah al-Qiyama 75:36*).**

'Imla', Respite

'Allah (S.w.T.)'s plan' includes '*Imla*'. From the time Allah (S.w.T.) created man it has been a Divine practice that the thankless ones and the sinners should not be punished for their sins immediately. Rather they are given a long respite. Since everyone is prone to sin except the Infallibles, if each one were to be punished for their misdeeds immediately, not a single person would remain on the face of the earth. Allah (S.w.T.) has stated in the Holy Qur'an,

"And if Allah had destroyed men for their inequity, He would not leave on the earth a single creature, but He respites them till an appointed time..." (Surah an-Nahl 16:61).

Besides, Imla proves to be the Grace of Allah (S.w.T.) for the pious. It gives them time to reflect upon their behaviour, realize their mistakes, repent, and make a firm intention not to repeat their sins. Allah (S.w.T.)'s indulgence thus helps them to achieve the good in this world and the hereafter. On the other hand indulgence shown to unrepentant sinners only makes them heedless of the fact that eventually they will be accountable for their deeds. They continue to commit one sin upon another and when their corruption reaches a limit, a sudden punishment descends upon them.

"And I grant them respite; surely My scheme is effective." (Surah al-Ar'af 7:183).

Disbelievers and sinners leading successful and comfortable lives may conceitedly feel that their capabilities have brought them success but in reality all that they have is a form of punishment from Allah (S.w.T.) and a sort of retribution which is referred to as 'the Plan of Allah (S.w.T.)."

Respite For The Wrong Doers

The Glorious Qur'an quotes thus,

"And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is better for their souls; We grant them respite only that they may add to their sins; and they shall have a disgraceful chastisement." (Surah Ali- 'Imran 3:178).

Imam al-Ridha' ('a) said,

"By Allah, they have not been punished with anything more severe than Imla (respite)."[1]

Imam al-Sajjad ('a) has mentioned in Du'a al-Makarimul Akhlaq:

"(O Allah). Give me such a life that my (long) life is spent in obedience to you. And when my life becomes a field of Satan take away my soul towards you (before I become eligible for Divine retribution)."

Istidraj (Drawing Near)

Istidraj is also included in Allah (S.w.T.)'s plan. At times the respite granted by Allah (S.w.T.) also includes a new blessing. Allah (S.w.T.) bestows His bounties upon a person who has sinned so that he may feel ashamed of himself and make amends. Instead, the person often develops confidence and blatantly commits more sins. Such unfortunate people are mentioned in the following verse of Qur'an:

***"And (as to) those who reject Our communications, We draw them near (to destruction) by degrees from whence they know not."* (Surah al-Ar'af 7:182).**

It is recorded in Safinat ul-Bihar, "When Allah wishes good for a person and he commits a sin, Allah involves him in difficulties so that he may become aware that the cause of his problems is his own sin. He can then repent for it (immediately). When Allah wishes to punish a person who commits a sin, He gives him a new form of blessing so that he may be dazzled by the blessing and ignore repentance. This is what Allah means in the Ayat (quoted above)."

Istidraj Denotes Failure To Repent

When Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) was asked the meaning of "Istidraj" he replied:

"When a person commits a sin he is given respite and a new blessing, then when he fails to repent he is slowly led towards destruction; about which he is heedless. This is known as Istedraj and 'Allah's Plan."[2]

It is related from Amir ul-Mu'minin ('a) that he said:

"Certainly, those who are given an increase in wealth and property by Allah, should not think anything but that it is Istidraj. They should not be fearless (of Allah's plan). Because calm precedes storm."[3]

Fearlessness Of Allah (S.W.T.)'S Plan

Allah (S.w.T.) possesses two kinds of qualities, the Jamali (good) and Jalali (severe). Example of Jamali qualities are His being Rahman (Beneficent), Rahim (Merciful), Karim (Generous), Halim (Magnanimous), Shakur (Thankful), Ghafur (one who forgives).

The Jalali qualities are His being Jabbar (Mighty), Qahhar (One who punishes), Muntaqim (One who retributes), Muzallil (One who degrades), Mutakabbir (Proud) and Shadidul Iqab (Severe in punishing). Hence Allah (S.w.T.) informs of His good qualities and then warns of His Severity:

***"Inform My servants that I am the Forgiving, The Merciful, and that My punishment - that is the painful punishment."* (Surah al-Hijr, 15:49-50).**

Elsewhere Allah (S.w.T.) says,

"The Forgiver of faults and the Acceptor of repentance, severe to punish, Lord of bounty." (***Surah Ghafir, 40:3***).

Thus Allah (S.w.T.) is the most Merciful of the mercifuls in the matter of forgiveness and also the most severe in retribution.

Fear And Hope Are The Signs Of Marefat

One who recognizes the boundless expanse of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Mercy is bound to have great hopes; if he has repented, his sins will be forgiven, if he has worshipped Allah (S.w.T.), his invocation will be accepted and Allah (S.w.T.) in His generosity will let him have the maximum benefits. Allah (S.w.T.) is known to be the 'Forgiver of sins' and 'Acceptor of prayers'.

In the same way the knowledge of the severity of Allah (S.w.T.)'s chastisement for every sin will make one tremble with fear. The fear of Allah (S.w.T.) inspires a person with Tawfiq that insulates him from transgressing the bounds of prohibitions, and compels him towards sincere repentance. When we are in the throes of temptation to commit an aggression, we have to be extremely cautious not to give in. It may so happen that the particular sin we are about to commit will seal our fate and deprive us forever, of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Mercy and forgiveness. It is narrated from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a):

"One who intends to commit a sin (should control his selfish desires and) must not put it to practice. Certainly when (sometimes) a person commits a sin, Allah dislikes him and says: "By My Honour and Greatness I will not forgive you after this."[4]

Since there is a possibility that a sin may not be eligible for pardon, it is extremely important that we keep ourselves protected from every sin; be it big or small. In fact the sins which do not deserve to be pardoned are regarded as insignificant by the one who commits them.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) states:

"You must fear the small sins, for they are not pardoned."

The narrator asked, "What is meant by 'small'?" Imam replied;

"A person commits a sin which he considers to be insignificant and says, "I deserve admiration for I have not committed a sin as serious as that of the other person."[5]

Speech And Action Should Be Guarded By Divine Fear And Hope

Even if the sinner repents for his sins, he should continue to be fearful. It may be that his repentance has not fulfilled the necessary conditions. For example, he have made an intention of not repeating a sin, but

later he does not remain firm upon it. We should therefore continue to live between fear and hope till the end of our lives, hoping for Allah (S.w.T.)'s rewards for our good deeds and dreading the accountability of our sins committed knowingly or unintentionally.

One Must Fear The Acceptance Of His Prayers

If a prayer is not accepted it should be feared that (maybe) it is because of our sins. And if it is granted, it may be that one is so disliked by Allah (S.w.T.) that He could not stand his invocation again and again and has thus accepted his prayers immediately.

Separation Is The Most Painful Experience

If we are able to achieve success, be it material, intellectual or even spiritual, at all times we should be aware that our achievements are a Grace and Mercy from Allah (S.w.T.), and not the result of our own capabilities. Thankfulness to Allah (S.w.T.), alone earns Allah (S.w.T.)'s approval. Pride and ingratitude will forever separate us from our Creator and this is the worst of the punishments.

Amir ul-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) says in Du'a al-Kumail:

Suppose, My Lord! My Master! My Cherisher! I am able to endure your punishment, how can I endure separation from Thee. Suppose I am able to endure the heat of Thy fire, how can I endure not gazing upon Thy generosity.

How Should We Remain Till The End Of Our Lives

We should be very apprehensive and anxious about our end. We have seen good and pious people who, in the final stages of their lives, turned to evil. Let us implore the Merciful Lord to protect our faith, and let us die as believers.

***"...Therefore take a lesson, O you who have eyes!"* (*Surah al-Hashr 59:2*).**

Everyone Shall Be Tested

We must also be fearful of the difficult test that we have to undergo. All the believers who have attained a high position have been in constant dread of failure when put to test. The respected Book of Allah (S.w.T.) has said:

***"Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, 'We believe' and not be tried?"* (*Surah Al-'Ankabut 29:2*).**

Hazrat Ibrahim (‘A) And The Fire

When Hazrat Ibrahim (‘a) was tied to a catapult to be thrown into the blazing fire he said, “Allah (S.w.T.) is sufficient for me.” When Ibrahim (‘a) claimed that Allah (S.w.T.)’s help was sufficient for him, and he did not need help from anyone else, Allah (S.w.T.) decided to test him and sent Jibril, who asked Ibrahim (‘a) if he had any kind of wish so that it may be fulfilled.

Ibrahim (‘a) replied, “I do have a wish but not from you.” Jibril said: “It is correct but express your wish to the one in whom you repose hope.” Hazrat Ibrahim (‘a) replied: “He is aware of my condition hence there is no need for me to say it verbally.”

Successful When Tested

Hazrat Ibrahim (‘a) deserves admiration. In the most difficult circumstances he refrained from showing his want, even to the trustworthy angel of revelation Jibril (‘a). Thus he emerged successful from the most severe test. Hence the Divine verse says:

“And (of) Ibrahim who fulfilled (the commandments).” (Surah an-Najm 53:37).

We must also not be heedless of the Divine test nor should we be fearless of Divine retribution. Even the most near ones to Allah (S.w.T.), the angels, the prophets and the messengers were not careless in this regard. Especially in times of difficulties and calamities we have to be extra careful; constantly imploring Allah (S.w.T.) to prevent us from overstepping the boundaries prohibited by Him. Imam al-Sajjad (‘a) says in the beginning of Du’a al-Abu Hamza Thumali:

“Do not punish my sins by letting me to be heedless of your retribution.”

Tawfiq Is From Allah (S.W.T.)

Let it be very clear to us that whatever good we are able to do, is only due to Tawfiq from Allah (S.w.T.) and we have to be most humbly grateful to Allah (S.w.T.) for this Tawfiq. Thanklessness in the matter may result not only in the loss of such opportunities in the future but may even nullify the good already done, and bring us disgrace.

Wise People Fear Allah (S.W.T.)

Those who realize the Greatness and the Majesty of Allah (S.w.T.) in comparison to their own worthlessness are more fearful of Allah (S.w.T.). Only those who realize how utterly miserable and worthless they themselves are and how exalted and Supreme is their Creator, are fearful of Allah (S.w.T.).

The Holy Qur’an says:

"Those of His servants only who are possessed of knowledge fear Allah." **(*Surah Fat'ir 35:28*).**

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said: *"The fountain-head of wisdom is the fear of Allah."*[6]

The Prophet's (S) Conversation With Umm Salama

Janabe Umm Salama says that she saw the Holy Prophet of Allah in a middle of the night standing in a corner of the house and entreating Allah (S.w.T.): "O Allah! Whatever You have given me, do not take those blessings away. Never let me become the butt of criticism and jealousy of the enemies. O Allah! Never let me return to the vices from where You have extricated me. O Allah! Do not leave me (free) to myself even for a blink of the eye (for a moment)."

Umm Salama says: When I heard these words I began to weep uncontrollably. The Prophet asked the reason for my lamentation. I replied, "Why shouldn't I weep when you, who have attained such a high position , are invocating Allah in such a (humble) way?"

Holy Prophet (S) said:

"Why should not I fear thus. When Allah left Hazrat Yunus ('a) on his own for a moment, what did happen." (That is, he remained in the belly of a whale).[7]

The Prophets ('A) And The Imams ('A) Were The Most Fearful

The Holy Qur'an praises the prophets in the following words:

"Surely they used to hasten, one with another, in deeds of goodness and to call upon Us, hoping and fearing; and they were humble before Us." **(*al-'Anbiya' 21:90*).**

Regarding the Holy Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) the Divine words are:

"They fulfill vows and fear a day the evil of which shall be spreading far and wide." **(*Surah al-Insan 76:7*).**

The fear of the Prophets and the Holy Imams, specially that of 'Ali ('a) is well-known. He used to lose consciousness due to the fear of Allah (S.w.T.). Imam Zayn ul-'Abidin ('a) expresses this fear most eloquently in the Duas of Sahifat'ul-Sajjadiya. If we are to record all such examples we shall be straying away from our aim. We hope that the examples given so far will be sufficient for the intelligent.

A Believer Lives Between Fear And Hope

A believer lives in a state of anxiety and optimism, (as prescribed by the traditions) He is fearful of Divine punishment and yet hopeful of Divine Mercy. The Holy Qur'an says:

***"It is only the Shaitan that causes you to fear from his friends, but do not fear them, and fear Me if you are believers."* (*Ali- 'Imran 3:175*).**

This type of fear is obligatory for every Muslim. The fear which refrains him from even approaching sins. Allah (S.w.T.), the Almighty addresses his Prophet (S) in the Qur'anic Ayat,

***"Say: Surely I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the chastisement of a grievous day."* (*Surah al-An'am 6:15*).**

Hope Should Not Cause Arrogance

The trust and hope we repose in Allah (S.w.T.)'s Mercy and generosity will certainly bring us additional bounties. But this trust should not assume proportions that make us feel confident and arrogant that we think, we shall not be punished. As is mentioned in Qur'an,

***"Let not the arch-deceiver* (*Satan*) *deceive you respecting Allah."* (*Surah Fat'ir 35:5*).**

Allah (S.w.T.) tells the polytheists in Surah al-Hadid,

***"...the arch-deceiver* (*Satan*) *deceived you about Allah."* (*Surah al-Hadid 57:14*).**

The exegesis of this ayat as recorded in "Minhaj us-Sadiqin' is that Satan says, "Have complete faith in the magnanimity and the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.). He does not punish any one."

Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) said,

"There is no believer who does not possess two lights in his heart. One is the light of fear and the other, the light of hope. None of these is heavier than the other. Both are equal."[8]

Action Of Man Depicts Hope And Fear

It is related from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) that he said, "A believer cannot have belief till both fear and hope are present in him. Nor can he be called as fearful and hopeful till he makes it evident in his actions."[9]

Man's psyche should contain a perfect balance of fear and hope. It is related from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a):

"Hakim Luqman (r.a) advised his son in his will. 'If your deeds equal the good deeds of all men and Jinns, together, you must expect that you may yet be punished by Him. And you must hope in Allah so much that even if you carry the burden of the total sins of men and jinns, and approach Allah for forgiveness, He will pardon you.'[10]

A Lesson

Now I invite the readers to contemplate on this. Do we have true hope and real fear of Allah (S.w.T.)?

If we truly dread Allah (S.w.T.)'s punishment then why are we not fearful of our sins?

Why is there a sluggishness in following the commands of the Ma'sumin ('a)? If we truly regard ourselves to be desiring of Divine Mercy, why do we not strive for the goal? Why are our actions not directed towards absolute obedience and worship?

Yes, we do have genuine fear and hope with regard to the worldly affairs. This is evident in the excessive care, concern and caution we exercise to preserve our physical safety and material assets. Any sign of losing them, and we get restless till the danger is averted. If a worldly object is our goal we strive for it tirelessly and are not negligent for a moment.

By Allah (S.w.T.)! Let us look at the amount of efforts we put in our worldly affairsand honestly admit to ourselves whether we work even a fraction of it for the Hereafter. We most certainly do not. So let us resolve to divert some of our energies towards the fear and hope of the hereafter. If a sin has been committed, let us continuously feel remorse and weep for forgiveness, forgetting luxury and comforts, repenting till our last moment when we hear the good news.

***"(As for) those who say: Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the Garden which you were promised."* (*Surah Fussilat 41:30*).**

Let us realize that it is obligatory for the believers to remain in fear of Allah (S.w.T.) till the end of their lives.

Between Two Fears

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) said,

"A believer is always between two fears. One is the fear of his past sins, (so) he does not know as to how Allah would deal with him. Secondly he fears until the end of his life and does not know the sins that might be committed by him, causing his destruction. The believer does not forgo his fear for his whole life, and his affairs do not improve without fear."[11]

One Must Strive For The Hereafter

We must understand that Allah (S.w.T.) has guaranteed sustenance for us in this world. The Qur'an says,

***"And there is no animal in the earth but on Allah is the sustenance of it..."*(*Surah Hud 11:6*).**

However the success of the hereafter depends upon the efforts of man. As Allah (S.w.T.) says,

***"And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for; And that his striving shall soon be seen."* (*Surah an-Najm 53:39-40*).**

Claim Must Be Substantiated By Action

Amir ul-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) says in Nahjul Balagha:

"One who claims (verbally) and says that I am hopeful of the Mercy of Allah, is a liar. By Allah if his claim is genuine then why is his sincerity not reflected in his actions."

It is true that hope and fear are inner feelings, but they are manifested in one's actions. Hence, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) says,

"The Proof of fear is flight and the proof of hope is the effort to come near."

So, those who do not resort to flight from the sins prove that they do not have fear. Similarly, those who do not strive for the hereafter, make it evident that they do not have any hope in the bounties of Allah (S.w.T.). Such people claim only verbally that Allah (S.w.T.) is Most Merciful. Actually, Satan has deceived them, and speaks through their tongue. Why is it that they do not just claim Allah (S.w.T.) to be generous for worldly benefits. Rather, they strive hard to procure these but are content to claim that Allah (S.w.T.) is Merciful for the Hereafter, and feel very secure in that thought without making any effort to strive for the Hereafter.

Fear Allah (S.W.T.) As If You Can See Him

Hazrat Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) has stated,

"Allah has to be feared as if you see Him with your own eyes. Because even if you can't see Him, He is surely watching you. If you think that He is not watching you, you are a Kafir. However if you know that He is watching you and still commit sins, it means that you have regarded Him as an insignificant viewer."[12]

If any mortal were to see us committing a sin we would feel ashamed and refrain from such a behaviour. But its a pity that we disregard the All-seeing Almighty and indulge in sins, unabashed.

The Perfect Example

One look at the life of Amir ul-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) will make the best of us hang our heads in shame. We would appear to be the most despicable and wretched creatures, when judged in the light of his

excellence.

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

“A stroke of ‘Ali (‘a) on the day of Khandaq (battle of Ahzab) is superior to the total worship of men and jinns.”[13]

‘Ali (‘a), inspite of his exalted position, is all humility when he addresses his Lord. Not an iota of significance does he attach to his outstanding achievements. They are all a Mercy from his Creator. In himself, he sees only shortcomings, faults and weaknesses for which he weeps and prays till he becomes unconscious. Abu Darda relates that I heard ‘Ali (‘a) reciting in a disconsolate voice: “O my Lord, there is no doubt that I have spent a good part of my life in Your disobedience[14].

Still I do not hope for forgiveness from anyone but You. Nor do I intend to please anyone except You. O my real Master when I think of Your Mercy, the weight of my sins begins to feel light. But when I remember Your severity, the load of the difficulties crush me.”

Abu Darda says, ‘When there was a silence after this, I moved forward and saw that ‘Ali (‘a) had fallen unconscious. When I shook his arm, it seemed lifeless. I thought that my master ‘Ali (‘a) has passed away.’

Similarly Zorara says, ‘Once I saw ‘Ali (‘a) in the last part of a dark night. He was holding his beard and pleading in a sorrowful voice: ‘O! The provisions for the journey are less and the distance vast. The way is horrifying and the path dangerous.’

‘Ali (‘a) says in Du’a Kumail:

“O Allah the trials have increased and my condition has deteriorated and my good deeds are very few.”

The Personality Of ‘Ali (A.S) Is A Model For Us

Like his fear, the hope of ‘Ali (‘a) is also well known. Since his birth upto the last moments of his life he remained engrossed in worship and obedience. He did not forgo worship even for a single moment. Sometimes he used to pray a thousand rakats of prayers in a day. Throughout his life, he fasted the whole of the month of Shaban. He never missed the midnight prayers. Even in the night of the battle of Siffin, which is known as the coldest of the nights he offered his midnight prayers.

For Three continuous days he broke his fast with water. He gave his share of bread to the poor, the needy and the orphans. He gave in charity the proceeds of the sale of the garden that he had planted with his own hands. A detailed chapter of Bihar al-Anwar deals with the endowments of ‘Ali (‘a) and his charity. A few examples are quoted below.

An Excerpt From The Will Of ‘Ali (‘A)

The will of ‘Ali (‘a) is phrased in the following manner:

“This writing is that in which we have willed regarding one’s belongings. The slave of Allah, ‘Ali hopes that Allah shall reward him for this by Heaven and shall protect him from the fire of the Hell on the day when the faces of some people would be white and the others black. Whatever property I own in ‘Yambao’ and its suburbs, I leave all of it as an endowment to achieve the happiness of Allah.”

Inspite of excelling in good deeds and worship, while returning from a battle, he was seen exclaiming,

“Certainly, the best deed of a man is to die a martyr. I fear I may not get a chance to achieve martyrdom.”

At last the Holy Prophet (S) informed him:

“O ‘Ali! Your end shall be martyrdom.”

We Shall Follow ‘Ali (A.S)

We may think that it is not possible for sinners like us to come up to the level of a lofty personality like ‘Ali (‘a) in terms of piety and spiritual realization.

In reply to this we can say that, though it is not possible for us to reach that stage we can at least try to follow his commands as much as possible. For example, if a child sees a shining cobra, it is possible that he may try to catch it and risk being bitten to death?

Let us suppose the child is accompanied by his father. In such a situation the father who is aware of the poisonous qualities of the cobra will shout warnings and move forward to rescue the child.

O the heedless one! Is not ‘Ali (‘a) your spiritual father and the virtual guide? Are you not the claimant of his love and Wilayat. If your reply is positive then you must strive to follow and imitate your master as much as possible. The hardships and the punishments of the Day of Judgement make one shudder with horror and one cannot be complacent about the preparations of this last journey. If you are a true Shi’a of ‘Ali (‘a) then he is the best model for you. ‘Ali (‘a) has himself said,

“You cannot imitate me entirely, but you can imitate (to some extent) and follow us.”

“Our Shi’as are only those who follow us.”

Warning Of The Leader

The leader of the caravan issues warning regarding the dangers of the journey and advises his followers to make all the necessary provisions for the perils and the wild animals they would encounter. Every person will be responsible for himself. Saying this he himself busies himself in preparations. The fear of the impending journey makes him terror-stricken.

Seeing their leader in this condition the followers respond by feeling a similar concern for the journey and its preparations.

Let us not be complacent and heedless, and waste precious moments. Let us follow our Imam (‘a) faithfully, so that we do not have to face remorse on the Day of Judgement.

The Chief Of The Caravan Is Terror-Stricken

O! the caravans of piety and belief. The leader of your caravan, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) is extremely afraid of the pitfalls of the last journey. He has issued clear warnings regarding the dangers. Every night he announced at the Masjid al-Kufa,

“Travellers! may Allah have Mercy upon you. Pack up the provisions for your journey and be prepared. Certainly you have in your path deep ravines and terrible dangers. There is no alternative but to traverse this path.”

After this he used to say,

“It is a pity! The provisions are meagre and the journey extremely long and the destination, great.”15

It is truly deplorable that our involvement in worldly affairs has created a wide unsurmountable gap between us and our Imam (‘a). We have been completely cut off from his virtuous life and perfect morals. May Allah (S.w.T.) protect us from departing His influence to follow the misguidance of Satan. Certain sins cause us to be deprived of the Wilayat of Allah (S.w.T.) and love of Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a) and lead us to the Wilayat of Satan. After this we come under the control of Satan who rules us totally. Let us take refuge with Allah (S.w.T.) from such a doom.

Insulting A Believer Expels One From Wilayat

Hazrat Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) said:

“If a person slanders a believer to expose his faults to the public, or to insult him, Allah expels him from His Wilayat and leaves him to the Wilayat of Satan.”16

“Like the Satan when he says to man: Disbelieve, but when he disbelieves, he says: I am surely

clear of you; surely I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds." (***Surah al-Hashr 59:16***).

1. Safinat ul-Bihar.
2. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
3. Bihar al-Anwar.
4. al-Kafi.
5. al-Kafi.
6. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
7. Bihar al-Anwar.
8. al-Kafi.
9. al-Kafi.
10. al-Kafi.
11. al-Kafi.
12. al-Kafi.
13. Bihar al-Anwar.
14. 'Disobedience' as mentioned by the infallible Imam ('a) is not to be equated with disobedience as we understand. For details refer to the introduction to Psalms of Islam translated by William Chittick.
15. Nahjul Balagha.
16. al-Kafi.

Fifth Greater Sin: Murder

Murder

The fifth Greater Sin is the murder of that person whose execution has not been ordered by Allah (S.w.T.) and the Holy Prophet (S). Traditions which confirm that murder is a Greater Sin have already been mentioned at the beginning. Moreover the verses of the Holy Qur'an mention clearly the Divine punishment for the murderers.

"And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is Hell; he shall abide in it, and Allah will send His wrath on him and curse him and prepare for him a painful chastisement." (***Surah an-Nisa' 4:93***).

Five types of punishments have been ordained for those who kill the believers. First, Hell; Second, Eternal abode in Hell; Third, involvement in the Divine wrath; Fourth, being the accursed by Allah (S.w.T.); Fifth, the Great Chastisement.

Permanent Chastisement Is Exclusively For Unbelievers

One of the beliefs of the Shi'a Ithna Ashari school of thought is that eternal punishment is only for the Kuffar (Unbelievers). In other words, if a person dies in belief, he will not remain under punishment

forever, even if he has killed a believer (or someone else whose killing has been prohibited according to the Divine command), or even though he has committed other greater sins. Hence the verse mentioned above has been explained in various ways.

One possible explanation is that: one becomes eligible for eternal punishment only if he murders the believer because of his Iman (belief). If such is the case, then, the killer is indeed liable for everlasting chastisement, for he considered the murder of a Mu'min as Halal, whereas it is Haram. To consider a murder of a believer Haram is an article of faith. Consequently one who does not have this belief is a Kafir.

The Life And Property Of A Muslim Are Protected

The Holy Prophet (S) announced on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage (*Hajjatul Wida'*):

"O People! It is not permitted to kill the Muslims. Similarly to appropriate their property is not allowed. So do not be unjust upon yourselves and do not revert to disbelief after my death."[1]

Another explanation of the afore-mentioned hadith is that "abide in Hell" denotes being under punishment for a very long period. It does not mean that the sinner will be involved in eternal chastisement.

One Murder Is Equal To The Killing The Whole Of Humanity

"Whoever slays a soul, unless it be for a manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he slew all men; and whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive all men." (***Surah al-Ma'ida 5:32***).

All the believers are sons of Adam ('a) and brothers to one another. One who kills another person perpetrates a great evil and instigates a feeling of malice, revenge and hatred among people.

Suicide Is Murder

The Almighty Allah says:

"....and do not kill ourselves; surely Allah is Merciful to you. And whoever does this aggressively and unjustly, We will soon cast him into Fire; and this is easy for Allah." (***Surah an-Nisa' 4:29-30***).

Allah (S.w.T.) prohibits the believers from suicide even in times of turmoil.

Enlivening The People

"…..and whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive all men." **(*Surah al-Ma'ida 5:32*).**

If one saves the life of a "protected soul" whose killing has been prohibited by religion, be it forgiving, or not avenging, or protecting him, it is as if he has given life to the whole humanity. By saving one person he has; in a sense; saved humanity.

Murder is the worst sin in the eyes of Allah (S.w.T.) and severe punishment has been prescribed for a killer. The opposite of this, that is, saving the life of a person is accordingly regarded as the greatest form of worship.

A Murderer Does Not Die A Muslim

The following tradition is indicative of the fact that murder is a Greater Sin:

Regarding the killing of a believer, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) says:

At the time of his death the killer is told. 'Die as you wish, die as a Jew or a Christian or as a Magian.'[2]

Another tradition:

"A believer is free in the vast expanse of his belief till he colours his hands with the blood of a Mu'min."

Imam ('a) further says:

"One who kills a believer intentionally is deprived of the 'Tawfiq' of repenting (for his sins)."[3]

One Who Instigates A Murder Is The Actual Killer

The third tradition, also from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) says,

"The Holy Prophet (S) was told that a Muslim has been killed and his corpse is lying on the street. When the Holy Prophet (S) and his companions reached the site of the murder, he enquired as to who the killer was."

The people said, "We do not know." The Prophet was surprised,

"A person has been killed among the Muslims, and no one knows of his killer?"

"By the Almighty who appointed me with Prophethood, If all the creatures of the heavens and the earth participate in the murder of a Muslim and be pleased upon that, then Allah would surely involve them in punishment and send them all to Hell."

The lesson derived from this hadith is that there is no difference between the killer and those who support or co-operate with him.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) has said,

"On the Day of Qiyama a person would be presented before Allah. He will be having a streak of blood (like one gets a cut while shaving). He will say,

'By Allah, I have not killed anyone. Not have I co-operated with anyone's murder.' Allah will say, 'Yes, but one day you spoke about a believer and your words caused him to be killed. Hence you are responsible for his murder.'"

Hazrat Imam al-Ridha' ('a) said,

"If someone is killed in the east and one who lives in the west is pleased upon this, then he is a partner in this murder."[4]

Abortion Is Haram

It is Haram to abort an unborn child. Like in the case of a murder, *diyah* (prescribed fine) has to be paid here too. There is no difference between a foetus and a full-grown man. Even if the killers are its own parents. If a woman takes medicine that causes abortion, she would be liable for the punishment of a murderer.

The penalty (*diyah*) for killing a 'protected soul' (*Nafs al-Muhtaram*) is one thousand misqal of gold.

If the killers are the parents themselves they do not inherit any part of *diyah* but the other relatives who are eligible for the inheritance are qualified for it.

To Abort A Foetus Intentionally Is Haram

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that human life is considered sacred by the Islamic Shari'a. Nothing has been given so much importance like the one reserved for the 'protected soul' (*Nafs al-Muhtaram*). So much so that the beginning point of the human life, that is, the fertilised ovum is also not to be wasted. Once conception has taken place, no abortion is allowed. The '*diyah*' (penalty) for abortion is as follows:

If the fertilised ovum is aborted the '*diyah*' is sixty misqal.

If bones have formed it is eighty misqal.

If an incomplete child is aborted whose features have become distinct but the soul not entered the body, the penalty is one hundred misqal.

If soul had entered it and it was a male child, *diyah* is one thousand misqal, and if female, it is five hundred misqal.

If a pregnant woman dies, it is necessary to remove the unborn child by operation. Any carelessness in this regard is 'Haram'.

If due to carelessness the child dies, *diyah* is Wajib upon the one who was responsible for the lapse.

Repenting For Murder

By way of repentance, a person who has committed a willful murder should surrender himself to the heir of the murdered person. The successors of the murdered person have a choice of either avenging the death or accepting the 'diyah'. That is, they can forgive him or kill him in retribution.

If the murderer is forgiven, Three things become obligatory on him:

1) Freeing a slave

2) Feeding sixty poor people

3) Keeping sixty fasts

If freeing a slave is not allowed by the law, the other two penalties should be fulfilled.

Accidental And Intended Murder

Even in the case of an accidental murder the heirs of the victim are to be paid the 'diyah'. But they should forgive the killer.

Apart from this the Three penalties should be imposed, that is, freeing a slave, feeding sixty people and fasting for sixty days.

Similarly cutting off a part of someone's body is a Greater Sin. Those who intend to study this subject in detail are requested to refer to the books of Jurisprudence.

1. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
2. al-Kafi.
3. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
4. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.

Sixth Greater Sin: ‘Aqq Al-Walidayn (Disobedience To Parents)

Those Who Are Disobedient To Their Parents

The sixth Greater Sin is to be disobedient to one’s parents as expressly mentioned in the traditions from the Holy Prophet (S) and the Pure Imams (‘a). These have already been quoted in the first chapter. A tradition of the Prophet (S) says that the greatest sins are Shirk and to be disobedient to one’s parents. The seriousness of disobedience to parents as a Greater sin can be gauged from the fact that the Holy Prophet (S) has mentioned it along with Shirk which is the greatest of all Greater sins, and unforgiveable. “‘Aqq – عاق” is a sin, the punishment of which is promised in the Qur’an and the traditions.

The words of Hazrat Isa (‘a) as quoted by the Qur’an are:

“And dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent, unblessed.” **(*Surah Mariyam 19:32*).**

As Isa (‘a) did not have a father, his mother is alone mentioned. In the same Surah, both the father and mother of Hazrat Yahya (‘a) are mentioned.

Both the verses mention Three characteristics of the disobedient child (*‘Aqq al-Walidayn* عاق الوالدين).

1) ‘Jabbar’ (insolent)

2) ‘Shaqi’ (unblessed)

3) ‘Asi’ (disobedient)

Each of these negative qualities render one liable for severe punishment. Regarding ‘Jabbar’ (insolent) the Qur’an says:

“And they asked for judgement and every insolent opposer was disappointed. Hell is before him and he shall be given to drink of festering water: He will drink it little by little and will not be able to swallow it agreeably, and death will come to him from every quarter, but he shall not die; and there shall be vehement chastisement before him.” **(*Surah Ibrahim 14:15-17*).**

The one who is Shaqi will be punished as follows:

“So as to those who are ‘Shaqi’, they shall be in fire; for them shall be sighing and groaning in it; Abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord pleases.”

(***Surah Hud 11:106-107***).

Those with the third characteristic, that is, those who are 'Asi' will be dealt with severely by Allah (S.w.T.).

"And whoever disobeys Allah and His Apostle and goes beyond His limits, He will cause him to enter fire, to abide in it, and he shall have an abasing chastisement." (***Surah an-Nisa' 4:14***).

Tradition Regarding 'Aqq Al-Walidayn

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

"Beware! Abstain from angering the parents. The fragrance of Paradise is perceived even at a distance of a thousand years, but those who are disobedient to parents and those who cut off ties with relatives will not be able to smell it."[1]

The Holy Prophet (S) also said.

"One who displeases the parents, (it is as if) he has displeased Allah. One who angers both his parents (it is as if) he has angered Allah."

Elsewhere, it is mentioned,

"One who hurts his parents, hurts me and one who hurts me has hurt Allah. And the one who hurts Allah is accursed."[2]

The Prophet (S) has also stated:

"Allah will not speak to Three kinds of people on the Day of Qiyama. Neither will He have mercy upon them, nor will He purify their sins. There is for them a horrible chastisement. The Three types of people are the believers in destiny, the drunkards and those who disobeyed their parents."[3]

'Aqq Al-Walidayn Is Not Eligible For Divine Forgiveness

The wretchedness of the 'Aqq al-Walidayn is sufficiently evident from the fact that the trustworthy Jibril ('a) has cursed him and said,

"One who is blessed with parents but does not fulfill their (his parent's) rights will not be forgiven (his sins) by Allah."[4]

When Jibril ('a) said this, the Holy Prophet (S) uttered, 'Amen'! Hazrat Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) said,

"Accursed, Accursed is the one who beats his parents. Accursed is the one who distresses his parents.[5]

Prayer Is Not Accepted

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) said,

"Allah will not accept the Salat of the person who stares angrily at his parents. Even though they (parents) may be unjust."

A Young Man Is Interceeded By The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.)

A young man was on his deathbed when the Holy Prophet (S) came, sat near him, and told him to recite two kalimas (*Shahadatain*). But the youth could not speak. The Holy Prophet (S) enquired if his mother was present? A woman sitting near his head said, "Yes, I am his mother."

The Holy Prophet (S) asked, "Are your displeased with him?"

'Yes, O Prophet (S), we have not spoken to each other since the last six years.'

The Holy Prophet (S) asked this woman to forgive her son. Thus at the Prophet's instance she forgave his mistakes and was reconciled. At once the young man was able to recite the Kalima al-Shahadat.

The Holy Prophet (S) asked him,

*"What do you see, at this moment?". "*O Prophet of Allah a dark and smelly man has got hold of me and is not leaving me.*"*

The Holy Prophet (S) told him to recite the following Du'a,

يامن يقبل اليسير ويعفوعن الكثير اقبل مني اليسيرواعف عني الكثيرانك انت الغفور الرحيم

"Ya man Yaqbalul yasira wa y'afo 'Anil Kathira Iqbal minnil Yasira Wa 'Afo 'Annil Kathira."

Then asked, "Now what do you see?" He replied, "A fair complexioned man, handsome and fragrant, is moving towards me."

The Holy Prophet said, "Keep repeating this Du'a." When the youth repeated this Du'a he said "O Prophet of Allah (S) both of them have disappeared from my sight." After this the face of the Holy Prophet (S) was illuminated with joy. He said, "O Allah forgive the sins of this young man." Then the youth passed away.6

This tradition shows how difficult are the last moments of the 'Aqq al-Walidayn. He leaves this world in disbelief and remains, forever, in Divine punishment. The tutor of Kalima for this young man was the Holy Prophet (S). In spite of this his tongue did not move till his mother forgive him. The blessings of the

Holy Prophet (S) and the forgiveness of his mother brought salvation for this youth.

What Is 'Aqq Al-Walidayn?

Allama Majlisi (r.a.) writes in his commentary on al-Kafi:

'Aqq al-Walidayn means that the son or the daughter cause disrespect to parents by speech or actions. Or they do not obey them in matters which are within reason and matters which are not in any way against religion.

'Aqq al-Walidayn is absolutely Haram. The books of traditions of both the Shi'as as well as the Sunnis validate this fact.

To look at the parents with anger is *'Aqq*, to cause unhappiness to the parents results in *'Aqq*. It is Haram to take any step, which one is sure, will displease the parents.

Benevolence To Parents Is Wajib

The verses of the Qur'an as well as the traditions of the infallible Imams ('a) not only prohibit displeasing and angering the parents, but also stress that benevolence towards them is *Wajib*.

A few examples of the Qur'anic Ayats are presented for the readers:

1) ***"And We have enjoined on man goodness to his parents."*** **(*Surah Al-'Ankabut 29:8*).**

2) ***"Be grateful to Me and both your parents..."*** **(*Surah Luqman 31:14*).**

The above verse is specially worth noting for the fact that Allah (S.w.T.) has mentioned together gratefulness towards Himself and to the parents. Certainly thankfulness to Allah (S.w.T.) is *Wajib*, and in the same way it is *Wajib* for the children to be thankful to their parents.

***3*) *"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve* (*any*) *but Him, and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them* (*so much as*) *"Uff" nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! Have compassion on them, as they brought me up* (*when I was*) *little.* (*Surah al-'Isra', 17:23-24*).**

In this Ayat Allah (S.w.T.) has mentioned goodness to parents. In the same sentence He exhorts about service to Him. As service to Allah (S.w.T.) is Wajib, benevolence to parent is Wajib too.

When the Imam ('a) was asked to explain the meaning of the term "Bil Walidayn Ihsana" (and goodness to your parents), he said,

“Be good to your parents and if they are in need of something, procure it for them before they ask for it.”

Then the meaning of the words, “Taqullahuma Qualan Karima” (speak to them a generous word) was explained by the Imam (‘a)

“If the parents beat you, say ‘May Allah forgive you’. The phrase ‘*Wakhfiz Lahuma*’ (and make yourself submissively gentle to them) is elaborated by the Imam (‘a):

“Do not look at them with distaste. Do not raise your voice above theirs. When you walk with them do not precede them. When you go to a gathering, do not sit before they do. Never keep your hand above theirs (while giving them something).”

Service To Parents Is Better Than Jihad

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) narrates that a young man presented himself to the Holy Prophet (S) and said that he wanted to participate in Jihad. The Holy Prophet (S) told him:

“Certainly, go for Jihad in the way of Allah. If your are killed you will be alive near Allah and be provided sustenance from Him. The recompense for your sacrifice would be with Allah. If you return alive your sins would be washed off as if your were a newborn child.”

This man said: “O Prophet of Allah, my parents are alive and they are aged and have great expectations from me. They do not like me to be away from them.”

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

“If that is so, then stay behind to serve your parents. By Allah in whose hands is my life, to serve parents for a day and night is equal to a year of Jihad.”

Another tradition from Holy Prophet (S) says:

“Acquire your place in Heaven by serving your parents. If you are guilty of ‘‘Aqq’ then make Hell your abode.”

Goodness To Parents Is The Expiation Of Sins

Goodness towards the parents is the expiation of various sins. It is related in a report that a man came to the Holy Prophet (S) and said, “O, Prophet of Allah (S) there is not a single misdeed, that I have not committed. Is there repentance for me?” The Holy Prophet (S) told him,

“Go and do goodness to your father in order that your sins may be expiated.”

When the man left the assembly the Prophet (S) said,

“If his mother had been alive, it would have been more meritorious to do good to her.”

Satisfaction Of Parents Is Satisfaction Of Allah (S.W.T.)

The Holy Prophet (S) has stated,

“In the happiness of parents lies the happiness of Allah and in their dissatisfaction is Allah’s dissatisfaction.”7

He (S) further said,

“A person who is good to his parents will be just a grade below the prophets in Heaven. And the ‘Aqq al-Walidayn will be only a grade higher than the Fir’ons in Hell.”8

Angels Pray For Those Who Do Good To Their Parents

Amir ul-Mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a) says,

“Benevolence to parents is the greatest of the religious obligations.”

The Holy Prophet (S) says that Allah (S.w.T.) has two Angels one of whom says, “O Allah! Protect those who do good to the parents.” The other Angel prays, “O Allah! Destroy those people by retribution, with whom their parents are angry.” Needless to say, the prayers of the Angels are always accepted by Allah (S.w.T.).

The Material Effects Of ‘Aqq

The previous traditions mention the ill effects of ‘‘Aqq al-Walidayn’ in the hereafter. The following traditions describe the evil repercussions of ‘Aqq al-Walidayn in this life.

The last of the Prophets (S) says:

“There are Three kinds of sins which are punished in this world, rather than being given respite till Qiyama. The first is ‘Aqq al-Walidayn. The second, injustice upon men and third, thanklessness for favour.”

Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) stated,

“Secret charity cools down Divine anger while goodness to parents and benevolence to relatives, prolongs life.”9

Another tradition says,

“Benevolence to parents and secret charity, ward off poverty, and both (these deeds) prolong life.

Seventy types of death are kept away."[10]

"Those who assure me that they will be benevolent to parents and do good to the relatives, I will give them excess of wealth and a long life and assure them of being close among our group."[11]

Hazrat Imam al-Naqi ('a) said,

"The displeasing of parents causes decrease in sustenance and degradation (also follows)."

'Aqq Al-Walidayn Cause Poverty And Misfortune

There was a young man from Madinah. His parents were very old. He never did any good towards them. He neglected them and did not expend any of his wealth for their well-being. After sometime he became a destitute and fell sick. His wretchedness and misery reached such extreme, that he became a pitiable character. The Holy Prophet (S) said,

"Those who cause hurt to their parents should derive lessons from the life of this man. See how his wealth and property has been taken away. His affluence and independence has changed to poverty and his health has turned into disease. Whatever position he was to get in Heaven, he has been deprived of due to his sins; in its place the fire of Hell has been prepared for him."[12]

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) narrates:

"When Hazrat Yaqub ('a) went to Egypt to meet his son Hazrat Yusuf ('a), he (Yusuf – 'a) did not alight from his horse to pay respect to his father. Hazrat Jibril ('a) descended, and told Hazrat Yusuf ('a) to open his fist. As he did so, a light shot out from his palm and rose towards the sky. Hazrat Yusuf ('a) enquired, "What was this light which came out of my hand and shot to the sky?." Jibril ('a) replied, "The light of Prophethood has departed from your loins. You did not pay due respect to your father hence none of your descendants will get Prophethood." It is true that Hazrat Yusuf ('a) did not descend from his horse to pay respect to his father. However, this was not due to any feelings of pride and vanity. The Prophets are sinless and could never harbour such emotions. His intentions were merely to maintain his dignity as a King among his subjects."

Evil Consequences Of 'Aqq Al-Walidayn

'Aqq al-Walidayn brings disgrace in the Hereafter, and goodness to parents brings honour and glory. As Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) has said,

"Those who wish an easy death should do good to the relatives and be kind to parents. When one does this, Allah will make easy the agony of death. In this world he will not face difficulties and poverty."[13]

Prayers Of The Parents Are Accepted Soon

The supplication of parents for the welfare of the child are quickly answered by Allah (S.w.T.) and in the same way their ill wish (curse) due to displeasing them also takes quick effect. Numerous traditions have been recorded in this connection. One such tradition is connected with the merits of Du'a al–Mashlul. It is said that a young man had lost the use of his right hand which was paralysed due to the curse of his father. After his father's death, the man prayed the entire night, continuously for a period of Three years in Masjidul Haram. One day Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) saw him and took pity upon him. He taught him Du'a al–Mashlul. By the virtue of this Du'a the young man was cured.

The Mother Has More Rights Than The Father

Goodness towards the mother is more rewarding. The Holy Prophet (S) emphasized that benevolence shown to the mother should be three times the magnitude of that shown towards the father. When he was asked as to which of the parents had more rights, he replied,

"Was it not your mother who suffered the birth pangs to give birth to you and provided you with your natural diet from her breasts? Indeed the rights of a mother far outweigh those of the father."[14]

Rights Of The Parents

Someone asked the Holy Prophet (S) about the rights of the father. He (S) replied,

"He should be obeyed always, as long as he lives."

Then he was asked, "What is the right of the mother?". He answered,

"If the service to a mother equals the quantity of the particles of sand in the desert and the drops of rain on earth, it (this service) will not repay for a single day that she kept you in her womb."[15]

A Young Man And His Invalid Mother

It is reported that a young man approached the Holy Prophet (S) and asked,

"O Prophet of Allah (S), I have a mother who is an invalid. She cannot even move by herself. I carry her on my back and feed her with my hands. I also clean her excreta. Have I fulfilled her rights?"

The Holy Prophet (S) replied,

"No. Because you have remained in the womb for a long period during which you derived your nourishment from her body. She was every busy in caring and protecting you at all costs. Inspite of such hardships she always wished a long life for you. But you are waiting for her to die so that you may

relieved of the responsibility of taking care of her."

The Holy Prophet (S) described the eminence of a mother's position in the following statement:

1) "If you are praying a mustahab prayer and your father calls you, do not break your prayer but if your mother calls, break the prayer."

Truly, this assigns a remarkably high status to a mother. The Prophet (S) states,

"Paradise is at the feet of your mother."

Hence one need not go far in search of Paradise.

Be Good To Parents Even If They Are Kafirs

Whether the parents are believers and pious or Kafirs and sinful, goodness towards them is Wajib. And ''Aqq al-Walidayn' is Haram.

The verse of Surah Luqman says thus,

"And if they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them, and keep company with them in this world kindly…". **(*Surah Luqman 31:15*).**

Du'a For Sunni Parents

Muammar Ibn Khallad asked Imam al-Ridha' ('a) whether one is allowed to pray for one's parents if they had not followed the truth and had not been Shi'a.

Imam al-Ridha' ('a) replied,

"If they are dead, pray for them and give Sadaqah on their behalf. If they are alive keep them happy."

The Holy Prophet (S) says;

"A-llah the Most High has sent me as the Mercy for the worlds, except to the ''Aqq' (of parents)."

Jabir Ibn Abdullah (r.a.) reports that someone asked Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a), "My parents are against the truth, i.e. they are not the Shi'a of Ahl ul-Bayt ('a)". Imam replied:

"Be good towards them like you would be towards out Shi'as."[16]

Mu'mins And Kafirs Are Equal Under Three Circumstances

Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) said;

“Allah has not given superiority to a Mu’min in three circumstances.

First, to return what has been entrusted to you for safe keeping whether it belongs to a Mu’min or a Kafir.

Second, fulfilling an oath, whether given to a Mu’min or a Kafir. Third, doing good to the parents, whether they be Mu’min or Kafir.”17

A letter on various aspects of Islamic Shari’a, written by Hazrat Imam al-Ridha’ (‘a) to Mamun, include the following:

“Benevolence to parents is Wajib even if both of them are ‘Mushrik’. However obedience to parents is not Wajib if their order is against the orders of the Creator.”18

Advice Of Imam As-Sadiq (‘A) To Zakaria Ibn Ibrahim

Zakaria, the son of Ibrahim, was a Christian. Later he converted to Islam and had the honour of meeting Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a). He told Imam (‘a) “My mother is a Christian and she is old and blind.” The Imam advised him,

“Serve your mother and behave kindly towards her. Upon her death, do not leave her dead body to others. Perform her funeral rites yourself.”

Thus this statement of the Imam (‘a) is pregnant with two prophecies. Her death, and her conversion to Islam.

When Zakaria returned to Kufa he began to behave very kindly with his mother. He fed her with his own hands. Changed her clothes, washed and bathed her too. In short, he served his mother in every possible way. His mother asked, “My son you were not so dutiful when you were a Christian. Why is it that now you serve me day and night?”

Zakaria replied, “O my mother. I have a master who is the son of the Prophet of Allah (S). He advised me to serve you in this way.” The mother asked, “Is he a prophet?” “No. But he is a son of the Prophet (S).” “Such a person must be a Prophet because only prophets teach such manners.” The mother remarked.

Zakaria explained to his mother, “The chain of the Prophets came to an end with the Prophet of Islam (S). He was the seal of the Prophets. The one who has guided me is the son of the Prophet (S).” The mother said, “My son, the religion of Islam that you have embraced is better than all the religions. Teach me, so that I too may become a Muslim.”

So, Zakaria made her recite the ‘Kalima’ and taught her the true beliefs. Later, this lady performed the Zohrain and the Maghrebain prayers. The same night death approached her. She told her son: “Dear

son, repeat to me again whatever you have taught me." Zakaria began to recite while she listened carefully and in this way she passed away.

Displeasing the parents is Haram and goodness towards them is Wajib, whether they are alive or dead. In other words parents have rights upon their children even after they (the parents) are dead.

If the son or the daughter forgets the parents after their death and does not perform good deeds on their behalf, it is "Aqq al-Walidayn' irrespective of the fact that the child had fulfilled all his or her rights and served them till the time of their death.

Rights Of Parents After Their Death

First: To carry out the Wajib acts which they did not perform during their life time, like Salat, Siyyam, Hajj and repayment of debts.

Second: To Act on their will and testament.

Third: To perform various good deeds for their salvation, i.e., to give Sadaqah, to perform charitable acts, and to carry out recommended acts on their behalf. In short, one should strive to the utmost in doing good deeds on their behalf so that Allah (S.w.T.) may shower His blessing and mercy on them.

The Disobedient Children After The Death Of Their Parents

It is narrated from Hazrat Muhammad al-Baqir ('a):

"Certainly, if a person is good to his parents when they are alive but forsakes them after they die and does not repay their debts or pray for their forgiveness, Allah will record "Aqq al-Walidayn' in the account of his deeds. On the other hand, if a person is "Aqq al-Walidayn' when they are alive but after their death repays their debts and prays for their forgiveness and salvation, Allah will include him among the righteous people".

Single Action, Multiple Rewards

Hazrat Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) said,

"What prevents you from serving your parents in their life and death? The Holy Prophet (S) remarks about the goodness to parents after death. "Perform their 'Salat' (if some Wajib prayers have been omitted by them, the eldest son should perform them himself, or have them fulfilled by someone else on payment. However, if no Wajib prayer is remaining upon them, then he could pray Nawafil Salat for them or have them performed on payment.) Pay Sadaqah on their behalf. Complete their Qaza fasts and fulfill the obligation of their Hajj. Whatever you do, both of you will be rewarded (i.e.you and your parents).

Apart from this, goodness to parents carries double rewards. One for the action itself, and second for the benevolence towards the parents.

Praying (Du'a) For The Parents And Seeking Forgiveness On Their Belief

It is narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) that a man approached him and asked whether his parents have any rights upon him after their death? The Holy Prophet (S) replied,

"Yes, pray Salat for them, seek forgiveness on their behalf, respect their tradition, and be good to their relatives."[19]

When Is Obedience To The Parents Wajib?

The orders and restraints of the parents are of no significance with respect to the Wajib acts and the Divine prohibitions. For example if the parents order the child to drink wine or restrain him from the obligatory prayers and fasts, they should not be obeyed. It is expressly mentioned in this Verse of Surah Luqman:

"And if they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them…" (***Surah Luqman 31:15***).

The traditions also support this Ayat:

"No Obedience of a creature in contravention to the Divine command."[20]

Apart from these circumstances, obedience to parents is obligatory with regards to the Makruh and Mubah acts. The same applies to the Wajib al-Kifai.

If by performing these actions, the parents are displeased or hurt, it is 'Haram', a Greater Sin and causes one to be "Aqq al-Walidayn'. Suppose the son wishes to proceed on a non-obligatory journey and the parents restrain him as they fear some harm for him, or because they cannot bear to be separated from him; and the son disobeys them and goes ahead with the journey, such a journey is Haram. It is a journey of sin. Salat and Fasting is not Qasr for this journey. In short, anything that causes displeasure and hurts the parents, is absolutely Haram.

Obedience to parents is not obligatory in the following cases:

When it causes unbearable hardships or harm. For instance, if they restrain the son from marriage when he feels the need for it. Or they order the son to divorce his wife without a sound reason. If such an action will result in harm to both the spouses, it is not obligatory to obey the parents.

As far as I know, it is not obligatory to obey parents even in cases where they do not get angry or hurt if their commands are disobeyed.

As far as possible one should obey their orders and restrain from opposing them. Especially when the parents advise their children for their own benefit and without any selfish motive.

Disagreement Among The Parents

If a situation arises when there is a disagreement between the parents on any subject, as far as possible, one should try to pacify and satisfy both of them. However, if it is not possible then the wish of the mother should be given precedence.

We have already seen the reasons why her rights far exceed those of the father. She is also more deserving of obedience because being a woman she is more sensitive in comparison to men. The mother is easily disturbed by the slightest hurt caused by her child. She becomes restless and uncontrollable due to her motherly feelings. In contrast, the father exercises reason and intelligence and being less emotional, is much less affected. He would realize that the son is obeying the mother because of the very special status granted to her by Allah (S.w.T.) and not because he intends to disobey his father due to disregard for him.

Permission Of The Parents Is Necessary

The Islamic Shari'a has prescribed certain matters wherein it is necessary to obtain the permission of both the parents. Or at least of one of them. For example, the Wajib al-Kifai acts like Jihad, or the Mustahab acts like the recommended fasts, or matters like taking an oath, vow and promises. In all such cases it is Wajib to obtain the parents' permission. The First Martyr[21] had mentioned ten topics on the rights of parents in his book "Qawaid". It will be appropriate to mention them.

Journey Of The Child And The Martyr's Viewpoint

1) Mubah and Mustahab journey without the permission of parents is Haram. However a business journey and the journey undertaken for acquiring knowledge is allowed according to some Mujtahids.

2) Some Jurists are of the opinion that, obedience to parents is Wajib upon the child in every condition where there exists a doubt. Hence if the parents order their son or daughter to eat with them, and if there is doubt regarding the food, it is incumbent to obey the parents. Because, obedience to parents is Wajib while avoiding food in case of doubt, is Mustahab.

3) If it is time for prayers and the parents would like to get some work done, it is necessary to carry out the orders before offering Salat. Here again the offering of Salat at the earliest is Mustahab whereas the obedience to parents is Wajib.

Refraining From Salat Al-Jama'a

4) Parents cannot prevent their child from performing Salat in congregation unless it causes some problem to them. For example, the absence of the son, while he goes for Fajr or Isha prayers, may cause them anxiety regarding their own safety or the safety of their property. Or, it may make them apprehensive about the son's safety.

5) If it is not absolutely obligatory (Wajib al-A'ini) the parents can stop their son from going on Jihad.

6) Regarding the commands, which are Wajib al-Kifai, the parents can prevent their son or daughter only if there is a certainty or a chance of the Wajib being fulfilled by other people.

7) Some jurists are of the opinion that if one is praying a recommended prayer, he can interrupt it if his parents call him.

8) One must forgo recommended fasts if the father disallows them.

9) In the matter regarding vows and promises, if the parents are against it, then one must not disobey them.

10) It is the duty of the son to ensure that he causes no harm to his parents. And if someone else intends to harm them, the son must do everything in his capacity to ward off the harm.

Respect For Parents

As it is Wajib to fulfill the rights of the parents, it is also necessary to give them due respect and honour. Numerous traditions have been recorded from the Ahl ul-Bayt ('a):

1) One must not address the parents by their names. However, they can be addressed by their title or kunniya.

2) One must not precede them while walking, nor should one sit down before them.

3) While having meals one should not begin before the parents. Hazrat Imam Zayn ul-'Abidin ('a) did not have meals with his mother for the fear that he may pick a morsel which she intended to.

4) One must never sit with one's back to our parents in a gathering.

5) While speaking, one's voice should not rise above the voice of one's parents.

6) One should not do anything that would cause the parents to become a butt of criticism. We must not insult the parents of others, or they would insult our parents in retaliation.

7) Hazrat Sajjad ('a) saw a young man walking on the street with the support of his father's hand. He

was much displeased and did not even speak to the boy again.[22]

It is the unanimous opinion of the jurists that 'Ahsan' of parents means refraining from everything that displeases them.

The following actions are considered disrespectful:

1) Not providing them with the necessities, thus compelling them to beg for them.

2) Not inviting them to a function where others have been invited.

3) Not getting presents for them from a place where one had been to, on a journey.

All the above acts are Haram. In addition, the jurists also consider the following actions Haram:

1) To turn away from the parents with disdain.

2) To sit with one's back towards the parents.

3) To speak in a voice louder than the parents.

4) Walking ahead of the parents.

If any of them do not cause disrespect or displeasure, they are allowed. However, to refrain from them is '*mustahab*'.

Rights Of The Children Upon Their Parents

Just as it is Wajib for the children to respect, honour and fulfill the rights of their parents, it is incumbent upon the mother and the father to fulfill the rights, which the children have upon them. If the parents do not fulfill these rights, it would amount to Qat'a ar-Rahm (cutting off the relationships). Since children are the closest to parents it is a must to refrain from Qat'a ar-Rahm with them, and Qat'a ar-Rahm is a great sin, as would be described later.

Just as the children become "Aqq al-Walidayn' by not complying with their duties, the parents also become "Aqq' if they fail to perform their duties towards their children. Further, the parents should not impose unbearable commands upon the children such that the children are forced to find excuses for not obeying them and thus become "Aqq'.

The parents should not ridicule their children for their actions. Rather the children must be corrected by constructive criticism. Ridicule makes the children stubborn and creates enmity between them and the parents. When the parents fail to fulfill the rights of the children, it induces the children to forsake the rights of the parents in retaliation. As a consequence, both the parents and the children are involved in a Greater Sin.

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

“The parents are liable to be ‘‘Aqq’ in the same way as the children who do not fulfill the rights of the parents become involved in the sin of ‘Uquq’ [plural of ‘Aqq].”

It is therefore a solemn duty of the parents to behave kindly with their children and give them a good training and education. They should keep them under gentle control and must not do anything that would cause them to be ‘‘Aqq’.

For example, the parents should overlook the minor faults of the children. They should appreciate insignificant favours and show happiness and gratitude for these favours which would encourage the child to further good actions. They should make the children aware that they wish them the best and pray for their happiness in the world and the Hereafter.

We will now put forward the rights of children upon their parents, as enunciated by educated jurists and propounded in the books of Islamic Law.

Maintenance Of Children

It is Wajib upon the parents to bear the expenses of the children right from the time of their birth till they become independent, and in case of a daughter, till she gets married.

Arranging The Marriage

One of the most important duties of the father is to arrange for the marriage of the son when he attains maturity. In case of the daughter too the father must strive to find a good match for her. The parents cannot restrain their daughter from matrimony. The Holy Qur’an states clearly:

“…then do not prevent them from marrying their husbands when they agree among themselves in a lawful manner.” (***Surah al-Baqarah 2:232***).

Religious Education And Training

Another important duty for the parents is to give a good education to their children. The parents must strive to instruct the children with regard to the fundamentals of Islamic faith. The seriousness and significance of observing the laws of Shari’a should be inculcated in the children, and no leniency must be shown if the religious laws are not strictly followed.

However, the aspect of Amr bil Ma’ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar must be kept in mind. The details regarding the same shall be explained in the chapter of Amr bil Ma’ruf (enjoining good) and Nahy Anil Munkar (forbidding evil).

Various traditions stress upon the duty of the parents to shower their love and affection upon the children. A few of these are quoted below.

Love And Affection For The Children

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

“Be affectionate to your children and have mercy upon them. When you promise them something, fulfill your promise because the children repose hope only in the parents. When a promise is not fulfilled, it causes dissatisfaction and strains relationships. Certainly Allah is most wrathful when the women and children are disheartened.”

Kissing The Children

The Holy Prophet (S) has told that when a person kisses his child, a good deed is recorded in his *Sahifat al-Amal* (Scroll of deeds).23

Daughters Are More Deserving Of Kindness

The parents have been ordered to be more kind towards the daughters. It is mustahab that when a father brings something for the children he must first offer it to the daughter; especially the one who is named Fatima.

If the children oppose the parents, they must never be abused or reviled. The curses of the parents cause an increase in the misery of the children.

Spiritual Fathers Are More Qualified For Kindness

Whatever has been mentioned till now concerns the biological parents; however the spiritual fathers or the guides of humanity are Hazrat Muhammad (S) and his Purified Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a). All of us are spiritually related to them. In every circumstance their followers can be enriched by virtues and get protection from calamities. The Holy Prophet (S) has informed, “I and ‘Ali (both) are the fathers of this Umma.”

The spiritual fathers are superior to the biological parents in a manner that the soul is superior to the physical body. Similarly the punishment of the ‘‘Aqq’ of the spiritual fathers is much more severe than that of the ‘‘Aqq’ of ordinary parents.

High Rewards And More Punishment

The rewards for kindness to the spiritual father is a thousand times more than kindness to the real

parents. In the same way the "Aqq' of a spiritual father is far more severely punishable, i.e., Heaven is prohibited for the person who disobeys the spiritual father, and none of his deeds are accepted even if he prays in the nights and fasts during the day.

The punishment for those who do not acknowledge the Wilayat of Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) is more severe because the Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) are the real spiritual fathers. It would be wrong to consider all the Qur'anic verses and traditions in connection with Uquq al-Waledain to be restricted to biological parents. The Holy Qur'an and hadith are unanimous in declaring that the commands for Uquq al-Waledain apply equally and more stringently to the spiritual as well as biological parents. The ultimate argument in this connection is the Qur'anic verse wherein Allah (S.w.T.) has ordered obedience towards the parents along with His own worship.

***"Be grateful to Me and both your parents."* (*Surah Luqman 31:14*).**

***"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve* (*any*) *but Him, and goodness to your parents."* (*Surah al-'Isra', 17:23*).**

A similar reference to the Holy Prophet (S) and the Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) is to be found in the chapter of Silat ar-Rahm. Two traditions are reported from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a)

The first tradition is when Umru bin Yazid enquired about the meaning of the following Ayat of Surah ar-Ra'd:

***"And those who join that which Allah has bidden to be joined and have awe of their Lord and fear the evil reckoning."* (*Surah ar-Ra'd 13:21*).**

The next tradition is concerned with the tafsir of the same 'Ayat'. It says that the above Ayat has been revealed about the Silat ar-Rahm to Muhammad (S) and the Ahl ul-Bayt ('a), the close relatives of the Mu'min being included in it. The tradition further says,

"And do not be of those who restrict the Ayat to some particular personalities. But whenever you hear of a verse regarding a kind of people you must consider it to be applicable to the other people of the same kind."

The 'Uquq Of Spiritual Fathers

The '*Uquq* of the spiritual fathers means to disobey their commands and to be heedless of their orders. To sever relationships with them in this world by not acknowledging their leadership. Imam al-Ridha' ('a) asked,

"Won't you feel bad if your parents are displeased and say that you are not their child?"

Those who were present answered, "Yes". Imam ('a) continued,

“The spiritual parents are superior to your biological parents. Do not give them an opportunity to say this. Rather consider yourself lucky be to their son or daughter”.

1. Wasa’il ul-Shi’a.
2. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il.
3. al-Kafi.
4. Bihar al-Anwar.
5. Mustadrak.
6. Bihar al-Anwar.
7. Bihar al-Anwar.
8. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il.
9. Bihar al-Anwar.
10. Bihar al-Anwar.
11. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il.
12. Safinat ul-Bihar.
13. Safinat ul-Bihar.
14. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il.
15. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il.
16. al-Kafi.
17. al-Kafi.
18. Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha’.
19. al-Kafi.
20. Bihar al-Anwar.
21. Al-Shahid Al-Awwal Faqih Al-Sarbidaran.
22. al-Kafi.
23. Wasa’il ul-Shi’a.

Seventh Greater Sin: Qat’a Ar-Rahm

Breaking Up Relations

The seventh Greater Sin is Qat’a ar-Rahm, the breaking up of relations with one’s kith and kin. This is clearly verified by Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) as well as Imam Musa al-Kadhim (‘a), Imam ‘Ali al-Ridha’ (‘a) and Imam Muhammad al-Taqi (‘a). The Qur’an has also decreed Hell-fire and the curse of Allah (S.w.T.) upon those who cut off ties with their relatives.

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) says:

“Beware of those who cut off relations because I have found them cursed thrice in the Qur’an.”

1) ***Whoever break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut asunder what Allah has ordered to be joined, and make mischief in the land, these it is that are the losers.*** (***Surah al-***

***Baqarah, 2:27*).**

In the Qur'anic terminology when the word Khasir (loser) is used it denotes the one who is to be in loss, or rather the one who is cursed.

2) ***And those who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut asunder which Allah has ordered to be joined and make mischief in the land;* (*as for*) *those, upon them shall be curse and they shall have the evil* (*issue*) *of the abode.* (*Surah ar-Ra'd, 13:.25*).**

3) ***But if you held command, you were sure to make mischief in the land and cut off the ties of kinship. Those it is whom Allah has cursed, so He has made them deaf and blinded their eyes.* (*Surah Muhammad, 47:22-23*).**

The Denouncement Of "Cutting Off Kinship Ties" In The Traditions

Numerous traditions have reached us in this regard. A few of these reports are quoted here:

The Holy Prophet (S) states:

There is destruction in enmity, especially with the relatives. I do not mean the destruction of the law but rather the destruction of the religion. (Enmity among people not only harms the hair and the body, but it also destroys one's religion).[1]

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) says:

"Protect yourself from 'Haliqa' for it destroys the people." The narrator asked "What is 'Haliqa'", Imam replied, "To sever relations."

The Worst Deed In The Eyes Of Allah (S.W.T.)

A man approached the Holy Prophet (S) and enquired, "What is the worst deed in the eyes of Allah?"

The Holy Prophet (S) replied,

"To attribute partners to Allah."

The man then asked, "After this which is the worst sin?"

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"To sever relations".

After this the same person asked, "After this which is the worst sin?"

The Holy Prophet (S) replied:

“To enjoin the evil and to forbid the good (deeds).”2

Goodness In Return Of Ill-Treatment

A man complained to Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) about his relatives. Imam (‘a) said,

“Swallow your anger and behave nicely with your relatives.”

The man said, “My relatives give me all sorts of troubles and there is hardly any cruelty they have not committed upon me.” The Imam (‘a) told him,

“Do you also want to cut off relation with them? If you also become like them, then Allah will never have mercy for you.”

Allama Majlisi (r.a.) says, “If one behaves kindly to the relatives who are bad, they would at one time or the other regret their behaviour. Then the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.) will be upon both of them. If the ill-behaved relatives do not rectify their ways then at least the Mercy of Allah (S.w.T.) will be upon the one who continues kindness to them (the relatives).

It is very clear to us that we must not sever relations even with those relatives who are unkind to us and who want to cut off the relationships.

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

“Do not sever relation with your kindered even if they cut off relations with you.”3

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) states:

“There are Three sins whose punishment has to be borne in this world itself:-

The first is injustice, the second is breaking of relationships and the third is false oath.”4

Life Is Shortened

Hazrat ‘Ali (‘a) says in one of his sermons: -

“I seek refuge from the sins which cause the hastening of death.”

Someone asked him, “Maula, Is there any sin by which the death is hastened?” He replied,

“Yes, the breaking up of the family ties.”

Families who live with co-operation and care for each other are given increase in sustenance by Allah

(S.w.T.) and those who remain divided and are aloof from each other, Allah (S.w.T.) removes the bounty from their sustenance and their lifespan shortens even if they are all pious (in other respects).

Death Due To Qat'a Ar-Rahm

A companion of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) complained about the ill-treatment given to him by his relatives,

"My own brother as well as my paternal cousins are harassing me. They have snatched the house that rightfully belonged to me and have given me only a room to live in. If I complain to the government, I shall be able to recover all my property.

Imam ('a) said,

"Be patient, everything will be alright."

The man returned satisfied. In the year 131 A.H. there was a terrible plague. All the relatives of the man perished. Thereafter when he arrived before Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a), he (Imam - 'a) asked,

"How are your relatives?"

The man said, "By Allah all of them are dead." The Imam ('a) said,

"Their deaths have been due to their ill-treatment and Qat'a ar-Rahm of relatives like you, not recognizing your right and cutting off relationships."

Bereft Of Divine Mercy

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) relates from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said:

"When people claim to possess knowledge but do not act upon it, when they claim to profess love but harbour malice in their hearts and sever relations, in such a condition Allah removes mercy from them and makes them undiscerning to logic.[5]

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

"Among the various sins, injustice and cutting off relationships are such that one who commits these is punished in this world itself. Apart from this the punishment for these sinners has already been prepared in the Hereafter."[6]

At another occasion the Holy Prophet (S) has informed:

"One who severs relationships will not enter Heaven."

Jabir Ibn Abdullah al-Ansari (r.a.) has related from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) that he quotes the Holy Prophet (S) as follows:

"Jibril ('a) has informed me that even at a distance of a thousand years man will be able to smell the fragrance of Heaven , but one who disobeys his parents, the one who breaks ties with the kith and kin, or the aged adulterer will not be able to smell it. In fact, the fragrance of Paradise will be felt even at a distance of two thousand years, but not by those who disobey their parents and those who break ties with the relatives."

The exalted Prophet of Islam (S) has also informed that the invocation of the person who breaks family ties shall not be answered. "In the chapter on the merits of Shab al-Qadr the Prophet (S) has stated that in the night of Qadr Allah (S.w.T.) forgives the sins of all the people except of those who drink wine, who disobey their parents, and those who break ties with the relatives or harbour enmity towards the believers."

Kindness To Relatives Is Obligatory

The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says in the Qur'an:

***"...and be careful of* (*your duty to*) *Allah, by Whom you demand one of another* (*your rights*), *and* (*to*) *the ties of relationship;"* (*Surah an-Nisa' 4:1*).**

According to Imam al-Baqir ('a), the notable point in this verse is that the fear of Allah (S.w.T.) is mentioned alongwith the fear one should have about breaking relations with kith and kin.

In the book al-Kafi there is a tradition from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a). He says:

"The relatives in this Ayat, include all, and not only the nearest ones. Certainly Allah has ordered kindness towards all the relatives. Allah has given so much importance to this deed that he mentions it with his exalted name."

Kindness To Relatives Is Commanded In The Same Way As Salat And Zakat

It is related from Imam 'Ali-al-Ridha' ('a):

"Allah has ordered Three things along with Three others, in the glorious Qur'an:

1) Salat is ordered along with Zakat. If one offers Salat but does not pay Zakat (when it is due upon him) then his Salat will not be accepted.

2) Allah has ordered thankfulness to Himself along with the thankfulness to one's parents. If one is not

grateful to one's parents it is as if he has not been grateful to Allah.

3) Allah has ordered piety along with kindness to ones kith and kin. Then one who is not kind towards the relatives is not pious."

Rights Of The Relatives And The Ease In Reckoning

The Creator of the Universe, Almighty Allah remarks in the Holy Qur'an:

"Certainly Allah orders equity, kindness (***to people***) ***and the giving*** (***of what they need***) ***to the relatives."*** (***Surah an-Nahl 16:90***).

In Surah ar-Ra'd is the following verse:

"And those who join that which Allah has bidden to be joined and have awe of their Lord and fear the evil reckoning." (***Surah ar-Ra'd 13:21***).

The expression 'reckoning' in this Ayat denotes the accounting of one's deeds with regard to his duty of kindness towards relatives. This Ayat shows that kindness towards the kith and kin shall be an important factor to ease the difficulty of the accounting for one's deeds.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) explains as follows:

"Kindness to relatives makes the reckoning (of the Hereafter) easy."[7]

The Inimical Relative Of Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq ('A)

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) made a will in his last moments:

"Pay seventy Dinars to my paternal cousin Hasan Aftas."

He was asked, "Master you are making a gift to someone who has attacked you with a sword?"

Imam ('a) replied,

"Do you think I should not be included among those concerning whom the Qur'an says:

'And those who join that which Allah has bidden to be joined and have awe of their Lord and fear the evil reckoning..." (***Surah ar-Ra'd, 13:21***).

Allah has created Paradise, purified it and made it fragrant. Its fragrance is felt at a distance of two thousand years (of travel). But the one who disobeys his parents or breaks ties with the kin will be so far away from Paradise, that he will not even experience its fragrance.[8]

Traditions Regarding Kindness To Relatives

There are numerous traditions to the fact that Silat ar-Rahm is obligatory. In one of such traditions Imam al-Baqir (‘a) relates from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said:

“I will (command) all the people of my Umma, whether present or not, and those generations which are to come till the Qiyama, who are still in the loins of their father and wombs of their mothers, that they should be kind to their relatives (and visit them) even if they live at a distance of a year’s journey. Because kindness to relatives is one of the commands which is made an integral part of the faith (Iman).”

One Who Is Kind To The Relatives Will Be Able To Cross The Bridge Of Sirat Smoothly

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) relates from Hazrat Abu Zar Ghaffari (r.a.) who quotes the Holy Prophet (S) to have remarked:

‘Sirat (the bridge passing over Hell that everyone has to cross) will have on each side (of it) ‘Silat ar-Rahm’ and ‘Amanat’ (keeping a trust) one who performs the act of Silat ar-Rahm and maintains trusts (Amanat) shall be able to cross the ‘Sirat’ easily and will reach Paradise.

None of the good deeds will benefit those who have broken ties with relatives or committed breach of trust. They will slip from the bridge of ‘Sirat’ and drop into Hell-fire.[9]

The Worldly Benefits Of Kindness To Relatives

Numerous reports (*Rawayat*) testify that Silat ar-Rahm (kindness to one’s relatives) also has worldly benefits. Like, increase in the life-span, postponement of death, increase in the number of descendants etc., Hazrat Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) related Three traditions from the Holy Prophet (S) in the court of Mansur Dawaniqi (l.a.).

1) “A man who has only Three years of life remaining, performs an act of kindness to his relatives and Allah increases his life by thirty years. In the same way a man has thirty years of life but due to his breaking off the ties of relationship, his (remaining) life is decreased to Three years. Then the Holy Prophet (S) said: Whatever Allah wills He erases and whatever He wills He writes.

It means that if Allah wills He can alter (certain destinies) due to one’s actions and deeds.”[10]

2) “Fulfilling the rights of kith and kin increases the life-span even if the relative is a sinner.”[11]

3) Silat ar-Rahm (kindness to relatives) is a cause for the easy accounting of one’s deeds on the Day of

Qiyama and it (Silat ar-Rahm) protects one from sudden death."

Hazrat Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) has told Maysar:

(O' Maysar) the time of your death has arrived many times but Allah has postponed (your death) due to your kindness to the relatives and good behaviour towards them.

'Silat Ar-Rahm' Prolongs Life

It is reported from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) that he said to Maysar,

"O Maysar, truly your lifespan has increased, what good actions have you been performing?"

Maysar replied, "In my youth I used to earn from my labours an amount of five Dinars a day and I used to give these to my maternal uncle."

Yaqub Magribi was once in the presence of Imam Musa al-Kadhim ('a). Imam ('a) said,

"You and your brother had an argument over the ownership of a house. So much so that you abused each other and broke up the ties of relationsip. Such a thing is not from my religion, neither is it from the religion of my ancestors. Then fear Allah , the One Who is without any partner. Fear the Divine Punishment. Due to this sin, death shall soon separate you (two). Your brother will die in this journey and you shall regret you actions."

The man asked,"May my life be sacrificed upon you, when will I die?"

Imam ('a) replied,

"Your death had also arrived but you did an act of kindness to your father's sister (your aunt) and thus your lifespan increased by twenty years (or months)."

As Imam ('a) has predicted, Yaqub's brother died before he could reach home and was buried on the way.[12]

The Benefits Of Silat Ar-Rahm In The Hereafter

The practice of Silat ar-Rahm (kindness to kith and kin) accrues worldly advantages, spiritual benefits and bounties of the Hereafter.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) says:

"Silat ar-Rahm perfects the morals and encourages charity. When one performs Silat ar-Rahm he has to be benevolent towards his relatives. The continuous practice of Silat ar-Rahm brings refinement in his morals. In the same way repeated acts of kindness inculcate a benign and compassionate feeling in the

person, and the soul is purified (from the sin of jealousy and enmity).[13]

Silat Ar-Rahm Causes All The Good Deeds To Be Accepted

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) states:

Silat ar-Rahm (kindness to relatives) purifies deeds. Purification of deeds means, that the shortcomings in all the good deeds of a person practicing Silat ar-Rahm are naturally compensated and all his good deeds are accepted by Allah.

It increases wealth, wards off difficulties and calamities. The accounting of your actions on the Day of Qiyama is made easy. Even the ordained time of death is postponed.

Extending Hand Of Friendship Towards Those Who Want To Break The Ties (Qat'a Ar-Rahm)

Imam al-Sajjad ('a) says:

There are two actions, towards which, a step taken is liked by Allah more than anything else. One is the step taken to join a row formed in the name of Allah (for Jihad or Salat); the second is the one taken to extend a hand of friendship towards kith and kin who want to break relations.[14]

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"Certainly there is a section in Paradise which can not be attained except by Three kinds of people. First the just Imam, second, the one who does Silat ar-Rahm, and third the one who has family (and children) but remains patient (in poverty and difficulties).[15]

The Reward Of Silat Ar-Rahm

The reward for Silat ar-Rahm has been described by the Holy Prophet (S) in one of his traditions. He says:

"When a person goes towards his relatives so that he can fulfill his rights with his life and his wealth, Allah bestows upon him the reward of a martyr at every step he takes. He (Allah) writes down forty thousand Hasana (the unit of Divine rewards) and He erases forty thousand of his sins and He elevates him by forty thousand grades. The person achieves the position of one who has worshipped Allah for a hundred years."[16]

At another place the Holy Prophet (S) says, regarding the rewards for Silat ar-Rahm:

"The reward for Sadaqah in the way of Allah is ten times, whereas the reward for giving a loan is twelve

times (because in giving a loan the dignity of the Loanee is maintained). The reward for the good behaviour to the believing brothers is twelve times and the reward for Silat ar-Rahm is twenty four times."[17]

The Meaning Of Silat Ar-Rahm And Qat'a Ar-Rahm

The Shari'a of Islam has not provided any fixed definition for these two terms. In this case the meaning as judged by common sense and reason must be accepted. We must consider all the relatives from the father's side and mother's side, irrespective of whether they are close or distant, to be our kith and kin who have a right on us. In the same way the children of the daughters and their descendant also come in this category as the Qur'an says:

'Those who join together **(*do Silat ar-Rahm*)** ***those things which Allah has commanded to be joined."*** **(*Surah ar-Ra'd 13:21*).**

Urwah Ibn-Yazid asked Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) the meaning of this Ayat (Surah ar-Ra'd 13:21), the Imam ('a) replied;

"You have been commanded to do Silat ar-Rahm towards all your relatives. Whether they are Mahram (in the prohibited category of marriage) or Non-mahram, (not in the prohibited category) whether they are distant relatives or closely related, whether they are immediate relatives or separated by several generations."[18]

No Discrimination Between The Affluent And The Poor Relatives

It is generally observed that people tend to behave graciously towards their wealthy relatives and avoid the poor ones. The faith of Islam does not differentiate or discriminate between the rich and the poor relatives. What is important is the closeness of relationship. The more closely a person is related to you, the more important and necessary it is to fulfill his rights.

What Is Silat Ar-Rahm?

Any behaviour which is generally regarded by people as good, kind, gracious or obligatory, when directed towards your relatives is Silat ar-Rahm.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) says:

"The kindness towards relative and goodness towards the believing brother makes easy your reckoning on the Day of Judgement and protects you from sins. So you should be kind to your relatives and be good to your believing brothers even if it is as little as a sincere 'salam' (salutation) or a hearty reply to a salam."[19]

At another place the Sixth Imam (‘a) remarks:

“Do Silat ar-Rahm towards your relatives and the near ones even if it is just by offering a glass of water to them.”[20]

The Different Grades Of Silat Ar-Rahm

Shahid al-Thani[21] (r.a.) describes the grades of Silat ar-Rahm in the following words:

It is deduced from the traditions that the highest stage of Silat ar-Rahm is to consider the relatives as our own selves. That is, we should wish for our relations whatever we wish for ourselves.

The next stage of Silat ar-Rahm is to help relatives overcome the difficulties and hardships they may be facing. Next, we must earnestly try to benefit our kith and kin as much as possible, in areas where they need help and of course in a manner permitted by religion. This benefit can be either economic or by way of making a person independent, by securing for him a job or initiating him into a trade. It can also be in the form of a sound advice, spiritual guidance and religious teachings.

The fourth stage of Silat ar-Rahm is towards those people who are dependents of our relatives. For example, the brother’s wife or the step-mother.

The simplest kind of Silat ar-Rahm consists of salutations, a lesser kind is the conveying of Salam (through someone). The smallest kind of Silat ar-Rahm is to pray for relatives in their presence and to encourage them.

The Difference Between Breaking Relations With Nearest Kin And With Distant Relatives

Qat’a ar-Rahm and Silat ar-Rahm with respect to the close kith and kin could be different from that with the distant relatives. It is possible that a certain action or attitude towards close relative would amount to Qat’a ar-Rahm but the same towards a distant relative may not be regarded as such. Also a certain behaviour with a knowledgeable and a pious relative may be termed as Qat’a ar-Rahm but with respect to other relatives it may not be so. It is best to refrain from every act that could possibly amount to Qat’a ar-Rahm. We must observe extreme precaution in this matter lest we bring upon ourselves the severe punishment of a Greater Sin.

Arrogance Towards Poor Relatives Is Qat’a Ar-Rahm

The ones most guilty of Qat’a ar-Rahm are the rich and affluent who do not acknowledge their connections with their poor relatives and deal with them with pride and arrogance, while they are polite and kind to their wealthy relatives. To neglect one’s duty and give importance to material possessions,

contradicts the laws of Islam both in the letter and spirit.

What Is The Least Amount Of Silat Ar-Rahm That Is Wajib

Every kind of Silat ar-Rahm, the failure of which is viewed as a sort of Qat'a ar-Rahm, is obligatory for us. For example, if a person is unable to fulfill his needs due to poverty or is unable to get medical aid for any reason, or is in debt; and he approaches a rich relative for help; it is obligatory on the rich person to help him. Even if the rich person is not approached directly but comes to know the predicament of his poor relative, it is obligatory on him to help this less fortunate relative. The wealthy man who fails to carry out these obligations will be guilty of Qat'a ar-Rahm.

It is however not obligatory for a person to help his poor relative if he himself is not in a sound position to do so and fears that his finances will be constrained or that he himself may become a destitute. Also, Silat ar-Rahm is not obligatory, if by doing so he will violate the laws of Islam. For example one need not pay a visit to a relative, if by doing so one would be in the midst of Na-mahram or may be compelled to hear music.

Sometimes we may be in doubt whether a particular action could be considered as Silat ar-Rahm or Qat'a ar-Rahm. In this case the reference point is to see how the people in general view it. The criteria for deciding that a particular behaviour is Silat ar-Rahm or Qat'a ar-Rahm therefore depends on the general feeling for it. If a small lapse like not saluting or non-compliance with a small request is Qat'a ar-Rahm according to those around us, then it is so. By the same token if observing small niceties are considered as Silat ar-Rahm, then it is so.

Silat Ar-Rahm With Certain Relatives Is Mustahab If Not Wajib

At times some obligations towards distant relatives are not considered Silat ar-Rahm and accordingly are not Wajib (obligatory) for us. But these obligations are bound to be Mustahab. In any event, it is best to conduct ourselves in a manner that we totally eliminate the risk of committing a Greater Sin.

Breaking Ties Even With Those Who Wish To Break Up Ties With Us Is Haram

Although one would not be at fault from a worldly point of view, according to Shari'a, breaking ties even with those who want to do so is Haram.

It is natural for a person who, finding that his relative does not acknowledge him nor fulfills his rights, reacts by remaining aloof and allowing the bonds of kinship to be broken.

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

“Do not break ties with your relatives even if they break them with you.”

The Order Of Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (‘A) Regarding Qat’a Ar-Rahm

Abdullah Ibn Sinan says that I pleaded to Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a), “I have a cousin, I do Silat ar-Rahm (kindness) towards him and do not wish to break ties with him. But he wants to break ties with me. (Master!) I want to maintain relations but he wishes to sever them. Due to this behaviour of his I am also inclined to cut off ties with him. Can you permit me to do so?”

Imam (‘a) replied:

“(Remember) If you behave kindly with this relative of yours inspite of his Qat’a ar-Rahm (then it is possible that one day this will affect him and he too will begin to fulfill his obligations). In this way the Mercy of Allah shall be upon both of you. But if you break ties with this cousin of yours then neither of you shall be eligible for the Mercy of Allah.”22

Goodness In Return Of Ill-Treatment

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

“If any one betrays trust with you, do not betray trust with him or you will also become like him. Similarly, do not break ties with your relatives even if they do so.”23

It means that if we reciprocate the malice of a relative we shall also be like him (i.e. sinful). In the same way the Holy Prophet (S) has invited us to perform kindness in lieu of misdemeanor. He remarks, “Do you wish me to tell you (about those qualities) which shall benefit you in this world as well as Hereafter?”

The people said, “O Prophet of Allah! Please do so.”

The Prophet (S) said,

“The Three such qualities are, firstly, to do Silat ar-Rahm with one who does Qat’a ar-Rahm with you. Secondly, fulfill the needs of one who has deprived you. Thirdly, forgive those who have oppressed you.”24

Breaking Of Ties With The Muslim And The Kafir Relatives

The traditions of the Ma’sumin (‘a) leave no doubt whatsoever that the fulfilling of the rights of one’s relatives is obligatory. Whether the relatives are Shi’a or Sunni, pious and religious or sinful and transgressors or whether they are Muslims or Kafirs. It is compulsory to perform Silat ar-Rahm with them. Even if a Muslim relative apostises and becomes a kafir, his rights are not invalidated.

Inb al-Hamid enquired from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (‘a): “My relatives are not of my religion. Are any of their rights upon me?” Imam (‘a) gave the following reply:

“Why not? The rights of the relatives do not become invalid for any reason (even if the relatives are unbelievers) but if the relatives are Muslim then their rights are twice as much. One is due to their being relatives and second because of their being Muslim.”[25]

Dawud Raqqi The Companion Of The Sixth Imam (‘A)

Dawud Raqqi says: “I was sitting in the company of Imam (‘a) when Imam (‘a) himself started speaking and said:

“Dawud, on Thursday the report of your deeds was presented to me and I saw among your deeds the Silat ar-Rahm which you have performed with your cousin (brother), I was very pleased. However, I know that this Silat ar-Rahm of yours will (because of his Qat'a ar-Rahm towards you) be the cause of his early death.”[26]

Dawud, the companion of Imam Sadiq (‘a) says: “My cousin used to bear enmity towards me. He was an evil person. When I came to know about his destitution, I went to Makkah and gave him some money so that he could manage himself for some time. It was this action of mine about which Imam (‘a) was informed and he told of it on my return to Madinah.”

The Behaviour Of Imam As-Sadiq (‘A) Towards His Inimical Relatives

Certain relatives of the Holy Imam (‘a) not only failed to acknowledge his rights but even bore enmity against him in their hearts. Although the enmity against Imam (‘a) makes him a disbeliever. Yet Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (‘a) willed that seventy Dinars be given to Hasan Aftas. Hasan Aftas was an evil person and had such deep malice against Imam (‘a) that he had once tried to attack Imam (‘a) with a sword. The goodly behaviour of Imam (‘a) towards his enemy was due entirely to his relationship.

Conversation Of Imam As-Sadiq (‘A) With Abdullah Hasani

Once Abdullah Hasani, a relative of Imam Sadiq (‘a) met him on the streets of Madinah. He had a meaningless argument with Imam (‘a) and spoke ill of him. Imam (‘a) replied to this misbehavior in the best way. He went to the house of this person the very next day and said, “Yesterday I recited the following Ayat of the Qur'an,

“And those who joined that which Allah has bidden to be joined and have awe of their Lord and fear the evil reckoning. (***Surah ar-Ra'd 13:21***).

I became very fearful because of it." Abdullah understood that Imam (‘a) was intending to correct him. He began to weep and said, "I have willfully forgotten this verse. After this, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (‘a) and Abdullah embraced each other.[27]

The Grief Of Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (‘A) On The Oppression Upon The Descendants Of Imam al-Hasan (‘A)

When Mansur Dawaniqi arrested and imprisoned Abdullah Mahej and other Hasani Sadats, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (‘a) was grief-stricken. Although the Hasanis were opposed to Imam (‘a), the Imam's (‘a) distress was such that he was confined to bed for twenty days. He wrote a lengthy letter to them to express his sorrow and to offer comfort and consolation. He sent this letter to the prison of Kufa and was in regular contact with them to know their well-being. Often he wept on their imprisonment.

It Does Not Matter If We Are Kind To Certain Relatives Who Are Not Muslim

It is simply clear by now that for Sileh-Rahem and Qat'a ar-Rahm, the Shari'a does not distinguish between a Muslim and a Kafir or between a pious and a sinful person. At the same time we also know that Islam exhorts us to shun infidels and to dissociate with them. These contradicting views will cause some confusion in our minds and a word of explanation is in order.

Undoubtedly Islam orders us to detest kafirs, hence it is improper to behave well with them. Good behaviour towards a Kafir is an outward act and at a social level. While hating him for being an Kafir is how you feel and think about him at a spiritual level. Since Sileh-Rahem is obligatory, we must behave well with our Kafir relatives, but at no stage should we be oblivious of the fact that they are non-believers and deserve to be hated for being Kafirs.

Silat Ar-Rahm To Kafir Relatives Should Not Encourage Them In Their Disbelief

If Silat ar-Rahm towards a Kafir relative, in some way, strengthens his conviction towards his own religious views; or if Sileh-Rahem towards a sinful relative provides him with opportunity and encouragement in his unlawful ways, then this kind of Silat ar-Rahm is forbidden. In fact, if Qat'a ar-Rahm induces a disbeliever to introspect and reconsider his disbelief, then, Qat'a ar-Rahm is obligatory on us. In the same way Qat'a ar-Rahm is obligatory if it discourages or dissuades a relative in his sinful ways.

Dissociating With The Enemies Of Islam

There is another situation where Qat'a ar-Rahm is Wajib (obligatory). That is when the kafir or sinful relative harbors malice towards the religion of Islam. Allah (S.w.T.) says in Surah al-Mujadala:

"You shall not find people who believe in Allah and the latter day befriending those who act in opposition to Allah and His apostle, even though they were their (own) fathers, or their sons or their brothers or their kinsfolk..." (Surah al-Mujadala 58:22).

This verse clearly indicates that one must abstain from Silat ar-Rahm towards even the closest of relatives if they are inimical towards Allah (S.w.T.) or the Holy Prophet (S) or the Islamic faith.

Silat Ar-Rahm Is Wajib If The Relative Is Not Overtly Inimical

A Qur'anic verse from the chapter Mumtahana says:

"Allah does not forbid you from respecting those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly, surely Allah loves the doers of justice. Allah only forbids you from respecting those who made war upon you on account of (your) religion, and drove you forth from your homes and backed up others in your expulsion, that you make friendship with them and whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust." (Surah Mumtahana 60:8-9).

Thus it could be concluded from the above two verses that if a relative does not openly oppress us or exhibit enmity, then Silat ar-Rahm is Wajib towards him.

Silat Ar-Rahm Is Wajib Even If One Has To Travel Far To Perform It

It is highly recommended to fulfill the duty of Silat ar-Rahm even if one has to travel a long distance to do so. The Holy Prophet (S) told 'Ali ('a):

"O 'Ali! Even if you have to travel for two years to do good to your parents, do it, even if you have to travel for one year to perform Silat ar-Rahm to your kinsfolk, do so. Even if you have to journey a mile to see a sick person, do it. Even if you have to walk two miles to attend a funeral, do it. Even if you have to travel four miles to meet a believing brother, do it."[28]

Traditions have stated, as mentioned earlier, that for every step a person takes to visit his relatives, he gets forty thousand rewards, forty thousand of his sins are forgiven and his status is raised by forty thousand grades.

Maintain Cordial Relations But Do Not Reside Close To Each Other

Amir ul-Mu'minin (‘a) writes a letter to one of his officers,

“Order the relatives to visit each other but ask them not to reside in the same neighborhood.”

The late Scholar, Naraqi, explains in his book, ‘Miraj us Sadat’: “Staying next to each other breeds malice and jealousy and results in Qat'a ar-Rahm.”

It is much easier for relatives to maintain harmony and goodwill by staying apart from each other. Proximity often results in friction and enmity.

There is a Persian proverb that says that distance and friendship are proportionate to each other.

Silat Ar-Rahm With The Spiritual Father

We are indeed indebted to our parents for our physical, mental and spiritual development. But mankind could not have been guided right, without a spiritual father. The essence of spiritual guidance which consists of rules of conduct as approved by Allah (S.w.T.) have come to us only through the Holy Prophet (S) and it was the sustained and unsparing effort of the Holy Prophet (S) which guided mankind to the path of salvation and eternal happiness. The Holy Prophet (S) was the spiritual father of the Muslims in his time and later ‘Ali (‘a) took his place. It is only through love and obedience to them that one can hope to achieve spiritual eminence.

This is corroborated by the statement of Allah (S.w.T.) to the effect that whoever enters the ‘fort’ (protection) of these exalted personalities, his spiritualism becomes evident in his behaviour. The doors of knowledge and awareness are open. The fountain of sagacity flows in his heart and the reality becomes manifest for him.

The Advent Of The Holy Prophet (S) – A Fabulous Blessing

It is not possible for a man to achieve spiritual excellence without the love and obedience of a spiritual father.

“Certainly Allah conferred a benefit upon the believers when he raised among them an apostle from among themselves, reciting to them His communications and purifying them, and teaching them the book and the wisdom, although before that they were surely in manifest error.” (***Surah Ali- ‘Imran 3:164***).

This verse signifies the importance of the advent of the Holy Prophet (S) by Allah (S.w.T.) for the

guidance of mankind. We must acknowledge it as the greatest blessing of Allah (S.w.T.) and a favour that He bestowed upon His creatures.

The Wilayat Of Ahl Ul-Bayt ('A) And The Worldly Comforts And Blessings

Yunus Ibn Abdul Rahman told Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a):

"The love and Wilayat of Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) has been prescribed as your right upon us by Allah. I consider this blessing to be much superior to the worldly blessings."

Imam ('a) was distraught and he replied:

"You have made an inappropriate comparison. What are the worldly blessings? What is it more than eating, drinking and dressing? And you compare all these transient things with our love which is an everlasting reality?"

We have seen in the discussion on the rights of parents, that we can be "Aqq' of our spiritual fathers if we fail to fulfill their rights. Not all of us may be capable of fulfilling this duty to the fullest extent. But we should sincerely try our utmost to obey their commands. At the same time we should be fully aware of our deficiencies and failings and continually implore our infallible guides to pardon us.

Who Are The Spiritual Fathers?

Silat ar-Rahm is Wajib and Qat'a ar-Rahm is Haram towards our spiritual relatives also. Our Holy Prophet (S) and our Imams ('a) are our spiritual fathers. So, the descendants of our Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams ('a), that is the Sadat, are our spiritual relatives. Also, since the Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams ('a) are the spiritual fathers of all believers and Shi'as, we all are related to each other, and are like brothers of each other.

"Certainly the Believers Are Brothers of Each Other." (***Surah al-Hujurat 49: 10***).

The verse clearly indicates that everyone is somehow related to a common spiritual father.

Rights Of Sadat

Allama Hilli in his book 'Qawaidul Ahkam' counsels his son Fakhrul Muhaqqiqain in the following words:

"You should practise Silat ar-Rahm with the pure descendants of the Sadat also. The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) has emphasized upon this duty so much that he has made the love of relatives of the Holy Prophet (S) as a compensation of the prophetic mission."

"…Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives…." **(*Surah ash-Shura 42:23*).**

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"I shall intercede for four types of people even if they carry the sins of all humanity."

A person who has helped my descendants and progeny.

A person who has spent his wealth upon my descendants when they were in need.

A person who has loved my Progeny with his tongue and his heart.

A person who has considered the wants of my descendants when they were surrounded by enemies and were homeless."

Does Anyone Have A Right Upon The Holy Prophet (S)?

Hazrat Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) said:

"On the Day of Qiyama a caller will announce, 'O people, keep silent, because Muhammad (S) is to say something to you.' Then the Messenger will arise and say, 'O people! If anyone of you has any right or favour upon me, or if there is any obligation upon my neck then he should stand up. I will see that he is compensated.' The people will reply, 'May our parents be sacrificed upon you. What right? What favour? And what obligation? Rather the rights and favours are of Allah and His Prophet upon all the creatures.'

Goodness To Sadat And Paradise

Then the Holy Prophet (S) shall say:

"No, they do have a right. Whoever has provided shelter and help to anyone from my Ahlul-Bayt ('a) or did good to them or gave them clothes in their need or fed them when they were in need, should stand up so that I can recompense him."

Some people who had performed such deeds will arise. Then the voice of the Almighty shall be heard. "O Muhammad, my loved one! With due regards to your position I have fixed the reward for their deeds. They shall be given whatever position you intend for them in Paradise." Then Allah (S.w.T.) shall give them a place near the Holy Prophet (S) and his Ahlul-Bayt ('a) and there would be nothing to obstruct their view."

Rights Of The Brothers In Faith

There are numerous traditions in connection with the rights of the believers and brothers-in-faith. A few of such traditions are quoted below:

Mualla Bin-Khanis asked Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (‘a): “What are the rights of the believing brother?”

Imam (‘a) replied,

“Seven rights of the believers are Wajib – If one fails to fulfill even one of these rights, he is externed from Allah's obedience. He shall not receive any reward from the Almighty.”

“What are those seven rights?” enquired Mualla.

Imam (‘a) said,

“I fear that you may fail to act upon them.”

Mualla said, “La Quwwata Illa Billah.” There is no power except of Allah. (He meant, It wouldn't be so).

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (‘a) said,

“The foremost right is that you wish for the believing brothers whatever you wish for yourself.”

Imam (‘a) then related the other six rights,

“The second right is that you must refrain from angering him and try to seek his pleasure and obey him. The third right is that you help him with you life, your wealth, your tongue, and your hands. The fourth right is that you guide him and teach him that which is beneficial for him. The fifth, is that do not eat till satiation when your believing brother is hungry, and do not drink to satiation if he is thirsty, and do not dress nicely if he is deprived of good clothes. The sixth right is that if you have a servant you should send him to do his work. The seventh right is that if the believing brother says something on oath you should believe him, if he invites, you accept his invitation, if he is sick, visit him, if he dies, accompany his bier, if you come to know any of his needs, fulfill them it before he asks.”[29]

Silat Ar-Rahm With The Imam (‘A)

Imam al-Ridha' (‘a) has informed,

“Those who cannot come for our Ziarat must visit our virtuous followers. They shall get the reward of performing our Ziarat. And those who wish to do Silat ar-Rahm towards us but are unable to do so must do Silat ar-Rahm towards our pious devotees. They shall be given the reward of our Silat ar-Rahm.”

Respect and honour for the believing brother is the same as respect and honour for the spiritual father

(Imam– ‘a). In the same way, insult and disrespect of the believing brother is equivalent to insult and disrespect to the spiritual father, (the infallible Imam – ‘a). It is for very reason that insulting a believer brings the wrath of Allah (S.w.T.) upon us and makes us deserving of severe punishment.

We shall conclude with the prayer that Allah (S.w.T.) may give Tawfiq to all of us for doing Silat ar–Rahm and fulfilling the rights of others.

1. al–Kafi, Chapter of Qat’a ar–Rahm.
2. al–Kafi.
3. al–Kafi.
4. al–Kafi.
5. Bihar al–Anwar.
6. Mustadrak.
7. Bihar al–Anwar.
8. Bihar al–Anwar.
9. al–Kafi.
10. Bihar al–Anwar.
11. Bihar al–Anwar.
12. Safinat ul–Bihar.
13. Safinat ul–Bihar.
14. Bihar al–Anwar.
15. Bihar al–Anwar.
16. Bihar al–Anwar.
17. Bihar al–Anwar.
18. al–Kafi.
19. al–Kafi
20. Wasa’il ul–Shi’a.
21. Al–Shahid Al–Thani, Zain Al–Din Al–Jubli Al–Ameli.
22. al–Kafi.
23. Bihar al–Anwar.
24. al–Kafi.
25. al–Kafi.
26. Bihar al–Anwar.
27. al–Kafi.
28. Bihar al–Anwar.
29. al–Kafi.

Eighth Greater Sin: Usurping The Property Of The Orphans

The eighth among the Greater Sins is to usurp the property of an orphan who has not attained maturity.

This is categorized as a Greater sin by the Holy Prophet (S), Imam 'Ali ('a), Imam al-Ridha' ('a), Imam al-Kadhim ('a) and Imam al-Taqi ('a). It is a sin, the punishment of which is fixed by Allah (S.w.T.) to be the fire of Hell.

The Qur'an says,

"(As for) those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and they shall enter burning fire." (Surah an-Nisa' 4:10).

It is mentioned in Tafsir al-Kabir that one who cheats an orphan of his property will be raised on the Day of Judgement in such a condition that the flames of fire will be protruding from his mouth, nose and ears. By looking at him people will recognize that he is the one who in his lifetime had usurped the property of the orphans. The last phrase, "They shall enter burning fire" indicates that one who deprives an orphan of his rightful property will be liable to be burnt in Hell-fire, even if he has not committed any other sin.

The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says,

"And give to the orphans their property, and do not substitute worthless (things) for (their) good (ones) and do not devour their property (as an addition) to your own property; this is surely a great sin." (Surah an-Nisa' 4:2).

The above verse gives clearcut instructions to those who are guardians and caretakers of the orphans, on how to fulfill their responsibility. They should spend the property in their trust in a correct manner for the benefit of the orphan and without stinginess. A caretaker should be very careful not to spend any of the orphan's money on himself. This is a very serious offence that will cause his entire Halal wealth to become Haram. Under no circumstances should an orphan's valuable possessions be substituted with anything inferior. Finally, when the child reaches maturity, all his property should be returned to him with complete honesty.

In the same chapter of Surah an-Nisa', Allah (S.w.T.) says in verse number nine:

"And let them fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offsprings, would fear on their account, so let them be careful of (their duty to) Allah, and let them speak right words." (Surah an-Nisa' 4:9).

It is mentioned in Tafsir-al-Mizan that whoever betrays the trust of orphans and oppresses them, their children will suffer a similar fate. This is an amazing reality that is revealed by the Holy Qur'an. Similarly in other numerous verses, the Qur'an informs us that the returns of our deeds are evident in this world itself. We will witness the results of our own actions. Every action has an effect on one who performs it, and we should be fully conscious of the fact that our sinful acts are not restricted to the sinner, but they come to bear on our children as well.

It is our confirmed duty to wish for others as we wish for ourselves. A good or bad action directed

towards others therefore implies that we wish the same for ourselves. So, by carrying out these actions, we, in effect have prayed for it for ourselves. This prayer will not be rejected and we will be recompensed as we deserve.

The marvellous functioning of our body is the result of the co-ordination between the various composite parts and organs. We as individuals are also composite members of a large body, which is our community. Just as the malfunction of one organ in the body, causes distress in the other organs, so also whatever hurt or misery that we may inflict on another is bound to take us also in its grip. So it is, that the injustice we do to another's child will cause our own children to suffer the repercussions of our actions. It is of course another matter that the Almighty in his Infinite Mercy allows some of our good deeds to compensate for the bad actions.

"And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and (yet) He pardons most (of your faults)" (Surah ash-Shura 42:30).

Undoubtedly, we must dread Allah (S.w.T.)'s punishment and refrain from oppressing the orphans. We have to have kind and tender feelings for them as we have for our own children. If we trample upon the rights of an orphan or do any injustice to him or her, we can rest assured that the same fate will befall our own children after our death. The verse of Surah an-Nisa' unequivocally states that oppressing an orphan is a Greater Sin. The horrible consequences of this sin are also mentioned clearly.

Punishment For Usurping The Orphan's Property Is Meted Out In This World

It is recorded from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) that Allah (S.w.T.) has ordained two penalties for appropriating the wealth or property of an orphan:

"The first punishment is in the Hereafter, and that is the fire of Hell. The second one is in this world itself. As indicated by the following verse of Qur'an:

"And let those fear who, should they leave behind them the weakly offspring, would fear on their account, so let them be careful of (their duty to) Allah, and let them speak right words." (Surah an-Nisa' 4:9).

Whatever has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, the same has been emphasized by Imam 'Ali ('a), Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a), Imam 'Ali al-Ridha' ('a). Other Tafsirs of Qur'an also give the same explanation. Imam 'Ali ('a) states: "Certainly one who usurps the orphan's property, his own children shall be similarly dealt with in this world in the near future and he will suffer for it in the Hereafter."[1]

'Ali ('a) has also mentioned:

"Do good to the children of others so that good may be done to yours (after you are dead)."

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) has informed:

"If one oppresses someone, Allah will appoint an oppressor upon him or upon his children."[2]

This Is Not Against Divine Justice

We may wonder as to why the innocent children who are not at fault and in no way responsible for the misdeeds of their parents should be the target of oppression and injustice meant for their parents. Is this not against Divine Justice?

The answer to this objection is simple. Allah (S.w.T.) does not appoint any oppressor but when someone oppresses the children, Allah (S.w.T.) does not restrain him. Allah (S.w.T.) witholds His Mercy and favour.

Bad behaviour towards the children implies that the father wishes the same for his children and also that he has not wished Allah (S.w.T.)'s Mercy and favour upon his children.

Hazrat Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) has stated:

"If the father is virtuous the Almighty Allah protects the children."

As mentioned in the Qur'anic verses of Surah al-Kahf:

"And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them, and their father was a righteous man, so your Lord desired that they should attain their maturity and take out their treasures, a mercy from your Lord..." (***Surah al-Kahf 18:82***).

Thus it is clear that the Mercy and favour of Allah (S.w.T.) upon the orphans is due to the righteousness of their father. On the other hand if their father had oppressed others than this would have caused them to be deprived of Divine Mercy and favour.

Tradition That Denounces The Usurpation Of Orphan's Property

Umar bin Zurarah says that he enquired from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) regarding the Greater Sins. He said:

"One of the Greater Sins is illegal appropriation of the orphan's property."[3]

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) narrates from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said:

"On the Day of Qiyama some people would arise from their graves in such a condition that flames of fire would be protruding from their mouths."

The people asked, “O! Messenger of Allah who are these people?”

The Prophet replied:

“Those who have illegally appropriated the property of the orphans.”[4]

Imam al-Ridha’ (‘a) was asked, “What is the smallest quantity of the orphan’s property the appropriation of which causes one to enter the fire (of Hell)?”

He replied:

“When one consumes something belonging to the orphan without the intention of returning it to him. There is no question of less or more.”

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

“On the night of ascension (Miraj) when I was taken to the skies I decried a group of people whose bellies were being stuffed with fire. And the fire was spilling from their anal openings. I asked Jibril, who they are? Jibril replied, ‘They are those who used to usurp the property of the orphans unjustly’.”[5]

The Death Of A Creditor And His Minor Children

A person who has minor children and had given loans to others, and dies without making any arrangement for their recovery, will be counted as one who has misappropriated the wealth of orphans. Because after the death of the father the children become the owners of his property. However, the dead father would only be accountable for that portion of the loan which is the share of the children.

Severe Pain In The Eyes Of Amir Ul-Mu’minin (‘A)

Once Hazrat ‘Ali (‘a) had sore eyes. The pain was so severe that he was groaning loudly. The Holy Prophet (S) came to visit him and said:

“Is this sighing and groaning due to the restlessness or due to severe pain?”

‘Ali (‘a) replied:

“I have never had such severe pain.”

The Holy Prophet (S) related to him a tradition which was so frightening that ‘Ali (‘a) forgot his pain. The tradition is as follows.

A Frightening Tradition

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

“O ‘Ali! When the Angel of Death (Israel) comes to a disbeliever he will come with a mace of fire. He will extract his life painfully. Seeing this, Hell will scream loudly (so that it may take this disbeliever to itself soon).”

Hearing this ‘Ali (‘a) sat up abruptly and said:

“O Messenger of Allah (S), repeat to me this tradition. I have forgotten my pain after listening to it.” Then he enquired, “Will anyone’s soul from your Umma be also extracted in this way and will anyone be subjected to such a severe punishment?”

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

“Yes! There are three types of people among the Muslims whose souls shall be taken out this way. First group is of the unjust rulers. The second is of those who unjustly appropriate the wealth of orphans and the third is of those who give false witness.”

Kindness Towards Orphans

Injustice and oppression to the orphans brings severe punishment in this world as well as Hereafter. In the same way kind and gentle behaviour towards them earns countless rewards in this world, as well as the Hereafter. Especially blessed by Allah (S.w.T.) are those who protect the orphans and take the responsibility of being guardians to them. Numerous traditions have been recorded concerning this. A few of these are quoted below.

Hazrat Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) says:

“One who maintains the orphans, Allah makes Paradise Wajib upon him, in the same way as he makes Hell wajib upon those who usurp the property of the orphans.”

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

“I and one who maintains an orphan would be together in Paradise in the presence of Allah, in the same way as these two fingers are together.”

And he pointed out to his index and the middle finger joined together.

According to a tradition, The Holy Prophet (S) and one who maintains an orphan, will not be separated nor would there be any barrier between them in Paradise.

The Prophet (S) has also stated:

“If anyone from you becomes the guardian of an orphan and deals kindly with them, and he fulfills these actions satisfactorily, and he strokes the head of the orphan with sympathy, then Allah necessarily writes good deeds equivalent to the hair covered by his hand and forgives sins equal to the number of hair, and raises his position in grades equal to the hair of the orphan’s head.”

Elsewhere the Holy Prophet (S) has been reported to have said:

“When an orphan cries the Heaven shudders, then Almighty Allah says, ‘O Angels, Is this the same orphan whose father has been buried in the earth?’ The Angels reply, ‘(O Allah) you are the all–knowing.’

Then Allah would say, ‘O My Angel be a witness. Whoever consoles this orphan and makes him happy, I will make him happy on the Day of Qiyama.’”

The caressing of an orphan’s head removes callousness from the heart. There are many tradition which indicate this. However, only a few shall suffice for our discussion.

Guardian Of Minor Children

The boy who has not reached the fifteenth year cannot spend from his wealth. In the same way the girl who is not yet nine years of age cannot spend from her property. A minor boy or a girl cannot spend from their wealth in any way. Only their guardian has the right to spend from their wealth for their upkeep. The foremost guardians, according to Shari’a are the father, grandfather, mother and grandmother. The next in order is the one who is appointed a guardian after the death of the father and grandfather. He has the right of maintaining the orphans.

If the father and the grandfather die without appointing a trustee for the children, the legal guardian is the ruling Mujtahid or someone appointed by the Mujtahid. In a situation where a ruling Mujtahid is also not present, the Mu’minin shall maintain the orphans6. It would be explained at an appropriate place.

The Affairs Of The Orphans Should Be Conducted With Care

The guardian of an orphan shoulders a very serious responsibility. He should judiciously spend for all the needs of the orphan, neither being miserly nor extravagant.

The guardian should strictly maintain the account of the orphan’s expenditure separately and club it with his own family expenses. Since it would be more convenient and economical to cook the orphan’s food along with the food for the rest of the family. But the expenses incurred for the orphan must be accurately calculated. It would be highly commendable if the guardian took a little less as the orphan’s share than the calculated amount. He would indeed gain Allah (S.w.T.)’s immense pleasure.

At times, however, due to the dietary requirements of the orphan, it may be necessary to cook his food separately. This would certainly pose some problems. But the main thing the guardian has to keep in mind is the wellbeing of the orphan and an honest assessment of his expenses.

This has been permitted because it is easier and much more economical then having food cooked separately for the orphan. However, if there is a great difference between the dietary requirement of the orphan child and other family members, it would be very difficult to adhere to this arrangement. For example, if a child does not eat meat and rice, then it would be difficult to have his food cooked together with the main dish. The thing to be taken care of, is that the well-being and property of the orphan is maintained.

A verse of Surah al-Baqarah says:

"And they ask you concerning the orphan's; say: To set right for them (their affairs) is good, and if you become co-partners with them, they are your brethren; and Allah knows the mischief-maker and the peace-maker..." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:220).

The above verse was revealed at a time the people were confused as to how they should handle the money of their orphan wards. The verse revealing the severe punishment for those who misappropriate an orphan's property had struck such fear into the hearts of guardians that they started cooking the orphan's food separately. They would not even touch the leftovers and allowed them to rot. They then approached the Holy Prophet (S) in a confused state of mind and the above verse was revealed.

It is evident that we must live together with the believing brother. The Omniscient Allah (S.w.T.) knows what is in our heart, and is aware of our intentions. He knows who intends to misappropriate the property of the orphans and who wants to put right their affairs.

The Wealthy Guardian Of The Orphans

It is recommended that a wealthy guardian should maintain an orphan. He will enjoy boundless blessings of the Hereafter fixed by Allah (S.w.T.) for this gracious act.

As the Holy Qur'an states:

"...And whoever (of the orphan's guardian) is rich, let him abstain altogether (from spending of the orphan's wealth)..." (Surah an-Nisa' 4:6).

The Impoverished Guardian Of The The Orphans

If the caretaker of the orphan is poor, he can charge for his services. Concerning the remuneration of these services there are Three legal opinions. Some scholars are of the opinion that he can charge an amount generally believed to be appropriate. The second opinion is that he must take only as much as is

necessary for his own upkeep, and no more. The third view point is that he must find out the generally accepted remuneration and the expenses of his own upkeep; and charge the amount which is less. This is a precautionary measure and the most recommended one.

The Property Of The Orphan Must Be Guarded Till He Attains Maturity

It is not permissible to hand over an orphan's money to him before he reaches maturity. The guardian will be held liable, if he is careless in this matter and the orphan suffers a loss as a result. On the other hand an orphan's property should be restored to him immediately, once he reaches maturity.

Signs Of Puberty

Maturity is recognized by any one of these Three signs:

1) The completion of fifteen lunar years for the boy and nine lunar years for the girl.

2) Growth of pubic hair.

3) Discharge of semen in boys.

What Is The Meaning Of Rashid?

The Qur'anic verse says,

"And test the orphans until they attain puberty; then if you find in them maturity of intellect (Rashid), make over to them their property…" **(*Surah an-Nisa' 4:6*).**

The maturity of intellect (Rashid) in this connection means maturity in the financial affairs. This maturity is reflected in the child's capacity to handle his day to day needs without there being any risk of loss and wasteful expenditure. At this stage it is Wajib to hand over to the orphan his wealth and property.

In other words it is Wajib to restore the wealth and property of an orphan when he attains puberty and maturity of intellect.

1. Bihar al-Anwar.
2. al-Kafi.
3. Bihar al-Anwar.
4. Bihar al-Anwar.
5. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
6. This is called Udul al-Mu'minin in religious terminology.

Ninth Greater Sin: Usury

The ninth Greater sin is usury. That it is classified as a Greater Sin is clear in traditions recorded from the Holy Prophet (S), Imam 'Ali ('a), Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a), Imam Musa al-Kadhim ('a), and Imam Muhammad al-Taqi ('a).

According to the glorious Qur'an, taking interest is a sin that incurs severe Divine punishment. The punishment for usury as mentioned in the Qur'an is far more severe than the punishment for other sins. It is announced in Surah Ali- 'Imran:

"O you who believe! Do not devour usury, making it double and redouble and be careful of (***your duty to***) ***Allah, that you may be successful. And guard yourself against the fire that has been prepared for the unbelievers.*** (***Surah Ali- 'Imran 3:130-131***).

It means that the fury of the fire that is prepared for those who take interest will be just as intense as the fire prepared for the unbelievers. The verse of Surah al-Baqarah says,

"Those who swallow down usury cannot arise except as one whom Shaitan has prostrated by (***his***) ***touch does rise. That is because they say, trading is only like usury; and Allah has allowed trading and forbidden usury. To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his Lord, then he desists, he shall have what has already passed, and his affair is in the hands of Allah; and whoever returns*** (***to it***) ***- These are the inmates of the fire; they shall abide in it."*** (***Surah al-Baqarah 2:275***).

The above verse confirms that the usurer will remain in Hell eternally and there is no salvation for him. Allama Muhammad Husain Tabatabai, in his Tafsir al-Mizan' says that the punishment ordered by Allah (S.w.T.) for usury is so severe, that such severity is not mentioned even for disobedience to any of the *Furu' ad-Din*. Another equally serious offence is to nurture friendship with the enemies of Islam. The direct ill-effects of usury are clear and evident. Hoarding of wealth increases the disparity between the rich and the poor. Poverty is a malady that can degrade and humiliate its victims, erode his values and destroy his morals. This in turn leads to corruption, theft and murder. Those directly responsible for destroying the social equilibrium, are the hoarders, who amassed wealth and thus it was unavailable to those who needed it. The total disintegration of the social fabric can precipitate a civil war and further a world war which brings with it only death and destruction. In the world of today with the advances of the nuclear and chemical weapons, war does not only bring death to the humans, but leaves them a caricature, sick and maimed and deformed for generations to come.

The direct ill effects on the Muslim society as a result of friendship with those opposed to Islam, are also clear and evident.

History has recorded that friendship with the enemies of Islam can only be bought at a price. The price in this case is to compromise. Compromise on the tenets, the culture and the spirit of Islam, till a time comes when the country loses its identity as an Islamic society.

Usury Is Against Intellect And Shari'a

The verse of Surah al-Baqarah which is quoted above, says that those who take usury (interest on loan) shall be counted among mad people (whom Shaitan has touched). On the Day of Judgement people will recognize them from their madness that they had been taking usury. Their sanity would be destroyed, because in this world they have acted against intellect and Shari'a.

They have been oblivious of humanity and the needs of humanity. They did not deal equitably with others and disobeyed the law of co-operation. Actually these people had been insane in the world, because they have followed the direction of Shaitan and performed such insane acts.

Is Trading And Usury One And The Same?

This argument is obviously foolish. There is nothing comparable between interest and trade. There is equity in business transactions because there is a mutual agreement between the two parties and both stand to gain or lose. In trading, a seller sells an article to the buyer at a price mutually acceptable to both, and the matter ends there.

But taking interest is a clearcut case of exploitation. A person with surplus money, which he does not need, lends it to someone who is in dire need. The needy person agrees to pay interest which he can ill afford; not because it is acceptable to him but because of his compelling situation.

Interest And Inequality Of Classes In Society

Undoubtedly, usury is an unjust and oppressive evil. It is against human nature and human dignity. It increases the riches of the wealthy and drives the impoverished to further depravation.

Understandably, the exploited poor begin to hate the rich. The pent-up hatred then finds an outlet in the form of violence and bloody revolutions.

In the book "Islam and World Peace" it is written, "Islam says that earning should be only in return of efforts and work. because capital itself cannot do any work and make any effort. Hence the wealth of the rich man should not be increased by taking usury."

Increasing wealth by usury is the easiest form of making money but Islam forbids it. Wealth cannot be accumulated by forcing the helpless poor into further destitution; and usury does just that, causing economic imbalance and trampling upon human rights, equity and justice. Maulana Sayyid Abul 'Ala

Maududi of Pakistan has written a comprehensive and interesting book on usury that describes its evil effects and the arguments are supported by statistics.

The needy person ends up returning not only the amount loaned to him but far in excess of it. The excess can even amount to more than the principal amount if the repayment is delayed. Taking interest imposes an excruciating financial burden on one who is already needy and it is nothing short of blackmail. Needy people should be given loans without interest. This promotes a feeling of friendship, co-operation and charity.

Interest For Goodly Loans

To give a loan on interest not only destroys the economic balance in the society, it also inflames the feelings of hatred, enmity and selfishness.

The One Who Indulges In Usury Is Deprived Of Goodness

There are too many disadvantages of taking interest. The earnings of one who takes interest, loses 'Barakat' (abundance and prosperity). Whereas the earnings of hard labour have much 'Barakat'.

The Holy Prophet (S) says in one of his traditions:

"Worship consists of seventy parts. The most important is lawful earnings."[1]

The Prophet (S) also says:

"The truthful trader shall be counted among the prophets on the Day of Judgement. His face would glow like a full moon."[2]

The Usurer Does Not Place Trust In Allah (S.W.T.)

Another misfortune of the usurer is that he loses trust in Allah (S.w.T.). He does not pray to Allah (S.w.T.) to give him 'Barakat'. All his hopes are pinned upon the interest that he collects from his debtors and this is polytheism as discussed in the section on 'Shirk'.

Another point to be noted is that in normal business there is a possibility of both gain and loss. So the businessman not only puts in sincere efforts but prays to Allah (S.w.T.) for success and profit in his endeavour. An usurer has no fear of loss and feels no intuitive need to pray to Allah (S.w.T.) for his 'Rizq'. He is thus deprived of an important facet of religion.

The Reward Of Giving A Loan Is More Than That Of Sadaqah

One who takes interest is deprived of the rewards that are prescribed for giving a goodly loan. If there are ten merits in giving Sadaqah, the interest-free loan has eighteen merits. An interest-free loan is therefore more rewarding than Sadaqah in the way of Allah (S.w.T.).

A person who gives respite to his debtors and does not take interest is given a reward that is equivalent to charity of the said amount every day for the number of days that he extends. It is evident that the usurer does not qualify for such rewards. In fact he is afflicted with miserliness and greed, which only increase day by day. Surely the result of miserliness and greed is Hell.

The Fate Of The Usurer

We have already seen from the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the sayings of our Holy Prophet (S) and of our Imams ('a) that the punishment for usury in more severe than that of other sins. We have also discussed the reasons for this. Islam classifies usury as the greatest of the Greater Sins and its punishment is the severest of all punishments. If the usurer does not repent for his acts, his end will be with the disbelievers and those whose eternal abode is Hell. The usurer shall never be released from Hell.

***"To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his Lord, than he desists, he shall have what has already passed, and his affair is in the hands of Allah, and whoever returns (to it) these are the inmates of the fire, they shall abide in it."* (*Surah al-Baqarah 2:275*).**

However there are certain ways to compensate for this sin and pray for forgiveness. Certain sinful acts are forgiven by just repenting sincerely. If a Polytheist repents for his sins and becomes a Muslim, a great sin like 'Shirk' is forgiven. He does not have to do anything more than that. But there are some sins that require compensation in addition to sincere repentance i.e. like the one who has Qaza prayers and fasts. Along with repentance he must perform all the prayers and observe all the fasts due on him. Similarly in the case of interest, the penitent should give back the amount that he has taken as interest from his debtors.

No Barakat In Interest

The above Qur'anic Ayat continues:

***"Allah does not bless usury, and he causes charitable deeds to prosper, and Allah does not love any ungrateful sinner."* (*Surah al-Baqarah 2:276*).**

Charity spreads peace, promotes beneficence and love in society, whereas usury destroys peace and hardens the hearts of the people.

When usury spreads its roots in society, people have no hesitation in usurping each other's rights. They are only driven by a feeling of enmity, hatred and a passion of revenge. A society devoid of harmony and co-operation cannot progress, it destroys itself with its own corruption. Charity and Sadaqah on the other hand promote feelings of friendship, love and brotherhood. An atmosphere of peace and prosperity prevails which inspires people to further good deeds.

War With Allah (S.W.T.) And The Holy Prophet (S)

The Noble Qur'an says,

"O You who believe! Be careful of (your duty) to Allah and relinquish what remains (due) from usury, if you are believers. But if you do (it) not, then be appraised of war from Allah and His Apostle..." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:278-279).

The proof of one's belief is in obedience of Divine orders. The same verse continues,

"...And if you repent, then you shall have your capital, neither shall you make (the debtors) suffer loss, nor shall you be made to suffer loss." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:279).

One who does not obey this command must be prepared for war with Allah (S.w.T.) and His Prophet (S).

Tafsir Minhaj us-Sadiqin gives an explanation of this verse. It could mean that the severity of the sin of usury is such that if in this world a usurer were to come face to face with the Holy Prophet (S), the Prophet's (S) sword would be against him and the Prophet (S) would be prepared to fight him. In the Hereafter the fire of Hell shall keep him in torment by the order of Allah (S.w.T.). The usurer must be fought till he submits to the Divine orders and refrains from taking usury. Traditional reports state that after the revelation of this verse, the Holy Prophet (S) informed the Commissioner of Makkah that if the tribe of Bani Mughaira does not desist from taking usury, they must be fought against.

The Holy Prophet (S) also said inter alia in a sermon at Makkah: "Know that the usury which has been accumulated in the period of ignorance is now condoned completely. First of all I condone the interest (that is upon your neck) of (my uncle) Abbas Ibn Abdul Muttalib."

Traditions Denouncing Interest

It is reported from Hazrat Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a):

"Taking a Dirham as interest is worse in the eyes of Allah than doing illegal intercourse with Mahram women."[3]

Imam 'Ali ('a) says:

"The Holy Prophet (S) has cursed one who accepts interest, one who pays interest, one who buys

interest, one who sells interest, one who writes the contract of interest and one who is the witness of this transaction."[4]

Ibn Baqir relates that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) was informed about the person who took interest and considered it as permissible as mother's milk. Imam ('a) said:

"If Allah gives me power over this man, I would strike off his head."[5]

It is clear that to consider interest Haram is an article of faith. One who disregards this and says that interest is not Haram becomes an apostate. The Imam ('a) can also have him killed.

Interest Is Denounced In The Holy Qur'an

Sama says that he asked Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) as to why Allah (S.w.T.) has mentioned the illegality of usury at various places. Imam ('a) replied:

"So that people may not forgo acts of charity (like giving interest-free loans)."[6]

Imam al-Baqir ('a) said:

"The worst transaction is that which involves interest."[7]

The Sinner Is Deprived Of Religious Faith

Zurarah says that I asked Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) concerning the Qur'anic verse:

"Allah does not bless usury, and he causes charitable deeds to prosper..." **(*Surah al-Baqarah 2:276*).**

And added:

"But I see that wealth of usurers goes on increasing?"

Imam ('a) replied,

"What could be a greater loss? That in return of a Dirham of interest he loses his faith. And if he repents of his deeds in the world all his wrongfully earned wealth comes to an end and he becomes a destitute."[8]

The Belly Of The Usurer Shall Be Filled With Fire

The Holy Prophet (S) says,

"One who takes interest, his belly shall be filled with an equal quantity of fire by Allah. If he has earned

more from the interest money, Allah will not accept any of his deeds. And till even a grain of interest remains with him, Allah and his angels will continue to curse this man."[9]

Punishment Of Usurers In The Barzakh

The Holy Prophet (S) has also stated:

"On the night of ascension (Miraj) I saw some people trying to stand up but did not succeed because of their huge bellies, I asked, O Jibril, who are these people?"

Jibril replied, "They are those who have taken usury. Now they can only stand up like those who have been possessed by the Devils."

The Prophet (S) continues,

"Then I saw them herded upon the path of the followers of Fir'on. Seeing the extreme heat of the fire they exclaimed. O God! Then when will be Qiyama?" (It is clear that the fire mentioned in the tradition is of the punishment of Barzakh).

Usurers Under The Feet Of Fir'on

In another tradition it is said that when these people saw the followers of Fir'on they tried to get up and run away. But due to overlarge bellies they could not rise up and consequently the followers of Fir'on trampled them under their feet and moved on.

It is narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said:

"When adultery and interest becomes common in a town the angels are given permission to destroy its inhabitants."

Another Prophetic tradition in the same vein says:

"When the people of my Umma start taking interest, tremors and earthquakes will be frequent."[10]

Usury Is Worse Than Adultery

The Noble Prophet (S) says:

"If a man commits adultery with his mother in the Holy Kaba this act shall be seventy times lighter than the act of usury."[11]

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) says:

"In the eyes of Allah, taking one Dirham of interest is worse than thirty incestuous acts."[12]

A previous tradition describes this sin to be seventy times more than adultery. There is one more report where taking a Dirham is equated with twenty such acts.[13]

Even in today's world, the scourge of interest has spread to such a magnitude that economies are on the verge of collapse. Some economists say that interest is necessary for development. If this had been true then Islam would not have prohibited it. At the present time there are two schools of economics whose ideology is not based on interest. One is Communism and the other Islam. Whereas the foundation of imperialist economy is based upon interest. Even the Communist and the Islamic schools of economies differ greatly.

Unlike the Communists, Islamic government has never felt the compulsion to accept interest as inevitable, in order to fit the logistics of economy. And yet, Islamic economy is not known to have weakened because it does away with interest.

Yes, it is a necessity for the few selfish and greedy people who wish to add to their already enormous wealth, by increasing the miseries of the poor and the destitute. Their aim is to enslave the deprived people. We are well aware of the logic of these hoarders.

Loan On Interest

A loan on interest is one whereby a person lends something with the precondition that it would be returned with fixed increment at a fixed time. The loan given may be money or any other article, say, one loans five Mounds of rice and expects to get back six Mounds. The increment demanded may be in the form of cash or kind, labour or even a favour.

For example, one may lend money with the condition that the borrower will return the money and also carry out some household chores for him. Or a lender may lend a sum of money for a year and in return stay in the house of the borrower for a year without paying any rent. Or a person may give gold as a loan and expect the borrower to make some jewellery free of cost. Whatever is taken in excess of what was given, irrespective of its form, is interest and is Haram. Also it does not matter whether such conditions for giving loan were stated in the beginning or decided later. It is Haram in any case.

Some Important Points

1) A transaction involving interest is Haram. Charging interest is Haram and paying interest is Haram too. So if the borrower takes money on interest and uses it and earns some profit, the actual owner of the profit is the lender. For example, if he borrows some wheat and plants a crop, the crop that grows from this, rightfully belongs to the lender. However, if the lender has agreed that his loan can be utilised in such a manner, then the profit from it is the right of the borrower.

2) If one gives an amount to a trader with the understanding that he can return a lesser amount, it is permitted. For example, he gives a thousand Tumans to a trader in Shiraz and agrees to take nine

hundred and ninety Tumans in Tehran, he is allowed to do so. This type of transaction is knows as 'Sarf al-Barat', since there is no involvement of interest.

3) If at the time of disbursement of the loan there had been no mention of interest and the loanee wishes to return the loan amount with an increase out of his own wish, it is not Haram. In fact it is Mustahab. It is also Mustahab to repay the loan, if possible, before its due-date or before the lender demands it. It is also Mustahab for the debtor that when repaying the loan he should add something to it with the intention of giving it as a gift to the creditor. But the intention must be of 'gift'. It must not even remotely be thought of as interest. Similarly, it is Mustahab for the creditor to accept whatever extra is given to him as a gift, not think of it as an interest, and accept it as a goodwill.

Transaction Involving Interest

If any of the following conditions are present in a transaction, it becomes a transaction of interest, and is Haram:

1) Whatever is taken and whatever is given back are of the same material but the quantities are unequal. Or if the quantities are equal, there is disparity in quality etc.

2) When only one standard of measure and weight is employed, the amount taken and given back is of unequal measure or weight. However, at the time of borrowing if the measure of weight is kilogram but while returning it, it is Sir or Pound it is allowed. In the same way whatever was taken by the unit of measurement as metre and returned by the units of measurement as foot or yard, is valid too.

In the same way it is Haram for a person to lend one Mound of wheat for a month and in return borrow one mound of wheat for two months from the same person. Even though the quantity is the same, the transaction is Haram because time is also a significant factor.

Three Important Points

1) In the matter of interest, wheat and barley are considered equivalent. Then if one gives a Mound of wheat and takes one and-a-half Mound of barley, it is interest, and thus Haram.

Similarly, whatever constitutes the same basic material is regarded as equivalent. As an analogy one may think of the roots, branches and leaves of a tree as equivalent. For example, milk and curd are equivalent, grape-vinegar and grapes are equivalent, sugar and sugarcane are equivalent too. All these have to be loaned and given back in equal quantity or it will constitute interest and will be Haram.

2) If a person gives one Mound of wheat and a handkerchief and takes back one and-a-half Mound of wheat, it does not constitute interest and is not Haram. In this transaction one Mound of wheat shall be considered in lieu one Mound of wheat that is returned. And the remaining half a mound of wheat shall be in the lieu of the handkerchief. It is also possible that a person may give one Mound of wheat and a

handkerchief and take back one Mound of wheat and some other article, for example, soap. In this way too he has not committed usury.

3) If a person first sells one Mound of his wheat for two Tumans and later purchases one and a half Mound of wheat for two Tumans, it is permitted. Since both these transactions are separate. It does not constitute usury.

It may be possible that Zaid sells a Mound of wheat to Khalid, and Khalid gives half a Mound of his wheat to Zaid as a gift. This is also permitted.

When Taking Interest Is Permitted

There are Three types of people between whom the taking and giving of interest is allowed:

(1) Father and son: The father and son can enter into a transaction of interest. But a transaction of interest between mother and son is Haram.

(2) Husband and wife: The husband and wife can charge interest from each other. For example one of them gives a hundred rupees and demand one hundred and fifty rupees in return. It is permitted.

(3) The Kafir who is not staying in an Islamic country: A Muslim can take back more but he cannot give him more. As far as the Zimmi Kafir (one who is staying in an Islamic country) is concerned it is Haram to enter into a transaction of interest with him. Taking and giving of interest both are Haram in this case.

1. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
2. Muhajjatul Baidha.
3. al-Kafi.
4. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
5. al-Kafi.
6. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
7. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
8. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
9. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il.
10. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il.
11. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
12. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
13. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.

Tenth Greater Sin: Fornication

The tenth Greater sin is adultery (zina) according to the traditions of Masumen ('a). Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq

(‘a), Imam Musa al-Kadhim (‘a), Imam ‘Ali Ridha (‘a) and Imam Muhammad al-Taqi (‘a) have all described it as a Greater Sin.

In the following ayat the Almighty says:

***“And they who do not call upon another god with Allah and do not slay the soul which Allah has forbidden except in the requirements of justice, and (who) do not commit fornication and he who does this shall find a requital of sin. The punishment shall be doubled to him on the day of resurrection, and he shall abide therein in abasement.”* (Surah al-Furqan 25:68-69).**

The Meaning Of Ithm And Ghayyi

The book Minhaj us-Sadiqin states that *Ithm* (sin) in this ayat denotes a valley of Hell. Fornicators shall be punished in this valley. It is also said that *Ghayyi* means the secretions of blood and puss from the private parts of the people of Hell. It is a black puss.

Another ayat says:

***“But there came after them an evil generation, who neglected prayers and followed the sexual desires, so they will meet perdition.”* (Surah Maryam 19:59).**

Some traditions record that the Ithm of the previous verse and *ghayyi* of this verse are two wells in Hell. These two wells are so terrible and deep that if a stone is dropped into one of them, it will take seventy years to reach the bottom.

It is mentioned in Surah al-’Isra’:

***“And go not nigh to Fornication, surely it is an indecency and an evil way.”* (Surah al-’Isra’, 17:32).**

It is an evil due to which paternity is not established. It leads to corruption and mischief. The child that is born is bereft of inheritance. The child that is born and its father do not have rights upon each other like the legal father and son.

An Evil Way To Fulfill The Sexual Urge

In the book, Balahae al-Ijtemai the above ayat is explained as follows:

“One must not even go near fornication for it is a lowly act. It is a very dirty action and leads one astray.”

The seriousness of this sin as mentioned in the Qur’an is evident from this ayat;

“… It is an indecency and an evil way.” (Surah al-’Isra’, 17:32).

These words clarify the Islamic point of view, which opposes all types of indecencies and carnal desires. It shows that adultery is an indecent act and an evil way of satisfying the sexual urge. The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) has created the sexual urge for continuation of the human race. He has also created a feeling of love and physical attraction between man and woman. If this sexual urge is satisfied in a disciplined manner, the human race is assured of peace and prosperity. It must be remembered that fornication contaminates the progeny. But when this evil becomes prevalent in a society just to satisfy the basic instincts, it leads to destruction and despair.

Also, as a result of an immoral life countless people and their children suffer from debilating, deforming and incurable diseases. Huge sums of money are drained from the budget to take care of victims and to find a cure for such diseases. Innumerable illegitimate children are born ill and undernourished; destitutes without a home and with no one to care or be concerned for them.1

Page number 131 of the same book describes the evil that has spread due to sexual crimes and illicit relationships. Such destruction and evil does not have an equivalent in the 20th century.

In the highly competitive world of today, man strives to use all his assets to optimal capacity. His efforts are fully concentrated in deriving the maximum efficiency from all his inputs so that he can achieve unprecedented progress in minimum time. So it is pity to see him make a wasteland of his most precious possessions, his natural instincts and desires gifted to him by Allah (S.w.T.) for his happiness and prosperity.

Like all branches of science, nuclear and medical science has also made a progress. Vast sums of money are poured into research for discovering new drugs that may save mankind from the scourge of these diseases. Yet, the number of people suffering from debilitating maladies resulting from immoral conduct are ever on the increase. In every country, countless such people have to be hospitalised over extended period of time. They wreck their own lives and are also a burden to society.

Every country makes ambitious plans to achieve progress and prosperity. But all these development plans come to naught as millions of illicit children are born, posing a challenge to the economy of even the most affluent countries. For the poor undeveloped countries the results are disastrous. Not only are the uncared children a drain on the country's economy, they even pose a law and order problem as they grow up uneducated in a condition of abject poverty and crime. A shocking survey of statistics reveals the enormity with which sexual crime has gripped the world.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica a majority of Americans contract venereal diseases. America has hundreds of special hospitals for patients with venereal diseases.

The book "Qawanine Jinsi" says that every year thirty-four thousand new born children die of hereditary diseases. The deaths caused by these diseases are more than the deaths due to any other cause (except tuberculosis).

The ‘Kahyan Daily’ (no.5356) has mentioned,

“Dr. Maulin Norjoe who practices in North London, writes in his article that every year 50000 abortions of illicit children are carried out in London. One child out of every twenty newborns is illegitimate.”

The daily ‘Ittelat’(no.1414) writes that in 1957 America had illegitimate children numbering 201700. There has been a five fold increase in the next twenty years. This year, unmarried pregnant women numbered 24000. It is astonishing and pathetic that a majority of them are less than eighteen years of age. In Paris, of the total of 43515 new born children, 4145 are illegitimate. In the Soviet Union, every year 17000 illegitimate children are born.

The Evil Effects Of Adultery In This World And The Hereafter

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) says:

“Fornication has six types of effects. Three are for this world and Three for the Hereafter. The Three evils which become evident in this world are:

The face of the adulterer loses countenance.

He falls into depravity and destitution.

His death draws near.

And the Three punishments for Hereafter are:

(1) He is liable for Divine anger.

(2) His reckoning is severe.

(3) He abides forever in Hell.”

Fornicator In The Barzakh

The fifth Imam (‘a) has also said,

“Whoever commits Fornication with a Muslim, Jew, Christian or Magian woman, whether she is a slave or a free woman; and dies without repenting of his sin, then the Almighty Allah opens Three hundred doors of punishment in his grave. From each door many snakes, scorpions and pythons emerge from the fire and burn and torment him till the Day of Qiyama.”

Fornicator On The Day Of Judgement

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) describes the fornicator in detail and says that when he would be raised from his grave on the day of judgement he shall be in a horrible state.

The Imam says,

“When a fornicator will rise from his grave the stink of his body shall hurt the people. The people will know what deeds he had committed in the world. Till the Almighty Allah would order him to be thrown into the fire.”

Then Imam al-Baqir (‘a) continues,

“Know that Allah has prohibited Himself the Haram things. He has also prescribed the rules and regulations of life. No one is more modest than Allah. It is His modesty that He has prohibited Fornication.”

The Stench Of The Fornicator Will Be A Nuisance For The People On The Day Of Judgement

Hazrat ‘Ali (‘a) says:

“On the Day of Qiyama a bad smell shall be released by the order of Allah. And all the people will become restless because of it. So much so that it would be difficult to breathe. Then a caller will proclaim loudly, ‘O people of Mahshar! Do you know what this stench is?’

They would reply, “We do not know! However this stink is causing great discomfort”, then Imam (‘a) continued,

“It is the bad smell from the sexual organs of the fornicators who died without repenting for their sins. O people, Allah curses these people, you too invoke curse upon them.” Then there will be not a single person who would not say, ‘O Allah send your curse (anger) upon these fornicators’[2]

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

“After me when Fornication will increase, sudden deaths will also increase.”

He also said:

“Fornication causes depravity and destitution, and because of it, populated places become deserted.”

Unknown Progeny

Hazrat Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) says:

"*Allah has made adultery Haram because it causes many evil things. Murder of innocent, lack of lineage and paternity, lack of training of children and lack of proof of inheritance*."

Fornication With Pure Women

The punishment for illegal sexual act with a woman is hundred lashes. The penalty of illicit sexual intercourse between a married woman and married man is stoning to death.

Hazrat Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) says:

"There are Three types of people with whom Allah will not even speak on the Day of Qiyama. There is a terrible punishment for them. One of these Three group will be of the women who inspite of having husbands commit adultery with others."

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

"Whoever commits Fornication with a married woman, both of their sexual organs will give out such a stink that it would be felt even at the distance of five hundred years. This stench will hurt the people of Hell. And such fornicators will be subjected to the most severe punishment."

Islam Views The Problem From Every Angle

The book "Burhan al-Qur'an" examines the punishment for adultery as prescribed in Islam keeping in mind the factors of human desires and sexual feeling, Islam has also enunciated the easiest ways of satisfying sexual desires and fulfilling sensual feelings. It has ordered its followers to marry at the beginning of puberty. It is the most recommended way.

The book also describes the punishment prescribed in Islam for adultery. It also discusses the way of life recommended by Islam which; if followed strictly; would minimise or even eradicate the practice of illicit relationships.

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

"Marriage is my practice. One who forsakes this practice of mine is not from me."

The rules and regulations of marriage in Islam are simple so that there are no encumbrances in finalising a marriage. An Islamic government is bound to provide financial support to the unmarried people who are unable to marry because of poverty. In this way, youthful passions and desires are contained and

illicit relationships are minimised. In order to eradicate this evil, Islam directs us to fulfill a social as well as a spiritual code of conduct. At the social level it is obligatory for those more fortunate amongst us to fulfill the needs of the less privileged.

The wealthy amongst us are duty bound to take care of the financial needs of the poor. It is likewise obligatory to make a sustained and dedicated effort to educate the people for both social welfare and spiritual upliftment. Islam expects every individual to help the members of the community in whichever manner he can. The philosophy of Islam, if adhered to, can ensure the removal of poverty and ignorance which in turn ensures the removal of envies, perversion and illicit and illegal affairs associated with these. With an early marriage, the basic material needs of man are taken care of and an individual is well equipped to resist getting involved in degrading acts like adultery.

Self-control is further strenthened by practicing the laws of Islam which are encoded at the spiritual level. Islam has defined some acts of worship as obligatory. Our Holy Prophet (S) and our Ahl ul-Bayt ('a) have taught us and guided us to innumerable recommended acts of worship like mustahab fasts, Mustahab prayers and Etekaf. Every prayer essentially refines a person's character and raises him to greater heights of nobility. By earnestly keeping up prayers and fasts, an individual can strengthen his inner resources and develop his spiritualism. Such an individual will have the power to exercise control over his passions and natural instincts and will not stoop to commit adultery which is declared as a Greater sin by his religion.

Islam prescribes very strict and severe laws of punishment for the wrong doers. This is necessary. It is only the severity of a law that compels average individuals to abide by it. But, however severe the punishments prescribed in Islam may be, they are always tempered by Allah (S.w.T.)'s Mercy and Compassion. Hadd (punishment) for adultery can only be executed if there are four just witnesses who have seen the sin being committed with their own eyes. Obviously the worldly punishment can be given only to those who publicly and shamelessly behave like beasts. It is truly amazing that even for such loathsome behaviour, Islam orders leniency in punishment. For example, only a married person who commits adultery is to be stoned to death. The punishment for an unmarried person is a hundred lashes.

The present day youth is caught in the mire of economic and moral decline. They are mentally disturbed and unstable. They believe it is advantageous to avoid the bonds and responsibilities of marriage and satisfy their natural needs with illicit relationships.

Undoubtedly, these problems have arisen because we do not implicitly practice the code of conduct as laid down by Shari'a and we do not fully implement the rules and regulations as defined in Islam. Had there been an Islamic government, it would have endeavored to eradicate this immorality from the society by providing the basic needs to the poor and facilities for an early marriage.

An Islamic government would strictly ban pornography, bars, night clubs etc., all of which arouse sexual desires in people and lure them to indecencies and indiscriminations. Islam prohibits all activities that

excite passions and promote shameful and degrading behaviour.

The strict laws of punishment in Islam should not lead us to think that Islam only wishes to punish the wrong doers. Its laws are designed to rid the society of all evil. In fact, Islam takes a very compassionate view of sinners. On the one hand, the stern orders of punishment are strictly regulated so no injustice is done in carrying them out. On the other hand, Islam outlines a code of social obligation that creates an atmosphere of joy and dignity for all. No one in an Islamic society would be compelled by helplessness and desperation into bad conduct. It is a pity and our misfortune that we fail to implement fully our social obligations.

Islam has not ignored the punishment for the wrong–doers. Punishment is prescribed for sins in order that law and order are maintained in the society. Hadd (punishment) for adultery is prescribed only when a person performs this act shamelessly and openly, in the presence of four just witnesses. He defiles the chastity of some women and satisfies his beastly desires in the worst manner. Islam orders the punishment only when four just witnesses state that they have witnessed the actual act with their own eyes. Islam punishes the fornicator when he plays with the honour of the society. It is surprising that even in this case, Islam has been lenient with the wrong doers to a great extent. If the adulterer is unmarried a hundred lashes is his punishment. Stoning to death is only for that sinner who has a legal wife and indulges in this serious crime only to give vent to his lewdness.

It is necessary to mention this remarkable fact. In today's world, the youth is having such a state of mind that due to the economics and morals of the society they try to escape from the bonds of marriage and are attracted towards sexual perversions.

It is true that our youth is involved in economic difficulties and moral problems. But what is the root of this problems? A simple answer to this is that Islamic rules and regulations are not being followed and are not being put into practice. If the Islamic laws are fully implemented we would remain safe from immorality. If there had been an Islamic government it would have endeavoured to eradicate the lewdness and immorality from society. It would have provided the means of an early marriage. It would have also endeavoured to provide the basic necessities to the common people. It would save its youth, who are its future, from falling into the abyss of destruction.

If the Islamic government is in power, such things like shameful films, pornographic magazines, bars and night clubs would not have any existence because these things arouse the sexual desires. The Islamic law prohibits all such activities that promote sins and evils. In Islamic society, the youth is not compelled to remain celibate due to such created problems. Rather, such an atmosphere and society is created wherein all the people spend their life with chastity and dignity. Islam is not only for punishing the people. Its laws are designed to rid the society of all evils.

For this very reason, Islamic law first takes into consideration the condition and helplessness of the fornicator, and only then does it prescribe the punishment. The fornicators are divided into seven groups

and different penalties are fixed for them.

1) Stoning to death.

2) Stoning and lashes – both.

3) A hundred lashes and exile from the city after shaving the head.

4) Fifty lashes.

5) Seventy five lashes.

6) "Zighas"– it means picking up the lash many times to hit once.

7) The penalty of Fornication and fine – both.

Here, we shall describe the legal rulings, according to jurisprudence and traditions, for the information of our respected readers.

1) In order to establish the crime of adultery, four just male witnesses are required or Three just male and two just female witnesses or two just male and four just female witnesses. If two just male witnesses and four just female witnesses state that they have witnessed the act, and if the sinner or the fornicator does not have a legal wife, or the fornicator woman does not have a legal husband, than they are not stoned to death. They are only given a hundred lashes each.

2) All the witnesses must testify that the crime had occurred at one and the same place.

3) All the witnesses must testify that the crime had occurred at the same time.

4) All the witnesses must testify in the same sitting.

5) If four just people quote the testimony of four just witnesses it is not sufficient.

6) If four just witnesses testify that a certain woman has committed fornication, their testimony shall not be accepted if they are not familiar with this woman since they do not know her and it could be that she is the legal wife of that man.

7) If Three of the four witnesses testify and the fourth one refrains from testifying, or if his testimony differs from the previous Three witnesses, the Three witnesses who have testified shall be punished for 'qazaf' (defaming a chaste man or woman of adultery).

8) If the fornicator confesses his crime thrice, but refrains from the fourth confession, he cannot be punished. For a penalty to be lawful, it is necessary to confess four times.

9) He must make four confessions in four different sittings. He cannot be penalised if he makes four

confessions in one sitting.

10) It is not permitted for the Judge to goad the accused to confess. He must also not be prompted to complete sentences (that is, words must not be put into his mouth). The Judge must try to maintain purity, chastity and dignity among the common people and must try his utmost that the crime of adultery is not proved. The Judge must try to give such suggestions to the accused that he may be able to save himself from the penalty by falling into doubts and uncertainties. It is also the duty of the Judge to encourage the accused to plead innocence.

11) When a married man confesses of adultery four times but later pleads innocence, the penalty of stoning will not be imposed upon him. His punishment shall be reduced.

12) A new convert to Islam who is unaware of the punishment shall not be punished.

13) If the adulterer is unmarried and he is suffering from some illness, the jurist is authorised to beat him with a broom of twigs or a branch of the date palm. He should consider these as lashes. He could also beat him with a branch or broom and consider each of its twig equivalent to one lash.

14) The lashing should be so controlled that the flesh of the body is not affected. The accused can only be punished when he has committed the crime willingly. (If someone is forced to commit fornication, penalty cannot be imposed upon them).

15) If a man mistakes a woman to be his legal wife and has sexual intercourse with her, then he cannot not be punished.

This is thus the detailed analysis of the laws prescribed by the all Beneficent and the all Merciful Allah (S.w.T.), who knows His creatures very well. He has prescribed such regulated punishments for a serious sin like fornication. Now we shall quote a tradition that proves the extent to which the saints of Allah (S.w.T.) strived to protect the dignity of the people. How much precaution they took in passing a decree of fornication.

In the time of the rule of Umar a woman came to him and confessed of adultery. She also said, “Please impose the penalty of fornication upon me.”

When Umar heard this, he ordered that the penalty of fornication be executed upon this woman. ‘Ali (‘a) happened to be there and was surprised at this. He said, “Umar, inquire from this woman the conditions when she had committed fornication.”

The woman explained, “I was extremely thirsty in the desert. When I went far in search of water, I sighted a black tent which belonged to an Arab. I approached him and asked for water. But he refused to give me any water without my having adultery with him. I did not agree to his devilish desires and ran away into the desert. My eyes became sunken and I felt as if each of my bones were breaking. I returned to this man and in exchange of a drink of water I gave my body to him.”

‘Ali (‘a) said,

“It is this compulsion which is mentioned in the ayat,

‘…But whoever is compelled by hunger, in inclining willfully to sin, then surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful,’ **(*Surah al-Ma’ida 5:3*).**

This woman is not at all guilty of the crime.”

Then Imam (‘a) ordered for her release and she was released.[3]

Reasonable Precautions

Adultery is the root of degradation of society in the world and eternal punishment in the hereafter. Islam has therefore prescribed some obligatory rules for our protection. Allah (S.w.T.), in His unsurpassed wisdom made these rules incumbent upon us. If these rules are obeyed, the Muslims can protect themselves from such a serious sin.

1. The Order For Hijab In The Qur’an

The Holy Qur’an has ordered women to cover themselves in some situations.

“And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what appear thereof. And let them wear their head coverings over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments…” **(*Surah an-Nur 24:31*).**

It is also mentioned in Surah al-Ahzab,

“O Prophet! Say to your wives and daughters and the women of the believers that they let down upon them their over garments, this will be more proper, that they may be known and thus they will not give trouble. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” **(*Surah al-Ahzab 33:59*).**

In the same chapter, Allah (S.w.T.) says:

“O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other of the women, if you will be on your guard, then be not soft in (your) speech, lest he whose heart has a disease yearn and speak a good word.” **(*Surah al-Ahzab 33:32*).**

Another verse states,

“And when you ask them (the wives of the Prophet) any goods, ask of them from behind a curtain, this is purer for your hearts and (for) their hearts.” **(*Surah al-Ahzab 33:53*).**

In the above verses, the Muslim woman is ordered to veil herself. She must not come before non-

mahram without Hijab. She should dress in such a manner that strange men do not get an opportunity to glance at those parts of her body which arouse passion; and thus make her an object of desire. It is the responsibility of a woman to assume such poise and behaviour that she does not excite a man's passions. Even a glance of lust can infatuate a man and a seemingly harmless encounter eventually lead to mischief and corruption in society, destroying entire families.

In Iran, during the rule of the Shah when the law of Hijab had been revoked, the cases of fornication increased sharply. Every day many cases related to sexual crimes were heard in the courts of law. Every month many married mothers used to forsake their homes to enter into a perverse life of illicit sex. Five thousand such parents established a new township outside the city of Tehran. The condition steadily deteriorated and came to a stage that every day approximately seven infants were found abandoned in the streets of Tehran, as reported by the commissioner.

It is obvious that illicit children born as a result of fornication, whose parentage is not established, cannot create a position for themselves and are a burden to society. Due to the absence of Hijab, adultery and fornication became common and thousands of chaste women become immoral. One of the highly effective ways of protecting the society from the sin of adultery is that women wear hijab and ward off the evil glances of sensuous men.

2. Looking At The Non-Mahram

The women are also ordered not to look at non-mahram men, and the men are similarly warned.

It is ordered in Surah an-Nur,

"Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely Allah is aware of what they do." (***Surah an-Nur 24:30***).

The Poisonous Arrow Of Satan

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a):

"An evil glance is one of the poisonous arrows of Satan. Many of such glances becomes a cause of prolonged jealousy."[4]

Fornication Of Organs

Both Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) have informed,

"There is no man who is not to some extent guilty of fornication. The fornication of the eyes is the evil glance, the kiss is the fornication of lips and touching a non-mahram woman is the fornication of hands."[5]

It is also recorded that,

“Those who look at a non-mahram woman with an evil intention and fill their eyes with this sight (that is they look for a long time) Allah will, on the Day of Qiyama fill (pierce) their eyes with burning rods. They will continue in this way till Allah completes the hearing of the cases of all the people. Only after that will He order them to be thrown into Hell.”6

In The Chains Of Fire With Iblis

That person who embraces a non-mahram woman will be tied with chains, together with Iblis on the Day of Qiyama. These chains shall be of fire and both of them shall be tossed into Hell together. The following are also the words of the tradition:

“One who glances at a woman, but instantly looks away at the sky or turns his gaze down; before he could remove his gaze fully, Allah marries him to a black-eyed houri and he creates such a freshness of belief in his heart that he is extremely delighted.”7

It is reported from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said;

“The wrath of Allah is very severe upon the married woman who apart from her husband sees another non-mahram man with a prolonged glance. When this woman does this, Allah the mighty invalidates all her good deeds and does not give her any rewards.”8

A few traditions mention that looking at a woman in hijab is also not allowed. Although it is a generally considered a makruh act. Although there are numerous traditions that denounce glancing at non-mahrams these shall suffice for our purpose.

Alone In The Company Of Non-Mahram

It is Haram for a stranger or non-mahram man to remain alone in company of a non-mahram woman when there is a risk of committing a sin, even though they may be busy in worship. In the same way women are ordered not to stay in company of non-mahram men when there is a chance of sinful act.

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

“One who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgement does not remain in a place where (even) the sound of breathing of the non-mahram women is perceived.”

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) said:

“When the Prophet (S) took allegiance from the women he told them to take an oath that they shall not sit alone in company of non-mahram men.9

A lonely place means the one where there is no chance of anyone else entering or coming. Like a room, the door of which is locked from inside. Or a place not frequented by people.

Islam has prescribed severe penalty for a serious offence like adultery. Some of the aspects are given in the points mentioned below.

1) If a person commits an incestuous fornication he is to be killed according to Islamic laws.

2) If one sees that a stranger is fornicating with his wife, then he can kill both of them if he considers himself safe in doing so. But if he does not feel safe or if he does not wish to kill them, then apparently his wife is not prohibited for him.

3) If a Kafir commits adultery with a Muslim woman, he is to be killed according to Shari'a. Similarly, if a Muslim is punished thrice for fornication and is again proved guilty for the fourth time, he is to be executed.

4) If the person is sane, major, and legally married, and has a wife with whom he could establish sexual relation whenever he wants, and inspite of this he commits fornication with another sane, mature woman, he has to be stoned to death according to the Islamic law. And according to some Mujtahids, he must first be given a hundred lashes.

5) If a man does not fulfill the conditions listed in the above point, and if he commits fornication with a woman then his penalty according to Islamic law is a hundred lashes. Similarly, the married woman who willingly commits fornication should be stoned to death. If she is unmarried, then the penalty for her is a hundred lashes.

"As for the fornicatress and the fornicators, flog each other of them, (***giving***) ***a hundred lashes, and let not pity for them detain you in the matter of obedience to Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day, and let a party of believers witness this chastisement."*** (***Surah an-Nur 24:2***).

After quoting the above ayat, the Journal of Anjuman al-Tablighat al-Islam writes:

Two points are derived from this. The first is that the punishment of the adulterer is carried out in the presence of other people. This will be a warning and a lesson to them. They will be terrified of committing the same sin after witnessing the horror of the punishment.

Another point, although its truth is not established, is that the punishment acts as a cure for the diseases of the sinner. It could be that due to the hundred lashes, the bodies of the sinners are so much heated that the germs that have entered their bodies are annihilated before they could multiply and spread.

One more point to be noted is that the germs of disease like syphilis etc. are not confined only to those who commit fornication. The spouse of the fornicator may also contract these diseases. Marriage with an adulterer is therefore detestable and is discouraged. If an adulterer man marries an adulteress woman,

an innocent person is not victimised, but their deeds will definitely affect their progeny adversely. Their future generations will be contaminated with the evil of their sin and there will be some deformity or the other in their progeny. It is for this very fact that the religion of Islam says;

***"The fornicator shall not marry any but a fornicatress or idolatress, and* (*as for*) *the fornicatress, none shall marry her but a fornicator or an idolater; and it is forbidden to the believer."* (*Surah an-Nur 24:3*).**

When Adultery Is Proved According To Shari'a

It must be clarified that the penalty for adultery could be imposed when the sin is proved from the viewpoint of Shari'a. As it has been stated earlier, adultery is only proved if the conditions necessary for it are fulfilled. One of the conditions is that all the four just witnesses should testify unanimously as to the time and place of the crime. They must also know the woman by sight. Otherwise, there arises the possibility that the person who performed the sexual act with the woman may have been her husband.

Two Important Points

1) If a person commits adultery with an unmarried woman or the woman who is not in the *Iddah ar-raj'aia* (the waiting period after divorce in which the husband can resume relation with her without another nikah), he can later marry her. But if she is married or in *Iddah ar-raj'aia*, and he has had a sexual intercourse with her, he can never ever marry her legally. She is Haram for this man forever. Even if the husband dies or divorces, she cannot legally marry the person who has committed adultery with her when she was married with another man.

2) If a man commits fornication with a woman, then her mother and daughter become Haram for this man. That is, he can never ever marry them but they are not counted among his mahram women. Similarly, the father of the man with whom a woman has committed adultery becomes Haram for her. There are minor differences of opinion among the Mujtahids in these problems. Any one who wishes to study further should refer to the knowledgeable jurists.

The opponents of Islam take objection to the law of Islam and support the sexual ethics of the West. They praise the sexual freedom of these countries and say that the Europeans and Americans are not hypocrites and express whatever feelings they have, freely and openly. They say that sexual desire is the legitimate desire of all human beings. If this desire is suppressed, it shall have a damaging effect upon man. These desires should therefore be satisfied so that man can rid himself of various limitations and inhibitions. He can then perform his day to day activities efficiently to achieve progress and development.

These words express the misguided thoughts of the enemies of Islam. They have forgotten the Second World War when France had surrendered to Germany in the very first attack. The German forces freely

indulged in the satisfaction of their carnal passions. Even the French people began to pray for peace.

Freedom must also have a limit and must be disciplined. If the sexual drive is uncontrolled, man behaves worse than an animal. The defeat of France was also to an extent due to the promiscuous way of life prevalent in France. It is written in the book “Khun France Shikast Khund” (When France was defeated):

“When the German planes started to bomb the French cities, the Prime Minister ‘Patrino’ tried to contact the Central Headquarter of the air force so that additional bombers could be summoned for defence. He continously tried to phone the Central Headquarters, and each time he dialed the number of the Major on duty, each time the phone was attended by the beloved of the Major, Madam Dolly. Madam Dolly answered the phone and spoke foolishly to the Prime Minister in a demure way whereas there was bloodshed all around, and France was being converted into a sort of Hell”

As far as America is concerned, 38 % of the middle school female students become pregnant. As these girls reach high school, colleges and universities, the incidence of unwanted pregnancies reduce. These girls use their past experiences to avoid getting pregnant. American society is plagued with this evil, but its laws are unable to cope with the situation.

There is no doubt that the sexual urge is a natural instinct, but it must be controlled and disciplined.

Islam does not expect the sexual urge to be suppressed, nor does it order anyone to forsake productive activities. On the contrary, Islam is against celibacy. However, Islam, as any other decent society, cannot allow for absolute freedom as seen in the animal kingdom. What Islam does is to lay down the golden rules for the satisfaction and fulfillment of natural desires and instincts such that neither the personal freedom of man is endangered nor is the peace of society disrupted.

There is no doubt that the West is far ahead in the field of science and technology and has progressed and prospered as a result of it. But their success is hollow. The excessive affluence has eroded human values and deluded them to search for happiness in immorality and perversity. Their culture deprives them of true happiness and comfort that comes with peace and stability of mind.

The women of these countries have also taken great strides. They work shoulder to shoulder with men in practically all walks of life. But many of them fail in what is their primary duty, as loyal wives and caring mothers. It is quite common to come across women having extra marital relations and neglecting their home and children. These children deprived of parental love and care in turn search for happiness by following the degraded examples set by their misguided parents and the vicious circle continues. The result is that couples just live together without being married and go their own way when they choose to. If there are marriages, they often end in divorce.

The divorce rate in America today is 40 % and is on the increase. Women have come to occupy high positions in governmental and commercial organizations, but this does not solve the human problems

facing these societies. It is a pity that these societies have no guidelines that will help them to realize that their well being lies in maintaining well-knit families where husband and wife care for each other, are loyal to each other and the children are secure and happy.

This is what Islam aims to achieve for its followers. By upholding the laws of Islam our lives are automatically canalized into maintaining a healthy family life which provides for physical satisfaction, mental peace and spiritual upliftment, where the family members are a source of strength, solace and comfort to each other.[10]

1. Balahae al-Ijtemai.
2. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
3. Burhan al-Qur'an.
4. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
5. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
6. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
7. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
8. Bihar al-Anwar.
9. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
10. Adapted from Burhan al-Qur'an.

Eleventh Greater Sin: Sodomy

The eleventh sin that is classified as a Greater sin is sodomy or homosexuality. This is verified from the sayings of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (‘a) and Imam al-Ridha' (‘a). In fact it is a sin greater than adultery. Its retribution and punishment are more severe than for adultery. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (‘a) has stated:

“Penetrating the anal opening is a greater sin than penetrating the vagina. Certainly Allah destroyed a complete Umma (Umma of Hazrat Lut (‘a) because they indulged in sodomy. Allah has not destroyed even one man for adultery”.[1]

The Holy Prophet (S) says,

“A person who commits sodomy with a boy will acquire such a Janabat (impurity) that even all the water of this world cannot remove it. Allah will be wrathful at him and curse him. (That is He will take away His Mercy from him and will award Hell for him.) What a dreadful place it is! Then the Heavens shudder of it. And the person who allows another to mount him from behind to commit sodomy, then Allah puts him on the fringe of Hell (in extreme heat) and keeps him there till He completes the reckoning of all the people. Then He orders him to be put into Hell. One by one he is made to suffer all the punishments of Hell till he reaches the lowest stage. Then he never comes out from there.”[2]

Sodomy Is Kufr (Disbelief)

Amir ul-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) has said:

"Sodomy is a Greater Sin and carries punishment when a man mounts upon another man but does not penetrate. If he penetrates, it is kufr".[3]

It means that one who considers sodomy legal is a Kafir, because to consider sodomy illegal is one of the requirements of faith. And one who disbelieves in any of the requirements of faith becomes a Kafir. However if anyone commits this act knowing that it is Haram is deserving of punishment which is similar to the one meted out to kuffar, and it is eternal.

Huzaifa ibn Mansur says:

"I enquired regarding sodomy which is a Greater Sin from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a)". The Imam replied:

"To press the sexual organ between the thighs in an illegal way"

I asked, "Who is the person who commits sodomy".

Imam ('a) replied;

"One who has disbelieved in what Allah has revealed to his Messenger (the Holy Qur'an)."[4]

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) was queried by Abu Basir regarding the verse:

***"So when our decree came to pass, we turned them upside down and rained down upon them stones, of what has been decreed, one after another."* (*Surah Hud 11:82*).**

Imam ('a) explained:

"There is no one who leaves this world while considering sodomy Halal, but that Allah hits him with one of the stones that had fallen on the people of Hazrat Lut ('a)."

It is reported in Wasa'il ul-Shi'a that a person who believes sodomy to be Halal and commits it several times and does not repent; at the time of his death Allah hits him with one of the stones that had rained upon the people of Lut ('a). His death is brought about by the impact of this stone, but people do not see it (the stone).[5]

Punishment Upon The People Of Lut ('A)

The Holy Qur'an has described Three kinds of punishments that were meted out to the people of Lut ('a), one was a terrible scream and shriek, the second was the shower of stones that rained upon them, and the third was that the earth turned upside down. After mentioning the last calamity, it is said in Surah

Hud:

***"Marked** (**for punishment**) **with your Lord and it is not far off from the unjust."** (**Surah Hud 11:83**).*

This verse is an indication that such type of punishments may even be inflicted upon those who commit similar acts (acts of homosexuality).

The Slave Who Killed His Master

In the time of Umar a slave killed his master. When this slave confessed to the crime Umar ordered him to be put to death. Amir ul-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) questioned this slave,

"Why did you kill your owner?"

"He had forcibly committed sodomy with me," replied the slave.

'Ali ('a) asked the heirs of the deceased, "Have you buried him?"

"Yes we have just come after burying him", they replied.

'Ali ('a) advised Umar to have the slave held in custody for three days and told the heirs of the deceased to come back after three days.

A Homosexual Shall Be Counted Among The People Of Lut ('A)

Three days passed, then 'Ali ('a), Umar and some of the heirs of the murdered man went to the grave. Upon reaching there 'Ali ('a) asked, "Is this the grave of your man?" "Yes" they answered.

'Ali ('a) ordered the grave to be dug out. Amazingly the dead body had disappeared from it. 'Ali ('a) said,

"Allahu Akbar! I have heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying that, 'Whosoever from my Umma commits the act of the Umma of Lut and dies before repenting for it shall not remain in the grave for more than three days. The earth will suck him inside and he shall reach the place of the dead of Lut. Where destiny annihilated them. Then that person will also be counted among them'."[6]

Sodomy Is An Indecency

Hazrat Imam 'Ali al-Ridha' ('a) has said;

"Refrain from adultery and sodomy, and this sodomy is worse than adultery. These two sins are the causes of seventy two ills of this life and the Hereafter."[7]

The Qur'an has used the word 'indecency' for adultery in the way it has also used it for sodomy. It is said in Surah al-Ar'af:

"And (we sent) Lut when he said to his people: What! Do you commit an indecency which anyone in the world has not done before you?" (Surah al-Ar'af 7:80).

"Most surely you come to males in lust besides females. Nay you are a prodigal people". (Surah al-Ar'af 7:81).

What could be more indecent than the act where man squanders away his sperms in a way prohibited by Allah (S.w.T.) instead of allowing them to reach the wombs of women to ensure the continuation of the human race.

Sodomy and homosexuality are denounced in Surah Hud, Surah Al-'Ankabut, Surah Qamar, Surah an-Najm in addition to Surah al-Ar'af; so that the people are fully warned. Allah (S.w.T.) has strictly forbidden such a loathsome act.

A Lustful Glance On A Young Boy

To look upon a young boy with lust is Haram, especially a boy who has not yet developed facial hair. The evil effects and the severe punishments for a lustful glance have already been described in the section on adultery. It is also related from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said;

"Refrain from looking lustfully at the children of rich people and slaves, especially those who have yet no beard. Because the mischief that is possible by such glances is greater than mischief of glancing at young girls, who are in veil."[8]

It is obligatory for a Muslim to control his glances and safeguard against such indecencies.

The Sensual Kiss And The Rein Of Hell

It is Haram to kiss a young man with passion. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) quotes the Holy Prophet (S) that he (S) said;

"If a person kisses a young man with passion, on the Day of the Judgement Allah shall tie a rein of fire on his mouth."[9]

Imam al-Ridha' ('a) has remarked,

"When a person kisses a young man sensually, the angels of the sky, the angels of the earth, the angels of mercy, and the angels of wrath curse him. And Allah decrees for him a place in Hell. O, what a dreadful place it is!"[10]

The Holy Prophet (S) has said,

"Allah shall punish for a thousand years in Hell, the man who kisses a boy with passion."[11]

If two just witnesses testify to have seen a man kissing a young man in a sensual way, the wrongdoer could be punished with thirty to ninety lashes as decided by the Qazi. This is the punishment according to Islamic law.

The traditions imply that those who perform such an act should also be punished like the adulterers, that is, a hundred lashes for each of them. However, if two women are involved the Qazi prescribes less than a hundred lashes for them.

Sleeping Together Of Two People Of The Same Sex

Some scholars remark that since the sleeping of two men under a single blanket without clothes is a punishable offence according to Shari'a, it is also a Greater Sin.

It is therefore mustahab not to sleep together even with clothes on. Except for husband and wife, Islam prohibits any two persons who are able to distinguish right from wrong, to sleep close to each other or under a common blanket. The same prohibition applies to brothers and sisters.

The Holy Prophet (S) has stated:

"Make separate bed for your children above ten years. Two brothers and two sisters and a brother and a sister should not be made to sleep on the same bed."[12]

The Holy Prophet has thus advised us that brothers and sisters should not sleep very close to each other. If they cover themselves, they should have a separate blanket or sheet.

The Punishment Of Sodomy

Since sodomy is a greater crime than adultery and its evils are worse, the punishment for sodomy is also more severe than that of adultery according to the Islamic law. Islam prescribes capital punishment for the active as well as the passive partner in the crime. If both are major and sane, both of them have to be killed. The active partner is beheaded with the sword or killed by stoning or burnt alive or thrown from a height with the hands and the legs tied. These are the ways prescribed for punishing the criminal, but it is at the discretion of the Judge to determine the method. Similarly, the method adopted for the death of the passive partner is also determined by the Qazi.

According to Amir ul–Mu'minin 'Ali ('a), a person who has committed this sin must also be burnt after being killed.

As in the case of adultery, the guilt of sodomy is also proved in one of two ways. The first is that both the participants, or one of them confesses four times before a Judge. If he confesses less than four times the legal penalty cannot be issued. He is only warned and severely rebuked so that he may never repeat it. Some Mujtahids believe that the four confessions should be on four different occasions. It is also

required that the accused be major, sane, free and independent. Even if he confesses four times, a minor person can only be reprimanded for the act so that he never does it again. The same applies for the slave and the insane person. Apart from this, if someone is forced into such a crime and is unable to avoid it, there is no penalty for him.

The second method of proving the crime of sodomy is that four just witnesses see it being committed with their own eyes and testify in consonance. If the witnesses are less than four, the testimony is not accepted and the penalty for sodomy is withheld. If less than four people have seen this act, they should not testify. If they do so, they shall themselves become liable for the penalty of "*qazaf*". This clause shall be elaborated later. If the guilty repents before the four witnesses testify, the penalty is not imposed and he is not killed. The confession or the testimony should be with regard to the penetration of the anus with the penis, only then the capital punishment is carried out. But if the two men cause ejaculation without penetrating the anus (by pressing the sexual organ between the thighs of another man or by rubbing with the buttocks), then the punishment is a hundred lashes for them.

Why Is Sodomy Punishable With Death?

People, who have abandoned shame and decency so as to commit such a revolting and loathsome act of sexual perversion in the presence of other people, are like cancer for the society. If they are left alive, they will spread their shamelessness till it engulfs the entire society. This was the fate of the people of Lut (ʻa). First, Satan led one person to commit this indecency and later he invited others to the same evil. Finally, the crime reached such a gigantic proportion that among the people of Lut (ʻa), it was common to see a man mount upon another and perform sodomy right before the eyes of the onlookers. Women also had sexual relations among themselves. Allah (S.w.T.) cursed these people and destroyed them.

Homosexuality is such a hideous crime that if one does not repent and pray for forgiveness, he becomes like the one who has disbelieved in Allah (S.w.T.). He becomes liable for eternal punishment like the Kafirs. Hence, there is no better way than to kill this person and burn the corpse.

We have already noted in the chapter on adultery that punishment in Islam for acts of indecency are severe but tempered with Allah (S.w.T.)'s Mercy and Compassion. We have also discussed that Islam has formulated strict laws not just to punish the wrong doers but rather to act as a detriment for the negligent. Although capital punishment is prescribed for sodomy, it can only be administered after four just witnesses have testified to the sin being committed in their presence. The extreme degree of leniency in Islamic laws is apparent here. If an individual shows just enough decency as not to commit a filthy act in public and that too for fear of being put to death, Islam does not allow his fellow–beings to punish him. Further, if the sinner repents before the four witnesses have testified, he cannot be put to death. But if the testimony is complete, penalty cannot be reduced and the guilty has to be killed.

As far as confession of the crime is concerned, the same regulations hold as in the case of adultery. The

guilty must confess four times. He must confess in clear unambiguous words and must not speak in an elusive way. The Judge must make sure that the person is sane. Also, that he is not joking and confessing to something he has not really done. All these stipulations and concessions are given to the guilty by the Almighty so that the sinner has an opportunity to save himself. If, finally the guilty is found deserving a death sentence, his death will be a lesson for others. The aim of Islam in designing these laws is not merely to punish the offenders but to reform society. Islam aims at creating a sound environment for us where we can get the best of the world and the hereafter.

A person who is guilty, he confesses and undergoes the penalty for it in this world, and thus he will have atoned for his sins and will not be subjected to the torture of the hereafter. Even so, it is better if he refrains from revealing his secrets and submits his case only before the Almighty. He should repent, weep and beg for forgiveness from Allah (S.w.T.). Insha'Allah, Allah (S.w.T.) will forgive him. However, a person should not be complacent after seeking forgiveness. While he is hopeful of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Mercy, he should be in dread of Allah (S.w.T.)'s retribution and must continue to implore Allah (S.w.T.) to forgive him. In this way, he will attain a degree of piety and emerge a far better human being than he ever was.

In the end we quote a tradition from Amir ul-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a): "If anybody deserves to be stoned to death twice, it is the homosexual."

All the revealed religions are unanimous that sodomy must be dealt with strictly. Not only is the human race inflicted with spiritual degradation and physical illness and disabilities, it also runs the risk of extinction. The boy who is sexually assaulted, loses his manliness. Sodomy takes the society to the depths of depravity. It is therefore incumbent on men and women to marry and satisfy their sexual urge in a healthy manner, the way Nature has designed. This will ensure the continuity and the well-being of the human race.

Fire Did Not Burn The Repentant!

There is a tradition from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) in the book al-Kafi (Section on Penal Code), that:

One day 'Ali ('a) was sitting with his companions when a man approached and said "O Chief of the Believers, I have committed sodomy with a boy, please purify me (impose legal penalty upon me) 'Ali ('a) told him, "Go home, you may have had some misunderstanding."

The next day the man returned and repeated his confession and requested for penalty. 'Ali ('a) said,

"Go home, you may not be in your sense right now."

He went away only to return the third time and repeat his confession and again asked for punishment.

At last when he came for the fourth time, 'Ali ('a) said,

“The Holy Prophet (S) has prescribed Three methods of dealing with the situation, you may choose any one of the three deaths – by having the arms and feet tied and thrown from the cliff, being beheaded or being burnt alive.”

He said, “O, ‘Ali (‘a) which is the worst of these methods?” Imam replied, “Burning alive.” “Then I choose this death.” said the man. By permission of ‘Ali (‘a), he stood and prayed two rakat prayer and then said, “O Allah ! A sin was committed by me of which You are well aware. Then I had the fear of this sin, I came to the Successor of your Prophet and requested him to purify me. He gave me a choice of three deaths. I chose the most dreadful death. I pray to you to consider this penalty as the expiation of my sin and do not burn me in the fire of Hell which is ignited by you.”

Then he got up weeping and jumped into the pit into which the fire had been lit. He sat in the fire and the fire engulfed him from all the sides. ‘Ali (‘a) began to weep, upon seeing this condition and the other companions were also in tears.

‘Ali (‘a) said, “Arise, the one who has caused the angels of the earth and the sky to weep. Allah has certainly accepted your repentance. Get up but never approach the sin that you have committed.”

It so happened that the man came out of the fire unscathed. The fire could not burn the one who repented.

Remarkable Points

It is commonly agreed by the Mujtahids that if a person confesses four times but repents before the execution of sentence, the Judge has the authority either to impose penalty or cancel it. The above report also indicates that the Imam (‘a) did not pursue the sentence. However, the sentence cannot be cancelled after the testimony of four just witnesses.

The Mother, Sister And Daughter Of The Sodomist

It must be known that if a man commits sodomy with a boy (that he penetrates his anus), the mother, sister and daughter of the boy becomes Haram for this man forever. That is, this man could never lawfully marry the mother, sister or daughter of this boy.

1. al-Kafi.
2. Wasa’il ul-Shi’a.
3. al-Kafi.
4. Wasa’il ul-Shi’a.
5. Tafsir al-Qummi.
6. Kitab Mualim-uz-zalfa.
7. Fiqh al-Ridha.
8. Wasa’il ul-Shi’a.
9. al-Kafi.

10. Fiqh al-Ridha.
11. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il.
12. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.

Twelfth Greater Sin: Qazaf

The twelfth Greater Sin is Qazaf. Qazaf means to wrongfully accuse a chaste Muslim man or chaste Muslim woman of adultery or homosexuality. We have the authority of our Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a), Imam Musa al-Kadhim, Imam 'Ali al-Ridha' ('a) and Imam Muhammad al-Taqi ('a) that qazaf is a Greater sin. The Holy Qur'an also speaks of the punishment for this sin.

"Surely those who accuse chaste believing women, unaware (of the evils), are cursed in the world and the hereafter and they shall have a grievous chastisement. On the day when their tongue and their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them as to what they did." **(*Surah an-Nur 24:23-24*).**

The above verses clarify that those who falsely accuse chaste men or women of adultery are cursed by Allah (S.w.T.) as long as they are alive, and in the hereafter they shall be deprived of His Divine Mercy. We should maintain our distance from such people on whom the wrath of Allah (S.w.T.) has descended and be very careful not to believe their false accusations. False accusers have to be penalised in this world according to the Islamic law. Once their testimony is proved false, they can never ever testify in a court of Islamic law.

Organs Of The Inhabitant Of Hell

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) has said,

"The organs and the parts of the body of a true believer shall not testify against him. But they will testify against the one who, after all, has to burn in Hell."[1]

The person who accuses anyone falsely of adultery and sodomy belongs to this category. Because his punishment is Hell-fire, his organs, according to the Holy Qur'an shall testify against him.

Penalty For Qazaf : Rejection Of Testimony And Its Invalidation

It is also mentioned in Surah an-Nur:

"And those who accuse free women then do not bring four witnesses, flog them, (giving eighty lashes), and do not admit any evidence from them ever, and these it is that are the

transgressors." **(*Surah an-Nur 24:4*).**

Three commands are issued in this ayat regarding one who commits qazaf. The first is that he has to be punished with the Islamic penalty imposed upon him. The second is that his evidence is never ever to be accepted and the third is that such a person must always be considered as unreliable and a transgressor.

Islamic society which is geared to promote the dignity and welfare of its members cannot allow a false accuser to go unpunished. This falsehood dishonours an upright person, and a society which cannot uphold the honour of its members, cannot possibly give them peace and security.[2]

The book 'Islam and World Peace' mentions that in order to curb frivolous propaganda, a slanderer who cannot furnish four witnesses, is given lashes. If Three witnesses testify and the fourth witness is not available then the former Three are also punished with eighty lashes each. However, if a husband accuses his wife of adultery but cannot support his accusation with witnesses, he cannot be lashed. This is to avoid domestic upheavals. In this case the husband is made to repeat four times by calling Allah (S.w.T.) as a witness that his wife has committed adultery. And the fifth time he has to say that if he is lying, the curse of Allah (S.w.T.) be upon him. His wife is also given a similar right that she can say four times, calling Allah (S.w.T.) as a witness that her husband is lying. And the fifth time she has to say that if her husband is telling the truth, then the curse and the wrath of Allah (S.w.T.) may be upon her. She can escape punishment in this way. This law is derived from the sixth and the seventh ayat of Surah an-Nur.

Whether it is true or false it must be known that it is Haram to accuse anyone of adultery or homosexuality till he sees with his own eyes the penetration of the sexual organ. Even after being the eye witness of this he must not testify before a Qazi till Three other just witnesses testify (he must himself be just (adil) too). As stated earlier, if the witnesses are less than four, their testimony is rejected. In this case, the witnesses are considered as transgressors instead of the alleged sodomist and the fornicator, and penalised with eighty lashes each.

Those Who Commits Qazaf Are Not Believers

Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) has informed;

"One who commits qazaf is removed from the ranks of the believers of Allah and considered as a transgressor. Transgressor is also the opposite of believer as Allah himself says,

'Is he then who is the believer like him who is the transgressor?'" **(*Surah as-Sajda 32:18*).**

The Holy Prophet (S) has been reported to have said,

"The person who accuses falsely a chaste man or a chaste woman of indecency, Allah invalidates all his

good deeds (and does not give him any reward) and on the Day of Judgement seventy thousand angels lash him from the front and behind and continue to do so till the order is passed for him to be put in Hell."

Penalty For Qazaf

***"And those who accuse free women then do not bring four witnesses, flog them,* (*giving*) *eighty lashes, and do not admit evidence from them ever."* (*Surah an-Nur 24:4*).**

The above verse, numerous traditions and the rules promulgated by the Mujtahids indicate that every one of the false accusers of sodomy and fornication must be lashed eighty times (provided four just witnesses are not available simultaneously). However, the following conditions should be noted.

1) The sinner must be major and sane. A minor child or an insane person cannot be punished for false accusations. Also, the major and the sane person should have made the allegation after careful consideration and not under compulsion. No penalty can be imposed on an accuser if he has made a genuine mistake or if he has made the accusation in jest.

2) One who has been accused of adultery or sodomy must possess five characteristics. First of all, he must be a major. Secondly, he must be sane and not a madman. Thirdly, he must be free and not a slave. Fourthly, he must be a Muslim and not a Kafir. Lastly, he must apparently be chaste. A person who strongly objects to being blamed of adultery and fornication or is shocked and dismayed by such an accusation is taken to be a chaste person. So if the accused does not fulfill the above conditions or is notorious for being corrupt and indecent, the accuser is not penalised for qazaf.

3) The accusation should clearly mention adultery or sodomy. If an accuser is vague in his allegations and merely hints at adultery or sodomy or addresses the accused as 'adulterer' or 'sodomist', then he can be exempted from punishment. But in this case, the accused has a right to demand action against the accuser.

Sometimes, the allegation is against someone other than the one who is addressed. For example, One says, "Your father was an adulterer! Your father was a sodomist!" In such a situation, it is the right of the father, of the one who is addressed to insist upon the penalty. The son is not directly accused but insulted in the process. Consequently, he cannot demand the sentence of qazaf against the accuser but must insist upon a lighter penalty like reprimanding or beating so that the sin is not repeated.

In the same way, if someone says "bastard" or "adulterously born!' etc., the right of having the punishment decreed rests upon the one who is actually accused. The person who is addressed can only claim a reduced penalty.

Expiation Of The Sin On The Day Of Judgement

A woman presented herself before the Holy Prophet (S) and said, “O, Messenger of Allah, I called my maid adulteress.”

The Prophet (S) said,

“Have you ever seen her committing adultery?”

“No,” she replied.

The Holy Prophet (S) told her,

“Know that on the Day of Qiyama, some of your good deeds will be transferred to this maid and it would be the expiation.

This woman returned and handed a whip to her maid and said, “lash me” but the maid refused, so she freed her. Again, she returned to the Prophet (S) and related the incident. The Holy Prophet (S) remarked,

“May be this action of yours will act as the expiation of your utterance and you may not suffer it’s consequences in the hereafter.”[3]

Repenting For Qazaf

One who accuses a Muslim of adultery or sodomy should know that qazaf or false accusation is a sin that trespasses upon the right of man as well as the right of Allah (S.w.T.). As far as the human rights are concerned, the one who is falsely accused can take the accuser to the Qazi. If qazaf is proved by the confession of the accuser or by the testimony of two just witnesses who testify having heard the accuser making the false allegation, the legal sentence is executed. It is Wajib for the person who has committed qazaf to submit himself to the accused for trial.

However, he can request the one he has falsely accused to forgive him and must try his best to do so. If he is condoned, he escapes punishment. But if he is not forgiven and nor is the sentence carried out, and the falsely accused dies, the right of having the penalty executed is transferred to the legal heirs of the falsely accused. Now it is Wajib upon the one guilty of qazaf either to surrender himself to the heirs so that he may be taken to a Qazi or he could ask for their forgiveness. If the heirs of the deceased forgive, he is saved from punishment.

Sama says: “I asked Imam Ja’far al–Sadiq (‘a) regarding the person who commits qazaf but is forgiven by the one whom he accused falsely. If later, this person regrets having forgiven and wishes that the accuser be punished, can the punishment for qazaf be executed now?”

Imam (‘a) replied;

“No penalty can be imposed upon him after being respited.”

Sama further enquired,

“What if the man says, “O son of a fornicatress.” And the one who is falsely accused condones him but leaves the matter to Allah?” Imam (‘a) replied;

“If his mother is alive, the son does not have the right of forgiving the accuser. His mother has the right to forgive. She can exercise her right whenever she wants. If his mother has died, only then does he have the right to forgive.”4

It is Wajib upon the accuser, that after he has received the penalty or after he has been condoned by the one whom he falsely accused that he must publicly announce that whatever he has uttered is absolutely false. For example, he should say, “I had accused this person of fornication. It was a false accusation.” His announcement should be to the extent that those who have heard the false accusation must hear his confession too.

In an authentic report Ibn Sinan asked Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a), “If a person makes a false allegation and undergoes the Islamic punishment and also repents. Can his evidence be accepted in future?” Imam replied,

“If he repents and his repentance consist of taking back the words he has uttered and confesses before the Imam (‘a) and the Muslims to have uttered a lie... Then it is incumbent upon the Imam to accept his evidence and consider him just.”

The book al-Kafi and Al-Tahzib contain other reports concerning the same issue. If the accuser has made a false accusation, it is obvious that to falsify his accusation is a must. But there may be a situation where the accuser has really witnessed the act of adultery and sodomy but the crime is not proved due to lack of four witnesses and as a result he becomes liable for penalty. In this case too, he has to falsify his statement.

Since adultery or sodomy could not be established according to the stipulation laid down by Islam, from the point of view of Shari’a, his accusation is false. So although he had witnessed the crime, it is appropriate on his part to falsify his statement. This he should do with the clear intention that he is submitting to the laws of Islam.

This is in consonance with the following verse:

“Why did they not bring the four witnesses of it? But as they have not brought they are liars before Allah.” (***Surah an-Nur 24:13***).

The Shaykh writes in the book 'Nihaya' that a person who is guilty of qazaf should repent by publicly announcing that the accusation he had made is untrue, and that he had uttered a lie. He should do this at the same place where he had made the accusation. In this way all those who had heard a Muslim being denounced will now be aware of its falsehood and there will be no misunderstanding in their minds about his good character.

A person guilty of qazaf transgresses Allah (S.w.T.)'s right by disobeying a Divine command. Allah (S.w.T.) has strictly prohibited qazaf and a person guilty of it is deserving of the punishment of the hereafter. But if the offender repents sincerely and reforms himself, Allah (S.w.T.) is most Forgiving and most Merciful.

"Except those who repent after this and act aright, for surely Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." **(*Surah an-Nur 24:5*).**

Sincere repentance reforms a person. He will either make peace with the person whom he had earlier maligned, or he will confess his guilt and falsify his accusation before a Qazi. After this he is no longer a transgressor or a liar according to Shari'a. He is now an adil (just man) whose evidence is acceptable. Beyond this, the experience of being guilty of qazaf and repenting sincerely by going through the humiliation of acknowledging it in public, brings about a deep-rooted transformation in the person's character. He is now inclined toward virtue and piety and strives for spiritual upliftment.

The Shaykh says in the book "Mabsut": "After repentance, only good deeds should be seen in that man."

One who hears the accuser is obliged to advise him to refrain from slandering and even to reprimand him.

Qazaf And The Responsibility Of Other Muslims

According to the philosophy of Islam, if a Muslim hears of another Muslim being accused of adultery or sodomy he should not pay heed to it. It is Haram for him to believe it. It is also Haram to repeat this slander to others. Till four just witnesses testify before the qazi and the qazi issues his decree, it is Haram to associate any one with these sins. Even if one has witnessed the crime with his own eyes or believes the accuser, one should not spread the slander. Such an action would cause the accused person to lose his honour and dignity in people's estimation. This is totally unacceptable in Islam.

Till four just witnesses have not testified, the accuser should be regarded as a liar and a transgressor, and it is Wajib upon the person who hears him to consider him so, even if what he says is true. It should be said to the accuser, "This is a great allegation. We do not accept that the statement is correct according to Shari'a."

"Surely they who concocted the lie are the party from among you. Do not regard it as an evil to

you, nay, it is good for you. Every man of them shall have what he has earned of sin and (***as for***) ***him who took upon him the main part thereof he shall have a grievous chastisement.*** (***Surah an-Nur 24:11***).

Why did not the believing men and the believing women, when they heard it, think well of their own people and say: this is an evident falsehood? (***Surah an-Nur 24:12***).

Why did they not bring four witnesses of it? But as they have not brought witnesses they are liars before Allah. (***Surah an-Nur 24:13***).

And were it not for Allah's Grace upon you and His Mercy in this world and the hereafter, a grievous chastisement would certainly have touched you on account of the discourse which you entered into. (***Surah an-Nur 24:14***).

When you received it with your tongues and spoke with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, you deemed it an easy matter while with Allah it was grievous. (***Surah an-Nur 24:15***).

And why did you not, when you heard it say: 'It does not beseem us that we should talk off it, glory be to Thee! This is a great calumny?' (***Surah an-Nur 24:16***).

Allah admonishes you that you should not return to the like of it ever again if you are believers. (***Surah an-Nur 24:17***).

And Allah makes clear to you the communications, and Allah is knowing and wise. (***Surah an-Nur 24:18***).

Surely (***as for***) ***those who love that scandal should circulate respecting those who believe, they shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and the hereafter and Allah knows while you do not know.*** (***Surah an-Nur 24:19***).

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ʿa) explains,

"One who speaks wrongly about the believer and says something which he has neither seen nor heard himself is from those who have been mentioned in the verse:

"Surely (***as for***) ***those who love that scandal should circulate respecting those who believe they shall have the grievous chastisement in this world and the hereafter and Allah knows while you do not know."*** (***Surah an-Nur 24:19***).

In conclusion, it is Haram to accuse anyone of fornication and sodomy without having seen the act with one's own eyes. Even after seeing it, it is Haram to speak of it till four just witnesses testify having seen it.

But, if a husband accuses his wife wrongly of adultery, four witnesses are not required. It is sufficient for

the husband to say before the qazi in the prescribed manner, “I am the liar, may the curse of Allah (S.w.T.) be upon me.” And his accusation is admitted. This order is known as *“lai”* in Islamic terminology. And the accuser must fulfill the conditions as mentioned earlier in which case two just witnesses could testify that he has committed a calumny. As a result of this he is liable for penalty (eighty lashes). But these lashes would be lighter than those which are prescribed for the adulterer and the alcoholic. Also, the slanderer will not be lashed on a naked back like an adulterer and the alcoholic. He would be allowed to wear his shirt during lashing.

If Conditions For Qazaf Are Absent

Even if the necessary conditions are not present in the accused it is still Haram to associate him with adultery or sodomy. In this case the slanderer is reprimanded. However if some one calls a Muslim ‘bastard’ it does not imply that he is born of adultery. It could also imply that he was conceived when his mother was having a menstrual discharge. In such a condition it is Haram for his father to perform the sexual act and the child conceived during this time is also a child of sin. In the same way if someone calls another, indecent or ‘evil doer’, the accusation of adultery and sodomy is not proved. However he could be punished lightly or reprimanded for insulting a person.

Similarly if a Muslim accuses falsely a Kafir of adultery or sodomy, the penalty of qazaf does not apply. Yet it is Haram to associate even a Kafir with adultery and sodomy. It is not permissible to make such a statement in unequivocal words or to allude to it. But if it is established that he has committed adultery even from the point of view of his own faith, then it is allowed to associate him with it.

The Association Of The Kuffar With Adultery

Umru bin Noman Juhfi says that there was a friend of Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a). He always remained with the Imam (‘a) wherever he went. He had a slave who was from Sind. One day, the person was passing through the market of shoe-makers with Imam (‘a) while his slave walked behind. The master wanted to send the slave on an errand, but when he looked back the slave had disappeared. He looked back Three times but could not see the slave. After some time, when he looked for the fourth time, he saw the slave. He was angry with him and said, “O’ son of the adulteress! Where were you?”

The narrator says that Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) slapped his forehead and said,

“Glory be to Allah! You are accusing his mother of adultery. And I was seeing some piety in you, but now I find that there is no sign of piety or religiousness left.”

The companion protested,”May I be sacrificed upon you, his mother is an inhabitant of Sind (India) and she is a Mushrik (polytheist).” Imam (‘a) replied,

“Don’t you know that all people have their own type of marriage? Be away from me!”

The narrator says, “In the Imam’s life-time, I never saw him walking with Imam (‘a), again.”

Another tradition states,

“All the people have their kind of marriage due to which they protect themselves from adultery.”[5]

Abul Hasan al Hazzae says that he was in the company of Imam (‘a) when a person came and asked him, “What did your debtors do?” I responded, “Are you asking about the son of that adulteress woman?” Upon hearing this Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) glared at me in anger. I said, “May I be sacrificed upon you. He is a Majus (fire worshipper) and his mother is also his sister (means that his father had married his daughter). Imam (‘a) asked,

“Is not this type of marriage permitted in their religion?”

Abusive Language Is Haram

Apart from grave accusations like adultery or sodomy it is also Haram to use abusive language for a Muslim who does not openly indulge in evil acts. It is not allowed to abuse him with words like Transgressor! Dog! Drunkard! Pig! Even calling out to someone with such words is Haram. Similarly, it is Haram to address someone by associating him with some disease or handicap like Blind! Lame! Deaf!

According to Shari’a a person who uses abusive language should be given a light punishment or reprimanded.

The book Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il has a tradition from Imam ‘Ali (‘a) wherein he said,

“If a person calls another Sinner, Indecent, Kafir, Munafiq or Donkey, he must be given thirty nine lashes.”[6]

There is no difference if such words are used for relatives or strangers, against a student or a servant. Any bad words which mention the private parts or the indecent act are Haram whether addressed to one who is an open sinner or not or whether he gets offended or not.

Traditions That Denounce Abusive Language

Numerous traditions have been recorded which censure bad words and abusive language.

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) said,

“Abusive language is an atrocity and atrocity earns Hell.”[7]

The Holy Prophet (S) has said,

“There are four people, the intensity of whose chastisement will also annoy the other people of Hell.”

“There would be a man who had blissfully used abusive and foul language in the world. In Hell, puss and blood shall flow from his mouth.”

Other reports on this subject have already been mentioned in our discussion.

Replying To The Abuse

It must be understood that as it is Haram to initiate abusive language it is also Haram to abuse in reply to it. This strictly applies to words that denote, Qazaf (accuse of adultery or sodomy). But for abuses like ‘ignorant’, idiot tyrant, it is permissible to reciprocate with the same words.[8]

The Holy Qur’an also allows this, in the following ayat

“… Whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict injury on him according to the injury he has inflicted on you…” (***Surah al-Baqarah 2:194***).

“And whoever defends himself after his being oppressed these it is against whom there is no way (to blame).” (***Surah ash-Shura 42:41***).

“And if you take your turn, then retaliate with the like of that with which you are afflicted.” (***Surah an-Nahl 16:126***).

If No Excess Is Committed

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (‘a) says regarding two people who have abused each other,

“From the two of them, the one who initiated it, is more unjust, his sin includes the sin of abusing as well as the sin of the one who had cursed him in reply. But the oppressed one should not exceed the limit.”

It means that a person who is abused should retaliate only with words that equal the abuses. He should not use a more abusive language otherwise his sin will be equal to the sin of the one who initiated.

For example if one calls another ‘you donkey’ and he replies with ‘you dog’ then this would be exceeding the limits. Or if one says ‘you donkey’ only once and the other person responds by repeating the same word twice or more, it would constitute an excess. If a person who has uttered a bad word, seeks forgiveness immediately before he is replied to, he must be condoned. In this case it is not allowed to reply even with the same words.

Silence Is Better

It must be emphasized that although it is permitted to retaliate in equal measure, it is best to remain silent.

The Holy Qur'an says;

"And the recompense to evil is punishment like it, but whoever forgives and amends, he shall have his reward from Allah, surely He does not love the unjust." (***Surah Ash-Shura 42:40***).

Allah (S.w.T.) also says:

"And it is nearer to righteousness that you should relinquish." (***Surah al-Baqarah 2:237***).

One Who Utters Abuses Will Himself Be Humiliated

Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari relates that 'Ali ('a) saw that a man was abusing Hazrat Qambar and Qambar was about to reply to him. 'Ali ('a) called him:

"Qambar, stop! Humiliate the one who curses you by remaining silent. In this way the Beneficent will be satisfied with you and the shaitan angry. And you will be able to hurt your foe. You will please that Allah who splits the seed and cause pleasant winds to blow. No one can please Allah more with his forbearance, similarly nothing makes Shaitan more angry than silence in return of abuse. The revenge taken from an idiot (ignorant) person in this way is not possible in any other way."[9]

If a person who is abused responds with kind and gentle words like, 'Do not abuse your brother', he occupies a very high position with Allah (S.w.T.).

The Holy Qur'an says;

"And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (***evil***) ***with what is best. When lo! he between whom and you is enmity would be as if he were a warm friend. And none are made to receive it but those who are patient, and none are made to receive it but those who have mighty good fortune."*** (***Surah Hamim 41:34-35***).

The following incident is quoted in the book 'Kashful Ghumma':

A Syrian came to Madinah. He saw a handsome man astride a good camel. Upon enquiry he learnt that it was Imam al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ('a).

This man from Syria stepped forward in anger and said;"Are you the son of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib?"

"Yes, I am the son of 'Ali."

He said, "You are the son of a person who was a mushrik (polytheist)". And he continued his foul utterances till he got tired of it. Imam al-Hasan ('a) remained silent. At last the man felt ashamed. The Imam ('a) seeing his remorse said;

"You look like a traveller, are you from Syria?"

“Yes sir”, he replied.

Imam al-Hasan (‘a) said,

“If you need a place to stay, we shall provide it. If you need money we would give it you. If you have any other problem, we shall help you.”

Not only was the Syrian ashamed but was also rendered speechless by such excellent behaviour.

The following are his words:

“After I had the good fortune of enjoying the hospitality of Imam al-Hasan Ibn ‘Ali (‘a), I found his personality more likeable than that of any other person in the world.”

Imam al-Hasan (‘a) had offered the same type of hospitality to Asam bin Mutlaq the Syrian, and he too became his devotee.

1. al-Kafi.
2. Condensed from Burhan al-Qur’an.
3. Wasa’il ul-Shi’a.
4. Wasa’il ul-Shi’a.
5. al-Kafi.
6. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il.
7. al-Kafi.
8. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il.
9. Safinat ul-Bihar.

Thirteenth Greater Sin: Drinking Liquor

The thirteenth among the Greater Sins is drinking liquor. Its seriousness is proved from the traditions that have been related from Imam Musa al-Kadhim (‘a), Imam al-Ridha’ (‘a) and Imam Muhammad al Taqi (‘a).

The Holy Qur’an also states in unequivocal words that it is a Greater Sin.

“They ask you about intoxicants and the games of chance. Says: in both of them there is a great sin and means of profit for men, and their sin is greater than their profit.” (***Surah al-Baqarah 2:219***).

It is explained in ‘Tafsir al-Mizan’ that ‘Dhanb’ and ‘Ithm’ are synonyms that denote a condition wherein the person involved is deprived of reason. He has no inclination for deeds of virtue nor can he maintain an amiable disposition. ‘*Ithm*’ is a type of sin, the evil effects of which become apparent in the person

and he is absolutely doomed. The evils of drinking are known to all. The health of the alcoholic is affected in various ways. His digestion deteriorates. His intestines do not function well. His liver, lungs and all the five senses, are likewise affected.

Ancient and modern doctors have penned quite a few books on this topic. They have revealed astonishing statistics to show the far greater susceptibility of alcoholics to diseases as compared to others. The various ailments which are caused by alcoholism are also enumerated. They have termed wine as deadly poison.

The different kind of diseases that inflict the body of a liquor-drinkers are described in brief:

Effect Of Liquor On The Brain

Liquor affects the central nervous system. It may cause a brain hemorrhage leading to paralysis or prolonged coma and eventual death.

Effect Of Liquor On The Limbs

Ailments of the limbs are also caused by alcohol. The limbs become weak and the person loses control upon them. The body becomes absolutely broken-down. The five senses become despaired. Sleeplessness increases and even when the person gets to sleep he is haunted by nightmares.

Effect Of Alcohol On The Stomach

Liquor affects the tongue and the taste buds which lose their ability to discern flavours. Secretion of saliva is impaired. Liquor ruins the digestive system. The stomach cannot produce the digestive juices or maintain the required acidity for digestion. There is frequent vomiting and nausea. Along with phelgm, there is blood discharge in the vomit. Numerous other diseases of the stomach are also caused by alcoholism. The belly begins to protrude. The intestines swell and are ulcerated. The large intestines malfunction, causing alternate constipation and loose motions.

Effect Of Alcohol On The Liver

Wine and alcohol cause swelling and weakening of liver and slow down its function. The swelling increases and this gives rise to acute pain of the liver. The part of the liver that is nearer to the stomach is first affected. The kidneys become yellow and the effect becomes apparent in the eyes of that person.

Effect Of Alcohol On The Blood Circulation

Alcohol does not have any benefit for the human body. It is for this reason that none of its constituent parts could be absorbed into the human body. As soon as it reaches the stomach, alcohol enters the

blood stream, and as it enters the blood, it goes on destroying the white blood corpuscles. Due to this, blood pressure decreases. It may also cause fainting.

Effect Of Alcohol On The Respiratory Organs

The worst effects of alcohol are to be seen in the respiratory system. As it enters the lungs through the blood stream, it causes breathlessness. The tissues are inflamed and functioning of the lungs becomes sluggish. Calcium is continually depleted from the body. The damaged lungs are now highly susceptible to tuberculosis that is the most prevalent disease among the poorer class of people.

Effect Of Alcohol On Kidneys

Statistics show that ninety percent of the ailments of the kidneys are due to alcoholism. Alcohol is expelled through urine and causes numerous diseases involving the entire urinary system. It may also cause loss of bladder control.

Effect Of Alcohol On The Heart

Since alcohol circulates through the blood stream it has a detrimental effect on the heart as well. Gradually, layers of fat get deposited on the heart and it increases in size and weight. The heartbeats of an alcoholic are faint or irregular.

Effect Of Alcohol On Mental Faculties

The most destructive effect that alcohol can produce is on the overall psychology of the alcoholic. According to statistics available from mental hospitals the majority of the patients are those who have been long-time alcoholics.

The book 'Balahai al-Ijtemai' has quoted the magazine 'Health' which says:

According to medical research there are 2,000,000 lunatics in France who have become mad due to alcoholism. Also 80% of all mental patients have been drunkards. Further 40% of all the ailments that afflict the people are due to alcohol. According to British scientists, 90% of the lunatics are so, due to the effect of alcohol.

Effect Of Alcohol On The Offsprings

The book also mentions that wine affects the sperm cells. A West German doctor has conducted research that indicates that the effect of alcohol lasts for at least Three future generations of the alcoholic; even though these future generations may abstain from intoxicants.

Excessive Drinking Causes Sterility

According to an American doctor Dr. Nelson, if a teetotaler can father eleven healthy children the alcoholic is at the most capable of having three normal children. Moreover these children may be plagued with fainting, migraine, hot temper, lunacy, mental disability or anemia. Such children are the victims of various mental and physical problems.

The effects of liquor are also mirrored in the character of the drunkard. The alcoholic is usually a person of low character and has a foul tongue. Being in a state of intoxication most of the time, his behaviour is not normal or rational. Not being in control of his senses due to the influence of intoxicants, he has no hesitation in committing evil acts like murder, plunder, adultery, sodomy, exposing other people's secrets etc. In fact he will unhesitatingly break every law, be it of land or religion.

The Islamic code of life requires that a person should use whatever power of reasoning Allah (S.w.T.) has granted him to conduct himself with deliberation and discretion. In fact Islam expects every individual to try and improve his reasoning power by increasing his knowledge with study and by associating with those more knowledgeable than himself. Even good actions, without thought and intent are of no avail.

Islam therefore prohibits all such actions that affect the reasoning capacity of man. The acts that top this list are alcoholism, gambling, deceit and lying. All of which deprive man of his capacity to reason. Carnal desires and falsehood are two things that are instrumental in the demotion of man from the high position of humanity to the lowliness of the beasts. Such a person is not capable of carrying any important responsibility. It is very difficult for an alcoholic to excel in any field. Even if he resolves to do something, his resolution is soon defeated. The more difficult, the more important a task is, the more difficult it would be for an alcoholic to accomplish it. Even if the wisdom behind every Islamic act had been unknown, it would have sufficed to accept it, as the same is advocated by intellect.

The Holy Qur'an has termed as 'Atham' (sins) such acts as murder, slander, and withholding testimony before a qualified Judge. Murder has not been termed as 'Ithm al-kabir' (the greatest sin) whereas sins like alcoholism and gambling have been specified as the 'Ithm al-kabir' (the greatest sin). The quote ***"and in alcohol and gambling there is even some profit for men"*** (***Surah al-Baqarah 2:219***), imply the profit which arises from the manufacture and sale of alcohol etc. But this profit is not even a pittance when compared to the losses that accrue with the consumption of alcohol. The loss of character, the loss of mental & physical health and over and above all this, the loss of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Mercy and blessing in the hereafter.

The Qur'an says in Surah al-Ma'ida:

"O you who believe ! Surely intoxicants and games of chance and (***sacrificing to***) ***stones set up and*** (***divining by***) ***arrows are only an uncleanness, the Shaitan's works, shun it therefore that you***

may be successful." **(*Surah al-Ma'ida 5:90*).**

The prohibition regarding wine is of special significance in those two ayats for the following reasons:

1) The word 'innama' in the first ayat denotes emphasis.

2) Drinking of liquor is mentioned along with idolatry. Therefore drinking liquor is as serious a sin as idolatry.

3) Drinking of liquor has been classified as a satanic act along with gambling.

4) The verse emphatically orders one to avoid alcohol.

5) Avoidance of alcohol has been clearly shown to be a way of salvation.

6) The consequences of drinking liquor have also been listed namely; enmity, hatred and loss of belief in Allah (S.w.T.).

7) Then it is asked whether you would now avoid this evil or not.

8) After the prohibition, Allah (S.w.T.) orders to obey Him and obey the Holy Prophet (S). To beware of disobeying Allah (S.w.T.) and to know that the duty of the Holy Prophet (S) is to convey the message and complete the proof.

Tafsir al-Mizan quotes the dictionary meaning of wine as any liquid intoxicant. In the beginning the Arabs used to prepare it from grapes, barley and dates. But gradually new types of wines began to be produced. Nowadays there are many chemically manufactured alcoholic drinks. All these can produce varying degrees of intoxication. But however slight the intoxication a drink may produce, it is considered Haram. The word 'rijs' (indecency) implies everything that is evil.

The Qur'anic verses equate liquor with indecency. Human nature of its own accord is not inclined towards liquor. It is the insinuation of Shaitan that persuades man to consume such filth. Shaitan creates the illusion in the human mind that by consuming liquor one can obtain bliss and a feeling of exhilaration. The Qur'anic verses declare that it is the Shaitan's plan to entice people towards wine, gambling and idol-worship so he can create enmity, hatred and avarice amongst them and succeed in diverting their thoughts away from Allah (S.w.T.) and their duty towards the Almighty. Due to loss of reason and self control they stoop to the lowest depths of inhuman behaviour.

Under the influence of an intoxicant every thing vile and vicious appeals to their fancy. They get pleasure in destroying other people's wealth, honour and dignity ignoring all norms of civil behaviour. They may even speak insolently about their own religion and beliefs. They sink to the lowest depths of degradation when their own sisters and daughters appear to them as objects of gratification. When intoxicated a person will easily divulge the most confidential information in his possession.

The 33rd ayat of Surah al-Ar'af is as follows:

"Say, my Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin and rebellion without justice and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down any authority, and that you say against Allah what do you not know." (***Surah al-Ar'af, 7:33***)

'Fawahish' (indecencies) is the plural of 'fahsha' (indecency). In Arabic it implies an extremely evil act. The other sins that are described by this word in Qur'an are adultery, sodomy and falsely associating someone with adultery and sodomy. '*Ithm*' implies 'sin', and the Holy Qur'an clearly indicates that drinking and gambling are 'Ithm'.

There is a tradition narrated by 'Ali ibn Yaqtin in the book al-Kafi, wherein the Abbasid despot Mahdi asked Imam Musa al-Kadhim ('a) regarding wine, "Is wine Haram according to the Qur'an?" (Because) people know that it is prohibited but not aware that it is Haram." Imam Musa al-Kadhim ('a) replied:

"Wine is Haram according to the Divine book."

"At what place in the Qur'an is wine shown to be Haram?"

Imam Musa al-Kadhim ('a) said,

"In the following statement of Allah (S.w.T.),

'Say, my Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed.'" (***Surah al-Ar'af 7:33***).

Imam ('a) further said,

"As far as the apparent indecencies are concerned, they imply open adultery and ensigns that were hung outside the houses of prostitutes in the days of ignorance. 'The concealed sin' implies the sin of marrying the step mother after the death of the father as the people of the days of ignorance used to do. Allah has also ordered this act to be Haram. As far as sin is concerned, it is but "wine drinking". At another point, Allah says,

"They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: in both of them there is a great sin and means of profit for men, and their sin is greater than their profits." (***Surah al-Baqarah 2:219***).

In the above tradition Imam ('a) first quotes the ayat where 'sin' is labelled as Haram. Then he mentions that verse where wine is ordained to be a 'sin'. Hence when it is shown that 'sin' is Haram and wine is sin, then wine (and all alcoholic drinks) must necessarily be Haram.

Alcoholism According To The Traditions Of Ahl Ul-Bayt (‘A)

Traditions that denounce alcohol are numerous. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) says:

“On the Day of Qiyama the drunkard would come with a black face, a protruding tongue and the saliva dripping upon his chest.”1

In another narration Imam (‘a) informed:

“He will scream, ‘Thirst! Thirst!’ And Allah would have the right to make him drink from the well that contains the pollutants of the adulterers.”2

In a tradition from the Holy Prophet (S), he says:

“One who is careless of Salat will be deprived of my intercession, and will not be able to reach me at the pool of Kawthar3. And by Allah, my intercession will also not reach the one who consumes intoxicants, and he would not be able to reach me at the pool of Kawthar.”

One more tradition says, that the Holy Prophet (S) cursed ten types of people in connection with wine:

1) One who plants a sapling with the intention of producing wine.

2) One who cultivates this sapling so that wine may be manufactured.

3) One who crushes the grapes.

4) One who drinks wine.

5) One who serves the wine.

6) One who transports wine.

7) One who takes delivery from the supplier.

8) One who sells wine.

9) One who buys it.

10) One who uses the income that is earned by (making or selling) wine.

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) said:

“One who is addicted to wine (liquor) will meet the Lord (on the appointed day) like an idol worshipper.”

Another tradition says that,

“On the day of meeting of the Lord, the drunkard will be counted among the disbelievers.”[4]

Liquor Is The Root Of All Evils

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) has said,

“Disobedience to the order of Allah is mostly due to alcoholism. The alcoholic abandons Salat. He even commits incest under the influence of alcohol. He loses his senses.”[5]

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) says,

“Certainly even if a person swallows only a mouthful of wine, at that very moment, the angels, the Prophets and the righteous believers send their curses upon him.”

“And when he drinks enough to make him intoxicated, the spirit of belief leaves his body, it is replaced by the dirty, accursed, devilish spirit. When the person neglects prayers, he spreads corruption in society.”

It is related from Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a):

“One who drinks wine considering it Halal will remain forever in Hell. One who drinks wine, knowing it is Haram will still taste the punishment of Hell.”[6]

Imam ‘Ali al-Ridha’ (‘a) has informed,

“Allah knows better that every Prophet who has been sent by Him did not have his religion completed till wine was prohibited. Wine has always been Haram.”[7]

In the present Old and New testaments, even after so many interpolations and alterations, there is considerable criticism of alcoholism.

“Don’t associate with people who drink too much wine...”[8]

Also:

“Show me someone who drinks too much, who has to try out some new drink, and I will show you someone miserable and sorry for himself, always causing trouble and always complaining. His eyes are bloodshot, and he has bruises that could have been avoided.”

“Don’t let wine tempt you, even though it is rich red, though it sparkles in the cup, and it goes down smoothly. The next morning you will feel as if you had been bitten by a poisonous snake. Weird sights will appear before your eyes and you will not be able to think or speak clearly.”[9]

The punishment for drinking wine is mentioned in the following words:

“Inform the elders of the town, this son of ours is a rebel and a sinner. He does not obey us, he is a glutton and drinks too much wine? Then all the people of the town will stone him till he dies.”[10]

Also we find:

“Do not get drunk with wine, which will only ruin you...”[11]

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) says,

“Alcoholism is the mother of all sins. Liquor invites the drunkard to all sorts of indecencies. It destroys his intellect. So much so that under its influence he even fails to recognize his Lord. Whatever sin he encounters, he commits it. The alcoholics do not refrain from any such acts, which are against morality.”

Thus drinking liquor is Haram not merely in the light of the Qur’an and traditions, but it is a Greater Sin. One of the necessities of religion is to consider liquor Haram and if a Muslim considers it to be Halal he becomes a Kafir.

Liquor Is Absolutely Haram

It makes no difference if the quantity consumed is less or more; liquor is absolutely Haram; whether pure or mixed. Thus even if a person licks a single drop it is Haram whether he gets intoxicated or not. In the same way if liquor is consumed by mixing it with other things, it is still Haram.

Allama Hilli (r.a.) has quoted an authentic tradition from Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a), that he said:

“If more of it intoxicates, then to consume even a bit of it is Haram.”

A person enquired from Imam (‘a), “but I dilute it with water?”

Imam (‘a) told him,

“A Haram thing does not become Halal by mixing it with water. Fear Allah, refrain from partaking of it.”[12]

Umar Ibn Hanzala says that he enquired from Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a):

“Does it matter if as much water is mixed in wine so that it is no more intoxicating?”

Imam (‘a) replied:

“No! By Allah it is not. Even if a drop of wine falls into a well full of water it does not become Halal. Rather the whole well has to be emptied.”[13]

Ibn Wahab has narrated this tradition from Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a):

“Every intoxicant is Haram. Something that intoxicates only when consumed in large quantities, is also

not allowed to be taken even in a lesser quantity."

The narrator says, "I asked, 'Then if a Haram thing is mixed in a huge quantity of water, does it become permissible?'"

Imam ('a) flailed his arms twice, indicating emphatically that it does not.[14]

Liquor is harmful irrespective of the quantity consumed. Even if a drop of the poison enters the body it has harmful effects on it, whether apparent immediately or not. If you mix a few buckets of red dye in a pond of water, the whole pond water turns red. But on the other hand if you throw a glassful of ink in a pond of clear water it would not bring about any appreciable change in its appearance, yet, could you say that the ink has not affected the water at all? Certainly not! If the water is subjected to the process of distillation the glassful of ink could be recovered. If it enters the body it will cause harm.

A person who tastes liquor, one drop at a time, soon gets addicted to it till he needs to drink more and more of it. Consequently a stage is reached when he is unable to rid himself of this habit howsoever hard he may try. A stone is eroded when water drips upon it over a period of time. Similarly alcohol erodes the liver and other cells of the body. Grapes, raisins and dates, when unfermented have medicinal properties and are wholesome and beneficial to the body. But as soon as fermentation sets in these fruits and wine is produced they turn harmful and prohibited.

Intoxicant Liquids

If an intoxicant is a liquid in its natural state, in addition to its being Haram, it is also najis (impure). But if an intoxicating substance is solid in its natural form and it is available as a solution, like opium or hemp for consumption, it is not najis, but its consumption is Haram like that of wine.

Giving Liquor To Children

Offering liquor to others is also Haram even if it is to a young, naive child. The book, 'Mustanad ush-Shi'a' contains Three traditions regarding this topic. The gist of these traditions is that one who is responsible for serving liquor to young children will have to drink an equal quantity of the boiling water of Hell, on the Day of Qiyama, by Allah (S.w.T.)'s command.

Liquor At The Dinner Table

If liquor is served on a table, it is Haram to sit there and eat even if one does not touch the wine. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) informs that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

"Accursed, accursed is the one who sits at a table where wine is being served."[15]

The Holy Prophet (S) also says:

“One who believes in Allah and the last day, must not even sit at the table where wine is kept.”[16]

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) says:

“Do not sit with drunkards because when the curse descends it engulfs all the people in the company of the drunkards.”[17]

Some scholars have stated that it is not permitted to be in the company of people where anything Haram is being done. For example, backbiting about a Muslim. It is then obligatory on a person to leave immediately if possible and be free of the sin of just being in this company. Also, if by his leaving, the others will discontinue their sinful action, it is obligatory on him to do so.

Wine And Medicine

According to the traditions of the Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a) to take wine as medicine is also Haram. Rather, the Ahl ul-Bayt (‘a) have prohibited the consumption of any intoxicant as medicine. The jurists unanimously agree that one should refrain from consuming any intoxicant to cure a disease or to ward off pain. Allah (S.w.T.) has not reposed any curative effect in any intoxicant.

Three Exceptions

Certain Mujtahids have stated that there are Three exceptions where an intoxicant could be taken as medicine.

First of all the person should know that his malady is curable.

Secondly it must be that if this treatment is not taken it would result in death or extreme pain. Thirdly, there should be no other cure for this ailment.

If these conditions are fulfilled, the patient can be given an intoxicant as medicine but only just enough to cure his disease.

But as we have stated, Allah (S.w.T.) has not bestowed any cure in a Haram thing. Hence the above conditions are mentioned just for the sake of an obligation. Such a situation can hardly arise.

Wine Contains No Cure

Ibn abi Yazur told Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a): “I am suffering from a disease. When the pain intensifies I drink some wine of grapes and the pain subsides”. Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) said, “Do not drink. It is Haram; it is nothing but Shaitan who is preying upon you to involve you in sins. When he loses all hope of making you drink he will leave you.”

Ibn abi Yazur returned to his native place, Kufa. He was in intense pain and his people brought for him wine of grapes and persuaded him to drink it. Ibn abi Yazur said, “By Allah! I will not taste a drop of it.”

He bore the pain for some days. At last his pain receded and he never suffered from it for the rest of his life.

Drunkard On The Death-Bed

Abu Basir says that Umm Khalid Abadiya presented herself before Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) when Abu Basir was also present. Umm Khalid said,

“May I be sacrificed for you, on the Day of Qiyama. I will tell Allah that I have done as commanded by Ja’far ibn Muhammad (‘a). Physicians have told me to knead the flour with grape wine and eat the bread. This will cure the terrible pain of my heart. I ask you, shall I do this?”

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) replied to Umm Khalid,

“No! By Allah I will not permit you even a drop of wine. Don’t taste even a drop of it. Otherwise when your soul reaches here (Imam pointed towards his throat) you will only regret.” Then Imam (‘a) asked Umm Khalid thrice.

“Have you understood?”

“Yes”, replied Umm Khalid.

A student of Fuzail Ibn Ayaz was on his deathbed. Fuzail came to him and sitting near his head began to recite Surah Yasin (al-Qur’an, chapter 36). The disciple told his teacher, “Do not recite the Qur’an!” Fuzail became silent. Then he began to urge his disciple to repeat “La ilaha illallah”. The student said:

“I will not repeat this formula because I am disgusted with it!” and he died in the same condition.

Fuzail Ibn Ayaz was extremely perturbed. He returned home after completing his duties and went to sleep. He saw his student undergoing punishment. He asked him, “What is the reason of your being deprived of faith (Iman) at the time of your death? You were one of my best students.”

The student replied: “There are three reasons, firstly, I used to backbite too much, secondly, I used to be jealous, thirdly, a physician had prescribed for my malady a cup of wine every year. He told me that if I do not drink, the disease would never be cured. Every year I drank one cup of wine.”[18]

Numerous traditional reports mention that “Haram” things do not contain any cure. In the same way one must refrain from taking any medicine that contains even a drop of najis alcohol.

It is stated on page no 380 of the Journal of Anjuman Tablighate Islami:

“There is not a single doctor today who considers liquor to have any cure. No doctor permits even a small quantity of the same. If a physician prescribes liquor as a medicine for some cure, it must be understood that his medical knowledge is deficient.”

A hundred years ago some of the doctors and physicians believed that wine had some curative effects. But recent researches show that wine not only lacks any beneficial value but is in fact harmful. The molecules of alcohol on entering the blood stream affect the white blood corpuscles. These corpuscles perform the function of protecting the human body against infectious disease.

The white blood cells engulf the disease causing germs and exterminate them. Anything that impairs the functioning of these blood cells exposes a person to numerous diseases because his body is unable to protect itself. Some people think that wine helps in digestion. This is just a false notion. The reality is just the opposite. Actually wine causes indigestion. The food hardens in the stomach and becomes indigestible. You can experiment by pouring wine upon a piece of cooked soft meat. It will become tough like leather, and absolutely unchewable. Wine also destroys the digestive juices secreted by the stomach and leads to flatulence and indigestion. Wine destroys appetite.

Besides, alcohol causes addiction and wine taken for medicinal purpose soon becomes an addiction that is difficult to get rid of. We may observe that some alcoholics appear perfectly healthy even after years of addiction. But what is apparent may be different from reality. If a medical check up is carried out, it will reveal the deteriorating condition of the internal organs and the digestive system of these addicts. Besides, often the maladies are not associated with alcohol and are attributed to other factors. It should be also noted that alcohol affects some people more than others. Some have a hereditary capacity to withstand the rouging effects of alcohol. They should thank Providence for it and refrain from drinking so that they can protect their future generation from developing a weakness for it.

Punishment For Drinking Liquor

If a sane adult person, knowing that liquor is Haram, consumes even a drop of it of his own accord and later confesses to it or is seen in the act of drinking by two just witnesses who testify, the Judge is obliged to award punishment to him.

However punishment cannot be awarded under the following conditions: If the individual who drinks it is a child, or an insane person, or one who is unaware of its prohibition, or one drinks it by mistake being under the impression that it is not liquor and realizes the truth afterwards, or one who drinks it under coercion and force, or one who is compelled to drink due to extreme thirst there being no other way of quenching it.

The Islamic penalty for drinking is eighty lashes. Eighty lashes are given when the person drinks it for the first time. If he repeats the act after receiving 80 lashes he is lashed 160 times. If he repeats the sin again and confesses, or two just witnesses testify before a Qazi (religious Judge) the punishment is

tripled; i.e. 240 lashes. The fourth instance of the crime entails capital punishment. Some Mujtahids are of the opinion that capital punishment should be given when the sin is repeated the third time.

If a person confesses and repents before the testimony of two just witnesses, he is condoned. However after the testimony he cannot escape punishment. The drunkard cannot be punished while still intoxicated. He is punished only when he gets sober. If it is a man he is stripped above the waist and lashed from the shoulders and below. It is not allowed to hit the face or the private parts of the accused. If the accused is a woman she is lashed with her clothes on. If her dress is loose, it is made to stick to the body by tying it up. She is lashed in a sitting position.

If a person drinks wine at a sacred place, for example the Holy Kaba or in a sacred period, like the month of Ramadhan, he is lashed and also given a preventive punishment that is, he is beaten so much that he may not dare to repeat the crime.

Ibn Abil al-Hadid records the following incident in Sharh al-Nahjul Balagha:

"Najashi was a famous poet of Kufa. He was originally from Yemen. He was among the army of Amir ul-Mu'minin (‘a) at the Battle of Siffin. It was the first day of Ramadhan when his friend, Abu Sammak instigated him to drink wine at the tavern. Under its intoxication he created such a bedlam that his neighbour was compelled to complain to Amir ul-Mu'minin ‘Ali (‘a). Hazrat summoned both of them. Abu Sammak fled but Najashi was arrested and brought by the people. By the order of the Imam (‘a) he was detained for the night. The next day, before the congregation of Muslims he was stripped to the waist and lashed eighty times for drinking wine. After this he was given twenty more lashes. Najashi said, "Eighty lashes were for drinking wine, but why twenty more?" Imam (‘a) replied,

"This is because you dared to drink during the month of Ramadhan and did not respect its sanctity."[19]

The relatives of Najashi were present in large numbers in the camp of ‘Ali (‘a). They were perturbed at the extra punishment. One of them, Tarikh Ibn Abdullah said:

"We Yemenis are among your loyal friends and Shi'as. We expected you to consider us differently from your enemies. Najashi is our respected kinsman. By lashing him publicly you have degraded us in the eyes of our friends and enemies. We have began to doubt if the path that we tread leads to Heaven." Amir ul-Mu'minin (‘a) said,

"Strict adherence to justice and commands of Allah hurts the sinners. What have I done? Najashi dared to disobey the Divine command. I have only punished him according to the laws. Allah says:

***'... And let not hatred of a people invite you not to act equitably; act equitably, that is nearer to piety, be careful of* (*your duty to*) *Allah...'"* (*Surah al-Ma'ida 5: 8*).**

Ibn Abil al-Hadid writes, "Najashi and Tarikh were unable to assert their opinion. They left Kufa and went to Syria to join the group of Muawiya." Their meeting with Muawiya is not described here. Its details

can be studied in Ibn Abil al-Hadid's Sharh al-Nahjul Balagha, Vol. I part iv page no. 366.

Aloofness From The Drunkard

In order to discourage the evil habit of drinking, Allah (S.w.T.) and the Holy Prophet (S) has commanded that people should not associate with a drunkard and remain totally aloof from him. It is a method by which the drunkard will feel self-conscious about the lack of respect with which his community members view him. Being strictly excluded from company, he will not be able to influence tender or immature minds to develop this obnoxious habit. We can thus restrict the evils of alcoholism that destroy the foundation of individual and social life.

Do Not Give Your Daughter In Marriage To A Drunkard

Hazrat Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) quotes the Holy Prophet (S),

"Allah has made me to pronounce wine as Haram, after this pronouncement if someone still drinks wine, he is not fit to have his proposal for marriage accepted, when he proposes. If he seeks recommendation, he should not be recommended. If he says something he must not be believed. His testimony must not be accepted. Nothing should be kept in his trust. Allah is not responsible for something kept with a drunkard, with the knowledge (of his vice). He will not receive any compensation. If the thing is lost, nothing could be taken in exchange and neither its cost."20

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) says:

"One who marries his well-behaved daughter to a drunkard does Qat'a ar-Rahm."21

Imam ('a) has also said,

"One who marries his well-behaved daughter to a drunkard; it is as if he has given her to adultery."22

Imam ('a) has also stated in a tradition,

"If a drunkard falls ill do not go to visit him. If he dies, do not attend his funeral."

Boycott Of The Drunkard

By adopting this attitude we fulfill our duty of Nahy Anil Munkar. No one should trust or believe a drunkard, and no one should have any dealings with him whatsoever. As clearly ordered by our Holy Prophet (S) and our Imam ('a) no one should give his daughter in marriage to a drunkard. When the drunkard finds himself so totally cut off from the society in which he lives, he will be compelled to give up his sinful habit.

Jihad Against Intoxicants

The book Burhan al-Qur'an writes against intoxicants:

"The evil of intoxicants can be easily proved by the fact that in a country like France a woman legislator urged the parliament to abolish intoxicants completely. She was so disgusted by the ill-effects of alcohol that she protested against it vehemently. Obviously, until the powerful governments put an end to such evils they cannot be eradicated. Mere crusades of individuals, or social boycott will not have much effect."

It is true that life can be very difficult for some individuals. They face hardships and frustrations till they are driven to despair. Even so, drinking liquor to forget their troubles is not a solution. The physical, economic and social repercussions of this evil will only magnify their problems and engulf them in a vicious circle from which it will be almost impossible to extricate themselves. It is an evil that must be fought by individuals, by society and by the governments. Individual effort and social boycott will certainly help to a great extent. But the authority that the government can exercise in enforcing strict measures will go a long way in eradicating this evil. The American government in the year 1930 had made a serious effort to discourage the use of intoxicants. The propaganda was carried out through newspapers, magazines, radio, television, films and all modes of communication. The total expenses incurred by the government were eight million dollars. Ten billion pages of books and magazines were printed. Within a span of 14 years 250 million dollars were spent. 300 people were hanged, 532000 people were sent to prison, penalties were collected from 1,60,00,000 people and property worth $ 41,50,00,000 was confiscated. All this did not yield the desired result and the number of alcoholics, in fact, increased. In 1933 all these restrictions were withdrawn and complete freedom was given to the public to consume liquor.[23]

This only goes to show that government restriction alone will not cure this malady. What is needed are the co-ordinated efforts of strict government rules and the boycott of the alcoholics by society.

When Islam prohibited liquor, it considered all these aspects. Islam first strived to remove the causes of alcoholism. After this, it promulgated that liquor is Haram. One of the causes that promotes this habit are the people who themselves give a free rein to this vice. They do not adopt strict methods of prevention. Our society does not view the drunkards unfavourably and does not boycott them so that they may be compelled to give up their habits. According to Islam, dangerous diseases and ailments that befall the soul must be eradicated by all means. The drunkards and alcoholics must also be boycotted economically. People should not transact any business with them and they must also be socially boycotted. Proposals for their marriage must be rejected and none should keep company with them. An ideological war must be carried out against them. They must also be a spiritually cured. Along with heavy penal punishment they must be informed of the ill effects of liquor and other intoxicants.

1. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.

2. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
3. See Glossary.
4. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a, chapter of prohibited drinks .
5. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a: chapter of prohibited drinks.
6. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
7. Furu al-Kafi.
8. Proverbs 23/30.
9. Proverbs 23/29-33.
10. Proverb: 21.
11. Ephesians 5/18
12. Mustanad ush-Shi'a.
13. Furu' al-Kafi.
14. Furu al-Kafi.
15. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
16. Masalik of Shahid Thani.
17. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a, Chapter 33.
18. Safinat ul-Bihar Vol. I page 428.
19. Furu al-Kafi, Chapter on Penal Code.
20. al-Kafi.
21. al-Kafi.
22. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il.
23. From Tankihat of Abul Ala Maududi.

Fourteenth Greater Sin: Gambling

Gambling is the fourteenth Greater Sin. The following statements support this view. The Holy Qur'anstates in Surah al-Baqarah:

"They ask you about intoxicants and games of chances. Say: in both of them there is a great sin..." **(*Surah al-Baqarah 2:219*).**

"Ithm al-kabir" means a very great sin. The Holy Qur'an has used this phrase only for drinking and gambling."

The tradition related by Fazl Ibn Shazan from Imam 'Ali al-Ridha' ('a) also included gambling among the Greater sins. Similarly, gambling is clearly mentioned as a Greater Sin in the tradition related by Amash from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a).

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have told Abu Basir:

"It is Haram to sell chess. It is Haram to spend the income of this sale. To keep chess (board and pieces) in ones possession is tantamount to kufr (disbelief). To play chess is equal to ascribing partners

to Allah. It is a sin even to salute one who plays chess. One who touches it in order to play it, it is, as if he has contaminated his hands by touching pork."[1]

The same tradition is recorded in the book *Man La Yahzarul Faqih* with the addition inter alia that:

"To teach chess to others is also a kind of destructive sin."

It is related from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a):

"Allah pardons all the sinners in the month of Ramadhan except Three kinds of people; those who drink wine, those who gamble and those who harbour enmity and avarice towards a Muslim."

Another proof is the following verse of Qur'an, which shows that gambling, is a Greater Sin:

***"O you who believe! Intoxicants and* (*Maesir*) *games of chance and divining* (*azlam*) *by arrows are only an uncleanness, the Shaitan's work; shun it therefore that you may be successful."* (*Surah al-Ma'ida 5:90*).**

What Do 'Maesir' And 'Azlam' Denote?

Games of chances that are mentioned in this Qur'anic verse include all types of gambling. The Arabicequivalent to this is *"Maesir"* which is derived from the root word *"yusur"* which means 'ease'. Since a gambler does not perform a laborious work and is able to easily grab the money belonging to others, gambling is called*"Maesir"*.

"Azlam" is a game of chance that is played with dice. Actually, there used to be special pieces of wood which were used in gambling. *Azlam* is also known as*"aqlam"*. The gamblers used to purchase a camel and divide the meat of the slaughtered camel into twenty-eight parts. Ten pieces of arrow-shaped wood were kept at the venue of gambling. Each piece had a specific name. The names of seven of those pieces were *faz, tawam, raqib, halas, nafis, masbal and mualla*. Specific portion of meat was allotted to each of the arrows.

For example *faz* was equal to one portion and *mualla* had seven portions. The meat that had been divided into twenty-eight pieces was distributed only to these ten pieces of wood. Some of the arrows were such that no meat was allotted to them and in fact those who got them had to reimburse the cost of camel in full. The total of participants in this game was ten, and the Three unlucky ones were expelled. The Three unlucky arrows were named *"manaj, safih* and *raghad*".

'Azlam' is a kind of a wager whereas *'Maesir'* includes all forms of gambling. *Azlam* is mentioned specifically because it was popular before the advent of Islam. Other methods of *azlam* are also recorded but irrespective of the method, all types of wagers are *Haram*. Wine, gambling, idol worship and *azlam* are all satanic works. Involving oneself in these would deprive the person of salvation and

success in the hereafter. It is therefore commanded not to even go near wine and gambling.

Gambling And Wine Cause Avarice And Enmity

"The Shaitan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance..." **(*Surah al-Ma'ida 5:91*).**

It is common knowledge that a man loses his senses under the influence of alcohol and in this condition behaves in a most indiscreet manner. He is therefore bound to create enemies due to his shoddy behaviour. Drunkards are also known to murder their own family members and friends.

As far as gambling is concerned, enmity between the participants is the most natural outcome in a game of chance. The person who loses his money to his opponent is bound to resent him and have a feeling of vengeance and there is bound to be a winner and a loser. The dominating influence on the gamblers is that of hatred and enmity.

Gambling Causes Voluptuousness And Sensuality

A person who wins in gambling makes a lot of easy money. Obviously, he looks for ways and means for self-indulgence to splurge his ill-gotten wealth. In fact, profit from *Haram* means paves the way towards further unlawful evils. Avarice is the characteristic of all gamblers. The gambler who wins is so obsessed that he wagers more around larger profits. The loser is equally obsessed to win back what he has lost.

Such compulsive obsessions have disastrous consequences. The book *"Balahai al-ijtemai"* page 231 contains an incident where an inhabitant of an Iranian town stabbed his opponent thrice and killed him. The accused gave the following statement: "The victim has grabbed a lot of my money through gambling. He was not prepared to lay another bet despite my persuasion and ran away. I followed and killed him."

On page 325 of the same book, the following is quoted from the magazine *"Roshan Fikr"*. "In the town of Monte Carlo, Argentina, a gambler lost around forty hundred thousand t*umans* in a game that lasted for sixteen hours. When the casino closed, he drove his car to the forest and shot himself in the head."

Incidents of suicide are common in the woods surrounding Monte Carlo. Most often, those who arrive in this city to gamble lose all their money. Sometimes, they cannot even pay for their return journey. Such people go into the woods and commit suicide. One of the casinos has decided to loan the return fare to those who lose all their money.

The weekly magazine of 'Ittelat Daily' No. 1060 contains the following item.

"Suicides due to gambling are on the increase according to the available statistics. More suicides were committed in this year (1361 solar) compared to the number in previous years. The casino owners have,

as a result named this as the ‘unlucky year’. In the previous year, 120 people committed suicide after losing in Paris. The statisticians of America state that the cause of thirty percent of all crimes is gambling.”[2]

It is noticed that most of the criminals like robbers, pickpockets and murderers commit crimes after leaving their gambling dens.

Forgetting Allah (S.W.T.)

Alcohol and gambling are vices leading to spiritual bankruptcy. These offenders are oblivious of Allah (S.w.T.) and of their duties towards their Creator. Living in a state of forgetfulness of Allah (S.w.T.) is the worst tragedy that befalls the unfortunate victims of these vices.

“…And to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer….” **(*Surah al-Ma’ida 5:91*).**

An alcoholic in a state of intoxication is in no condition to remember Allah (S.w.T.) and he abandons even an obligation like *Salat*. In the same way, the craze of a gambler to obtain wealth or make up for his losses is all consuming and he loses awareness of all obligatory acts including prayers. In order to stress this point, Allah (S.w.T.) continues in the same verse:

“Will you then desist?” **(*Surah al-Ma’ida 5:91*).**

It means that even after being informed of the demerits of these vices, will you still not reform?

The next verse continues the emphasis:

***“And obey Allah and obey the apostle and be cautious. But if you turn back, then know that only a clear deliverance of the message is* (*incumbent*) *on your apostle.”* (*Surah al-Ma’ida 5:92*).**

In this way, the argument is completed. Now, you cannot say that you have not been warned.

Now, we shall describe some forms of gambling.

Objects Of Gambling And Laying Of Bets

There is a universal agreement among the Mujtahids that articles normally used in gambling should not be played with, even if one is not gambling. The tradition mentioned previously which states that one who touches chess is like one who smears his hand in pork; continues,

“The prayers of chess-players are not valid till they wash their hands after the game. And to watch a game of chess is like looking at the genitals of one’s own mother.”[3]

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) on being inquired concerning chess replied:

“Leave the preoccupations of the fire-worshippers to them.”

That is, Muslims should not even go near chess.

In another tradition, Imam (‘a) says:

“Do not even approach chess.”

The tradition from the book, *Tohafful Uqul* distinctly states that the articles employed in gambling cannot be used for any purpose whatsoever and it is *Haram* to do so.

“All the tools and actions of gambling are Haram.”

Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) has said:

“All kinds of games of betting are gambling and the sale, the purchase and the use of all the tools of gambling are Haram. It is only an act that Shaitan instigates you to do.”[4]

Chess and cards should not be indulged in even when played only for intellectual stimulation games with no intent to gamble. These games have an inherent power to obsess the player till he becomes oblivious of his responsibilities towards his family and even his livelihood. Such all-consuming activities lead to the disruption of an otherwise happy family life. Shaitan also will not lose the opportunity to incite the players to play for stakes. Very soon, the game started as an intellectual exercise will slip into a game for making money. The only effective way to eradicate gambling from society is to stay clear of such games as commanded by our Imam (‘a). Hence, Islamhas declared that to manufacture the tools of gambling is*Haram*; to buy or sell them is *Haram* and to spend from the profits of these transactions is *Haram*. It is *Haram*even to have the tools of gambling in ones possession. It is obligatory to destroy them.

Ishaq Ibn Ammar asked Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) that children play with eggs and cashew nuts in the same way as gambling? Imam (‘a) told him:

“Do not even eat these things!”

The following verse of the Divine Book ordains the income of gambling to be *Haram* and makes it obligatory upon the person who wins to restore the amount back to the person who lost it.

“O you who believe! Do not devour your property among yourselves falsely…?” **(*Surah an-Nisa’ 4:29*).**

Playing Games Of Chance Without Betting

We know from the above discussion that to play with articles used in gambling even without betting is

Haram.

To sit and watch the game is also *Haram*. The practice of *Nahy anil Munkar* makes it obligatory on us to leave the place where people are gambling. It is recommended (*mustahab*) that if perchance our eyes fall upon an article of gambling, we should remember Imam Husain (‘a) and curse Yazid (l.a.).

Fazl Ibn Shazan reports from Imam ‘Ali al-Ridha’ (‘a), “At the time the blessed head of Husain Ibn ‘Ali (‘a) was carried into Sham, Yazid (l.a.) started to dine and drink barley wine (similar to modern day ‘beer’) with his associates. After the meal, Yazid (l.a.) ordered the blessed head to be kept in a salver and placed at the foot of his throne. A chessboard was spread out and the accursed Yazid sat down to play chess. During the game, he ridiculed Imam Husain (‘a), his father (‘a) and grandfather (S). Whenever he won a game, he used to take hold of the barley wine and drink Three goblets. Then he used to pour the remaining wine in the salver upon the head of Imam Husain (‘a).”

Hazrat Imam ‘Ali al-Ridha’ (‘a) then continues, “Whoever is our Shi’a must abstain from barley wine and chess. One who sees barley wine or chess must remember Imam Husain (‘a) and invoke curse upon Yazid and the progeny of Yazid. If a Shi’a does this, Allah the Almighty will forgive all his sins even if they are more numerous than the stars.”[5]

Betting With Articles Not Normally Used For Gambling

To lay bets with articles not usually employed in gambling is also *Haram*. Archery and horse racing are exceptions to the extent that it is permissible only for those who participate in the sports to bet amongst themselves. Apart from these two games it is *Haram* to bet in any other competition. For example, yatching, weightlifting, lancing etc. The income of the participant who wins is*Haram*. He must return it to his opponent.

Horse Racing And Archery

It is undoubtedly permissible for participants (and not for spectators) in horse racing and archery to bet among themselves. The winner can rightfully own the amount he wins. Islam has permitted these two competitions because such sports contribute to the overall capabilities of a warrior, and a Muslim well versed in these is better equipped to challenge his adversaries. The details could be pursued in the books of legal rulings.

Shahid Thani in his book *“Masalik”* quotes the unanimous verdict of the Mujtahids. Three traditions are recorded in the book *“Al-Wafi”* from Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) which state that except for horse racing and archery whenever a game is played for stakes, the angels are infuriated and curse the people who lay the bet.

It is recorded that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

“Angles are present when a competition of horse and camel racing or archery is held. Except for these Three, every competition is gambling and (also) Haram.”6

In another tradition, the Holy Prophet (S) has prohibited all types of competitions except these Three.

“Except for horse racing, camel racing and archery, no contest is proper.”7

An authentic tradition by Muhammad Ibn Qays related from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) says:

“Amir ul-Mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a) issued a verdict against a man who had wagered with his friends on the maximum consumption of sheep’s meat. Issuing the judgement Imam (‘a) said, ‘If you have already eaten the sheep, it is yours. But if you have only laid a bet and have not commenced eating, then you have to pay a penalty. This penalty is equal for all the participants and has no connection with who ate more or less. However, he refrained the loser to bear any loss (of money etc.). The one who ate the least and lost the bet will not incur any loss because the bet is invalid.’”

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) concludes that Amir ul-Mu’minin (‘a) has decreed such a deal to be Haram.8

Hazrat Jabir (r.a.) narrates from the report of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (‘a) who has quoted from the Holy Prophet (S):

“Every competition is gambling where the loser has to pay a certain amount. Even if it consist of a cashew-nut or wager dung.”

To employ any article for the purpose of taking a bet is gambling even if such an article is not generally associated with gambling.

Game Without Wager

There is some difference of opinion among the Mujtahids regarding the games of competition that neither use tools of gambling nor are played with stakes. Most of the jurists consider such competitions to be *Haram*.

Allama Hilli (r.a.) in his book *“Tazkerah”* writes, “Yatching competition is not permitted even if the loser may not have to pay anything. This is the unanimous verdict of the scholars.”

Allama Hilli (r.a.) also states, “Competition of throwing stones with ones bare hands is not allowed. In the same way, racing any beast except horse and camel, yatching or racing of birds is not permitted even if a monetary bet is not involved. Cockfights and goat fights are also prohibited. In short, all those contests are prohibited that do not contribute usefully in the field of*Jihad*. For example, standing on foot for a long time, guessing games or number games, staying under water for a long time. In conclusion, except for horse racing and archery, no competition is permitted. Whether it involves a bet or not.”

Certain Jurists like Shahid Thani do not consider such games *Haram* where the tools of gambling are not used and where a bet is not involved. He is inclined to permit such competitions. This opinion appears to be valid especially for a contest where the *Haram* aspects of our religion are not compromised in any way or for a contest which has a specific aim like competition of calligraphy, reading, sewing, building, farming, etc. Athletics and boating can also be in the same category. But since most of the Mujtahids have prohibited all competitions except horse racing and archery, it is better to refrain from contests as a precautionary measure.

However even contests that can be considered permissible are prohibited if they involve a risk. For example, hazardous car–racing competition or gluttony and the dangerous methods of yatching are all *Haram* for they involve risks.

Purchase of lottery tickets in the name of charity, where the money is not refundable and only a few people win money without any effort, is *Haram*. It is gambling and a very great sin.

1. Wasa'il ul–Shi'a. Chapter on Business Transactions.
2. Balahae al– Ijtemai page 329.
3. Wasa'il ul–Shi'a. Chapter of Business Transactions.
4. Tafsir al–Qummi.
5. Uyun al–Akhbar al–Ridha'.
6. Al–Wafi.
7. Al–Wafi.
8. Makasib, quoted from al–Kafi and Tehzib.

Fifteenth Greater Sin: Music

Playing instruments of music is a Greater Sin. It is Haram to play instruments like guitar, piano, tambourine, drums etc. Listening to music is also a Greater Sin. Music as a Greater sin is reported by Fazl ibn Shazan from Imam 'Ali al–Ridha' ('a):

"*And to be engrossed in musical instruments is also a Greater Sin.*"

All the Mujtahids are unanimous in their opinion that the manufacture, sale and purchase of musical instruments is Haram and the income derived from musical activity is also Haram. The transactions involving these (instruments) are invalid. It is Haram even to keep instruments of music in one's possession. It is obligatory to destroy them. This is revealed in a lengthy tradition of Imam Ja'far al–Sadiq ('a) as recorded in the book "Tohafful Uqul". Similarly, Shaykh Hurr al–Amili records the following tradition from Imam Ja'far al–Sadiq ('a):

"The Almighty Allah has prohibited the manufacture of all such things that are exclusively used in Haram

ways; and things that only create evil like pipe, flute, chess and all types of instruments of gambling, images, statues. The manufacture of all such articles is Haram."

Imam (‘a) concluded, "T*hen even learning to sing or play music and teaching it, to sing and play music, to be paid for these things or to be in any way engrossed in these vices is Haram.*"

Music, According To The Traditions

Some more traditions prohibiting music are given below.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (‘a) reports from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said:

"I prohibit for you dancing and playing flute, drums and tabla."[1]

The Holy Prophet (S) has also said,

"The Almighty Allah has sent me as a mercy to the worlds, to guide the people. And He ordered me to eradicate the playing of flute and other instruments of music, all games of vice, idol (worship) and all practices of the days of ignorance."[2]

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (‘a) says,

"A person who has received blessings from Allah and while having these blessings, he plays flute. It is as if he has been thankless of the blessings."[3]

Every moment of our lives, we are enjoying Allah (S.w.T.)'s unlimited benevolence.

Music Causes Shamelessness And Hypocrisy

The Sixth Imam (‘a) has also stated,

"The playing of violin promotes the growth of hypocrisy in the heart like water assists the growth of vegetation (algae)."[4]

Imam (‘a) also says,

"If drums and cymbals are played at one's house for forty days, Allah will impose a satan by the name of 'faqandir'. The satans will infiltrate into every cell of the person's body. With the spread of this evil, the person loses all sense of dignity and self-esteem. He will then not care as to what he says or what is said about him. Then, this satan blows into this person. As a result, he becomes utterly shameless. So mush so that he is not concerned or affected even if his women are dishonoured."[5]

It is usually observed that the people in whose homes music is played with regularity either using musical instruments or by radio or cassettes are absolutely shameless and wanton.

Musician And The Song

Muadda Ibn Ziyad says, “I was in the company of Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) when a person said, “When I go to the toilet, I can hear the singing girls of my neighbour. Sometimes, I remain (in toilet) longer so that I may listen to more of it.”

Imam (‘a) said:

“Desist from listening to music and songs attentively.”

Then this man further said, “Master, I do not go to music gatherings! I only hear the sounds!”

Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) said,

“Have you not read this Qur’anic verse:

“Surely, the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these shall be questioned about that?” (***Surah al-’Isra’, 17:36***).

The man replied, “I was not aware of this ayat. I regret my actions. I shall not do so in the future. I repent for my past sins and I seek forgiveness from my Lord.”

Seeing his condition, Imam (‘a) said,

“Get up! Go and perform ghusl and offer Salat and pray for forgiveness. You have certainly been involved in a deadly sin and a terrible situation. You have repented for it and I thank Allah for that; and I seek forgiveness of Allah for all those things that He dislikes. Certainly, Allah only dislikes the evil things. Leave the evil things to the evil people because there are different people suitable for different things.”[6]

Divine Bounties (Barakat) Are Removed

Amir ul-Mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a) says,

“Angels do not even enter a house that has wine, drum, tambourine or a flute. Even the prayers of the inhabitants of this house are unacceptable. They are deprived of barakat.”[7]

Hazrat Imam ‘Ali al-Ridha’ (‘a) has said,

“To listen to a musical instrument is one of the Greater Sins.”[8]

The Blackened Face Of The Musician

The Holy Prophet (S) has stated,

“A person who possesses a sitar, on the Day of Qiyama will be raised with a black face. His hands will be holding a sitar of fire. Seventy thousand angels with maces of fire will be hitting him on the face and the head. The singer will arise from his grave, blind, deaf and dumb. The adulterer will be similarly raised. The player of flute will also be made to rise in this way as will be the drum player.”9

It means that all such people will appear on the field of “Mahshar” (on the day of reckoning) as blind, deaf and dumb.

A House Where Music Is Played For Forty Days

Hazrat Imam ‘Ali al-Ridha’ (‘a) remarks,

“A person invites Divine wrath when in his house instruments like flute, drum and chess are played for forty days. If this man dies within these forty days, his death would be of a sinner and a transgressor. His place shall be in Hell. And what a dreadful place it is!”10

Music And The Last Period Of Time

The traditions concerning the signs of the last stage before the Zuhur of our Imam (‘a) mention music:

“And you shall see that music will be so prevalent that no one will dissuade others nor will he find in himself the need to do so. And you shall see that music would be openly played even in the two sanctuaries (the city of Makkah and Madinah).”11

This is what we see in the present age where obscene music is openly played in the markets, on the streets, in shops and houses and even cars and no one bothers to prevent it!

So far we have mentioned the punishment of the hereafter for the sin of playing or listening to music. Now, we shall discuss the evils of music that affect life on earth. These evils too are numerous. Scholars have compiled complete books on this subject. For example we have the following books in Persian, “Munazrah Doctor-o-Pir”, “Balahai Ijtemai”, “Mausiqi-o-Islam”, etc.

Effects Of Music On The Nervous System

Expert Doctors, Scientists and biologists have defined two types of nerves, the principal nerves and the arterial nerves. The principal nerves stretch from the neck to all vital organs. The arterial nerves spread from the main nerves to all parts of the body. The secondary nerves are connected to outward parts of the body and convey the messages to the brain. When the veins enlarge the blood pressure decreases. Due to the shrivelling of blood vessels, the blood pressure increases. When the blood pressure varies at different parts of the body it affects the health.

When the secondary nerves work they produce heat whereas the functioning of the central nerves

produces the opposite effect. It is due to these nerves that feelings of sloth, sleep, thoughtlessness, forgetfulness, grief, sorrow, fainting, unconsciousness and even death occur. Obviously, when music can affect various nerves, it can give rise to various maladies. Mental diseases as well as physical ailments can occur. These mental effects can destroy man's reasoning capacity. It is for this reason that one who listens to music is unable to perform work that can be accomplished by a sane person.

Music creates vibrations in the body and these are conveyed to all the parts of the body through the nervous system. As a result of this, indigestion occurs. Music affects the heart in such a way that the heartbeats become irregular. The blood pressure goes awry. All such ailments make a person permanently ill. Consequently, even modern medical science, in spite of its astonishing progress, fails in such a situation. Sometimes, the music is so intense that the listeners lose their sanity. They become dumb and various kinds of mental diseases occur. In places where music is more prevalent, we find that there are more neurotic illnesses. It is for this reason that more mental hospitals are to be found in Europe and America.

Dr. Adlen writes against music, "Even though it seems pleasant, the effect of music is profound upon the nervous system. Especially, when the temperature is high, the ill effect of music is more. This is the reason that ill effects of music are more in the hot areas of Iran and Saudi Arabia. The American people are so disgusted with the bane of music that they have united to demand from the senate a permanent ban on music. It is a pity that the whole world clearly perceives the evils of music and yet adopts music as entertainment."12

1. al-Kafi.
2. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il, Chapter 79.
3. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
4. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
5. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
6. al-Kafi Chapter of Music.
7. Wasa'il ul-Shi'a.
8. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il.
9. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il.
10. Mustanad al Taraqi.
11. Mustanade Naraqi.
12. Refer to the booklet; "Tasir Mausiqi bar Asab" pages 3,6,10.

Glossary Of Islamic Terms

'Aqq al-Walidayn: One who disobeys or angers his/her parents

Ahl ul-Bayt: "People of the House". They are the Holy Prophet (S)'s family: Janabe Fatima Zahra (s.a.),

‘Ali (‘a) and eleven of their descendants who are successors to the Prophet (S) after Imam ‘Ali (‘a).

Ahsan: Goodness

Amanat: Trust

Amrbil Ma’ruf: Enjoining others to do good

Ayat: Verse of the Holy Qur’an

Barakat: Divine blessings and bounties

Barzakh: Purgatory. The intermediary stage between death and the Day of the Judgement

Bismillah: Literally “In the Name of Allah”. Said before commencing any task.

Dhuhrain: The two ritual prayers of Dhuhr (noon) and Asr (afternoon)

Dhuhoor: Reappearance (of Imam Mahdi [a.t.f.s.]).

Dirham: Unit of currency

Diyah: Blood money

Du’a: Invocation or Supplication

Fajr: Dawn

Faqih: Jurisprudent, Islamic Jurist

Fir’aun: Pharaoh (In this context Ramases II)

Furu ad-Din: Branches of Religion or the practical laws of Islam

Hadd: Islamic legal punishment (plural: Hudud)

Hadith: A statement of the Holy Prophet (S) or of the Holy Imams (‘a)

Hajj: Annual pilgrimage to Makkah during the month of Dhul Hijja

Halal: Permissible, legal

Haram: Prohibited, illegal

Hasana: A good deed deserving heavenly rewards

Hijab: Statutory Islamic dress for women, veil, curtain

Iblis: Satan

Iddah: A prescribed period a woman has to pass after divorce or her husband's demise before she can remarry.

I'tikaf: A recommended ritual consisting of a continuous stay of at least three days in the mosque during the last ten days of the month of Ramadhan.

Iman: Faith

Imla: Respite given by Allah to the sinners in which they become more heedless of their sins

Insha Allah: Common expression that literally means "If Allah wills" or "God Willing"

'Isha: Late evening

Jamaat: Congregation

Janabat: A state of ritual impurity that can be removed by performing ghusl (bath)

Jihad: Struggle in the way of Allah (S.w.T.), religious war

Kaba: The Holy House of Allah in Makkah, the directions that Muslims face during prayers.

Kaffara: Religious fine, penalty

Kafir: One who denies God

Kalima: To say: "I witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad (S) is the Messenger of Allah". Also called the Shahadayn. This testimony makes one a Muslim.

Kuffar: Plural of Kafir

Kunniyat: Patronym

Laylat 'l-Qadr: The Night of Power. Believed to be one of the odd numbered nights in the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan

Maghribain: The two prayers of Maghrib (early evening) and 'Isha (late evening)

Makruh: Detestable, in the Islamic terminology it denotes an action performing which does not incur sin but refraining from which earns divine rewards

Ma'rifat: Recognition, Realization

Masjidul-Haram: The Holy Mosque in Makkah

Ma'sumin: Infallible, Inerrant (Singular: Mas'um)

Mahram: Relatives between whom marriage is prohibited

Mahshar: The field where people will be collected on the Day of the Judgement for their final Accounting

Mi'raj: Ascension (to heaven)

Mithqal: A measure of weight of about 4.6 gms.

Muhib: Admirer

Mu'min: Believer

Mubah: Permitted. It denotes an action performing of which earns no rewards and refraining from it is not punishable

Mujtahids: Doctors of Islamic law

Munafiq: Hypocrite

Mushrik: Polytheist

Mustahab: Recommended. It is an action performing which earns rewards and refraining from it is not punishable

Mutawatir: A frequently related tradition

Nahy 'Anil Munkar: Forbidding evil

Najis: Unclean

Nama-e-Amal: Scroll of deeds (Farsi). Arabic: Kitab al-Amal

Non-mahram: Persons between whom marriage is possible

Nawafil: Recommended prayers (singular: Nafila)

Nikah: Marriage ceremony

Qasr: Shortening of the ritual prayers during a journey

Qat'a ar-Rahm: Breaking off relations with relatives

Qadha: An unfulfilled obligatory act

Qadhi: Judge, jurist

Qunut: Despondence

Rakat: A unit of ritual prayer

Riwayah: A narration

Riyaa: An act of showing off

Rizq: Sustenance

Sadat: Descendants of the Holy Prophet (S) through Imam Husain ('a)

Sadaqah: Voluntary charity, alm

Salam: Salute, Islamic greeting

Salat: Ritual prayers

Shaban: A month of the Muslim calender

Shahadatain: See Kalima

Shari'a: Islamic law

Shiraz: A city of Iran

Silat ar-Rahm: An act of goodness towards ones relatives. The opposite of Qat'a ar-Rahm

Sirat: Path

Siyam: Fast

Taqwa: Piety

Taslim: Acceptance

Tawakkul: Reliance

Tawfiq: Divine inspiration

Tawhid: Belief in the absolute Oneness of Allah

Thawab: Divine or spiritual reward

Toman: Currency of Iran

Ulil-Amr: One who holds an authoritative position

Umma: Followers (of Prophets)

Uquq: (Plural of ‘Aqq): See *‘Aqq al-Walidayn*

Wajib: Obligatory

Wajib al-A’ini: An obligation that is to be carried out by every person

Wajib al-Kifai: An obligatory act which if performed by one ceases to be obligatory on the others

Wilayat: Love and obedience

Yas: Despair

Zakat: Obligatory Islamic wealth tax

Ziyarat: Visitation or the recitation of salutation while facing the tomb of religious personalities

Zimmi: A non-muslim who lives under the protection of an Islamic government

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