



Selections from
QAZI NOAMAN'S

Kitab-ul-Himma fi Adabi Ataba-el-a'emma

or

Code of Conduct for the followers of Imam

Translated into English

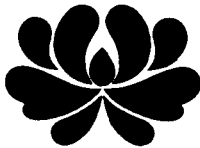
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PREFACE

The Research Department of the Ismaili Association, West Pakistan, Karachi, is pleased to bring out the first publication of its series the main object of which is to popularise the Ismaili literature among the Ismailis and others who are interested in Ismailism.

It is a translation of a well known book in Arabic "Kitab-ul-Himma" of Qazi No'man who wrote it in the tenth century A.D. Its subject-matter is the laws of behaviour prescribed for the followers of the Imams.

Since our object in the publication is the popularisation of the Ismaili literature and not necessarily a scholarly contribution, we have made, not a verbatim but a free translation of the book. Without tampering with the original we have changed the construction here and there by splitting long sentences into small ones and by treating long adjectival and adverbial clauses as independent sentences. We have made no additions and alterations but we have made some subtractions which we believe are out of date now.

In every chapter we have dropped down one or more paragraphs here and there and we have omitted the ninth chapter from the 1st part and the first, eighth, and eleventh from the second.

It is on this account that we have named the book "Al-Majalis from Kitabul-Himma."

Since, the author Qazi No'man and his family have made the largest and the richest contribution to the Ismaili literature, we think it proper to give a short sketch of the life of this great man.

*Jawad Muscati
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Code of Conduct

LIFE OF QAZI NO'MAN.

In the history of the Fatmides, we know no talented family which has influenced the intellectual life of the Fatmide period in Egypt and in other countries to the extent to which the family of No'man has done. No'mans have played a great part in enriching the Fatmide period with their great intellectual wealth. This gifted family has left behind books on the Fatmide Faith which were used as models by almost all the religious divines of the period and the later writers. The writings of the family of No'man upto this day are considered to be the most authoritative information on the Fatmide Faith.

Qazi Abu Hanifatun-No'man bin Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Mansoor bin Hayunat-tamimi-al Maghrabi was the founder of this family. In the history of the Fatmide missionaries he is known as Qazi No'man and not as Abu Hanifah lest he should be mistaken for Abu Hanifa No'man, a well known Sunni founder of a school of thought.

We know very little of the date of his birth and the earlier part of his life. Different historians have suggested different dates of his birth. But they all seem to be a guess work. There is nothing authentic on which we can lay hands. The date of his birth continues to be a mystery, but the year of his death has been unanimously put down by the historians as 363 A. H. (973 A.D.). He is

reported to have served in Egypt for a considerable long period as the Qazi until he died there at the end of the year 363 A.H. He is said to have lived for more than a hundred years.

We know practically nothing of his earlier days and of his fore-fathers. Ibn Khali-kan tells us that his father Abu Abdulla Mohammed had lived a long life. He had a great fund of information which he often used to give to the people as a result of his long experience. He died in the month of Rajab of 351 A.H. (951 A.D.) His funeral prayers were led by his son No'man and he was buried at one of the gates of Qairwan. This is all that Ibn Khali-kan tells us. The life of the fore-fathers of this great man is obscure. Historians make no mention of it. No'man himself mentions nothing in his books either about his fore-fathers or about his earlier career before the establishment of the Fatmide Khilafat in the West in 269 A.H. (882 A.D.)

Ibn Khalikan tells us that originally he belonged to the Maliki sect of the Sunnis and later on he embraced the Fatmide Faith. But the Shia historians tell us that No'man was first a 'Maliki'. From a 'Maliki' he turned into an Isna Ashri Shia and from the Isna Ashri Shia he turned into an Ismaili. Beyond this we know nothing of his earlier activities.

When Imám Mehdi made his appearance public and founded the Fatmide Khilafat in 296 A.H. (908 A.D.) after routing the Aghlabites and capturing their countries, a large number of the Muslims from the West followed his faith and Qazi No'man was one of them.

In the days of the Fatmide Caliph Al-Qayem-be-Amrillah, No'man came into importance and was appointed the Qazi of Tripoli in the West. When the Imam Al-Mansoor built the city of Mansooriya, he appointed No'man as the Qazi of this place and all the other important cities in Africa. Qazi No'man talks of this in his 'Majalis' and books of travels in the following manner. "When the Imam Al-Mansoor Billah called me back from the capital city of Tripoli and granted me an interview, it happened to be the morning of Friday. The Imam conferred on me a robe of honour and ordered me to go to the 'Jama-Masjid' at Qairwan and conduct the 'Juma-prayers' and recite the Khutba in the name of the Imam. He ordered a party of well-armed body guards to accompany me to the mosque and bring me back safe. The next day he issued orders of my appointment as the Qazi of Mansooriya, Qairwan, Mahdiya and all the cities and provinces of Africa."

This shows that No'man was the head of the judicial department of the Fatmides. In 341 A.H. (952 A.D.) when Imam Al-Moizo-le-dinillah ascended the throne No'man rose to the height of

his influence. He became a constant companion of the Imam. He was always with him whether the Imam was in the capital or outside it on his tour. In his book *Al-majaliso-wal-musayarat*. No'man refers to his influence with the Imam by quoting a reply from Imam Al-Moizo-le-dinillah to his letter. The reply is as follows. "O No'man, may God preserve you. I have read the contents of your letter. I find that you are not sure of my patronage. You seem to entertain unnecessary fears. You have no reason to fear any adverse change in my attitude towards you. On the contrary you should entertain greater hopes and aspire for a higher position. I know every thing about you. Every well-wisher of mine ought to look upon you as a model. You should continue on with your work in right earnest. Your friends will envy your lot and your enemies will feel jealous of you. May God help you and keep you straight. With regard to the position that you occupied with my predecessor, nothing is hidden from my notice. We, the Imams, are the roots and branches of the same tree. If my father has disappeared physically, the Imamate shall continue for ever. The spirits of the Imams are a connected chain, a link within a link. If your patron is gone your Imam is here. Thank God and entrust your affairs to Him. Write to me about your needs and you will get what you want."

The contents of this letter show that after the death of Imam Al-Mansoor, No'man was afraid

of being removed from the post of the Qazi. But, contrary to his fears the Imam Al-Moiz treated him with great respect and raised his position by making him a close associate with him. No'man has mentioned in his *Al-majaliso-wal-musayarat* all that he had seen and had heard from Imam Al-Moiz during his association with him.

When Imam Al-Moiz came from West to Egypt in 362 A.H. (972 A.D.) the members of the family of No'man were with him and No'man was the Qazi of the army. People thought that No'man would be appointed the Qazi of Egypt but Imam Al-Moiz allowed the former Qazi Abu Tahir Mohammed bin Ahmed-az-zehli to continue the job with instructions that he should give his decisions according to the Fatmide theology. The Qazi always consulted in his decision Qazi No'man until he died in 363 A.H. in Egypt.

Ibn Khali-kan tells us on the authority of Al-Musubbihi that No'man was well-versed in the Fatmide theology. He further tells us on the authority of Ibn Zulak that No'man bin Mohammed, the Qazi was an authority on the Quran. In theology he was so well-versed that he was conversant not only with all its branches but all the differences of opinion among the theologians of different schools of thought. He was very well informed in literature, poetry and history. All those historians who happen to talk of No'man make special mention of his learning and accom-

plishments. His great works are the best proof of what the historians have said about him. There is no wonder then if we find his books the very best and the most authoritative works on the Fatmide Faith. Almost all the learned divines have drawn their inspiration from his works. We know no Fatmide missionary worth the name who differed from No'man in his solution of the important problems in theology.

No'man tells us in his 'Majalis-wal-Musacrat' "The Imam Al-Moizzo-le-dinillah often used to invite me to address the people on the knowledge of the Fatmide Faith. I used to write books and read them to the Imam, chapter by chapter, before I read them to the people. At one time Al-Moizzo-le-dinillah gave me the subject matter of a book in a nut-shell and explained to me every thing that pertained to this matter to my fullest satisfaction. He asked me to write a comprehensive book on the subject. I took a long time to finish the work. When I carried it to him I apologised for the delay I had made in executing his order. He said, O No'man, do not mind the delay. Your work is brief but it is full of substance. You have used few words conveying a wealth of meaning. You think that you have taken long to finish this book. You are un-necessarily worried over the matter. Had it not been for your sincerity of purpose and the Divine help which has crowned your efforts with success, you would not have been able to produce even one chapter in a much

longer period than what you have taken to finish this book."

There are many such instances that go to prove that No'man before he wrote any book got the necessary instructions and inspiration from the Imam Al-Moizzo-le-dinillah. Before he showed his works to the public he always referred them to the Imam for his approval. This is the reason why the historian Ibn Zulak calls No'man a "daa-ee". We have nothing on record to show that he ever acted as a 'daa-ee'. He was called 'daa-ee' because like the 'daa-ee' he always showed his writings to the Imam before he read them to the public.

The 'daa-ee' Idrees says in his 'Uyoonul-Akhbar' "No'man was held in high esteem by the Imams. He held a very high rank with them. He was one of the pillars of the mission." This very writer who calls him one of the pillars of the mission never says in clear terms whether No'man was a 'daa-ee' or a 'hujjat' and does not say a word in praise of his missionary work as he does in the case of other 'daa-ees.'

With regard to his works, Ibn Khalikan says "No'man has written for the 'Ahle-beit' voluminous works of one thousand pages each in the best possible style. He has written a marvellous book on the virtues of the Imams and the vices of their enemies. He has a large number of publications

on the refutation of the arguments of the opponents of the Fatmide Faith. His refutations of Abu Hanifa, Malik, Shafa-e and Ibn Surej are the best known ones of their kind. He has written a comprehensive book on the difference of opinion among the learned divine to prove the validity of the doctrines of the Ahle-beit. He has written a 'Qasida' on theology which is known as 'Muntakhaba'.

Professor Ivanow in his book "Guide to the Ismaili Literature" gives a long list of his works under different headings. Under theology he mentions (1) Kitabul Eazah (2) Mukh-tasarul-Eazah, (3) Kitabul Akhbar fil Fiqh, (4) Mukhtasarul Aasar. This book is very popular with the Bohras. (5) Al-iqtesar, which is a well known book, (6) Qasida-Muntakhabah, (7) Da-e-mul-Islam (8) Minhajul Faraiz, (9) Al-Muqtasar, (10) Kitabul Ittefaq wal Ifteraq and (11) Kitabul Yamboo.

Under the heading "The books of history" he mentions (1) Sharahul Akhbar, (2) Qasida Zatul-Mehnat, (3) Qasida Zatul-minan.

Under the heading "The books on Realities" he mentions (1) Daemul-Islam, (2) Taweelus-Shariat, (3) Asasul-Taweel, (4) Sharahul Khutabatil-lati le Amiril-Mominin Ali, (5) Kitabul-Tauheed wal Imamah, (6) Isbatul Haqaiq fi Marefat-tauheedul Khaliq, (7) Hududul Marafat fi tafsiril-Quran, (8) Nahjul Sabil ila Marafat ilmittaweel and (9) Ar-Rahat-o-wal-Taselli.

Under the heading of Refutation of the opponents, he mentions (1) Ikhtelaful-Mazahib, (2) Al-Risalatul-Misriyah fil-radde-al-Shafie, (3) Al-Rado ala Ibn Sarajul-Baghdadi, (4) Zatul-Bayan fil-rade ala Ibn Quteba (5) Dameul Mujiz fil-rad-ala-al-Ataqee.

Under the heading of 'The books on Doctrine' he mentions, (1) Qasidatul-Mukhtara, (2) Kitabul-Himma, (3) Kitabul-Taharat, (4) Al-Arjuza (5) Mafatehun-he'ma, (6) Kitabud-Dua (7) Kitabul Ibadat Youme-wa-lcla, (8) Kaifiatus-salat alan-Nabi (9) At-Taqeeb wal-Inteqad, (10). Kitabul Hula wa Siyah (11) Kitab-ul-Shuroot, (12) Maqamatul Aaimma, (13) Taweel-ur-Ruya and (14) At-aqre-o-wal-taneef.

Under the heading 'Books on Preaching and History' he mentions (1) Resala ilal-murshidi daa-ee bi-Misr fi-farbeyatil-Momeneen, (2) Al-Majalis wal Masaerat (3), Ma-a-lemul-Mahdi, (4) Al-Manaqib le Ahle bait and (5) Iftetahul-Dawa.

Qazi No'man bin Mohammad was the head and the founder of the family of No'mans. His sons and grand-sons kept up the family reputation and every one of them made a name for himself in the field of literature. They had specialised in theology and the post of the Qazi and the 'daa-ee' in Egypt were monopolised by them upto the days of the Fatmide Caliph Al Imam Al-Mustansir-billah who ruled from 1035 to 1094 A.D.

Qazi No'man Abu Hanfa had two sons, Abul Husain Ali who died in 374 A.H. (984 A.D.) and Abu Abdullah Mohammed who died in 389 A.H. (998 A.D.) Abul Husain had one son known as Abu Abdullah-ul-Husain-an-No'man bin Ali who died in 395 A.H. (1004 A.D.) Abu Abdullah left a son Abdul Qasam Abdul Aziz who was murdered in 401 A.H. (1010 A.D.). He had a son Abu Mohammed al-Qasam who died in 441 A.H. (1049 A.D.) This is all that we know of his progeny.

When the Imam Al-Moizo-le-dinillah came to Egypt he brought with him Abul Husain bin No'man who was born in the month of Rajab in the year 328 A.H. (939 A.D.) along with the other members of the No'man family. After the death of No'man, Abdul Husain was appointed a joint Qazi of Egypt with Abu Tahir Zahli. They continued to hold this post jointly until the Imam Al-Moiz died and he was succeeded by Imam Al-Aziz. In the month of Safar of the year 366 A.H. (976 A.D.). Abu Tahir suffered from paralysis and Ali bin No'man was appointed the sole Qazi of Egypt. He was held in high esteem by Al-Aziz, but unfortunately he did not hold the job of the Qazi long. He suffered from fever and within a fortnight he died on Monday the 6th of Rajab of the year 374 A.H. (984 A.D.) Imam Al-Aziz conducted the funeral prayers of this great learned divine who had made a mark in theology like his father. Ali bin No'man

was the first person who bore the title of the "Qazi-ul-Quzat."

After the death of Ali bin No'man, Imam Al-Aziz wrote to his brother Abu Abdullah Mohammed bin No'man saying "After your brother the post of the Qazi is reserved for you. It will continue in your family." Thus, Mohammed bin No'man was appointed to the post of Qazi-il-Quzat in which he had acted sometime during the life time of his brother. He was very well versed not only in theology but in other sciences as well such as literature, psychology, history, poetry and physiognomy.

In 375 A.H. (985 A.D.) his son Abdul Aziz was married to the daughter of Al-Qaidul-Joharus-Saqli and Imam Al-Aziz attended the marriage as a mark of respect for Mohammed bin No'man. Later on he appointed this newly married son of Mohammed bin No'man to act for his father at Cairo and Misr. Mohammed bin No'man rose so high in the estimation of the Imam that he was allowed to sit along with the Imam on the 'Mimber'. Ibn Khalikan tells us, on the authority of Ibn Zulak, who was a contemporary of Ibn-un-No'man, "We never saw a Qazi in Iraq or Egypt who enjoyed the dignity of Mohammed bin-No'man. He well deserved this elevated position which was due to his great learning accompanied with piety and a high sense of duty. The Wazir Yaqub bin Killis grew jealous of the Qazi

and fearing lest his great influence with the Imam should harm him, he adopted ways and means of decreasing the importance of the Qazi. He cut down the powers of the Qazi but when the Imam Al-Hakim be-Amrillah succeeded Imam Al-Aziz in 385 A.H. (995 A.D.). Qazi Mohammed bin No'man resumed his former powers and became a great favourite of the Imam. On the 24th of Safar 399 A.H. (1008 A.D.) the Qazi died and his funeral prayers were led by the Imam who was greatly grieved by the loss of this genius. The Imam kept the post vacant for a month and ultimately filled it with Husain bin Ali bin No'man of the well-known family of the No'mans.

Husain bin Ali bin No'man was born at Mehdia in 353 A.H. (964 A.D.). In his very early days he shifted to Cairo where he learnt theology so well that he acquired the reputation of a 'Polar Star' among the learned divines of the Fatmide Faith. He often acted as a Qazi for his uncle Mohammed bin No'man and after his death in the month of Safar 391 A.H. (1000 A.D.) he was appointed the permanent Qazi. One day, after delivering his lectures on theology in the Jama Mosque of Fustat, when he stood for prayers and bent down for 'ruku' some one hit him on the head and he was taken home with a bleeding wound in his head. After sometime when his wound was completely healed he was given twenty armed men to protect his life. Whenever he stood for prayers these body guards stood behind him with naked

swords to guard him. The Imam Al-Hakim treated him with highest respect and made a great addition to his allowances. He put him in charge of leading of the Juma prayers and the reciting of the Khutba and appointed him a 'daa-ee' with the special privilege of giving lectures on the interpretation of the Ismaili philosophy at the palace. He is the first Qazi from amongst the Fatmide Qazis who, in addition to the job of the Qazi, also held the position of the 'daa-ee'.

Abdul Aziz bin Mohammed bin No'man is another prominent figure in the No'man family. He was born in the West in Rabiul-awwal of 355 A.H. (965 A.D.). He was well informed in the knowledge of 'dawat'. In the life time of his father he often acted as the Qazi and after the death of his cousin he was appointed the permanent Qazi. He is the author of the famous book on the Fatmide Faith namely 'Kitabul Balaghul Akhbar-wan-Namusul-Azam fi Usooliddin.' He was the first person to be appointed the head of the University which was founded by Al-Hakim. Here he used to lecture to the students on his grand father's book "Ikhtilaf-usoolul-Mazahib".

This is the short sketch of Qazi No'man, the author of the book 'Kitabul-Himma'. We could not deal with the details of his life within the space of a few pages. To excite curiosity amongst the Ismailis and the enthusiastic students of Ismail-

ism, our brief survey of the life of this illustrious family, we feel pretty sure, will not miss the mark. They will not fail to realise the extent to which the Ismailis are indebted to the family of No'man for the contribution they have made to the Ismaili literature, to the Ismaili philosophy and to the general culture of Islam.

* * * *

Majlis I

DEVOTION TO THE IMAM

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This chapter concerns all the servants of God. If I enter into detail, it will exceed the limits of this book and will make an independent book by itself. Hence I have dealt with only that part of the matter which it is absolutely necessary for the purpose.

A firm faith in the 'Wilayat' of the Imams, submission to the Imam and devotion to the Imams are the ground work of this book. They are the basic principles which deserve our foremost attention.

Those who are well acquainted with the true position of the Imams and have a firm faith in their Imam, look upon the duties they owe to them and obedience to their commands as the duties enjoined on them by God. They should have a greater regard for the glory and sublimity of the Imams than the followers and the office-holders of the temporal kings have for their masters. They should stand in greater awe of the Imams than these officers stand in awe of their kings.

God has laid down in His Holy Book that it is our duty to obey them. He has associated the devotion to the Imams with devotion to Him and devotion to the Prophet by saying "**Obey God, the Prophet and your Spiritual Leaders.**"

1. Chapter IV Verse 59 Al-Nisa (Women) Holy Quran.

This makes it obligatory for those, who, by the grace of God, belong to the various categories of the followers of the Imams, to have full faith in their Imam and feel in their hearts of heart that the pleasure of the Imams is the pleasure of God and that their displeasure is the displeasure of God. They should earn 'jannat' as a reward for seeking the pleasure of the Imams which is the pleasure of God and should shun the hell fire which is the inevitable consequence of the wrath of the Imams which is the wrath of God.

They should concentrate on things which can bring them nearer to the Imams and should train themselves in such a way as to act always to the satisfaction of the Imams. Their love and hatred, their pleasure and displeasure should be regulated by the will of the Imams. If they detect in their minds any inclination to unwillingness in doing this, they should discipline their minds and gain complete mastery over them and see that their un-willingness is turned into willingness. They should solicit God for the forgiveness of this which is the greatest sin. They should realise that repentance is meaningless if they do not uproot that tendency in them and do not like or dislike what the Imams like or dislike and do not love or hate what the Imams love or hate.

They should have implicit faith in these things and they should give a proof of their faith by profession in words and by practice in their intentions and actions. They should not mind it even

if in doing this they have to lose their lives and suffer the loss of their families, properties and children. They should submit to the Imams in all their affairs and the motive behind their submission should be obedience and no other consideration.

They must bear in mind that if they fail to do this or make the slightest omission in this direction, they cease to be 'momins'. God says **"Certainly by the Lord they will not be considered as 'momins' unless they refer their disputes to you and are not discontented with your decision and submit to you entirely'."**

This is the duty enjoined on the 'momins' by God who has associated with the devotion to Himself, the devotion to the Prophet and the devotion to the Imams and who has made the Imams His Vice-regents on earth after the Prophet, may the greetings of God be on him and on the Imams the chosen and the best of his descendants.

Accordingly it is our bounden duty to hold the Imams in the highest esteem and to acknowledge their supremacy in thoughts, words and actions.

The Imam of the time has as much claim on the followers of his time as the Prophet had on the followers of his time, and the devotion to the Imam must be the same as the devotion to the Prophet because God has associated this devotion with the devotion to Himself, and He is above every body and beyond the comprehension of men.

In short, no devotion of a devotee will be taken into account unless it is made to the Imams and none will be included among the 'momins' unless he submits to the Imams.

What we have said in this chapter will be sufficient for intelligent readers provided they use their intelligence to understand it.

* * * *

Majlis 2.

LOVE FOR THE IMAMS.

God the great says to Mohammed His Prophet, may the greetings be on him and his descendants, **"Say, I do not ask you to pay me (for the guidance) any reward excepting your love for my kith and kin."** When the messenger of God was asked as to who were his kith and kin, he replied "Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husain." He further said "He who loves them, loves me. He who hates them, hates me," none but a 'momin' loves Ali and none but a hypocrite hates Ali. It is said that in the days of the Prophet, 'momins' could not be distinguished from the hypocrites by any thing but their love for Ali. The Prophet ordained and exhorted his followers to love Ali and God enjoined it as a duty on the Moslems in general.

Hence it is the duty of the Momins to love the Imam of their time who is the descendant of the Prophet. Abu Jafar Mohammed al-Baqir bin Ali, greetings be on him, was asked to explain the meaning of the verse **"I do not ask for any remuneration excepting love for my kith and kin."** He explained it by saying, "It is the duty of every 'momin' to love us who are the 'Ahle-bait', the kith and kin of Mohammed."

He further said "He who loves us, will rise with us on the Day of Judgment." Again he said "Religion is nothing but love." God says, **"He made you love your faith and adorned it in your hearts".**¹

Another verse of the Quran says, "If you love God, then follow me, God will love you and forgive you your sins".² Ali, peace be on him, is reported to have said to some of his followers, "May I inform you of a virtuous deed which secures the doer from the frightfulness of the Day of Judgment and of a vice which drags its perpetrator head-long to Hell-fire?" They said, "Yes, O the Commander of the Faithful tell us." He said, "The virtue is to love us and the vice is to hate us."

It behoves those who know the true position of the Imams to love them sincerely. They should see that their faith in them is prompted by love and not by the expectation of a wordly gain from them.

For, if one's love is prompted by a wordly consideration it ceases with the loss of consideration. Hence let the love be love for the sake of love and let it continue to be the same whether one is favoured or disfavoured by the Imams and whether one is in prosperous or adverse circumstances. What is done for the sake of God cannot

1. Ch. 49. V. 7 Al-hujurat (Chambers) Holy Quran.

2. Ch. 3. V. 30 Aali-Amran (the Family of Amran) Holy Quran.

be affected by the vicissitudes of life. Change of circumstances can affect only those things which are done out of some wordly consideration.

Jafar bin Mohammed, may the greetings of God be on him, says, "He who loves us should make his love as pure gold."

Ali, may the greetings of God be on him, says, "If I were to strike a blow on the nose of a 'momin', he will never hate me, on the other hand if I were to shower gold and silver on a hypocrite he will never love me."

Thus, those who love the Imams, should be sincere in their love towards them and should pay them their dues. It is the duty of the lover to love his beloved with sincerity. It is his duty to return to him the 'amanat' with honesty and support him and never forsake him or disobey him. It is his duty to like and dislike for him what he likes and dislikes for himself. It is his duty to see that his inward regard does not differ from his outward behaviour. This is the quality of love which the lovers display to their beloveds of the world.

One can easily imagine then the quality and intensity of love which one is expected to extend to the Imam who is loved by God, who knows all about what we do openly or in secret. The best thing for a lover of this category is to keep a watch on his own self to see that his love for the Imam

inwardly and outwardly does not fall below the standard.

In conclusion, O momins, be sincere in your love for the Imams so that you may be amply rewarded by God. Whatever I have mentioned in this chapter will suffice for those who are on the right path.

* * * *

Majlis 3

THE RETURN OF THE ' AMANAT ' TO THE IMAM.

God says, "God commands you to pay back the 'amanat' to their owners'." "If any one of you were to deposit something with some one then let the one with whom the things are deposited return the deposit to its depositor²." "O momins, do not commit breach of trust in your dealings with God and the Prophet and do not abuse the trust in the matter of 'amanats' knowingly³."

The Prophet says, "Do not commit breach of trust, do not go to excess and do not be deceitful." "It is your duty to return the 'amanat'. He who deceives us is disowned by us." "It is unlawful for you to shed the blood of one another and to misappropriate the properties of one another."

Ali, be the greetings of God on him, says to some one of his followers, "Pay back what has been deposited with you and do not commit the breach of trust in your dealings even with those who have abused your trust." Imam Jaffar-us-Sadiq, be the greetings of God on him, says "Return the

1. Ch. 4 V. 58 Nisa (women) holy Quran.
 2. Ch. 2 V. 283 Baqra (cow) holy Quran.
 3. Ch. 8 V. 27 Anfal (accession) Holy Quran.

deposit to its owner, it matters little whether he is Red or Black, a Haruri, a Syrian or an Ommyade" Pay back the 'amanat' even if the owner is your enemy even if he is the murderer of Husain."

These quotations from the Quran and the traditions make it clear to us, that God, the Prophet and the Imams have ordered us in unequivocal terms to return the deposits to their owners regardless of their being our friends or foes. It is the duty of the Momin to pay back the 'amanat'. This keeps up his credit, guards his religion and purifies his soul. If he commits the breach of trust, he loses his credit, and brings disgrace to himself, his religion and his reputation.

As far as the depositor is concerned, he loses nothing of the kind. His loss or gain is a monetary one. If the deposit is not returned to him, he loses some money and if it is returned to him it adds to his capital.

It then behoves every one who fears God and safeguards his self-respect that he should pay back the 'amanat'. If it is obligatory on us to return the 'amanat' to all sorts of people, how many times more obligatory does it become on us that we should return the 'amanat' which belongs to the Imams? To commit a breach of trust in your dealings with the Imams is a dreadful affair and the worst possible sin. God says, "**O memins don't commit breach of trust in your**

dealings with God and the Prophet'." Thus he who deceives the Prophet, deceives God. God says, "**Those who make covenant with you make covenant with God'.**" "**He who obeys the Prophet obeys God. Obey God, obey the Prophet and obey your spiritual heads'.**" It follows that obedience to the Imams is obedience to God and disobedience to them is disobedience to God. He who is treacherous to them is treacherous to God and he who is true to them is true to God. He who pays them their 'amanat', pays the 'amanat' of God to God. If breach of trust is forbidden in general, then breach of trust in our dealings with the Imams is the worst sin.

In short, breach of trust in our dealings with the Imams belongs to the category of great sins.

This chapter is applicable to all classes of the followers of the Imams and even to the non-followers. For, return of the 'amanat' to its owner and sincerity are incumbent on every Muslim. The Prophet says, "Religion means sincerity to God, the Imams and the Momin in general. Lack of sincerity to God and the Imams is impermissible. God says, "**The weak, the sickly and the poor (who cannot take part in the religious war) are not to be blamed if they are sincere to God and His Prophet. There is nothing against good men. God is forgiving**

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- *1. Ch. 8 V. 72 Anfal (accession) holy Quran.
 2. Ch. 41. V. 10 (accession) holy Quran.
 3. Ch. 4. V. 59 Nisa (women) holy Quran.

and merciful. Nor are those persons to be blamed who come to you for riding animals to carry them (to the battle field) and who return with grief with tears flowing from their eyes when you tell them that you cannot provide them with the animals and when they find that they have no money to pay for them'." These verses clearly show that if the Muslims are unable to join the war, they are permitted to give it up but under no circumstances are they allowed to give up sincerity. Cessation of love in one's heart for God and the Prophet and the Imams is equally impermissible. Imam Husain bin Ali, the greetings of God be on him, says, "He who lodges in his heart love for us and uses his tongue and his hands in defence of us, will stay with us in the highest regions. He who loves us at heart and defends us by his tongue but is unable to use his hands, will also be with us in heaven but his rank will be below the rank of the first one. He who loves us at heart and is unable to use his tongue and his hands in fighting for us, will also be in heaven with us and his rank will be a little lower than the rank of the second person. But the one who can neither use his tongue nor his hands in our favour nor loves us in the heart of his heart, has nothing to expect from us."

Thus sincerity to the Imams and the return of the 'amanat' to them are the best things that

1. Ch. 9 V. 91, 92 Barat (innuency) Holy Quran

we have been enjoined upon to do. He who fails to do this and deceives them, is cast off from their fold.

O devotees of God, beware of being treacherous or deceitful to them. Bear in mind that if one were to return the 'amanat' to the Imams and show sincerity to them for no other laudable object in view than the acquisition of wealth or making a name for himself and securing himself from the worries of this world even then it will be worth his while to do so. We can easily imagine how much more profitable will it be if one were to do these things for a heavenly reward for which there is no substitute in this world and for securing himself from the frightful punishment of the next world from which none can save him.

We know many men at the lowest wrung of the ladder of life such as workmen, petty traders and labourers who are in no way better than lower animals and who yet are very particular about the return of the 'amanat'. In spite of their extreme poverty, they return the 'amanat' not for the sake of religion or for the sake of their belief in a particular code of conduct but for the fear of their being boycotted by the people and put to disgrace by them in consequence of breach of trust.

If this is the way in which low types of people behave towards one another in the matter of the

return of the 'amanat' what should then be the behaviour of those who have some knowledge of religion, some sense of the code of morality and some idea of self respect? How can these men risk their position and lose every good thing by committing a breach of trust? If they are not attracted by a heavenly reward and are not afraid of the punishment of the Day of Judgment, even then in their own interest they will never commit the breach of trust.

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Majlis 4.

RESPECT FOR THE IMAMS.

To hold the Imams in the highest esteem is a duty enjoined on us by God. He has associated the devotion to them with the devotion to Himself and the devotion to the Prophet. He has laid emphasis on our devotion to them and has further ordered us to refer our disputes to them.

In view of the fact that our devotion to the Prophet is just the same as our devotion to God, it is incumbent on us all to revere the Imam of our time to the same extent to which our Prophet was revered by the followers of his days.

It behoves every one of us then that we should hold them in reverence and bow down to them with humility. It is our bounden duty to have a greater respect for them than we have for the wordly kings and to stand in much greater awe of them than we do in the case of the dignatories of the world. Let our respect for the Imams and our fear of them be prompted by no other motive than our desire to please God who has elevated them to this highest position. Wordly men respect the kings because of their wealth and they fear them because of their pomp and power. But the followers of Imams should revere their spiritual heads because of the dignity of the Imamat which they carry with themselves and they should

stand in awe of them because of the dazzling light of divine wisdom which radiates from their foreheads.

Let us look upon them as kings in the realm of religion and let us respect them because God respects them. If we fail to do so we shall be incurring the wrath of God and the consequences will be serious. Let us look at them with our senses in tact. Let us look at them with eager eyes and an anxiety to look at them again and again. There is a tradition to the effect that "To look at the Imam is a devotion and to look at the Quran is a devotion." The word looking in this tradition does not mean an absent-minded-glance. It means thoughtful looking. For, to a mere looker-on without any thinking, there is no advantage from his looking at the Quran. God says, "**Do they not ponder on the Quran? Are their minds locked up?**" There is also a tradition to the effect that "Reading of one verse thoughtfully is better than reading the Quran thoughtlessly for the whole night." There is another tradition which says, "The Kharjees read the Quran but it does not go down into their hearts." It means that they merely mutter the Quran by their tongues and do not apply their minds to it. Hence it does not reach their hearts and it does them no good.

Let us then pay full attention to the words of the Imams when we listen to them. Let us be all ears when they talk and let us ponder over the matter when they finish their talk. We must bear in mind that their words are practically the words of the Prophet himself. For, devotion to them and devotion to God and the Prophet are linked together by God. Let us obey their commands and prohibitions. Let us do what they want us to do and let us keep aloof from what they do not want us to do.

In what we hear from them not directly but through the agency of news let us use our discretion. For, every word of them is full of wisdom and every expression of theirs means to us a world of good. It is a gift of God to understand these things. God confers this gift on those whom He likes and with-holds it from those whom He dislikes.

If any one of us finds the words of the Imams highly complicated and beyond his depth, if he does not understand the meaning or dislikes some part of it or finds it useless or meaningless then let him realise that the fault lies with him. He should admit his inefficiency and refer the matter to some one else who is better informed in this than himself to enlighten him. If he cannot find any one to solve his difficulty, even then he should retain his regard for these traditions and his faith in them. He should adopt the next best course to know them and trust the Imam for the rest.

1. Ch. 9 V. 91,92 Barat (immunity) Holy Quran.

Majlis 5

FULFILMENT OF THE TERMS OF
BAYAT WITH THE IMAMS

God says, **“O momins, fulfil the terms of your contracts”** **“Fulfil your promise ; you will be enquired about it”** **“(O Mohammed) those who enter into a covenant with you make a covenant with God. The hand of God is upon their hands. He who breaks it does harm to himself and he who fulfils the terms of the covenant which he has made to God will be amply rewarded”**¹

These verses make it clear to us that our pledge to the Imams is equivalent to our pledge to the Prophet which is a pledge to God. Just as devotion to the Imams is linked with the devotion to God which under no circumstances can be given up, the fulfilment of our terms of covenant with them is also a sort of devotion from which we cannot break away to the slightest extent. If a devotee is devoted to God but he disobeys His Prophet or belies him, his devotion will not be taken into account and he will be punished for falsifying the Prophet and disobeying him. It needs no further testimony than the following verse of the Quran which speaks of the infidels

1. Ch. 5 Ma-eda (Food) V. I. H. Q.
2. Ch. 17 Bani Israil (The Israelites) V. 34 H. Q.
3. Ch. 48 Anfal (accession) V. 10 H. Q.

who believed in God but did not believe in the Prophet and who consequently incurred the wrath of God who condemned them to perdition. The verse runs thus **“If you ask them as to who has created them they say God has created us.”** Since they disbelieve in the Prophet, inspite of their acknowledgement of the Lordship of God they expose themselves to His wrath because of their (disbelief) in His Prophet.

Similarly, if a devotee believes in God and in His Prophet and does not believe in the Imam of the ‘Imams’, the successors of the Prophet, even if he were to worship God throughout his life-time he becomes one of those about whom God says, **“We shall look to their deeds and treat them as nothing but particles of scattered dust.”**

Thus, if one is devoted to God and His Prophet but disobeys the Imam of his time or belies him, practically disobeys God who will not recognise his devotion to Him and His Prophet in view of his denial and disobedience of the Imam of his time. This is clear from the fact that God has linked the devotion to Him, to the devotion to the Prophet and the devotion to the Imams so intricably that none of these three devotions can be separated. Hence, he who fulfils his pledge to God, His Prophet and his ‘Wasees’ *i.e.* the Imams, entitles himself to be included in the group about which God says, **“They will be emply rewarded”**

1. Ch. 25 Al-furqan (distinction) V. 23 H. Q.

The ample reward stands for 'jannat'. But he who breaks his pledge to God and disjoins from what God has ordered him to join is one of those losers about whom God says, **"They have lost this world as well as the next."** They lose the pleasure of the Imams in this world and the pleasure of God in the next. They expose themselves to the punishment of God for disjoining the devotion to the Imams from the devotion to God which they have been enjoined upon to join.

In short, fulfil your pledges to them to the fullest extent. Take particular care of the return of the 'amanat' to them. You have pledged this to God. You have taken serious vows of your loyalty to them. You have taken upon yourselves the fulfilment of the terms of the pledges and the vows you have made to them. Strive hard to earn the reward of God and see that you do not become losers. Think again and again over the seriousness of the pledges and the vows that you have made to the Imams. Keep these vows always fresh in your mind and return the 'amanat' to God and the Imams. God says, **"Secure are those 'momins' who pay back the 'amanat', fulfil their vows and are particular about their prayers. They are the persons who will inherit 'Firdaus' in which they will have a permanent abode."** These verses make it crystal clear to us that the fulfilment of pledges and the return of the 'amanat' carries the 'momins' to

'jannat' and the breaking of the vows and dishonesty in the payment of 'amanats' will drag them down to the lowest depth of the Hell-fire.

You must bear in mind that in keeping up your pledges and vows if no other consideration prevails upon you than the avoidance of disgrace which is involved in the breach of faith, even then it will be worth your while to do so. We know many people who in spite of the fact that they are not necessarily very pious nor strictly honest, are very particular about the fulfilment of their vows and in this matter they act exactly on the lines recommended by God in His holy Book. If any one of them breaks his vows to the slightest extent he atones for what can be atoned for and fulfils the pledge which cannot be atoned for. We must realise that we have voluntarily taken upon ourselves a heavy responsibility and we have no other go than to discharge our obligations by the fulfilment of our vows.

Let us fear God. Let us see that we do not commit a breach of faith in these matters. Let us guard ourselves against the breaking of our vow to God, against transgressing His limits and disobeying His commands and prohibitions. See that you do not die with your vows unfulfilled in your life-time. It must be borne in mind that even if we make a vow not to touch our wives, and not to take food, and not to change the clothing which belong to us, God makes these lawful

things unlawful for us unless we atone for our vows by giving something in charity and setting free a slave. Thus if we do not fulfil the vows that we have taken upon ourselves, we indulge in the doing of unlawful things and involve ourselves in the committing of heinous crimes and grave sins. May God forbid us all from this hazardous affair. May He include us all among those 'momins' who fulfil their pledges and never break them, and who pay back the 'amanats' and respect their word of honour.

O momins, may God's mercy be on you, you must remember that you cannot fulfil your pledge and be honest in the discharge of your obligations unless you know well the pledges you have entered into and the obligations you have put yourselves under. Hence, it is necessary for you that you should remind yourselves of the covenants that you have made with the Imam and the terms of the covenant that you have taken upon yourselves to fulfil. If you ignore inadvertently or forget or treat lightly any of those terms, then the moment you realise your mistake you must atone for it by repentance and do what you have omitted to do. If you have forgotten the terms or some part of it then renew them by reviving the terms of the covenant. Admit your guilt and repent to God and to the Imam. If you persist in your mistakes or your ignorance then you will appear before God as one who has ignored His sign on earth and broken his vow with Him. You will

appear in His eyes much more degraded and much more miserable than the one who has made no such pledge. For, the misappropriator of the 'amanat' is in a much worse position than the one who has refused to deposit the 'amanat' with him; and the one who knows the consequences of the breach of faith and still commits the breach is to be blamed more than the one who is ignorant of all this. Although it is the duty of the one who does not know these things to try to know them and it is incumbent on the one who has lost the way to look for guidance, still his guilt is less than that of the one who knowingly commits the breach of faith.

The hypocrites are condemned by God to the lowest depths of the hell fire and their condition is much worse than that of the infidels. It is because, the hypocrites knew the truth and yet they rejected it and the infidels persisted in their infidelism. Both the hypocrites and the infidels will be in hell fire and the lot of the hypocrites will be the worst for they have broken the pledge or ignored it and this is much worse than the refusal to take the pledge.

Majlis 6

FRANKNESS OF THE MOMINS IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH THE IMAM

God says, **“Had those who wronged themselves come to you and repented to God, and had the apostle of God also asked for forgiveness for them, they would have found God forgiving and merciful.”** With regard to the conduct of hypocrites God says, **“When it is said to them ‘come in, the Prophet of God will intercede for you’ they shrug their shoulders and turn away puffed up with pride.”**

The above verses show that those who wrong themselves cannot be forgiven unless they approach God through the Imams who are the gates of His mercy for His people and the medium of approach for the people. He who seeks for their intercession is interceded for by them. He who seeks God's mercy through them is favoured by God and he who tries to reach God through them is lifted to Him. The approach to God through His Prophet as it is mentioned in the above verse means our obedience to the Prophet through our obedience to the Imams who belong to his ‘Ahle-bait’. Had this not been the case the mercy of

God would have been cut off from His people and His forgiveness would have disappeared. The doors of our repentance to Him would have been closed and there would have been no way left open to us for forgiveness.

God has not left this world without a medium of approach to Him. This medium is the shelter for shelterless, the gate of divine mercy and a guide for the people. Had there been no such medium left for us, people would have argued in defence of their wrong doing by saying, “There was no one to show us the right path and warn us against the wrong one. There was none to let us know what we did not know and there was none to whom we could have run for shelter and through whom we could have approached God for forgiveness.” But God has shut the mouth of these people by leaving the medium on earth.

God has linked the obedience to Him and to the Prophet with the obedience to the spiritual heads who are the representatives of the Prophet on earth and has ordered us to refer to them in all our affairs for guidance and submit to their decision. In short, He wants us to be devoted to Him through our devotion to these Imams. They are the gates of His mercy and the means by which we can approach Him for forgiveness.

If any of the followers of the Imam does contrary to the pledge that he has given to him,

1. Ch. 5, Nisa, women, V. 64 Holy Quran.

2. Ch. 63, Munafiqoon (the hypocrites) V. 5 Holy Quran.

to the slightest extent or neglects to do what he has been ordered by him to do or commits a positive wrong, then let him go back to him and admit his guilt to him repenting for his sins. Let him regret for the sins of his omission and commission and seek the intercession of the Imam of his time for the forgiveness of these sins. This is what God has commanded us to do in His Holy Book. Let him on no account persist in his misconduct and justify it remorselessly without showing any sign of desisting from this perverse course.

God says in His holy book, **“He likes those who repent and those who try to purify themselves”**.¹ Imam Sadiq, greetings be on him, says, “We are the gates of God. We are His medium for His people. He who approaches Him through us is brought near Him. He who seeks our intercession is interceded for. He who seeks His favours through us is favoured by Him. He who turns away from us goes astray.” One of the ‘Ahle-bait’ says that Ali, peace be on him, is reported to have said, “It is the duty of every one who recognises the true position of the Imam to inform him of his short-comings. Let him tell the Imam what he can do and what he cannot do. The Imam will assign to him the post for which he finds him fit. This, in my opinion, is the best course of conduct for the followers of the Imams.”

Let us speak the truth and hide nothing from the Imams and let us do, what we do, not for the sake of expecting a post from them or for the sake of gaining power. Let us do this for nothing but for the sake of God. Let us do it for the eternal reward from God in return for our paying back the ‘amanat’ to the Imams and the fulfilment of our pledge to them. Let us show our maximum loyalty and sincerity to them according to the pledge that we have given to them.

If any of the followers of the Imam finds himself unfit for the job which is offered to him by the Imam and yet he intends to accept it to improve his worldly prospects and hides his deficiency from the Imam, does an act of treachery to God, to Prophet and his ‘Wasee’. But if he informs him of all his defects and speaks nothing but truth then the matter rests with the Imam and his duty is to carry out his orders. It matters little whether he knows the job or not. It matters little whether he is competent or incompetent. For, God helps those who are appointed by the Imams provided they discharge their duties with the best of their intentions.

I say on oath that I was ordered by the Imam for innumerable times to do a thing which I believed I could not do. All the same, as soon as I took up the job, I felt competent and I did the work to my satisfaction. I know for certain that God fulfils the expectations of the Imams and

1. Ch. 2 Baqara. (cow) V. 222 holy Quran.

they get what they want. Men are nothing more than instruments in the hands of the Imams. When these instruments are used by them they do wonderful things.

I know of a 'momin' who was appointed by one of the Imams to a post for which, in my opinion and in the opinion of others who knew him, he was not fit. He accepted the post with promptness. Some one who knew him and knew me to be a close friend of his, mentioned this to me and remarked that the fellow would make a mess of the job. He pressed me hard to advise the man to resign the post. I talked over the matter to the man and he replied "I know well, that I am what you know me to be. I have no previous experience of the job, at the same time I am convinced that since the Imam has appointed me to do it, I will prove to be suitable. I say on oath that if the Imam were to give me a piece of gold or silver and ask me to make, out of them ornaments of a particular design I shall accept the job and begin the work in right earnest. I know for certain that God will guide me and inspire me to do what the Imam wants me to do and I shall do it to his satisfaction.

I knew well that he was a man of conviction. I knew for certain that he would not give up the job. To give up the job will be as hard to him as to disobey the Imam. I did not think it proper to argue with him and left him to him-

self. Next morning I went to his house and found him suffering from a serious disease. He continued ailing till some one else was appointed in his place. After a few days he got over his ailment and became hail and hearty.

I realised for myself that after all God came to his help and relieved him of the job which I was afraid he would make a mess of. This was the result of his implicit faith in the Imam.

All the same the least that is expected of the devotees of the Imam, is, to inform him of their poor abilities, limitations and inefficiency when they are assigned to a job for which they think they are not best fitted. After this they have to submit to his decision and hasten to the job to which they are appointed.

We maintain that they look at things with the light of God. He guides them and informs them of what they ask Him about in His subtle ways. He confers on them favours and blessings which they are the only privileged persons to receive. We must bear in mind that the Imams are the light of God.

Majlis 7

OBEDIENCE TO THE IMAM.

It is the duty of every one who has given a pledge of loyalty to the Imams that he should fulfil the terms of his pledge and always keep them in view. He should never act contrary to the orders of the Imam. In carrying out his orders he should never exceed the limits nor fall short of them. He should not budge an inch from the right course. He should not put his interpretation on what he hears from the Imam. He should say nothing on his own account. He should not allow his imagination to influence his mind in these matters.

It is said that once Imam Jafar, greetings of God be on him, said to some of his followers, "You should be our silent propagandists." When the people asked him as to how they should carry on the propaganda by silence, he said in reply, "Carry it on by your good deeds." He gave a long sermon on this topic and said in the end, "When people find you doing the right things they will know that it is we who have guided you in this matter. Thus they will run to us and you will prove to be the medium of their coming to us."

It follows that it is the bounden duty of every one who is the follower of the Imams to do good things and keep away from the evil. He should be devoted to God and he should discharge the duties that have been enjoined on him. He should commit no sins and should do nothing which provokes God.

He should not indulge in religious discussions unless he is permitted by the Imam to do so. The Imam permits only those people to carry on religious discussions whom he finds fit for the job. Many a debator indulges in discussions with one who happens to be more competent than himself and in the end suffers a defeat at his hands and becomes sceptic.

It is for these reasons that the Imams order us to be silent and have implicit faith in them. None, but the one who is selected by them and is permitted by them to carry on the discussions is allowed to pursue this course. One of the Imams said to one of his 'daa-ees', "If you find your opponent a better debator than yourself then take the help of the inner knowledge, stop him by saying that you are not prepared to initiate him into the depths of the inner meaning. Do not prolong the discussion to give your opponent a free hand. It will create a bad result and make your opponent firmer in his stand. Keep him in suspense, if you are afraid of continuing the discussion. On the other hand if you know at the

very beginning that your opponent is a better debator, do not discuss with him and stop him by saying that you believe in inner things. For, very often, discussion with those who are on the wrong path leaves the impression on the audience that your opponents are right. This is exactly what happened when the sorcerers challenged Moses by bringing their ropes and sticks and making them look like snakes. Moses got frightened of the wrong impression they had created on the mind of the audience, although in the long run truth prevailed and the falsehood was eradicated."

It is out of these considerations that we have been ordered by the Imam to be silent and secretive. Imam Jafar, greetings be on him, is reported to have said to some of his followers who offered their services for his support, "We asked you to do something easier than this but you did not do it." They said, "What is that, O the grandson of the Prophet." He said, "We asked you to keep silent. If you had kept silent we would have been pleased with you but you did not do so."

We must bear in mind that in doing the work of the Imams, we have to follow some specific rules that are prescribed for us. We have to do things by degrees and we have to proceed with caution step by step. If we do not stop at the first step and jump to the higher step and try to reach the destination earlier than we are required to reach it we shall be ruined. It will be like feeding a new born baby to death.

In short, these are the things which have prevented the Imams from making their inner knowledge accessible to none but those whom they have found fit. Had they allowed every one to have a free access to it, people would have ruined one another like a new born babe who is killed by feeding or like an embryo who tries to come out before it is fully developed.

Hence, the Imams have purposely kept this knowledge secret in order to test their followers. Had they given full publicity to it and informed every one of what it is, none would have opposed them. But God wants to test His devotees by asking them to have faith in the 'ghaib'. The Quran says, **"This book is undoubtedly a guide to the God-fearing people who have faith in the 'ghaib' i.e. the hidden thing."** These are the people who according to the Quran have been "guaranteed success." If God had desired He could have forced all men to be devoted to Him. He could have easily asked some angel to shout from above and call people to devotion. It would not in that case have been necessary for Him to send one of His apostles to guide people. Had he done so none would have been superior to another and there would have been no room for exertion. In that case there would have been no reward and no punishment. All the people would have been of one type and knowledge and

accomplishments and such other gifts of God would have been evenly distributed amongst them. God knows best what He does and His 'walees' who are in the know of the divine secrets know best what they do. There is no God but He and there is no partner to Him.

Majlis 8

TO THANK THE IMAM IN WEAL OR WOE.

Patience and gratitude are two great virtues. He who is devoted to God and to His Imams, discharges all the obligations that he owes to them and relies on them in prosperity and adversity. He puts up with discomforts in the discharge of these duties for the sake of God and for the sake of the Imams. He belongs to that group of 'Sabirs' *i.e.* those who bear hardships with patience about whom God says in His holy book "**God rewards the 'Sabirs' beyond one's calculations'.**" God has praised them and spoken of His rewards to them in several other verses of the Quran.

By virtue of this quality of patience the 'sabirs' have kept themselves in check from doing unlawful things and have persisted in their devotion to God. As a reward for this they have received His favours and have settled down in 'jannat' the abode of bliss.

O momins, keep yourselves in check from doing wrong things and make yourselves deserving of divine favours. Persevere in your devotion and train yourselves to put up with discomforts for the

sake of the Imams. Do not be discouraged. Rush into them and do not feel depressed. Patience in this respect is an act of devotion to God. Those who practice it will be amply recompensated by God. 'Sabirs' are sure to be rewarded.

It is by patience over the difficulties which the followers of the Imams had to undergo that their authority has been established on earth and their claim have been recognised by the people. It is through the sufferings of these followers that people have submitted to their authority.

The 'sabirs' are steady people. They put up with all sorts of hardships for the sake of the Imams. They rush to the Imams and are ever-ready to carry out their orders. If they are appointed to any office they do the job willingly. They are devoted to God and they suffer with patience and firmness what befalls their lot. They abide by the laws of God. They fight for God and they establish His laws on earth. By virtue of this they win the reward of God. They are the happiest people on earth and their end is the best.

Had the sabirs not attended to the duties of God and had they not put up with hardships for the sake of the Imams and had they shilly-shallied in the discharge of their religious duties they would have brought on themselves a great disaster. Man would have pounced upon man in front of men and behind them. The strong ones would have swallowed the

weak ones and villains would have persecuted men of respectable birth. May God forbid us from such a disaster and the failure of religion which is sure to end in the reign of terror.

This is about patience. With regards to gratitude, it perpetuates the blessings and increases them to an unimaginable extent. Those who are neglectful in this are considered to be 'kafirs' *i.e.* deniers of truth and deniers of divine favours. God says "**If you show gratitude to me I shall increase my blessings on you. If you become 'kafirs' *i.e.*, if you deny my favours then my punishment is very severe**". The Prophet says "If one does you a good turn you must be reciprocal to him. If you cannot do so then thank him. If you fail to do so you become 'kafir' *i.e.* the denier of his favours." God does not like that we should be ungrateful to Him for the favours that He has done to us. He does not approve of ingratitude even from man to man for the good turn that one may do to another. He says "**Be grateful to me and to your parents. You have to return to me**".

The Prophet says "On the day of judgement God will say to some one of the ungrateful persons 'such and such a man did you a good turn but you did not thank him and denied his favour'. The man will say in reply 'I thought that you were

1. Ch. 14 V. 7 Ibrahim Holy Quran.

2. Ch. 31 V. 15 Luqman Holy Quran.

the source of the good turn he did to me and I thanked you for it.' God will say 'How should you thank me when you did not thank the person whom I had made the medium of doing you a good turn'."

To sum up, if to thank our parents for their bringing us up and to thank those men who do us a favour is a duty enjoined on us by God and want of it amounts to 'kufr' then, it needs no imagination to realise the magnitude of the importance of our thank to the Imams whose favours on us are beyond our calculations.

Let us make a short survey of their favours on us. We were ignorant of everything and were spiritually dead. They brought us back to life and showed us the path of wisdom. We were blind they gave us the eyes to see for ourselves what is right and what is wrong. We were groping in the dark they showed us the light. We had lost the track, they showed us the way to salvation. We were lacking in knowledge they gave us the knowledge. We were falling in hell-fire they picked us up and put up in the midst of the righteous. In short, they have done us the favours which we cannot count. They have given us all that is good in this world and the world to come.

With all this, even if one were to follow them with no other motive than an earthly desire for

a wordly gain, he will get what he wants. He will get even double the amount of his expectations, provided he is honest in the discharge of the duties that are assigned to him and is steady in his work. But, if he proves to be dishonest and unfaithful to them in doing his job, if he works against the interest of those very persons who provide him with all sorts of facilities and give him the necessary protection and security of life and property, then the blame lies at his doors. May God protect us from such people and may He not show us such things. The only course left open for such a person is to make amends for his misbehaviour and seriously repent for it. He must set himself right and be grateful to Imams.

Majlis 9

**WHAT IS DUE TO THE IMAM FROM THE
 PROPERTIES OF THE MOMINS.**

God says to Prophet Mohammed **“Take from the properties of your followers a ‘sadaqa’ i.e. a portion in charity which will purify them and keep their hearts clean’.**” It is also called ‘zakat’ because in the words of the holy Quran it is meant for the ‘tazkiah’ i.e. the purification of the hearts of the Muslims.

God has made it obligatory on all Muslims to take out the ‘zakat’ from their properties and hand it over to the Prophet or his descendants. In the life time of the Prophet the Muslims used to pay ‘zakat’ to the officers who were appointed by him for this purpose. They were the persons in charge of the collections who have been mentioned by God in His book.

After the departure of the Prophet from this world none of the Muslims came forward to say that the ‘zakat’ ceased to be a duty on him. The Muslims used to pay it to the officers who were appointed for this purpose by the successors of the Prophet one after another. The ‘Umayyads’ mis-appropriated these collections. When the

people saw this, they asked some of the surviving companions of the Prophet as to what they should do. The ‘ashab’ advised them to pay the ‘sadaqat’ to the officers. Some of these ‘ashab’ went to the length of saying “Pay these ‘sadaqat’ even if the Umayyads spend them on the purchasing of snakes”. Others remarked “Pay them, even if they spend them on drinking wine.” Some of them again remarked “Pay them. You do your duty. Your responsibility is over. The responsibility lies on their shoulders. If you catch some thieves and you cut off the hands of some of them and let go the rest, do you think you have acted rightly? They said ‘No’. Again the ‘ashab’ said “If you hand them over to the officers and they let go the whole lot or cut off the hands of some and let go the rest, are you responsible for the fault of the officers?” They said ‘No’. On the same analogy the ‘ashab’ remarked “You pay the ‘sadaqat’ to them and get rid of your responsibilities.”

There are many example of this type. If I were to quote them all, the matter will prolong. However, I like to give one more example to clear the point. If ‘A’ is indebted to ‘B’ and ‘B’ is indebted to ‘C’. If ‘A’, instead of paying his debt to ‘B’ pays it to ‘C’ directly on behalf of ‘B’ without any authority from him, he is not free from his responsibility to ‘B’. He will still continue to be indebted to ‘B’. Similar is the case with ‘zakat’. A Muslim has to pay it to the one to whom he has been ordered to pay.

1. Ch. 9 V. 103 Attawba Holy Quran.

O momins, may God bestow His mercy on you. Realise the significance of the proper use of what God has entrusted with you. Communicate this to one another. Argue out this case with those who hold different views on this. None of them will have any doubt left in his mind. Those who are not convinced are the oppressors and defiers of God. He who denies the truth and argues out in favour of untruth is the oppressor. In addition to the 'zakat', the 'momins' are required to pay the '*khums*' the one-fifth of their earnings. The holy Quran says **"Bear in mind that of whatever you earn the fifth part belongs to God, the Prophet and his relatives, the orphans, the poor and the way-farers*."** Imam Jafar Sadiq greetings be on him says "The *khums* belongs to us, the Imams. The people have no share with us in it." The sentence 'the one-fifth belongs to God' means it is to be given away for the sake of God and for a reward from Him. It is meant for the Prophet is his life time and after him it is meant for the Imams from his 'Ahle-bait'.

It is the duty of every 'momin' to pay one-fifth of his earnings to the Imam of the time. It must be borne in mind that the word 'ghanimat' used in the above verses does not necessarily mean the spoils of 'jihad'. It applies to everything that a man earns. Imam Jafar Sadiq, greetings be on him, says "God has made it obligatory for

the 'momins' to pay us one fifth of their earnings. It belongs to us as a matter of right. He who denies us this right and does not give us our share, will have no claim on God and will get no reward from Him."

O momins, understand the words of our 'maula'. Bear in mind that out of everything that you earn one-fifth must be paid to the Imam of the time. Whenever any one of you earns anything or receives anything as a profit let him take out the fifth of it immediately and pay it to the Imam. Let him keep the rest with himself.

This '*khums*' or the 'zakat' which God has enjoined on you to pay does not belong to you. It is not a part of your property. It is the 'amanat' of God and the Prophet in your hands. God has warned you in His holy book against the misappropriation of 'amanat'. He says **"O momins, do not deceive God or the prophet and do not mis-appropriate the 'amanat' in general. You know (the consequence ۱)"**. In this connection the Prophet says "The property does not decrease by the payment of 'zakat' or '*khums*.' This is not to be taken in the literal sense. For, the property does decrease when the 'zakat' or '*khums*' is taken away from it. What the Prophet intends to say is this. The '*khutns*' or 'zakat' which you are enjoined upon to pay is not a part of your property which is in your

*Ch. 8 4 V Al-anfal Holy Quran.

1. Ch. 8 V 29 Anfal Holy Quran.

hands. Since it is to be taken away it does not belong to you. What is left behind belongs to you. The 'zakat' or 'khums' is the 'amanat' of God with you. He has ordered you to guard it.

The Imams have every right to test their followers by asking them to part with their properties or to probe their loyalty by different means. God tested His Prophets by putting them to all sorts of trials and tribulations. I cannot mention them because they are out-side the scope of my book.

O momins, if any one of you is put to test by the Imam, then let him bear the trial with patience. The easiest of such trials is the test in money. You must bear in mind that no time is fixed for the Imams for such trials. They can test their followers at any time and in any way they like when they want to raise them to a high position. They are empowered to do what they like. There is no time limit to their power. Your duty is to submit to them voluntarily. God says **"He who volunteers to do good things, does the best things for himself *"**

With regard to the use of their 'khums' or 'zakat' by the Imams, they are the masters of their affairs. They can do what they like to do with the money they get from you. Whether they give it to their relatives, to their brothers

and to the poor and the destitute or not, this is the matter which rests entirely with them.

In short, O momins, it is your duty to pay to the Imams the 'khums' i.e. the fifth part from your earnings. You are nothing more than the depositories of something that belongs to God. It is an 'amanat' in your hands. God wants to test you. He wants to see which of you is more virtuous. God has repeatedly reminded you of this duty in His holy Book. O the devotees of God, fear God. Be honest in the return of the 'amanat' to Him who has deposited it with you. This is one of the greatest trials to which He has put you.

Imam Jafar Sadiq, greetings be on him, says "None of the duties of God on man is more severe than the return of the 'amanat' to Him from your property. Many people are ruined by the neglect of this duty. See that you put back this 'amanat' in the hands of the Imam of your time. It is not a part of your property." With all this, if one does not pay the 'amanat' and leaves it behind for his heirs, then he is the greatest loser. He loses everything. Not only does he lose his prestige but he also loses his faith. God says **"When death approached to one of them, he said 'O God, give me back the life in order that I may do well what I have neglected**

*Ch. 8 V. 184 Baqara. Holy Quran.

to do.' It is nothing but a meaningless expression'. Imam Jafar Sadiq, peace be on him, says that "the words 'What I have neglected to do' in the above verse of the Quran refer to the non-payment of the dues of the Imam of the time which God has enjoined on man to pay. If one does not pay the 'zakat' his prayers will not be recognised. No one deceives God in the payment of 'zakat' on his property excepting the infidels." God says **"Woe to the infidels who do not pay the zakat'2."**

We must bear in mind that one is not free from his obligations if he pays the 'zakat' to those who are not entitled to receive it. O momins, pay what you have been enjoined upon to pay to none but the Imams. Let me bring it to your notice that in this matter none of your opponents is a greater enemy of yours than you yourselves. If you conquer your-selves you will have no difficulty in the discharge of your duty. God says **"Your own self is the evil-dictator 3."** The Prophet says "Passion is a kind of a deity which is worshipped by people." God says in this connection **"Don't you see those people who take their passions to be their god 4."** Again the Prophet says "The 'zakat' does not come out of the hands of the 'momins' unless he relieves himself from the clutches of seventeen devils, every one of whom

1. Ch. 23 V. 99-100 Al-mo'minoon Holy Quran.
2. Ch. 23 V 24 Ha-meem Sajda Holy Quran.
3. V. 6-7 pa. 53 Yousuf Holy Quran.
4. Part 13 V23 Al-jathiyah Holy Quran.

holds him back and orders him not to pay." God says **"Behold, you are those who are invited to expend part of your subsistence for the support of Gqd's religion; but there are some of you who are niggardly and whoever is niggardly, is niggardly to wards his own soul. God is self-sufficient and you are needy. If you turn back, He will substitute another people in your stead who shall not be like you 1."**

In conclusion, O momins, subdue yourselves. Do not allow your selves to come in the way of the discharge of your duties. You must realise that you have to pay only a small portion of what God has given you and that too is God's property which He has entrusted with you. There is no way out of it. He says **"You must remember that of whatever you earn one-fifth belongs to God and the Prophet 2."**This is applicable to everything that you acquire by way of spoils in the war or what you earn by business or by manual labour or what you get from the Imams themselves in the form of remuneration for your work. You have to take out the 'khums' of everything that you have acquired by these means. It matters little whether what you have got is much or small. It is your duty to pay the 'khums' to the Imams or those who are appointed by them to receive it on their behalf. May God help us and you in the discharge of this duty. May He forbid us from being treacherous to the Prophet or the Imams in this matter.

1. Part 25 V 38 Mohammad Holy Quran.
2. Ch. 47 V. 41 Anfal, Holy Quran

Majlis 10

SUBMISSION TO THE DECISION OF THE IMAM.

God says **“Obey God, obey the Prophet and obey your spiritual leaders.”** **“I swear by your Lord, they cannot become ‘momin’ unless they refer their disputes to you and are perfectly satisfied with your decision and unless they submit to the utmost limit 2.”**

Submission implies obedience to God externally and internally; and obedience to God is linked with the obedience to the Prophet and to the Imams. Accordingly it is the duty of every ‘momin’ to submit entirely to the Imams. He should act strictly according to their instructions. He should have implicit faith in them and should give expression to it openly and in secret. It matters little whether he finds their instructions agreeable to him or not, it matters little whether he understands their significance or not. He should persevere in carrying them out and disciplining his mind in this direction. The time is sure to come when he will find agreeable what looks disagreeable to him now, when the signific-

ance of what he fails to understand now will ultimately dawn on his mind. If he does not attain to the true significance, he will realise at least the significance of his submission and will admit his inability, his ignorance and his incompetence to arrive at the real meaning of the instruction. He will realise that the Imams are always in the right. If he finds that he is punished by the Imam unnecessarily or is rewarded by them for something for which he thinks that he deserves no such reward, then he should know for certain that he is too dull to understand these things. The Imams understand them the best. For they see things by the light of God and issue orders according to His instructions. Their decisions are the decisions of God.

Most of the people who are on a wrong tract do not realise that they are in the wrong. They think that they are on the right side. God says about such people **“They think that they are right but they are liars’.”** **“When it is said to them ‘Do not create trouble on earth’ they say ‘we are peace-makers.’ They are really mischief mongers but they do not know 2.”**

This is a stiff chapter. It is difficult to understand its contents and it is still more difficult to retain them. It is a test for the intelligence of the

1. Part 5 Nisa V. 59 Holy Quran.
2. Part 5 Nisa V. 67 Holy Quran.

1. Part 28 Mujadala V. 18 Holy Quran.
2. Ch. 4. Nisa V 65. Holy Qurau.

followers and their position before the Imams varies according to their capacity to grasp the sum and substance of this chapter. Moses, greetings be on him, was put to a similar test by a divine agent when he wanted to keep company with him.

It is said that a certain person from Syria visited Ibn-e-Abbas and asked him to let him know how Ali behaved at the battle fields. Ibn-e-Abbas said in reply "Ask me about something which concerns you." The Syrian said "I have not come a long way off from Syria to ask you to explain to me what is 'haj' or 'Umra'. I have come to ask you to enlighten me with the behaviour of Ali at the battle-field." Ibn-e-Abbas replied "The knowledge of a divine being is so subtle and so deep that very few can fathom it. It is beyond the depth of ordinary human beings. Ali is to you what the divine agent was to Moses. Let me remind you of what God said to Moses when he expressed his anxiety to see Him. God said **"O Moses, I have chosen you above the people by giving you My message and communicating with you. Take what I have given you and thank me for that !."** **"We have written for him on the tablets advice on everything in detail."** Moses thought that he had attained to the utmost limit of divine knowledge. You also imagine that your learned divines have attained to the same limits.

They have put you on a wrong tract by claiming this. God proved to Moses his incompetency by putting him to test through the divine agent. Thus, when the divine agent made a hole in the boat knowingly, his action pleased God but displeased Moses because of his ignorance. Similarly when the divine agent killed the boy knowingly, his action was liked by God but disliked by Moses. His repairing of the wall was another mysterious act which was liked by God but disliked by Moses. Ultimately Moses realized his ignorance and the wisdom of the divine agent when the latter explained all this to him and informed him of the mysteries of his actions. All this is mentioned by God in His holy Book."

In short, Ibne-Abbas ultimately answered the question of the Syrian and explained everything to him to his satisfaction. It would have been much better if the Syrian had left everything to Ali and would not have persisted in interfering with his affairs and trying to find fault with him. It was as necessary for him to submit to Ali as it was for Moses to submit to the divine agent.

The Muslims are unanimously of the opinion that it is not permissible to any one of us and it does not behove us that we should make enquiries about or dis-approve of what the Prophet says or does. It is our duty to accept with readiness what we receive from him. God says **"Do what the Prophet commands you to do and**

do not do what he prohibits you from doing” “By your Lord, they are not Momins, unless they refer their disputes to you and are entirely satisfied with your decisions and they submit to you to the fullest extent.”

These verses of God make it clear to us that those who do not submit to the Prophet are not ‘momins.’ Submission is not to be mistaken for a mere lip profession of obedience. It is based on conviction. It is this kind of submission to the Imams that is enjoined on the ‘momins’. We have no right to probe into their affairs. We are not allowed to disapprove of anything that they do. We have to show our satisfaction openly and in secret by faith and conviction, in words and in our actions. For God has linked our obedience to the Imams with our obedience to the Prophet and He has made them his vice-regents on earth after the Prophet.

It is a hard task for the ‘momins’. The more they progress in the pursuit of this course of submission the more they rise in the estimation of God and the Imams. Imam Jafar, peace be on him, says “No one can understand the nature of our affairs excepting the angels who are within the closest proximity to God, the Prophets, ourselves or those devotees of God whose hearts have been illumined by Him.

1: Part 28 Al-hashr v. 7 Holy Quran.

It is necessary for the followers of the Imams in particular and the people in general that they should discipline their minds and train themselves to act to the satisfaction of God. They should be devoted to Him, to the Prophet and to the Imams from his progeny. They should be loyal to them and pay them the ‘amanat’ which God has deposited with us for them. This payment is a bounden duty on us. We should always be on our guard to see that we do not lower ourselves in the estimation of the Imams. We should never do anything which is disliked by them or is disagreeable to them.

If we find that we have been very steady in loyalty to the Imams by strictly abiding by the rules and regulations prescribed by them and by discharging all our obligations to them. If we feel within the heart of our hearts that we have done nothing which savours of disapproval of God and the Imams, if with all this, something befalls us from God or from the Imams in the form of a punishment or a trial and if we find this to be the worst of calamities from our point of view, let us not show the slightest sign of discontent by our outward behaviour or by the depression of our hearts. We should submit to this act of God and of the Imams and bear it with strength. We should show by our actions by our faith and by our intentions that we are not, in the least, disheartened by it. We should have the courage of conviction to realize that it is a fair deal by God

and that it is the correct attitude of the Imams to us.

We must be convinced that we must be deserving of this punishment or even of much more than that. Let us feel certain that what God and the Imams have forgiven us for is much more than what they have punished us for.

O momins, you must know that God does not inflict punishment through the Imams on any one unless He finds him to be deserving of it. He never gets anything done by the Imams which He does not like. If any one of you is punished in this world let him thank God for inflicting the punishment on him here and not postponing it till the next world. The punishment in the next world will be more severe and will last longer. Besides, He punishes us in this world as He puts His 'wasees' and 'safis' to trial and tribulations and He rewards His enemies for their good actions here, so that on the day of judgment His friends should not suffer and His enemies should not receive the reward there.

We know how often God has made the Prophets suffer in this world for their minor-short-comings for which people in general are never chastised here. In many instances they did not know why they were made to suffer. The Imams have mentioned to us the causes which were responsible for the trials to which Solomon, Ayub, Jacob and

Jones were put. These causes were minor short-comings on their part. If I were to give these things in detail the matter will prolong and will exceed the limits of this book. Had the Imams not mentioned to us these causes we should have never known why these Prophets were put to such severe tests.

Similarly the 'momins' are made to suffer in this world and very often they do not know the causes of their sufferings. God says "Whatever calamity befalls you is the result of your own doings. A greater part of your faults has already been forgiven by God." The Prophet says "Whatever you have been saved from is more than what you suffer." Once people said to the Prophet "According to the Quranic verse that **'He who does evil will be requited for it'**," if we are punished in the next world for every wrong thing that we do here, we shall be ruined." The Prophet said in reply "It is not as you think. Do you not suffer in this world in one way or the other? Do you not ail? Are you not put to grief? Does not calamity befall you?" They said "Yes, O the Prophet of God." He said "Yes. This is the way in which you are requited here."

In one of the traditions it is mentioned that a certain person went on a pilgrimage. When he was performing the 'circuit of the Ka'ba' he was attracted by a good looking woman. He

touched her with evil intentions. The woman shouted "Who is that person who is touching me in this sacred place? May God cut off his hands." The man left for 'Mena' and spent the night there, in his tent. In the middle of the night some one shouted that a thief had run away with some of the belongings of the 'hajees'. He and his friends came out in the dark in search of the thief. The 'hajee' who had offended the woman, woke up and came out to see what had happened. He happened to fall suddenly upon the thief who threw the belongings at his face and ran away. When the people found the stolen property in his hands he informed them of what had happened but they did not believe it. They said "None but you are the thief." They took him to the king and those who had seen the things in his hands gave evidence against him. The king ordered his hands to be cut off.

The fellow realized that this was the punishment for his misbehaviour to the woman on the occasion of his circuit of the 'Ka'ba'. Had the culprit met with this punishment after a long time, he would never have realized that it was the result of his own doings.

On the same lines, if one of you is meted out a punishment by God or by the Imams and he thinks that he is innocent in the matter, let him realize that it is not the punishment for the immediate sin for which he is taken to task and of which he thinks

he is innocent but for some other sin of which he is not aware. God forgives what He likes to forgive from our sins and He neither punishes us here nor will He punish us in the next world. On the other hand He punishes us here for our sins for which He likes to punish us and postpones the punishment for those for which He does not like to punish us here. He has got always some reason for punishing us and we are always indebted to Him for His mercy on us. If God forgives the sins of somebody and secures him from punishment in this world and the next, this is the most perfect form of His forgiveness and the greatest of His blessings. If He punishes some one here then let him realize that God will lighten his punishment in the next world. If he is punished in the next world then let him realize that he deserves the punishment. Just and fair are the ways of God.

Majlis II

WE SHOULD FEAR THE IMAMS.

Those who know the proper position of the Imams should fear them as much as they fear God and respect them as much as they respect God. For God has linked our obedience to them with our obedience to Him and has made them a medium between Him and the people. They have been appointed by Him to scrutinize our actions and certify them before Him. Their pleasure is the pleasure of God and their displeasure is the displeasure of God. We shall be rewarded or punished through them.

Imam Jafar, peace be on him, says "God is worshipped through us and is obeyed and disobeyed through us. He who obeys us obeys God and he who disobeys us disobeys God. God has emphatically declared that He will not take notice of the good deeds of anybody if they are not done through us *i.e.* according to our instructions. We are the gate of God. We are His 'hujjats.' We are the guardians over His people and the guardians of His mysteries. We are the depositories of His knowledge."

It is the duty of every one of us to ingratiate himself with the Imams by his devotion to them

and by doing things which are good in their eyes. We should do what they order us to do and should not do what they do not want us to do. We should act in a way that pleases them the most and yet we should fear them the most. Fear is one of the means of making us near and dear to God. He has promised those who fear Him, the 'jannat'. The Prophet is narrated to have said "He who does not fear men does not fear God." The word 'men' mentioned in the tradition refers to the Imams.

Imam Jafar, greetings be on him says in this connection "We are the men referred to who are envied by the people because of the Imamatus which God has conferred on us. Those who know our position fear us the most. God says **"None fears God excepting the learned from amongst His servants"**. Again He says **"O men of learning fear Me"**." Those followers of the Imams who have attained to a high position with them are the persons who should fear them the most. The angels who are nearest to God fear Him the most and are more assiduous in their devotion to Him than mankind.

If people possess anything in their hands, they are usually afraid lest some one should snatch it away from them. It is said that once Christ went

1. Part 22 Fatir V. 28 Holy Quran
2. Part 2 Baqara V 197 Holy Quran

on a journey accompanied by one of his disciples. They arrived at a desert where the disciple began to fear. When his fear increased Christ said to him "Have you got anything with you?" The disciple said "Yes." He took out a piece of gold and showed it to him. Christ asked him to throw it away. He threw it away and said nothing. When he forgot everything about the piece of gold, Christ said "This is the place where one has to fear." The disciple said "O Breath of God, we have nothing with us to make us fear."

The one who has attained to a high position before the Imam, should revere him the most and fear him the most. If he takes care to see that he does not do anything which should lower him in the estimation of the Imam, if he keeps away from indulging in things which are prohibited by God and if he pays his 'amanat' and fulfils all his obligations to him and lives a life which is above suspicion; even then he should not feel secure in his position. He should continue to fear him and keep a strict watch over his conduct. For, neglect is the root of sins. The angels who fear God more than all His creatures and are more devoted to Him than the rest, commit no sins. Yet they fear lest they should commit it.

He who does not fear a particular thing has a false notion of security and takes no precautionary measure to ensure his safety. We must bear in mind that by fearing the Imams we respect their

position and safe-guard their dignity. We must know this well and should always preserve our awe for them not only in our words and deeds but also in our thoughts. We should not do things which are disliked by them and which lower us in their estimation. If we do so we shall be depriving ourselves of the favours they usually confer upon us. In short, we shall be incurring their wrath. May God protect us from this and may we not do things which call for their wrath.

Most of the people suffer because they become overconfident of themselves and become proud of their good deeds or their relationship with the Imams. They imagine that it is their own actions which are responsible for their elevation. They think that they have acquired the position as a matter of right. They go a step further and say that because of their achievements they have established a claim on the Imams. I have made it clear somewhere else in this book that none has a claim whatsoever on the Imams. Whatever their followers receive from them they get as a mere matter of favour from them. Good actions bring us near to them and please them and bad actions keep the culprits away from them even if they happen to be related to them or connected with them in one way or the other. There are many people who are closely related to them and yet they are away from their hearts. There are many people who are physically close to them but are spiritually distant from them. May God

protect us from the people of this type. Those who do not know the true position of the Imams and are not known to them, although their condition before God is not an enviable one and they are deprived of His mercy, all the same, are better than those people who have been turned away by the Imams and are kept at a distance.

O momins, try to gain intimacy with the Imams by your good deeds. But do not be deceived by your intimacy with them or by your good deeds. Let not your intimacy with them mislead you and embolden you to indulge in wrong doing.

Majlis 12

LOVE THOSE WHO LOVE THE IMAM

God speaks of the momins in the following terms **“They are harsh towards the infidels¹ and are compassionate towards one another Momins are brothers to one another².”** **“You will never find those who have faith in God and the day of judgement making friends with those who are the enemies of God and His Prophet³.”** **“O! Momins, do not take my enemy and your enemies to be your friends. Never love them⁴.”** **“Those of you who love them are the oppressors⁵.”**

The Prophet while talking of Ali, peace be on them, says **“O God, love those who love Ali and hate those who hate Ali.”** With regard to those whom God has declared to be His enemies and commanded us in His book and through His Prophet to be hostile to them and has prohibited us from befriending them, even if they happen to be our fathers and sons and other members of

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1. Part 26 Fath V. 29 Holy Quran.
 2. Part 98 Hujurat V. 10 Holy Quran.
 3. Part 10 Tawba V. 22, Holy Quran.
 4. Part 28 Mumtahina V. 1 Holy Quran.
 5. Part 10 Tawba V. 23. Holy Quran.

our families, it is but proper that those who are aware of this hostility of God to them should sever their friendly connections from them openly and secretly. They should have no consideration for their being their close or distant relatives. They should not mix with them in the hope of getting anything from them or for the fear of suffering at their hands.

Imam Jafar Sadiq, peace be on him, says "He who wants to know whether a particular person is our friend or foe, should look to the persons with whom he associates. If they are our friends he is our friend; if they are our enemies he is our enemy." I have already said in this book that it is our duty to love the Imams sincerely and with the best of our intentions. Our duty does not end here. We have to keep aloof from their enemies and their evil intentions as long as they continue to be hostile to them. We have to cut off our friendly connections from them and we cannot trust them to the slightest degree. God says, **"Do not trust the oppressors, you will be overtaken by Hell-fire."** The worst of oppressors is the one who harms the "walees of God and shows hostility to them.

Imam Muhammed Baqir, greetings be on him says, "Our followers are those who treat strangers as their relations and befriend them

because of their love for us. They cut themselves off from their families and their closest relations because of their hostility to us. If we are pleased with anybody they are pleased with him. If we get excited against any one, they get excited against him. If we fear some one, they also fear him. If we feel secure, they also feel secure. They never make friends with our enemies and they never become enemies of our friends."

O the followers of the Imams who have faith in their 'Imamat', you should also behave in this manner. Test the man with whom you associate. Distinguish between the friends and the foes of the Imams. Bear in mind that the people are divided into three classes. There is no fourth class to them with the exception of this that in each of the three categories there are people of different grades and there is no criterion by which we can sort them out according to the degrees of their ambitions, their intelligence, their knowledge. their faith and their power of apprehension.

One of these three classes consists of the devotees of the Imams. They are men of different grades and different degrees of spiritual attainments. The next one consists of their enemies. They too are of different grades and of different types of hostility to the Imams. The third one consists of those who are weak-minded and in decisive. God speaks of them in the following

terms. **"They are neither here nor there. They neither know the truth nor they deny untruth. They are like cattle, nay, they are straying further away from the path!"** These people, although their condition is miserable, are in a way better than the out-and-out enemies of the Imams.

Hence, it is necessary for us to test the people and know their proper position in life. Once we have known this we should put every one of them in his proper place. We should befriend those who are the friends of the Imams and be hostile to those who are hostile to the Imams. With regard to the weak-minded and indecisive people let us try to guide them and show them the right path. If they hear the truth they will accept it and will apply their minds to it. With regard to our enemies let us attract them to our side by our good deeds and leave no room for their excuse. Let us give up discussing with them. If we prolong the discussion with them it will end in a fiasco. We have already talked of this in one of the preceding chapters. Let us follow in this matter the words and the actions of the Imam. Let us adopt his policy in our dealings with them. We should do what the Imam wants us to do. We should not go against his instructions.

Abu Jafar Mohammed bin Ali, greetings be on him, has described his followers in the following terms " Our followers do not praise those who find fault with us, do not join those who hate us and they never associate with those who do not like us. If they meet a 'momin' they honour him. If they meet an ignorant fellow they flee away from him. They say what we say. They cut themselves off from their friends for our sake. They treat the strangers as their close relatives because of their love for us. They treat their close relatives as strangers because of their hatred for us. Our followers are warners to the people on earth. They are the lamp-posts; they are the light for those who seek it. They are the leaders of the devotees of God. They will bear testimony on the day of judgement against those who oppose them. They are an asylum for those who come to them. They are extra kind to them and over-generous and forgiving. This is the description of the faithful followers of the Prophets given in the Old and New Testaments and the Holy Quran. The learned men from amongst our followers control their tongues and satisfy their urge by their devotion to God. They harbour ill-feelings in their hearts against the enemies of God. They know their defects but they never tell them what they think about them. They pass their time with indifference to them. They watch their evil deeds and listen to their evil talk with patience. They invoke curses on them, they hate their friends and love their enemies. The Prophet says "Be

what God and His 'walees' have described you to be."

O momins, hate for the sake of God and love for the sake of God. Follow your Imams and carry out their orders. Reveal what they have revealed to you. Have faith in what they have faith. God has made them your leaders. Follow them and obey their orders. Be hostile to those who are hostile to them and friendly to those who are friendly with them. Love those whom they love. Hate those whom they hate. It matters little whether the persons whom they love or hate are your friends or foes or they are your relatives or strangers to you. Let you do what you do for the sake of God. For, what is done for the sake of God cannot be influenced by passion. No misrepresentation or hypocrisy can affect it. May God help us and help you in loving Him and may He protect us and you from incurring His wrath.

Majlis 13.

DO WHAT PLEASES THE IMAM.

It is the duty of the followers of the Imams that they should train themselves to do things, openly and secretly, which are agreeable to the Imams. They should refrain themselves from doing what is disagreeable to them. God has linked our obedience to the Imams with our obedience to Himself and has made it as obligatory on us to obey the Imams as to obey Him. He says **"Let those men who act contrary to the dictates of God, fear a calamity from Him or some severe punishment".**

We must bear in mind that if the Imams tolerate our misconduct they do so with an uneasy mind. It is a great hardship on them to stand it and a great burden on their minds. The miscreants shall have to pay heavily for their misconduct in this world and the world to come. Hence, he who puts the Imams in this awkward position exposes himself not only to their wrath but also to the wrath of God.

It is said that it is much easier to bear a heavy burden than to bear an insolent fellow. For,

1. Ch. 14 Nour V. 63. Holy Quran.

the heavy burden is carried on the body and the insolence of the man is a burden on the soul. The soul is too noble to bear this burden and the souls of the Imams in particular which have been purified by God and honoured and elevated by Him are too sensitive in this matter.

O devotees of God, beware, beware. Never do a thing which is likely to prove disagreeable to the Imams. This is the worst of the sins and calls for the worst punishment. There are very few who tolerate misconduct on the part of their fellow men. If they do so they do it with great difficulty. They harbour ill-will in their hearts and put on a false appearance. If any one of you knows that he has offended some one who is equal to him in rank or who occupies a lower position, he tries to make amends for the offence and does not like to incur his ill-will. If we can not offend ordinary people, how can we make up our minds to offend the Imams and expose ourselves to their wrath? How can we bear ill-will to those from whom we expect the good in this world and their intercession on our behalf in the next? We should fear them the most and we should never give them an occasion to be annoyed with us. We should train ourselves to do things which can bring us near to them and which can win us their love and make us their favourites. We should do things which can purify us and raise us in their estimation. In this, lies our good in this world and our good in the next. This is the only way in which we

can save ourselves from the punishment of God in this world and the next.

O momins, may God bestow mercy on you. Try to understand this chapter. Think over it again and again. Act accordingly. Follow every good piece of advice that you hear. May God help us and help you in doing what pleases Him the most.

Majlis 14.

THE FOLLOWERS OF THE IMAM SHOULD BE FAIR TO OTHERS.

As far as oppression is concerned, God has guaranteed His help to the oppressed. He who exposes himself to the wrath of God will be severely punished here and hereafter. The holy Quran says **“God will help him who is oppressed by others”** Let us take a serious notice of this threat of God. Let us not treat it lightly. If God does not fulfil it immediately we should not ignore His threat. In the case of human beings usually revengeful people try to wreak vengeance on their victims at the earliest opportunity. They do so because they are afraid of dying before they are able to satisfy their feelings of vengeance. No such considerations weigh with God. If He postpones His punishment and lets go the culprit scot-free for sometime, He will certainly punish him a little later here or in the next world whenever He likes. His punishment is much severe and of a permanent nature.

It is said that some one went to Imam Jafar Sadiq and said “O the grandson of the Prophet, will you explain to us the meaning of the following verse. **“God destroys usuary and blesses the charities”**.” “In our every day life we find

that usually money increases by usuary and decreases by the charities drawn out of it.” The Imam said in reply “Nothing is more patent than the decrease of the money acquired by usuary. If the one who receives this money, repents of his misconduct and gives it away, it is gone. If he does not repent here, hell-fire will overtake him and will melt him along with the money.”

This is also a kind of oppression. Oppression is never tolerated by God in any form. If He inflicts the punishment on the oppressor, he is doomed to destruction. The Quran says **“When God help you (the oppressed) no one can over-power you”**. This is the promise which is held out to the oppressed. If He postpones His help to the oppressed and spares the culprits in this world, the punishment in the next world will be of the severest type. The one who is to be helped by God shall be helped by Him sooner or later because God has no time limit for fulfilling His promise. Besides, there is no fear of loss of opportunity with Him. Nothing can deter Him from His actions. God forbid us from our being oppressive. Oppression is the worst of sins. If it is directed against the Imams it calls for the severest punishment. For, he who oppresses the Imams oppresses God and His Prophet. Oppression is a sort of disobedience to God. He who obeys the Imams obeys God and His Prophet and he who disobeys them disobeys God and His Prophet.

1. Part 17th V. 60 Hajj. Holy Quran.
2. Part 3rd. V. 276. Baqara. Holy Quran.

1. Part 4 V 160 Al-emran. Holy Quran.

To oppress the 'momins' and the friends of the Imams is as bad as to oppress the Imams. It is a horrible sin. It is forbidden by God in general. His threat is always hanging on the head of the oppressor. The Prophet says "If one mountain were to be oppressive to another, God would break the oppressor to pieces." The Quran says **"If one is oppressed, God is sure to come to his help".** God has commanded us in His holy Book that we should wage a 'jihad' against the oppressors of the Imams and the 'momins'. Hostility, fighting, slandering or harming are the different forms of oppression. Calumniating a person by spreading false news against him is also included in the category of oppression. Those who speak the truth and are fair minded, never fabricate scandalous things about others and indulge in this kind of oppression.

The worst form of oppression is to run down innocent people in the presence of the Imams and to scandalise them by charging them with things which they have never done and which they are least likely to do. This is a double sin. It is a combination of oppression to the innocent people and insolence to the Imams.

Jealousy is another vice which is condemned in general. 'Momins' are forbidden by God from being jealous of one another. To be jealous of the Imams is an unimaginable form of mon-

1. Part 17 V. 60 Hajj. Holy Quran

strosity. The holy Quran says **"Are the people envious of what God has conferred upon them as a favour? We have favoured Ibrahim with our book and wisdom and we have given them a large Kingdom".** Imam Jafar bin Mohammed say "We are the persons who are referred to in these verses as those who are envied by others. They envy us because of the Imam which God has conferred on us. It is a great kingdom which is referred to in the above verse." "Envy" says the Imam "is the root of all sins. It was the first sin that was committed in heavens and on earth. It was the first sin that was committed by man and the 'jinnee'." Satan envied Adam and envy was the cause of his disobedience. One of the sons of Adam whose sacrifice was not accepted by God became envious of his brother whose sacrifice was accepted and killed him out-right. The holy Quran says **"People in hell fire will cry out O God show us those two persons from amongst the 'Jinnees' and human beings who have misled us so that we may put them under our feet and make them the lowest inmates".** It is said that it was the devil and Qabeel who were the first to commit the sin of disobedience from amongst the 'jinnees' and human beings and they were the first to introduce this vice on earth.

Similarly, those who deny the Prophet-hood of the Prophets and the Imam of the Imams

1. Part 5 V. 54 Nisa. Holy Quran.

2. Ch. 41 V. 29 Hameem. Holy Quran.

and assume a hostile attitude towards them by attempting to encroach upon their rights, are prompted by nothing but envy. They like that they themselves should become the Prophets and the Imams. Man is envious by nature. If he finds some one in possession of something which he has not got he tries to deprive him of it. If one commits theft or an act of seduction or indulges in other sins of this type, the motive behind his acts is always envy. It is for these reasons that Iman Jafar says "Envy is the root of all sins." Much of the human sufferings is caused by envy. One of the Imams says "I have never seen an oppressor like an envious person feeling more depressed than the oppressed ones."

Just as running down the innocent people before the Imams is the worst form of oppression because it is a combination of two sins one against the people and the other against the Imams, to be envious of those who are favoured by the Imams, is the worst form of envy. It is a double sin. It is envy against the people plus the denial of the right doings of the Imams. This sort of envy indicates that those who are favoured by the Imams are not the deserving persons. In other words it means that the Imams are not justified in their favouring these undeserving persons. It means a double hit, a hit against those persons and a hit against the Imams. It is the worst combination of two sins.

The vice of greed is equally detestable. It is one of the worst things which have been prohibited by God. To be greedy in general is condemnable, but to be greedy of the properties of the Imams is the worst sin that one can imagine. It is an act of treachery and an encroachment on the rights of the Imams. It is the most atrocious thing and the worst possible crime that one can commit.

Putting a wrong construction on the actions of people is a horrible thing and to misconstrue the acts of God is the worst form of this horror. The holy Quran says **"with regard to those who misconstrue the acts of God, the evil of their misconstruction is directed against them. He curses them and he has kept for them hell-fire in store. Their end is bad."**

Since, the devotion to the Prophet and the Imams is linked with the devotion to God, to misconstrue the actions of the Imams is as monstrous as to misjudge the acts of God. The misconstruction of the actions of the 'momins' who are the devotees of the Imams is equally horrible. Imam Jafar Sadiq says "God has made it unlawful for a 'momin' to shed the blood of his brother 'momin', or to dishonour him or to misappropriate his property or to misconstrue to his actions."

Ill-will is another vice of this kind which is equally condemned. A 'momin' is forbidden from

showing it to another 'momin' but if he shows it to the Imams, not only he commits the most heinous sin but he ceases to be a 'momin'. He becomes a hypocrite.

O the devotees of God, keep aloof from these dreadful things. See that you display none of these vices by your words or by your deeds. Never entertain them even in your thoughts. Never show signs of approval if you notice these vices in others. God says **"The ears, the eyes and the hearts will all be questioned about their actions".** Be sincere in your dealings with God, His Prophet and the Imams. Be fair and square in your dealings with them and with the 'momins'. Keep a strict watch over yourselves. The perfection of faith, descency of behaviour and straight-forwardness depend on the extent to which you watch your own conduct. You should be more afraid of your own-selves than of others. If you do so you will never do a thing which will bring you to disgrace before others. You will never do things which will lower you in the eyes of God or in the estimation of your fellow-men.

In conclusion, O momins, keep a strict watch on yourselves. Peep in your hearts and find out your defects. If you do not detect them others will point them out to you. May God help you and us in doing things which meet with His approval.

1. Part 15 Bani-esrael. Holy Quran.

Majlis 15.

THE FOLLOWERS OF THE IMAM ARE REQUIRED TO BE HUMBLE.

Humility to God and the Imams is an act of devotion. Pride or over-consciousness of oneself unless it is used in keeping oneself away from wrong doing is one of the signs of mean-mindedness. The Prophet says, "He who is humble to God will be exalted by Him. There is no man whose head is not in the hands of an angel. If he lowers it down before God, the angel lifts it up saying 'raise your head. God has raised you up.' If he raises his head with pride, the angel will lower it saying 'lower yourself because God has lowered you down'." Ostentation, pride and self-conceit are the peculiar characteristics of the devils. They are condemned by the people in general. But, if they are shown to the Imams, they look abominable. It is the worst sin that one can commit. We fail to understand how people can feel proud of or make a show of their actions if they undergo some hardship or take part in a religious war on account of the Imams. If they do this they do it for their own-selves and for their own good. If they have done this for the sake of God, then they are indebted to God and the Imams in this respect. God says **"They think they have conferred an obliga-**

tion on you by following Islam. Tell them do not talk of your obligation on me by your following Islam. On the contrary God has obliged you by guiding you to the right faith. If you are true (you will realise the truth of this.) ”

On the other hand if they work for the Imams for the sake of an allowance that is given to them or the wages that have been paid to them, then they are nothing more than wage-earners. If they work for the wages they have no further claim. If they work more, they are entitled to a reward. If they work less than what they were expected to do then they are the sinners. However, if they work voluntarily in order to improve their position and earn a good name, their purpose is served.

The Prophet says, “ On the day of judgement God will order some people to be thrown in Hell-fire. Some of these people will say ‘O God, we have fought for your sake’. Some will say ‘we have been regularly performing the pilgrimage to your house.’ Others will say ‘we have been praying and giving charities in your name.’ God will say to them : ‘You are liars. You have done all these things in order that you should be talked about as brave persons, as pilgrims and as generous men. Your purpose has been served. You were talked about by people as such. Go to Hell-fire.”

In short, he who feels proud of his actions, will be ruined by his pride, and he who puts a proper value upon himself will never suffer.

Again if one of those followers of the Imams scorns at the behaviour of the Qazis and officers in treating him and his opponents alike and at the sense of security which his enemies and the ‘zim-mies’ enjoy along with him, he is misled by the false notion of his superiority over others. He thinks that because of his close proximity with the Imams, he is entitled to a preferential treatment. He is carried away by pride. His self-conceit drives him away from the right course. He tries to make a show of his superiority over his enemies without realising the blessing that God has conferred on him by bringing him nearer to the Imams and without thinking of the duties that are enjoined on him because of his nearness. He has a mistaken idea that he is entitled to a better treatment at the hands of the Imams and their officers than his enemies.

If he makes a proper estimate of himself, he will come to his senses. He will then realise that if he had not been closely connected with the Imams, he would have stood before his enemy much more degraded than what the latter appears to be to him. Consequently it is his duty to treat his enemies on equal footing with himself and never to boast to them of his influence with the Imams. They are just and fair. They treat their

friends and foes alike. In this matter they do what they have been commanded by God to do. We cannot attribute any injustice to them in front of ignorant people. If we do so we shall be giving them a handle to be used against the Imams. We shall be putting into their heads a wrong idea that the Imams do things according to their own whims and not according to the dictates of God.

The Imams are above being oppressive to any one. To charge them with being unjust is as dreadful as to be hostile and oppressive to them. It is a clear case of transgression and defiance of their orders. It is a misrepresentation of their favours and slipping away from the right course.

Majlis 16.

THE FOLLOWERS OF THE IMAM SHOULD BE FORBEARING, FORGIVING AND GRAVE.

Forbearance, calmness, respectfulness and forgiveness are the peculiar characteristics of good 'momins'. God has mentioned forbearance as a distinctive mark of one of His Prophets. He says **"Verily, Ebraheem was for bearing, and compassionate and oft-turning to God."** To Prophet Mohammed He says **"Take to forgiveness, order your followers to do good and keep aloof from the ignorant people. If Satan comes in your way, seek the protection of God. He is all-hearing and all knowing¹."** There are other verses of this type which are as follows :—"He has given to the momins peace of mind in order that they may increase their Faith²." **"have faith in God and His Prophet. Exalt Him, revere Him and sanctify Him morning and evening³."** **"Let them forget and forgive. Do you not like that God should forgive you? He is forgiving and merciful⁴."** About the 'momins' He says **They are kind to one another⁵."**

1 Part 12 Hud V. 75 holy Q 2 Ch. 7 Araf V. 199-200 holy Q
3 Ch. 48 Fath V. 4 " " 4 Ch. 48 Fath V. 9 " "
5 Ch. 24 Noor V. 22 " " 6 Ch. 48 Fath V. 29 " "

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It is the duty of the followers of the Imams to acquire these virtues which have been taught to us by God through the above verses. Let them cultivate these habits and become as they have been described by God, forbearing, kind, grave and respectful in public and in private. This will add to their dignity here and will store for them a reward in the next world.

It is incumbent on us to practice these virtues with the best of our intentions and with frankness in our dealings with the Imams and the officers appointed by them. God will double our reward for the good we do to them just as He will double the punishment of those who do them harm. We have talked of these things in detail in one of the previous chapters of this book.

Nothing can be more desirable and more worthy of our attainment than the practice of these virtues which will entitle us to a reward from God and which will increase our reputation in our life time and after our death and will make us secure on the day of judgement.

It is equally desirable for those who know themselves and know the proper position of the Imams and who work for the good of the next world that they should keep clear of those habits which are the very opposite of the above virtues. They should never have recourse to them in their

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thoughts, in their words and in their actions. For instance, insolence is the opposite quality of forbearance, revengefulness is the opposite of forgiveness, hard-heartedness is the opposite of leniency, self-conceit is the opposite of respectfulness and frivolity is the opposite of seriousness. These evil habits are condemned by the people in general and to shun them is a positive virtue. It is a dreadful thing to indulge in them in our dealings with the public in general ; but if any one were to have recourse to them in his dealings with the Imams and their friends, he will be committing a sin of astounding atrocity.

Majlis 17

**THE FOLLOWERS OF THE IMAM SHOULD
BE SYMPATHETIC TO ONE ANOTHER.**

The followers of the Imams should be attached to one another. They should never allow self-interest to affect their love for one another. They should always be ready to help one another at the time of need. The Prophet says "On the Day of Judgement an angel will shout, 'Where are the men of self-discipline ? A group of them will come up and will be ordered to enter paradise. The angels will say to them 'What kind of self-discipline did you exercise which has entitled you to enter into paradise?' The men will say, ' We disciplined ourselves in our devotion to God and in refraining ourselves from committing sins.' The angels will say, 'Enter the paradise. Excellent is the reward.' Again the angel will shout, 'Where are the men of good actions ?' A group of men will stand in response and will be ordered to enter the paradise. The angels will say to them, ' What good actions have you done which have won you the entry in paradise?' They will say, 'We forgave those who oppressed us, sought union with those who cut us off and we gave to those who refused to give us.' The angels will

say, 'Get in.' Excellent is the reward.' Again the angel will shout, 'Where are the neighbours of God in the abode of peace? A group of men will come up and will be ordered to enter the paradise. The angels will say to them, 'What have you done to make yourselves deserving of your neighbourhood of God in the abode of peace?', They will say, 'We used to love one another for the sake of God. We used to show attachment to one another for the sake of God. We used to sacrifice our interests for one another for the sake of God. The angels will say, 'Get in. Excellent is the reward.'"

There is no reward which can be compared to the reward of these groups. There are very few men who can make themselves deserving of such rewards. There are very few men, who, when they love their brothers, love them for the sake of God; when they are attached to them their attachment is for the sake of God and when they sacrifice anything for them they do so for the sake of God. Such people belong to that group about which God says, "**Excepting those who believe in God and do good deeds and there are very few men of this type**'."

Most of the people who love others or show attachment to them or sacrifice their interests for them, do so with a selfish motive. They

either expect a return from them or do it for the sake of show and for the sake of being talked about as good men. The best way of doing these things is to do them for nothing but a reward from God. When one does them he should be actuated by no other motive than his desire to please God and none else. But such people are very few.

He who aspires to acquire these virtues should see that whatever he does, he does for the sake of God. His eyes should be turned to God and the reward from Him should be near his heart. He should be particularly careful when he does anything of this kind for the Imams. When he does it he should do it with the best of his intentions and the utmost eagerness. For pious deeds of this type are more than doubled by God.

If a 'momin' loves his brother 'momin' and is attached to him, he is guaranteed by God to enjoy His neighbourhood in the abode of peace. But if he extends his affection and attachment to the Imam, he will be making himself deserving of a much greater reward. If he is sincere in his intentions and if he is influenced by no other motive than his love for the Imam then his reward from God will be beyond his imagination.

On similar lines when one pays from his earnings what is due to the Imam he is required to do so with the purest intention. He should do what

he does for the sake of God and not for the sake of show or making a name for himself or for the fear that if he does not pay him he will be lowering himself in the estimation of the Imam and will thus be put to some trouble. For if he loves the Imam with some ulterior motive, his love will not be love for the sake of God. Similarly whatever he does, whether he takes part in the 'jihad' or serves him in any other form he should see that he is actuated by no other motive than doing things for the sake of God.

In this connection I am reminded of a piece of advice I got from an old man when I was very young. Although I neither believed in his religion nor was I satisfied with what he said, his advice is worth mentioning.

One day when I was engrossed in reading and writing he said to me, "O boy, I would like to give you a piece of advice." I said 'It is welcome'. He said 'Your engrossment in books will prevent you from doing good deeds. If you are over-attached to reading and writing you will not like to give it up and do something else. Hence, let your motive for doing what you are doing, be to act in the name of God and for a reward from Him. This motive of yours in itself will constitute a good deed.'

Although he was not cent per cent right but there was some truth in what he said. If one

acquires a right knowledge in the name of God, then his good intention is a good deed. But if one reads and writes and keeps himself engaged in the acquiring of a wrong knowledge and he does all this for the sake of God, his motive will not be recognised and he will not be rewarded for it. On the contrary, he will be punished for doing the wrong thing and his pursuit in this direction will be counted as a positive sin. Thus, if some one does a good deed and does it solely for the sake of God and for a reward from Him, he will be rewarded for it. But if he does it for the sake of show and acquiring a fame, his act will not be recognised as a pious deed. It will be an act of hypocrisy. The Prophet says, "Whether a particular act is meritorious or not, depends upon the intention of the doer. Every man is judged by his intention." If one leaves his country for the sake of God and His Prophet, his migration is certainly for God and His Prophet. But if he leaves the country for acquiring wealth or for the sake of a woman he wants to marry, then his migration is not for God but for the things which have prompted him to undertake the journey.

The word 'act' used in the above tradition stands for a good deed. If it is accompanied by a good intention it becomes meritorious. If the good intention is missing it ceases to be meritorious. But, if one does a wrong thing with the best of intention, his wrong will not become right.

He will be punished for his wrong deed inspite of his good intention.

Again the Prophet says, "The intention of a 'momin' is better than his action." God and His Prophet know best. But in my opinion the tradition means that a good act without a good intention will meet with no recognition. For instance, if one refrains from eating and drinking for the whole day but he does not do this for the sake of fasting, he cannot be said to have fasted. Similarly if one visits Mecca during the pilgrimage season and performs all the rites of pilgrimage without intending to perform the pilgrimage he ceases to be a pilgrim. If one stands, bows down and prostrates himself like the one who offers prayers, without intending to perform prayers, he cannot be said to have performed the prayer. In short, every good act must be preceded by a good intention. A good act without a good intention will be of no avail and will not meet with recognition. A good act ceases to be a good act if the good intention is missing. On the other hand, a good intention minus the good act, is an act of piety and a profitable concern. The Prophet says, "If one intends to do a good deed, a good deed is recorded in his name. If he does what he has intended to do then ten good deeds will be recorded in his name."

It is for these reasons that the intention of the 'momin' is considered to be better than his good

deed because it is helpful to him even if it is not translated into action. But a good deed without a good intention, does the doer no good. One of the ignorant fellows once said to one of the Imams "Is it fair that the one who disobeys God or commits sins during the short span of his life in this world should be condemned in the next world to eternal punishment?" The Imam said, "Yes. It is because his intention was to continue the sinful course of life even if he had lived upto an indefinite period. Besides, he persisted in this course upto the time of his death without repenting for his sins."

In short, evil intention plays as great a part in deciding the nature of punishment as a good intention does in bringing its reward. God says **"With regard to those who think ill of God, their evil thoughts are directed against them. Wrath of God befalls them. He curses them and makes room for them in Hell. Their end is bad."** Evil thought in the above verses means an evil intention. Again God says, **"You had all sorts of doubts in God. Here the 'momins' were put to the severest test and they became shaky in their faith to a startling extent."** God has, in these verses, taken the 'momins' to task for their evil thoughts.

O momins, acquire these good habits and practice them in your dealings with one another

1. Ch. 48 V. 6 Al-fatan. Holy Quran

2. Ch. 33 Vs. 10-11 Al-ahzab. Holy Quran

Be sincere in your love for the Imams and your co-religionists. Love one another and be attached to one another. Be steady in your loyalty to the Imams and in your love for them. See that you never entertain ill-will against one another. See that you are never cut off from one another. See that you never hate one another. Above all, see, that you do not become stingy in parting with the money which you have been enjoined upon by God to pay. May God help you and us to do good. May He make us successful in the discharge of His duties and may He guide us in this direction.

THE FOLLOWERS OF THE IMAM SHOULD III
DRESS PROPERLY WHEN VISITING
THE IMAM.

Majlis 18

THE FOLLOWERS OF THE IMAM SHOULD
DRESS PROPERLY WHEN VISITING
THE IMAM.

God has made it compulsory for us through His holy Book and through the preachings of the Prophet to put on a decent dress during our visits to the holy places. He says "**O the children of Adam be decently dressed when you visit the mosques**." The Prophet says "If God has placed any one in favourable circumstances let him show the signs of prosperity by dressing well. Let him be clean and well-perfumed when he visits the holy places for seeking further favours from Him." There are many traditions to this effect. I cannot quote them all. If I do so the matter will prolong.

Similarly if any one wants to visit the Imams, he should be neat and tidy. He should put on the best dress and use the best possible perfume that he can get. Let him exhibit the blessings of God which He has conferred on him. If he has received some consideration at the hands of the Imams then it is his duty to make a demonstration of it by visiting them in a ceremonious dress. This is out of respect for the position they hold.

God has enjoined on us that before we stand up for prayers we should make the necessary preparations by putting on a clean dress and performing ablutions. For, when we visit the house of God and stand up before Him we should maintain the dignity of the occasion. Similarly when we pay a visit to the Imams we should take the necessary precaution in the matter of cleanliness and decency of dress. If we do not take this precaution we shall be belittling the dignity of the Imams. He who thinks lightly of these things exposes himself to the wrath of God. For, to be clean on such occasions is traditional with us; nay, it is the necessary part of our religion. The Prophet says "God likes cleanliness and He hates clumsy fellows." Hence, in all such matters it is our duty to do what God likes us to do and to refrain from doing what He does not like. In short, we should observe the rules of decency when we visit the Imams who are the medium of our approach to God and on whom we look for intercession for us on the day of judgement.

1. Ch. 7 Araf. V. 31. Holy Quran

Majlis 19.

HOW TO STAND, SIT AND TALK IN THE PRESENCE OF THE IMAM.

Those who know the true position of the Imams and have faith in their 'imamat' conscientiously believe that their standing in front of the Imams with respectfulness which is due to them is a sort of prayer which brings the devotee nearer to God. For He has enjoined on us to hold them in reverence. When we stand in their presence we should be as respectful to them as we respect God at the time of our prayers. God says "**Stand before God devoutly**". Hence, when one stands in the presence of the Imams one should do so with the full faith that his standing with reverence will bring him near to God. He should look for the reward for this act and should never entertain the idea that sitting in front of the Imams is better than standing before them. He should never think that his sitting will bring him near to the Imams.

No one can claim, as a matter of right, to sit before them. If, however, one of us is asked by the Imam, either out of respect for him or for any other consideration he should sit down and acknow-

ledge his gratitude to them for this act of benevolence on their part. He should be particularly thankful to them and should not look upon it as a small affair. This is the highest position that one can aspire after and the greatest favour that one can look for from the Imams.

We should bear in mind that, if any one of us, receives a favour of this type, he should not be carried away with the idea that it will be used as a precedent on future occasions. None of us has any claim on the Imams. If they confer a favour on some one of us it cannot be claimed as a matter of right for ever. The favours of the Imams on their devotees are like the favours of God on His creatures. He says "**This is our favour. We extend it or withhold it as we like.**" Thus, the Imams can favour whom they like and how they like. If they withhold their favours they do so, not because they are unable to confer them or because they are too reluctant to confer them, but because they are the masters of the situation. It is left entirely to their sweet will.

What we are required to do is to show to the Imams that we are always satisfied with them. Their bestowal of favours on us or their withholding them from us should make no change in us. If they confer a favour on one of their devotees he should thank them for this and should not have the least idea that he has got it because he was worthy of it. He should never entertain such ideas in

his head. If the favour is repeatedly conferred on him he should be doubly thankful to them and should never feel that he was deserving of it. If it is not repeated he should still thank them for their previous favours and admit his un-worthiness for additional favours. He should be convinced that it was for his own good that this additional favour was not conferred on him. He should never visit the Imams in expectation of receiving what he imagines is his due from them.

If any one of us stands up before the Imam he should adopt the position which he takes up at the time of standing for prayers. He should have a due regard for the dignity of the Imam and should fix his eyes on the ground. He should lower his arms and look up to him with the belief that to get a glimpse of the Imam is a sort of prayer. There is an authoritative tradition to this effect. He should not turn his eyes here and there. He should not make awkward movements. He should not play with his hands. He should either lower them down or place the right one on his left a little below his chest.

He should be respectfully silent. He should speak only when the Imam asks him to speak or circumstances force him to speak or when the Imam intends to speak to him or when he is required to give some information to the Imam about some work which was assigned to him. When he speaks he should speak as long as the

Imam is prepared to hear him. The moment the Imam turns away from him or stops talking to him he should immediately stop unless the Imam, directly or indirectly, permits him to continue the topic. In that case he should say what he has to say otherwise he should shut his mouth and never utter a word without his permission.

While talking to the Imam he should talk as slowly as the Imam can hear him. He should not raise his voice. God has forbidden us from raising our voices above the voice of the Prophet. We have to follow a similar rule of conduct in our talking to the Imams. God has linked our obedience to the Imam with our obedience to the Prophet and hence our respect for the Imams is equivalent to our respect for the Prophet and God Himself.

When the Imam talks to somebody the person to whom he talks should be all attention to him. If he speaks to a group of people, then it is the duty of every one of them to pay close attention to what he says. If he speaks to any one of them openly or secretly then the one to whom he speaks should attend to every word that he utters and derive the fullest advantage from the speech of the Imam. For every word he utters is full of wisdom, full of knowledge and full of sense. The Imam never utters a word which is light, superfluous or meaningless. If a listener finds a single word of this type he must know that there is something

wrong with him. God has made the Imams free from these defects. If we imagine that a particular word uttered by the Imam is not fruitful, the fault lies with us. We are too dull to detect the proper meaning of the words uttered by the Imam.

The signs and symbols used by the Imams in the course of their conversation with us and hints dropped by them are a fathomless ocean. None can dive deep in it with the exception of those whose hearts have been illumined by God. They, too, cannot master all the subtleties in the conversation of the Imams. In this connection if I were to describe my own experience and the difficulties that I had in understanding them, the matter will prolong and will exceed the limits of my book.

If, in front of the Imam, some one says something which makes the Imam smile or laugh, none of those that are present there should laugh. They should smile, with their eyes fixed on the ground. They should show their reverence for the Imam and maintain the dignity of the occasion by refraining themselves from laughing. If the Imam wishes to speak to some one in secret, then let those who are sitting close to this man clear away from him. All those that are present there should divert their attention from him and should never try to over-hear his secret talk with the Imam. They should not whisper or talk among themselves

in the presence of the Imam. All the talking that takes place at the meeting with the Imam has to be kept secret. We should look upon it as a secret that has been confided in us by the Imam. There is a tradition to the effect that the proceedings of meetings with the Imams are to be treated as an 'amanat'. It matters little whether we have been asked by the Imams or not, to guard this secret. There is one exception to this. We are required to give full publicity to all the good things about the Imams and the favours they confer on their devotees. Even in these matters we can talk only of those things which have taken place in public. Of things that have been communicated in secret we have no right to talk.

We should never quarrel or indulge in disputes in the presence of the Imam. If one uses an offensive language to us we should not try to retort him. We should take no notice of such things. We should turn a deaf ear to those who talk ill of us. We should never give them a tit for tat even if we are in the best position to do so. However, if the Imam permits us to continue our dispute in his presence, then we should confine ourselves to the pleading of our own case. We should never deviate from the right course. We should not be reckless in the discourse. We should not talk disrespectfully. We should not yawn or stretch our limbs and make all sorts of awkward movements.

In our visiting the Imams there is one more point which deserves our attention. At the time of the rising of the Imam, before he actually rises, usually some indication is given to the public to this effect. Those who are present, the moment they become aware of this sign, should stand up, and go out by bowing without waiting for the permission. If they don't notice these signs and he stops talking or if they find out from his movements that he intends to rise then they should rise. If they are asked by the Imam to sit down, they should do so until they are ordered by him to leave. Under no circumstance should the visitors prove themselves to be a nuisance to the Imam. If the Imam wants them to leave, then they should move backward with their faces turned to the Imam. They should never turn their backs to the Imam until they reach the stage when he is out of sight.

Majlis 20.

THE LAWS OF BEHAVIOUR FOR THOSE WHO ACCOMPANY THE IMAM.

It is the duty of the one who moves about with the Imam to stick to the official position which has been assigned to him. If he is required to be in front of the Imam, he should stick to his position. He should always keep in view the distance which he is required to maintain between him and the Imam. To find this out he should never look at the Imam. He should find this out by a side glance and he should move in such a way as to keep up the official distance between him and the Imam. He should not allow anything to interfere with the maintenance of this distance. He should not trifle with it or neglect it. He should not divert his attention from this by talking to or looking at the passers-by or doing some such thing that may stand in his way.

He should always maintain his respect for the Imam and keep up the dignity of his behaviour. He should not talk at random. He should not speak to the Imam unless he himself orders him to do so. This class of people should be very vigilant. They should be all attention to the Imam and should see that they are always at his beck and call. If he calls any one of them, he should run to him with his face towards him and

ees fixed on the ground. He should hear what he says, and after doing what he is asked to do should immediately resume his position.

He should not look upon this position as a permanent affair. He should always wait for the orders of the Imam. He should look upon it as nothing but a favour from the Imam. If he is deprived of this honour, he should not be forgetful of the previous favours of the Imam. He should not look upon his not being selected for the job as a discredit to him or a wrong move on the part of the Imam. This is as much a favour on him as the former favours of the Imam. He must bear in mind that it is left entirely to the sweet will of the Imam. Whether he does these things with a cause or without a cause, he is above criticism in these matters.

If somebody else is called in his place to do the job which he used to do, he should keep back without being disheartened in the least. He should never entertain the idea that he has been disrespected by the Imam in this matter. We have said somewhere else in this book that if any one is favoured or honoured by the Imams he should not think that he has got what he has got as a matter of right. He should not look upon it as an established precedent. They favour those whom they like and withdraw their favours when they like.

Majlis 21.

THE LAWS OF BEHAVIOUR FOR THE RELATIONS OF THE IMAM.

God says to the Prophet **“Warn your nearest relations”**.¹ **“Warn the people of the day when punishment will be inflicted on them”**. These verses show to us that in the matter of warning from God the relations of the Imams and others are all alike. They are all enjoined upon by God to be devoted to the Imams who have been appointed by Him. The Quranic verse **“Obey God, obey the Prophets and obey your spiritual heads”** *i.e.* the Imams is as applicable to their relatives as to others. The Prophet says to the children of Abdul Muttalib **“O the children of Abdul Muttalib, let you not appear before God with the proof of your relationship with me when others appear before Him with their good deeds. I will not intercede for you unless you bring your good deeds with yourselves. Your actions alone will decide your fate in bringing you nearer to Him or driving you further away from Him.”** Imam Jafar Sadiq was once asked by a man whether the tradition **“The one who dies without acknowledging the Imam of his time will die a death of a pervert,”**

1. Part 19 V. 214 Ash-shuara holy Quran.
2. Part 13 V. 44 Ibrahim.

was an authentic one? The Imam replied "Yes". "Will your relatives also" said the man "die the death of perverts if they do not acknowledge the Imam of the Imam of their time?" "Yes", said Imam Jafar "In this matter our relations and others are all alike."

Really speaking the relations of the Imams are expected to be the foremost of all in their recognition of the Imam of the time. They are required to set a good example by submitting themselves to the Imam and by carrying out his orders with the utmost willingness. Allegiance to the Imams is enjoined on us all, but the responsibility of those who are nearer the truth is much heavier than that of others. In other words the relations of the Imams are expected to be more steady in their loyalty and devotion to the Imams than the rest of the people.

If they are indifferent to them or if they become envious of their position and imagine that it is below their dignity to make allegiance to them they will be degrading themselves to the position of infidels. God has selected the Imams from amongst them. He has ordered them to be devoted to them like the rest of mankind. If they oppose them they will be opposing God. If they make a show of pride to them they will be showing pride to God. If they turn away from them they turn away from God. Those who oppose God will be disgraced by Him. Those who show pride

to Him will be humiliated by Him. Those who turn away from Him will be subjected to speedy decay. In short, nothing will be more ruinous to them than the perverted idea that they are superior to others in the matter of allegiance to the Imams.

When Ali, peace be on him, paid to Talha and Zubair their legitimate dues from the booty, they protested by saying, "O the commander of the faithful, have you no consideration for our relationship with you?" Ali said in reply, "Are you more closely related to me than I am to the Prophet?" They said, "You are more closely related to him than we are to you." "Then", said Ali, "did not the Prophet distribute the booty among the muslims equally without giving preference to one man over another?" They said "The Prophet did distribute the booty equally, but those who succeeded him gave us a preferential treatment." Ali said "Who was more learned, the Prophet or his successors?" They said, "Certainly the Prophet was more learned." A long discussion took place amongst them and in the end Zubair and Talha were convinced that Ali was right. Their later ruination was due to nothing but the wrong notion that they had a greater claim over the booty than others. They broke their allegiance to him and waged a war against him. They launched on a course which brought about their disaster. The details are too long to be mentioned here.

In short, it is the duty of the relatives of the Imam to know the true position of the Imam and set an example to others by submitting themselves to his will. They should ponder over the words of God and the words of the Prophet and follow the tradition which has been laid down by their predecessors. They should never allow jealousy to influence their conduct. They should remember that one son of Adam was ruined because of his jealousy of his brother whose offer was more acceptable to God than his. They should never allow themselves to be carried away by the idea that because of their relationship with the Imams they are superior to others. They should never imagine that because of their relationship they are exempted from the duties which are imposed on us all alike. On the contrary they should realize that their responsibility in the matter of devotion to the Imam is much heavier than that of any one else.

Majlis 22.

HOW TO MAKE A REQUEST TO THE IMAM.

The good of this world and of the world to come lie in the hands of the Imam. He who asks for one of the two gets the one he longs for and he who asks for both will get both of them. When any one of us makes a request to the Imam for himself or for some one else for a worldly gain or for a spiritual elevation, let him put the request in the proper form and make it in its proper place. He should always be within the reasonable limits. If his request concerns his promotion to a higher stage in his spiritual career, his persistence is justified, but if it concerns some worldly affair, then he has no right to persist in it. In both these cases he should keep in view his position with the Imam. Whatever he does he should do in conformity with his position. He should never transgress the limits which are prescribed by his position with the Imam.

When we request the Imam for a worldly gain or for a lift in our spiritual career we should never talk at random and we should see that in such requests we are not prompted by a craving for power or a desire to make a parade of our piety. The Prophet says " He who seeks the good of the next world with a view to improve his prospects here, will not enjoy the fragrance of paradise which is so powerful that it can be smelt from a distance of a hundred years' journey." When we

Request the Imam for a worldly gain, we should not be greedy and obstinate in our demands.

If a 'momin' is forced by circumstances to beg, he should approach none but one of his brother 'momins'. He should never degrade himself by begging from his enemies. He should never accept charities at their hands even if they go out of the way to offer it to him. In the observance of this rule of life lies the prestige of the 'momins' and of their faith.

Imam Jafar Sadiq, greetings be on him, says, "Our followers will never be friendly with our enemies. They will never beg from them and they will never accept their gifts even if they were to face death." The Prophet has forbidden us from accepting gifts from infidels and our opponents. One of the Imams once said to one of his associates "If any one of my followers is needy, it is unlawful for him to approach any one excepting his brother momins." A proverb says "Do a good turn to some one and you will become his master, accept some favour from some one and you will become his slave." It is not a good thing for a 'momin' to make himself a slave of his enemy. If his wants are satisfied through his brothers, well and good; otherwise he should be patient and he should wait till God improves his affairs and provides him from unaccountable sources. God has promised this to the 'momins' who are contented with their lot.

Majlis 23.

THE MOMINS ARE FORBIDDEN FROM FINDING FAULT WITH THE IMAM.

God says "Do what the Prophet wants you to do and keep away from what he forbids you from doing." "Do not take the summoning of the Prophet to you to be similar to your summoning one another. God knows those of you who slip away under shelter of some excuse. Let those who disobey the orders of the Prophet, beware of the calamity that will befall them here or the severe punishment which will be inflicted on them hereafter." To obey the commands and prohibitions of the Prophet in toto is enjoined on us by God. It is an act of devotion to Him. God has linked our devotion to Him with our devotion to the Imams. Lip-profession of devotion in words ceases to be a devotion unless it is prompted by conviction and is followed by practice. To criticise the Prophet or to pry into his affairs or to show disapproval of his actions in words or in thoughts is abominable. It is strictly prohibited by God who through His holy Book has enjoined

1. Part 28 V. 7 Al-Haahr, holy Quran.
 2. Part 18 V. 63 An-noor. ,, ,,

on us all to submit ourselves to his will. Our faith is incomplete without our submission to his will. The holy Imams occupy a similar position. They are the representatives of the Prophet on earth and our devotion to them is a devotion to the Prophet.

It logically follows that it is our bounden duty to obey the commands of every Imam of the time and submit to his will. To criticise him or to pry into his affairs is as abominable as to criticise the Prophet or to pry into his affairs. God has entrusted our case to him. He has guaranteed His support to him. He has recognised him as a legitimate heir to his predecessor from amongst the Imams. He has conferred on him his highest favours and is always ready to help him when he needs His help. The Imam looks at things with the light of God and does what he does with the help of God. Whatever he does and in whatever age he does, he does well because he is guided by God. He does things which suit the requirements of the times, and says things which are appropriate for the occasion and he treats people as they ought to be treated. All his activities are well planned and are in tune with his surroundings. Those who cannot see through them disapprove of them and criticise the Imams because of their ignorance. They forget that God has forbidden us from finding fault with his actions and has made it obligatory on us to submit ourselves to his will. With all this there are people who disapprove of his actions

and criticise him by saying that the Prophet and the Caliphs had never lived the life of grandeur which the Imam lives. They appear to be ignorant of history. They are not aware of what God says in the holy Quran about a large kingdom which was granted to the Prophets like Joseph, David and Solomon. They know nothing of the various blessings of this world which God had conferred on the Prophets and the Imams. Imam jafar says "A certain Prophet used to sit on a throne studded with jewels with a circular canopy interlaced with golden threads made after the pattern of the throne which was used by Pharoë. It was from this elevated seat of grandeur that he used to decide the disputes among the people according to the book of God." The holy Quran says "Say, who has forbidden the beautiful gifts of God which He has produced for His servants and the things clean and pure which He has provided for sustenance? Say, they are in the life of this world for those who believe and purely for them on the day of judgement".

We must bear in mind that in the eyes of the Imams this world is more contemptible than a particle of dust. In every age and at every time they look into the things minutely and in whatever they do, they do for the good of the people.

130 THE MOMINS ARE FORBIDDEN FROM FINDING
FAULT WITH THE IMAM.

O the devotees of God, be careful of the position of the Imams. Never misconstrue their actions and never allow yourselves to be misled by their outward pomp which they are required to maintain to strike awe in the minds of the enemies of God.

May God guide you in carrying out the orders of the Imam of the time.

Majlis 24.

**THE OFFICERS APPOINTED BY THE
IMAM SHOULD BE VERY FAIR WITH
THE FOLLOWERS OF THE IMAM.**

This chapter deals with the officers who have been appointed by the Imam to look after his followers, to supervise his revenue or to collect his dues from the 'momins'. Whatever is mentioned in this chapter is applicable not only to the officers but to all the 'momins' in general. The Prophet says, "Every one of you is a sort of an administrator. He is accountable to God for the administration of his dominion. For instance, a man is an administrator of the members of his family. A woman is the administrator of her household affairs. She is accountable to God for the proper administration of her house and for the preservation of her chastity. A slave is the administrator of the job which has been assigned to him by his master. He is accountable to God for the administration of this job. Let every one of you fear God and let every one of you know that he has to render an account of his actions to God." These instructions of the Prophet are of a general nature. It is incumbent on every one who belongs to any one of these categories that he should be careful in the discharge of his

duties. He should always bear in mind that according to what the Prophet has said, he will have to give an account of his actions to God.

This is the duty of the people in general. The duty of the officers appointed by the Imams is of a far more serious nature. Those who have to look after the affairs of his followers or those who are engaged in his personal service, are required to lead an exemplary life. They have to improve themselves before they can improve others. For, he who neglects his own affairs can never manage the affairs of others. He cannot preach others to be good if he is not good himself. He cannot forbid others from doing wrong if he himself is indulging in wrong doing. God says, **“What ! Do you preach people to do good and neglect your own selves while you read the book of God? Have you no sense?”** The Prophet says, “May God curse those who preach good and do not practice it, and who forbid others from doing wrong while they themselves indulge in wrong doing.” How can such a person expect good from God who has been run down by Him in His book and who has been cursed by His Prophet? How can his actions bear fruit? How can he set right the affairs of the people?

If we ourselves are not good we have no right to expect good things from others. God says

“He does not guide the machinations of the treacherous’.” *i.e.* He does not want their tricks to succeed in their objects. **“He does not allow the work of the vicious people to prosper’.”** The Prophet says “How can any one of you point out a mote in the eye of his brother when he has the beam in his own eye.”

To sum up, the officers of the Imam should correct themselves before they think of correcting others. If they themselves are good, God will crown their efforts in making others good with success. Otherwise they will look like a physician who tries to cure people of a disease from which he himself is suffering. The Prophet says “If a person is fair to himself in his dealings with God, He will make others fair to him in their dealing with him.”

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1. Ch. 12 Yousuf V. 52, holy Quran.
 2. Part 11. Yoonus; 81, holy Quran.

1. Ch. 2 Baqara V. 44, holy Quran.

Majlis 25.

**THE DUTIES OF THE 'DAA-EES'
(Missionaries.).**

Self-correction is more necessary in the case of a 'daa-ee' than in the case of any one else. He should lead a good life and prove to be a 'daa-ee' in the true sense of the word. For when he invites people to his faith, his followers will look upto him as the best model. If they find good or bad things in him, they will attribute them to the teachings of the Imams and their faith.

Just as the contents of the preceding chapter are applicable to the 'momins' in general the contents of this chapter also are equally applicable to them. Imam Jafar Sadiq says to all his non-daa-ee 'Sheas', "Be our silent daa-ees." He made his remarks clear by pointing out to them that if they lived a straight life they would attract the people to their faith and thus they would prove to be the 'daa-ees' not by means of their tongue but by means of their good deeds.

In this sense every 'momin' who lives an exemplary life proves to be a 'daa-ee' to the Imam. We should bear in mind that our straight life is prescribed by the rules and regulations laid down by the Imam for our guidance. We should always be within our limits. To go beyond our limits is as bad as to fall short of our duties.

In case of the 'daa-ee' his first and foremost duty is to live in strict adherence to the principles laid down by his faith. He should be pious to the extreme and he should carry on the propaganda with skill and prudence. God says to His Prophet "**Invite the people to the path of your Lord by using your descretion and preaching to them in the best possible manner'.**" Not unlike the Prophet, the 'daa-ee' is expected to be very discrete in his propoganda. He should maintain contact with the people and he should know all those whom he intends to preach from man to man. He should study their minds and sort them out according to their intelligence. He should deal with them in dividually and preach to every one of them according to his intelligence and his power of assimilation. He should know how to approach him and how to infuse his ideas into his mind. This is the best course for the 'daa-ee' to adopt. We know many 'daa-ees' who have ruined their cause because of their ignorance of the proper methods of propoganda. In short, not only the 'daa-ee' should be well-versed in the art of propoganda but he should also try to be as useful to them as he possibly can. The good of his followers should be the main concern of his life.

May God guide us to the right path.