

Imam Ali^{a.s.}'s Sermon¹

Wasila (Intercession)

All praises are for Allah^{swt} who has annihilated and curtailed sceptics so that His^{swt} attributes are recognised and laid down heavy curtains (of Noor²) in order to cultivate intelligence so that no one would attempt to imagine His^{swt} Essence, through perception and speculations. He^{swt} is an Entity, who is away from any deviations or sub-division due to His^{swt} perfection. He^{swt} separates His^{swt} creatures (from each others) neither based on their dissimilarities nor based on their resemblances but rather what they are made out of and what they will face in the future- as per His^{swt} Eternal knowledge. His^{swt} knowledge is not subject to a change as there is absolutely no information, which could come from anywhere other than Him^{swt}. One can say, to the extent, that one's action is the proof of His^{swt} eternal existence and the same negates the forever existence of anyone but Him^{swt}. Thus Allah^{swt} is elevated from any attributes that one could come up with, for (the praise of) his own created god but Allah^{swt} is other than what could be created by His^{swt} servants. Thus, His^{swt} unique qualities may only be attributed to Him^{swt} in such a way that He^{swt} is pleased with those and accepts them with pleasure. I witness that there is no god But Allah^{swt}, He^{swt} is an undividable Entity and there is no one equivalent to Him^{swt} and I bear witness that Mohammed^{saww} is created by Him^{swt} to be His^{swt} Prophet.

These are the two declarations that would spruce up the wisdom and impart worth to the deeds. These would ease one's burden to be carried forward (in the hereafter) and would be so precious that cannot be quantifiable. These two (verdicts) lead one to the path of the paradise and away from the hell fire and would enable one to easily pass through the bridge of 'Siraat³' and enter into the gardens of paradise. The (true) holder of these witnesses will also be able to recite the 'Salawat'⁴ therefore qualifying him for the endless blessings. Thus send 'Salawat' on your Prophet^{saww}, and join the angels in doing so. O People with Eman! Do not only send Salawat on your Prophet^{saww} but also accept all of his rights to the best of your abilities.

O people! Surely, there is honour higher than Islam, no generosity is more glorified than 'Taqwa'⁵ (God fearing). No stronghold is more protective than piety, there is no cure better than the repentance; there is no appreciable outfit other than the peace of mind; there is no shield better than the carefulness. The best wealth to defend against poverty and to enrich you soul is to remain content. Whoever considered the 'layamouti' (Eternal) power sufficient and relied on it (rather than worldly means), has undoubtedly secured peace of mind and happiness. And became defiant against troubles and appreciably handled hardship. Whoever stacked for the future, set on a very painful and difficult path. Jealousy is an adversity for faith and greediness

¹ Nahjul Asrar, referene, Usool-e-Kafi, vol, 1, chapter 20.'

² Masomeen a.s. but in particular Bibi Zahira s.a., as per a tradition of Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq a.s.

³ A bridge over hell fire, which would be impossible to cross unless one has the intercession of masomeen^{as}

⁴ Darood, sending Allah swt's blessings on Mohammed^{saww} and his pure progeny^{as}.

⁵ Submission to Divine laws, God fearing

invites one to sins and triggers depression; disobedience (in religion) pushes one to destruction and it originates numerous wrong doings. A majority of those who fail to excel adopt greediness and cling onto false expectations which lead them to deprivation-this is a journey that is destined to disaster. Be aware, who indulged himself into the matters, without considering their end results, has got himself engulfed by the humiliating grievances and troubles and ended up committing those sins which are not worthy of a 'Momins'.

O People! Indeed, the most rewarding effort is in striving to seek knowledge, respect is the outcome of politeness, and esteem is earned through humbleness. The most painful consequences are manifested from anger and hostility. The most admirable among all the beautiful is the wisdom⁶. There is no worst companion other than indulgence in ignorance. The worst evil is in lying. The best sanctuary is in expressing less. The closest unseen is the death.

O People! One would not publicise others' shortcomings if he takes into account his own faults. One would not be curious about others' achievement if he were content with God's blessing onto him. Whoever unsheathes the sword of aggression will be killed with it. Whoever devices a trap for his brethren falls in it. Whoever discloses the secrets of others, indeed tarnishes the honour of his womenfolk. Whoever overlooks his faults, keeps on highlighting others' mistakes. Whoever adores his judgements, gets lost in wilderness. Whoever abandons 'Wisdom' is battered by the difficulties. Whoever adopts rudeness, is disgraced by the society. Whoever belittles people, is greeted with insults. Whoever associates with scholars, is respected but whoever prefers the company of uncouth, turns worthless. Whoever ventures what is beyond his capacity, becomes helpless and miserable.

O People! Valuables are not those, which need to be protected! The ignorance is in wading away from the impulses of wisdom. The best preaching is manifested through good piece of advice. There is no intelligence like a well thought solution. There is no worship better than the deep thought. There is no better approach but to work out through consultation. There is no solitude as horrific as praising oneself. There is no righteousness equivalent to abstinence of the forbidden. There is no self-possession like patience and calmness.

O People! A Human enjoys ten characters that the tongue reveals: The tongue provides evidence by revealing the mysteries of the heart, a judge that forms an opinion, a speaker that provides answers, an interceder by which the needs are settled, a describer by which objects are identified, a commander that enjoins good, a preacher that forbids evil, a consolatory that calms the grief, a thankful by which hatred is removed, and a soother that amuses the hearings. Persistent prayers are key to the cure. A deep thinker gets to recognise the hidden treasures of objects. Preaching provides shield against committing sins and ones gets relief in grief and misery through those who offer condolences.

O People! As there is no good for a community if an able leader is stopped from speaking out and an ignorant is allowed to publicise his views.

⁶ This word has both extrinsic as well as intrinsic meaning, the later one means recognition of the Divine Imam a.s..

O People! He who does not control his tongue regrets in the end and he who does not make an effort to gain knowledge remains unversed. One cannot be polite without relying on rationalism and one cannot be wise without putting into practise the gain experiences. Who does not adhere to wisdom, is humiliated. The one who is rejected does not respect others and is disregarded by others. He who works hard to acquire impermissible, gains no benefits from it. He who gets pleased when admired for his unjust deeds, is prohibited from any guidance. He who does not donate even if resourceful will not be relieved in his difficult time and is admonished. He who undeservingly asks for helping hand is humiliated. He who comes into power with just means is the real authority and he who stood against him will surely be humiliated. He who became humble, is respected but who became rude, was rejected as worthless. He who is not generous is never appreciated.

O People! Prior to the 'Day of Judgement' death is, surely, going to fall on you. (So) death should be preferred to humility, tolerance to inertness, and grave to poverty. Make use of 'Wisdom⁷' prior to its departure. Prepare yourself through accountability- before being punished in the grave; it is much better than being helplessness in the grave. It is better to be without vision rather than to have it and still indulge into forbidden. There is a day to collect worldly treasures and a day to lose them, thus take a step back as there is remorse for both of them.

O People! The strangest entity in your body is the 'Qalab⁸', it is the origin of wisdom as well as recipient of all the conflicts. If one is led by his desires, he is humiliated by the greed (never ending desires) and the excessive greed and envy finishes him off through ruining his peace. If he gives up hope then he falls pray to the depression. If he becomes aggressive then he ends up with bad temper. However, if he is blessed with patience then he gets protection through being thankful to God. If he is overpowered by the fear, the grief engulfs him. If he performs well, he is praised. If he is blessed with an award, he is honoured. If he is comforted by wealth, he is harmed by the abundance. If he loses his sustenance then troubles target him from all directions. And he starts screaming when hit by difficulties. If one is weakened by the malnutrition then abundance may also kill him. Every deficiency would harm him and any abundance would invoke unrest in him and invite troubles.

O People! Who earned little is humiliated by the society, but who secured more than his needs was hailed as a leader but who accumulated excessive wealth was greeted as master. Whoever ponders on God's personal attributes would lose faith. But whoever concentrates on His creations gets to their intricacies. The one who went over board in amusement lost his dignity. He who cannot control his laughter loses his pride. He, who does not recognise others' virtues, ends up useless (for society). The most admirable approach is to use your resources for safeguarding you honour. He who associates with the ignorant is mindless. He who keeps the company of illiterates should be prepared for nothing but troubles. Neither the rich will be protected from the death nor it would take pity on poor's circumstances.

⁷ The spirit which would recognise the masoom Imam of its time, see Divine guide reference.

⁸ The place of one's Nafas (self), Soul or spirit which get both Divine signal and corrupt messages from Satan.

O People! If it would be possible to buy out death (through some means) then neither a wise nor miser and ‘Momin⁹’ would be tempted to acquire it.

O People! There are few revelations directed onto your ‘Qalb’ the desires in ‘Nafs’ (self) are transmitted as per the status of an individual’s virtues, and similarly guidance signals are generated therein for the understand of ambiguities and recurring thoughts, and to extend protection on the lookout of falling in mistakes. One’s ‘Nafs’ (self) receives impulses and rational solutions; it is the responsibility of the wisdom, in the light of knowledge and experiences, to initiate protection against committing inappropriate deeds. Practising this (following wisdom) leads the way to compliance and guidance.

It would be sufficient for you (my followers) to adopt honourable attitude, which is disliked by your foes. And you should extend respect to your brethren ‘Momin’ in a similar way, as you would like to be respectfully greeted. Ignore your preferences and choices and be thoughtful prior to taking an action so that you are saved from humiliation. He, who takes on board others’ opinions, is in a better position to escape from mistakes. One can raise his status equivalent to people of intellect by not indulging into worthless activities. He, who rejects desires, has managed to protect his esteem. Whoever controls his tongue, has won the hearts of his people and succeeds in securing his basic necessities. If you like to unfold the mysteries of unseen (future) then carefully look into the past time and the present, there is a wealth of knowledge buried within these two. You need to focus your attention on your own affairs, even if they are too grim, as you won’t benefit from the borrowed relief-like sporadic lightening in the darkness. Whoever recognised the benefits of wisdom, his eyes would glitter with confidence and authority.

The best form of wealth is to give up on desires. Contentment provides safeguard from difficult times. Envy leads to poverty and selfishness brings about destitution. Sincerity is that wealth which would bear sweet fruits. It is far better to possess a tiny joule rather than a huge pile of tasteless and useless commodities (meaning little for next world is better than huge gains in this world). Nobel traditions are treasures for those who adhere to them. Whoever turned shameless, he lost ethics. A time will come when people would find comfort in their solitude. Whoever drifts away from politeness, subjects his own family to grievances. Whoever collected wealth and considered it plenty, would soon realise its not enough, as verified by his long wish list. One’s generosity may compensate for the lack of your politeness. The treasures of sustenance are hidden in your polite conduct.

In this world, it is mandatory to be thankful after achieving your aims but on the contrary, you would rarely hear appreciative comments from people. Whoever covered him up in the outfit of honour, managed to hide his shortcomings. You should de-link what you plan and what you say (refrain from pre-planned ideas), indeed whoever achieved this would have less conflict within him and this will lead him to success. Whoever recognised the intricacies of the world, never became careless in seeking the essential resources. Be aware! There is a price for everything, e.g., possibility of an air lock for every sip one takes and obstruction to every

⁹ True followers of Ahlul Bait a.s.

mouthful one swallows. Indeed, no living being is blessed unless being subjected to a loss. Every grain you eat is predestined to you and you are the diet of the death.

O People! Be aware everyone who walks on the earth will enter into its stomach; day and nights are always in pursue of finishing one's life.

O People! Ingratitude is meanness. (Be aware) association with ignorance is a tragedy; pious-ness is manifested in speaking softly, deceiving others is in the blood of shameless folks. Remain persistent in what is obscured from you (future achievements) but it is not certain that all of you would achieve your objectives. Your prayers are heard when you pray sincerely and with peace of mind¹⁰. What you consider quite far (i.e., death) is in fact closer than any closeness you could image. You should clearly identify and clarify your requirements prior to embarking on a trip or settling in a neighbourhood. Be aware the fast moving (time) will finally catch up with those who move slowly (do not prepare for hereafter). Keep to the secrets of your brethren to yourself and forgive the mistakes of your friends for the sake of that day when your enemies overwhelm you. Cruelties against that who is unable to defend will invoke prolong grief with severe punishment in the hereafter. He who fears Allah^{swt}, is protected from usurping others rights. He who does not distinguish between the evil and the good is like an animal. Indeed, causing troubles would only reduce one's essentials to carry forward (for the hereafter). The difficulties of the hereafter are enormous as compared with all the calamities, you may know, are minuscule. You would not be able to escape them as you carry stains of sins and loads of disobedience. There is nothing better as compared to the comfort when difficulties are converted into blessings and conflicts are replaced with peace. There is no disappointment as great as being unable to reach the proximity of Paradise and there is no bigger relief than the remoteness of the hell fire. Any blessing other than the Paradise is worthless and any trouble other than the hell is a comfort. Giving up on self-appraisal would encourage one to indulge into bigger sins. The execution of a deed to its highest level of sincerity is more difficult than the deed itself. The purification of intentions from contamination (with filth) is more difficult than spending a long time in war zone.

Alas! (No one understands) if abstinence is not my top priority then I would be the most diplomatic person of the Arab world. I advise you to be fearful to Allah^{swt} in the affairs of future, proclaiming witness to what you are revealed (Deen¹¹), the iteration of 'Just Verdict'¹². (Remember to) please your Lord, upon securing abundant resources and during the time of need, in the time of anger and in the time of desperation, in dealing (fairly) with your friends and foes, and executing a task in delight and committing it in crisis. Observe abstinence and surely, one would committed many mistakes through talking too much. One would turn shameless by insisting on mistakes. One would fall from his elevated position by deviating from the graceful manners. And one's 'Qalb' would lose life upon departing from abstinence. The one with the dead 'Qalb' paved his way to the Hell fire. But who

¹⁰ Mola Ali a.s. says in Nahjul Asrar that one should be able to forget about himself while praying to Allah swt.

¹¹ Religion

¹² The Three compulsory verdicts, Allah swt's Tauheed, Rasool saww's Rasalat and Mola Ali a.s.'s Wiliat.

dwelled for the truth found the wisdom, and who found the wisdom went into solitude and who went into isolation protect him from tragedies.

He would eventually stop listening to his egoistic desires whose birth was legitimate. People would start liking him who refrains from jealousy. A 'Momin's respect is in that he does not lean on others. Being content is that treasure which can never be consumed. One would remain comfortable with what he has got by remembering he would depart from here one day. He would stay calm who gives more importance to his words than the performed tasks. I am surprised with that fellow who does not stop committing sins even though he is fearful of punishment in the hereafter. And also on that person who hopes to receive Allah swt's blessing but still sails very close to the sins. The treasures of Divine blessings are inherited by acting on the findings of wisdom but ignorance would push one to destruction. (Be aware!) Ignorance is the key to infidelity. A blessed is that who learns from the mistakes of others. Acting on virtuous traditions and courteous behaviour are the best companions. One will not receive any benefits by giving up on generosity as well as by adopting aggressive and devious tactics.

There are ten parts in self-reliance in order to achieve peace, out of which nine are in keeping quiet; one is in remembering Allah^{swt} and the second is in keeping away from the company of unwise folks. Hospitality is extended by a knowledgeable whereas unwise would consider it a waste-It is, indeed, a gem from the mines of the 'Aman'. Patience in the time of difficulties and grief is the beauty of 'Faqr'¹³ and remaining thankful is the charm of a (honourable) rich. Excessive visits result in grief (misunderstandings). Believing in without fully understanding an affair is against careful attitude. A person's reliance on his 'Nafs' (self) reflects the worn out condition of his intellect.

A sinner should not loose hope, as there are so many individuals who believe that they have eliminated their sins, by good deeds and have pleased Allah^{swt}, but, in fact, have gone astray in their older age and would, therefore, be punished in the hell; (This is due to) their forceful and cruel attitude, on humanity, which have been very bad transaction for the hereafter. However, there is a good news for that who purely acted to please Allah^{swt} in his use of knowledge, execution of a task, love for and hate for¹⁴, refraining and participating, speaking and keeping quiet and promises and actions.

No Muslim can remain Muslim unless he keeps away from formidable. And abstinence cannot be achieved until he observes 'Zuhid'¹⁵, No one can become 'Zahid'¹⁶, until he carefully analysis the end result. No one can prepare for the hereafter unless he becomes 'Aqal'¹⁷. There is no 'Aqal' except for the one who ponders upon the instructions of Allah^{swt} and then conducts deeds for the hereafter. May Allah^{swt} decent His blessings on Prophet Mohammed^{saww} and his pure and infallible progeny^{as}.

¹³ The highest spiritual level in knowledge a non-masoom can achieve, see Nahjul Asrar.

¹⁴ Love of Ahlul Bait a.s. and hate for their a.s. enemies.

¹⁵ 'Zahid' is that who would neither get excited upon acquiring something and nor gets saddened when something is taken away from him. (Salooni Salooni Qabal An Tafqad duni, Nahjul Asrar, vol.1, pp. 186.)

¹⁶ The one who observes Zuhid

¹⁷ Wisdom, the intellect which recognises the Divine guide, the Imam a.s., See Divine guide.