

Sayings of Imam Ali (A.S.)

1. During civil disturbance adopt such an attitude that people do not attach any importance to you - they neither burden you with complicated affairs, nor try to derive any advantage out of you.
2. He who is greedy is disgraced; he who discloses his hardship will always be humiliated; he who has no control over his tongue will often have to face discomfort.
3. Avarice is disgrace; cowardice is a defect; poverty often disables an intelligent man from arguing his case; a poor man is a stranger in his own town; misfortune and helplessness are calamities; patience is a kind of bravery; to sever attachments with the wicked world is the greatest wealth; piety is the best weapon of defence.
4. Submission to Allah's Will is the best companion; wisdom is the noblest heritage; theoretical and practical knowledge are the best signs of distinction; deep thinking will present the clearest picture of every problem.
5. The mind of a wise man is the safest custody of secrets; cheerfulness is the key to friendship; patience and forbearance will conceal many defects.
6. A conceited and self-admiring person is disliked by others; charity and alms are the best remedy for ailments and calamities; one has to account in the next world for the deeds that he has done in this world.
7. Man is a wonderful creature; he sees through the layers of fat (eyes), hears through a bone (ears) and speaks through a lump of flesh (tongue).
8. When this world favors somebody, it lends him the attributes, and surpassing merits of others and when it turns its face away from him it snatches away even his own excellences and fame.
9. Live amongst people in such a manner that if you die they weep over you and if you are alive they crave for your company.
10. If you overpower your enemy, then pardon him by way of thankfulness to Allah, for being able to subdue him.
11. Unfortunate is he who cannot gain a few sincere friends during his life and more unfortunate is the one who has gained them and then lost them (through his deeds).
12. When some blessings come to you, do not drive them away through thanklessness.
13. He who is deserted by friends and relatives will often find help and sympathy from strangers.
14. Every person who is tempted to go astray, does not deserve punishment.

15. Our affairs are attached to the destiny decreed by Allah, even our best plans may lead us to destruction.

16. There is a tradition of the Holy Prophet "With the help of hair-dye turn old age into youth so that you do not resemble the Jews". When Imam Ali was asked to comment on this tradition, he said that in the early stage of Islam there were very few Muslims. The Holy Prophet advised them to look young and energetic and not to adopt the fashion of the Jews (priest) having long, white flowing beards. But the Muslims were not in minority then, theirs was a strong and powerful State, they could take up any style they liked.

17. For those who refused to side with any party, Imam Ali or his enemies, Imam Ali said: They have forsaken religion and are of no use to infidelity also.

18. One who rushes madly after inordinate desire, runs the risk of encountering destruction and death.

19. Overlook and forgive the weaknesses of the generous people because if they fall down, Allah will help them.

20. Failures are often the results of timidity and fears; disappointments are the results of bashfulness; hours of leisure pass away like summer-clouds, therefore, do not waste opportunity of doing good.

21. If the right usurped from us is given back to us we shall take it, otherwise we shall go on claiming it.

22. If someone's deeds lower his position, his pedigree cannot elevate it.

23. To render relief to the distressed and to help the oppressed make amends for great sins.

24. O son of Adam, when you see that your Lord, the Glorified, bestows His Favors on you while you disobey Him, you should fear Him (take warning that His Wrath may not turn those very blessings into misfortunes).

25. Often your utterances and expressions of your face leak out the secrets of your hidden thoughts.

26. When you get ill do not get nervous about it and try as much as possible to be hopeful.

27. The best form of devotion to the service of Allah is not to make a show of it.

28. When you have to depart from this world and have to meet death (eventually), then why wish delay (why feel nervous about death).

29. Take warning ! He has not exposed so many of your sinful activities that it appears as if He has forgiven you (it may be that He has given you time to repent).

30. When Imam Ali was asked about Faith in Religion, he replied that the structure of faith is supported by four pillars endurance, conviction, justice and jihad.

Endurance is composed of four attributes: eagerness, fear, piety and anticipation (of death). so whoever is eager for Paradise will ignore temptations; whoever fears the fire of Hell will abstain from sins; whoever practices piety will easily bear the difficulties of life and whoever anticipates death will hasten towards good deeds.

Conviction has also four aspects to guard oneself against infatuations of sin; to search for explanation of truth through knowledge; to gain lessons from instructive things and to follow the precedent of the past people, because whoever wants to guard himself against vices and sins will have to search for the true causes of infatuation and the true ways of combating them out and to find those true ways one has to search them with the help of knowledge, whoever gets fully acquainted with various branches of knowledge will take lessons from life and whoever tries to take lessons from life is actually engaged in the study of the causes of rise and fall of previous civilizations .

Justice also has four aspects depth of understanding, profoundness of knowledge, fairness of judgment and dearness of mind; because whoever tries his best to understand a problem will have to study it, whoever has the practice of studying the subject he is to deal with, will develop a clear mind and will always come to correct decisions, whoever tries to achieve all this will have to develop ample patience and forbearance and whoever does this has done justice to the cause of religion and has led a life of good repute and fame.

Jihad is divided into four branches: to persuade people to be obedient to Allah; to prohibit them from sin and vice; to struggle (in the cause of Allah) sincerely and firmly on all occasions and to detest the vicious. Whoever persuades people to obey the orders of Allah provides strength to the believers; whoever dissuades them from vices and sins humiliates the unbelievers; whoever struggles on all occasions discharges all his obligations and whoever detests the vicious only for the sake of Allah, then Allah will take revenge on his enemies and will be pleased with Him on the Day of Judgment.

31. There are four causes of infidelity and loss of belief in Allah: hankering after whims, a passion to dispute every argument, deviation from truth; and dissension, because whoever hankers after whims does not incline towards truth; whoever keeps on disputing every argument on account of his ignorance, will always remain blind to truth, whoever deviates from truth because of ignorance, will always take good for evil and evil for good and he will always remain intoxicated with misguidance. And whoever makes a breach (with Allah and His Messenger) his path becomes difficult, his affairs will become complicated and his way to salvation will be uncertain.

Similarly, doubt has also four aspects absurd reasoning; fear; vacillation and hesitation; and unreasonable surrender to infidelity, because one who has accustomed himself to unreasonable and absurd discussions will never see the Light of Truth and will always live in the darkness of ignorance. One who is afraid to face facts (of life, death and the life after death) will always turn away from ultimate reality, one who allows doubts and uncertainties to vacillate him will always

be under the control of Satan and one who surrenders himself to infidelity accepts damnation in both the worlds.

32. A virtuous person is better than virtue and a vicious person is worse than vice.

33. Be generous but not extravagant, be frugal but not miserly.

34. The best kind of wealth is to give up inordinate desires.

35. One who says unpleasant things about others, will himself quickly become a target of their scandal.

36. One who hopes inordinately, impairs his deeds.

37. When Imam Ali, marching at the head of his army towards Syria, reached Ambar, the landlords of the place came out to meet him in zeal of their love, faithfulness and respect, no sooner had they seen Imam Ali they got down from their horses and started running in front of him. Imam Ali asked the reason of their strange actions. They replied that it was their custom to show their love and respect in that way. Imam Ali replied: "By Allah, by your action you do no good whatsoever to your rulers but you tire yourself and put yourself in toils in this world and in trouble in the next. How unfortunate is that exertion, which brings harm here and in the Hereafter and how useful is that ease which keeps you in comfort in this world and away from the Hell in the next.

38. Imam Ali once said to his son Imam Hasan, My son, learn four things from me and through them you will learn four more. If you keep them in mind your actions will not bring any harm to you: The greatest wealth is Wisdom; the greatest poverty is stupidity; the worst unso- ciableness is that of vanity and self-glorification; and the best nobility of descent exhibits itself in politeness and in refinement of manner. The next four things, my son, are: "Do not make friendship with a fool because when he will try to do you good he will do you harm; do not make a miser your friend because he will run away from you at the time of your dire need; do not be friendly with a vicious and wicked person because he will sell you and your friendship at the cheapest price and do not make friend of a liar because like a mirage he will make you visualize very near the things which lie at a great distance and will make you see at the great distance the things which are near to you".

39. Recommended prayers cannot attain the pleasures of Allah for you when obligatory prayers are left unattended.

40. A wise man first thinks and then speaks and a fool speaks first and then thinks.

41. A fool's mind is at the mercy of his tongue and a wise man's tongue is under the control of his mind.

42. One of the companions of Imam fell ill. Imam Ali called upon him and thus advised him: "Be thankful to Allah. He has made this illness a thing to atone your sins because a disease in itself

has nothing to bring reward to anyone, it merely expiates one's sins and so far as reward is concerned, one has to earn it with his good words and good deeds. The Almighty Lord grants Paradise to his creatures on account of their piety and noble thoughts".

43. May Allah Bless Kabbab bin Aratt. He embraced Islam of his own freewill and immigrated (from Makkah) cheerfully. He lived a contented life. He bowed happily before the Will of Allah and he led the life of a mujahid.

44. Blessed is the man who always kept the life after death in his view, who remembered the Day of Judgment through all his deeds, who led a contented life and who was happy with the lot that Allah had destined for him. 45. If I cut a faithful Muslim into pieces to make him hate me, he will not turn into my enemy and if I give all the wealth of this world to a hypocrite to make him my friend he will not befriend me. It is so because the Holy Prophet has said: " O Ali! No faithful Muslim will ever be your enemy and no hypocrite will ever be your friend. "

46. The sin which makes you sad and repentant is more liked by Allah than the good deed which turns you arrogant.

47. Value of a man depends upon his courage; his veracity depends upon his self-respect and his chastity depends upon his sense of honor.

48. Success is the result of foresight and resolution, foresight depends upon deep thinking and planning and the most important factor of planning is to keep your secrets to yourself.

49. Be afraid of a gentleman when he is hungry, and of a mean person when his stomach is full.

50. Hearts of people are like wild beasts. They attach themselves to those who love and train them.

51. So long as fortune is favouring you, your defects will remain covered.

52. Only he who has the power to punish can pardon.

53. Generosity is to help a deserving person without his request, and if you help him after his request, then it is either out of self-respect or to avoid rebuke.

54. There is no greater wealth than wisdom, no greater poverty than ignorance; no greater heritage than culture and no greater support than consultation.

55. Patience is of two kinds: patience over what pains you, and patience against what you covet.

56. Wealth converts a strange land into homeland and poverty turns a native place into a strange land.

57. Contentment is the capital which will never diminish.

58. Wealth is the fountain head of passions.
59. Whoever warns you against sins and vices is like the one who gives you good tidings.
60. Tongue is a beast, if it is let loose, it devours.
61. Woman is a scorpion whose grip is sweet.
62. If you are greeted then return the greetings more warmly. If you are favoured, then repay the obligation manifold; but he who takes the initiative will always excel in merit.
63. The source of success of a claimant is the mediator.
64. People in this world are like travelers whose journey is going on though they are asleep. (Life's journey is going on though men may not feel it).
65. Lack of friends means, stranger in one's own country.
66. Not to have a thing is less humiliating than to beg it.
67. Do not feel ashamed if the amount of charity is small because to refuse the needy is an act of greater shame.
68. To refrain from unlawful and impious source of pleasures is an ornament to the poor and to be thankful for the riches granted is the adornment of wealth.
69. If you cannot get things as much as you desire than be contented with what you have.
70. An ignorant person will always overdo a thing or neglect it totally.
71. The wiser a man is, the less talkative will he be.
72. Time wears out bodies, renews hopes, brings death nearer and takes away aspirations. Whoever gets anything from the world lives in anxiety for holding it and whoever loses anything passes his days grieving over the loss.
73. Whoever wants to be a leader should educate himself before educating others. Before preaching to others he should first practice himself. Whoever educates himself and improves his own morals is superior to the man who tries to teach and train others.
74. Every breath you take is a step towards death.
75. Anything which can be counted is finite and will come to an end.
76. If matters get mixed up then scrutinize the cause and you will know what the effects will be.

77. Zرار bin Zamra Zibabi, known as Zرار Suda'i, was a companion of Imam Ali. When, after the martyrdom of Imam Ali, he went to Damascus, Muawiya called him and asked him to say something about Imam Ali. Zرار, knowing that Muawiya hated Imam Ali intensely tried to avoid this topic, but Muawiya forced him to speak. Thereupon, Zرار said: "O Amir, I had often seen Imam Ali in the depth of nights, when people were either sleeping or engrossed in amusements, he would be standing in the niche of the Masjid, with tears in his eyes and he would beseech Allah to help him maintain a pious, a virtuous and a noble character and to forsake the world. He would then address the world, saying 'O vicious world! Be away from me, why do you come in front of me like this ? Do you want to allure me ? Allah forbid that I should be allured and tempted by you and your pleasures. It is not possible. Go and try your allurements on somebody else. I do not desire to own you and do not want to have you. I have forsaken you thrice. It is like divorcing a woman thrice after which act she cannot be taken back as a wife. The life of pleasures that you offer is of a very little duration. There is no real importance in what you offer, the desire of holding you is an insult and a humiliation to sober minds. Sad is the plight of those who want to acquire you. They do not provide for the Hereafter. They have to pass through a long journey over a very difficult road towards a sat destination'. Zرار says that when he stopped, there were tears in the eyes of Muawiya who said, 'May peace of Allah be upon Abul Hasan Ali bin Abi Talib, he was undoubtedly like that. Now tell me, Zرار! How do you feel his separation?' Zرار replied, "My sorrow and grief is like that of woman whose only child has been murdered in her lap". With this remark Zرار walked out of the court of Muawiya and left the city.

78. After the Battle of Siffin, somebody asked Imam Ali whether they had been destined to fight against the Syrians. Imam Ali replied if by destiny you mean a compulsion (physical or otherwise) through which we are forced (by nature) to do a thing then it is not so. Had it been an obligation of that kind there would have been no question of reward for doing it and punishment for not doing it (when you are physically forced to do a thing, like breathing, sleeping, eating, drinking etc. then there can be no reward for doing it and no retribution for not doing it. In such cases nature forces you to do a thing and you cannot but do it), then the promised blessings and punishments in life after death will have no meaning. The Merciful Lord has given his creatures (human beings) complete freedom to do as they like, and then prohibited them from certain actions and warned them of the consequences of such actions (His Wrath and His Punishments). These orders of Allah carry in them the least trouble and lead us towards the most convenient ways of life and the rewards which He has promised for good deeds are many times more than the actions actually deserve. He sees people disobeying Him and tolerates them not because He can be overruled or be compelled to accept human supremacy over Him. He did not send His prophets to amuse Himself or provide amusement for them. He did not reveal His orders without any genuine reason nor has He created the galaxies and the earth without any purpose. The Universe without plan, purpose and program is the idea of infidels and the pagans, sorry will be their plight in the leaping fires of Hell. Hearing this the man asked Imam Ali, "Then what kind of destiny was it that we had?" Imam Ali replied: "It was an order of Allah to do it like the order He has given in His Holy Book: You are destined by Allah to worship none but Him, here 'destined' means 'ordered' it does not mean physical compulsion".

79. Acquire wisdom and truth from whomever you can because even an apostate can have them but unless they are passed over to a faithful Muslim and become part of wisdom and truth that he possesses, they have a confused existence in the minds of apostates.

80. Knowledge and wisdom are really the privilege of a faithful Muslim. If you have lost them, get them back even though you may have to get them from the apostates.

81. Value of each man depends upon the art and skill which he has attained.

82. I want to teach you five of those things which deserve your greatest anxiety to acquire them: Have hope only in Allah. Be afraid of nothing but sins. If you do not know a thing never feel ashamed to admit ignorance. If you do not know a thing never hesitate or feel ashamed to learn it. Acquire patience and endurance because their relation with true faith is that of a head to a body, a body is of no use without a head, similarly true faith can be of no use without attributes of resignation, endurance and patience.

83. A man hypocritically started praising Imam Ali, though he had no faith in him and Imam Ali hearing these praises from him said "I am less than what you tell about me but more than what you think about me".

84. Those who have come alive out of a blood-bath live longer and have more children.

85. One who imagines himself to be all-knowing will surely suffer on account of his ignorance.

86. I appreciate an old man's cautious opinion more than the valor of a young man.

87. I wonder at a man who loses hope of salvation when the door of repentance is open for him.

88. Imam Muhammad Baqir says that Imam Ali once said: "There were two things in this world which softened the Wrath of Allah and prevented its descent upon man: One has been taken away from you; hold the other steady - fastly. The one which has been taken away from men is the Holy Prophet and the one which is still left with them and which they must hold steadfastly is repentance and atonement for sins because Allah at one place in the Holy Book addressed the Holy Prophet and said Allah would not punish them while you were among them nor while they were asking for forgiveness. (Surah Anfal, 8 : 33)

89. Whoever keeps in order his affairs with Allah (follows His orders sincerely), Allah will also put his affairs with men in order. Whoever makes arrangement for his salvation, Allah will arrange his worldly affairs; whoever is a preacher for himself, Allah will also protect him.

90. He is the wisest and the most knowing man who advises people not to lose hope and faith in the Mercy of Allah and not to be too sure and over-confident of immunity from His Wrath and Punishment.

91. Like your body your mind also gets tired so refresh it by wise sayings.

92. That knowledge which remains only on your tongue is very superficial. The intrinsic value of knowledge is that you act upon it.

93. Take care and do not pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord! I pray to You to protect and guard me from temptations and trials", for there is none who is not tempted and tried. But beseech Him to guard you against such temptation as may lead you towards wickedness and sins because Allah says in His Holy Book, Know that your wealth and children are temptations. (Surah al-Anfal, 8: 28) it means Allah tried people through wealth and children so that it may be tested as to who is content with what he gets honestly and who is thankful to Allah for the position he is placed in with regard to his children. Though Allah knows them better than even they know themselves, yet those trials and tests are for the purpose of their realizing and knowing those deeds which merit reward or which deserve punishment. There are some people who love to have male children and hate daughters and there are some who simply crave for wealth and hate poverty.

94. Imam Ali was asked the meaning of being well-off or well-provided for. Imam Ali replied, "Your welfare does not lie in your having enormous wealth and numerous children but it rests in your being highly educated and forbearing and in your being proud of your obedience to Allah. If you do a good deed then thank Allah for it and if you commit a sin then repent and atone for it. In this world there is a real welfare for two kinds of people, one is the person who, when commits a sin, atones for it and the other is anxious to do good as much as possible.

95. Importance of the deeds that you have done with fear of Allah cannot be minimized and how can the deeds which are acceptable to Allah be considered unimportant.

96. "Nearest to the prophets are those persons who have to those prophets and obey them". Saying this, Imam Ali cited a passage from the Holy Qur'an 'Best liked by Abraham and nearest to him were the people who obeyed him'. He further said, "That the present times are the times of our Holy Prophet and his faithful followers. The best friend of our Holy Prophet is he who, though not related to him, obeys the orders of Allah and his greatest enemy is the man who though related to him, disobeys Allah '.

97. Imam Ali was told of a Kharijite that he got up in the night to pray and recite the Holy Book. Imam Ali said, "To sleep with having sincere faith in religion and Allah is better than to pray with wavering faith".

98. Whenever a tradition of the Holy Prophet is related to you, scrutinize it, do not be satisfied with mere verbatim repetition of the same because there are many people who repeat the words containing knowledge but only few ponder over them and try to fully grasp the meaning they convey.

99. Imam Ali heard somebody reciting the passage of the Holy Qur'an we belong to Allah and our return is towards Him, Imam Ali said, "How true it is ! Our declaring that we belong to Allah indicates that we accept Him as our Master, Owner and Lord. And when we say that our return is towards Allah indicates that we accept our mortality".

100. Some people praised Imam Ali on his face. He replied, "Allah knows me very well and I also know myself more than you. Please, Lord ! make me better than what they imagine me to be and please excuse those Weaknesses of mine which they are not aware of".

101. To secure for you fame, credit as well as blessings, the help that you give to men in need, should possess the following attributes: whatever its extent, it should be considered by you as trifling so that it may be granted a high status; it should be given secretly, Allah will manifest it; and it must be given immediately so that it becomes pleasant.

102. Your society will pass through a period when cunning and crafty intriguers will be favoured by status, when profligates will be considered as well-bred, well-behaved and elegant elites of the society, when just and honest persons will be considered as weaklings, when charity will be considered as a loss to wealth and property, when support and help to each other will be considered as favour and benevolence and when prayers and worship to Allah will be taken up for the sake of show to gain popularity and higher status, at such times regimes will be run under the advice of women and the youngsters will be the rulers and counselors of the State.

103. Imam Ali's garment was very old with patches on it. When somebody drew his attention towards it, he replied, " Such dresses, when worn by men of status make them submissive to Allah and kind-hearted towards others and the faithful Muslims can conveniently follow the example ". Vicious pleasures of this world and salvation are like two enemies or two roads running in opposite directions or towards opposite poles, one to the North and the other to the South. Whoever likes to gain the pleasures and pomps of this world will hate austerity in life which is necessary to gain salvation. Reverse will be the attitude of a man desirous of achieving Eternal Bliss. One has to adopt either of the two ways of life, and as they both cannot be brought together, a man has to choose one of them.

104. Nawf bin Fizala Bakali, the famous scholar of the early Islamic days says that one night he was with Imam Ali. In the middle of the night, Imam Ali got up from his bed, looked for sometime at the stars and inquired of Nawf whether he was awake. Nawf said: "I got from my bed replying, "Yes, Amirul Mo'minin (Commander of the Faithful) ! I am awake".

Imam Ali said Nawf ! Those are the fortunate people who adopt piety as the principle of their lives and are fully attentive to their welfare for the Hereafter. They accept bare earth as the most comfortable bed and water as the most pleasant drink. They adopt the Holy Qur'an and prayers as their guide and protector and like Prophet Jesus Christ (Isa) they forsake the world and its vicious pleasure.

Nawf ! Prophet David (Daud) once got up at such an hour in the night and said this was the hour when prayers of everyone who prayed were accepted except of those who forcibly collected revenues or who were scandal- mongers or were persons in the police force of a despotic regime or were musicians".

105, Those who give up religion to better their lot in life seldom succeed. The Wrath of Allah makes them go through more calamities and losses than the gains they gather for themselves.

106. There are many educated people who have ruined their future on account of their ignorance of religion. Their knowledge did not prove of any avail to them.

107. More wonderful than man himself is that part of his body which is connected with his trunk with muscles. It is his brain (mind). Look what good and bad tendencies arise from it. On the one hand it holds treasures of knowledge and wisdom and on the other it is found to harbour very ugly desires. If a man sees even a tiny gleam of success, then greed forces him to humiliate himself. If he gives way to avarice, then inordinate desires ruin him, if he is disappointed, then despondency almost kills him. If he is excited, then he loses temper and gets angry. If he is pleased, then he gives up precaution. Sudden fear makes him dull and nervous, and he is unable to think and find a way out of the situation. During the times of peace and prosperity he becomes careless and unmindful of the future. If he acquires wealth, then he becomes haughty and arrogant. If he is plunged in distress, then his agitation, impatience and nervousness disgrace him. If he is overtaken by poverty, then he finds himself in a very sad plight, hunger makes him weak, and over-feeding harms him equally. In short every kind of loss and gain makes his mind unbalanced.

108. We, Ahlul Bayt (chosen descendants of the Holy Prophet), hold such central and balancing position in religion that those who are deficient in understanding and acting upon its principles, will have to come to us for reformation, and those who are overdoing it have got to learn moderation from us.

109. A Divine rule can be established only by a man, who, where justice and equity are required, neither feels deficient nor weak and who is not greedy and avaricious.

110. Sohayl bin Hunayf Ansari was a favourite companion of Imam Ali. At the time of Imam Ali's return from Siffin, he died at Kufa of the wounds sustained in the battle. His death left Imam Ali very sad and he said: "Even if a mountain loves me it will be crushed into bits". (it means people are tested with my love, and to prove it they have to pass through loss and calamities).

111. Anyone who loves us Ahlul Bayt must be ready to face a life of austerity.

112. No wealth is more useful than intelligence and wisdom; no solitude is more horrible than when people avoid you on account of your vanity and conceit or when you wrongly consider yourself above everybody to confide and consult; no eminence is more exalting than piety; no companion can prove more useful than politeness; no heritage is better than culture; no leader is superior to Divine Guidance; no deal is more profitable than good deeds; no profit is greater than Divine Reward; no abstinence is better than to restrain one's mind from doubts (about religion); no virtue is better than refraining from prohibited deeds; no knowledge is superior to deep thinking and prudence; no worship or prayers are more sacred than fulfillment of obligations and duties, no religious faith is loftier than feeling ashamed of doing wrong and bearing calamities patiently; no eminence is greater than to adopt humbleness; no exaltation is superior to knowledge; nothing is more respectable than forgiveness and forbearance; no support and defense are stronger than consultation.

113. When a community is composed of honest, sober and virtuous people, your forming a bad opinion about anyone of its members, when nothing wicked has been seen of him, is a great injustice to him. On the contrary in a corrupt society to form good opinion of anyone of them and to trust him is to harm yourself.

114. When somebody asked Imam Ali as to how he was getting on, he replied: "What do you want to know about a person whose life is leading him towards ultimate death, whose health is the first stage towards illness and whom society has forced out of his retreat".

115. There are many persons whom constant grants of His Bounties turn them wicked and fit for His punishment and there are many more who have become vain and self- deceptive because the Merciful Allah has not exposed their weaknesses and vices to the world and the people speak highly about them. All this is an opportunity. No trial of the Lord is more severe than the time He allows (in which either you may repent or get deeper into vices).

116. Two kinds of people will be damned on my account Those who form exaggerated opinion about me and those who under-estimate me because they hate me.

117. To lose or to waste an opportunity will result in grief and sorrow.

118. The world is like a serpent, so soft to touch, but so full of lethal poison. Unwise people are allured by it and drawn towards it, and wise men avoid it and keep away from its poisonous effects.

119. When asked about Quraysh, Imam Ali replied that amongst them Bani Mukhzum are like sweet scented flower of Quraysh; their men are good to talk to and their women prove very good wives; Bani Abdush Shams are very intelligent and very prudent but we (of Bani Hashim) are very generous and very brave to face death. Bani Abdush Shams are more in numbers, ugly and intriguers but Bani Hashim are beautiful, good speakers and orators and very faithful as friends.

120. What a difference is there between a deed whose pleasure passes away leaving behind it the pangs of pain and punishment and the deed whose oppressive harshness comes to an end leaving behind Divine rewards !

121. Imam Ali was following a funeral and as it was passing along a road, somebody laughed loudly (a sign of discourtesy and lack of manner). Hearing this laugh, Imam Ali remarked, " Some of us feel that death is meant for everybody except themselves or it is destined to others and not to themselves or those whom we see dying around us are only travelers going on a journey and will come back to us. It is a sad sight to see that in one moment we commit them to earth and in the next we take hold of the things left by them as if we are going to remain permanently in this world after them. The fact is that we forget sensible advice given to us and become victim of every calamity.

122. Blessings are for the man who humbles himself before Allah, whose sources of income are honest, whose intentions are always honorable, whose character is noble, whose habits are sober, who gives away in the cause and in the Name of Allah, the wealth which is lying surplus

with him, who controls his tongue from vicious and useless talk, who abstains from oppression, who faithfully follows the traditions of the Holy Prophet and who keeps himself away from innovation in religion.

123. Jealousy in woman is unpardonable but in man it is a sign of his faith in religion (because Islam has permitted polygamy and prohibited polyandry).

124. I define Islam for you in a way that nobody dared do it before me. Islam means obedience to Allah, obedience to Allah means having sincere faith in Him, such a faith means to believe in His Power, belief in His Power means recognizing and accepting His Majesty, acceptance of His Majesty means fulfilling the obligations laid down by Him and fulfillment of obligations means actions (Therefore, Islam does not mean mere faith, but faith plus deeds).

125. I wonder at the mentality of a miser, fearing poverty he takes to stinginess and thus hastily pushes himself head- long into a state of want and destitution, he madly desires plenty and ease, but throws it away without understand- ing. In this world he, of his own free will, leads the life of a beggar and in the next world he will have to submit an account like the rich.

I wonder at the arrogance of a haughty and vain person. Yesterday he was only a drop of semen and tomorrow he will turn into a corpse. I wonder at the man who observes the Universe created by Allah and doubts His Being and Existence. I wonder at the man who sees people dying around him and yet he has forgotten his end. I wonder at the man who understands the marvel of genesis of creation and refuses to accept that he will be brought back to life again. I wonder at the man who takes great pains to decorate and to make comfortable this mortal habitat and totally forgets his permanent abode.

126. Whoever is not diligent in his work, will suffer; who- ever has no share of Allah in his wealth and in his life then there is no place for him in His Realm.

127. Be very cautious of cold in the beginning of winter and welcome it at the close of the season because cold season effects your bodies exactly as it effects the trees; in the early season its severity makes them shrivel and shed their leaves and at the end it helps them to revive.

128. If you understand Allah's Majesty, then you will not attach any importance to the creatures.

129. While returning from Siffin, Imam Ali passed along the cemetery of Kufa. Addressing the graves he said: "O you, who are lying in horrible and deserted houses. O you, who are shut up in the dark graves, who are alone in their abodes, strangers to the places assigned to them; you have gone ahead and preceded us, while we are also following your steps and shall shortly join you. Do you know what has happened aver you? Your houses and property was taken up by others, your widows have remarried, this is what we can tell you of this world. Can you give us some news about things around you?" Saying this, Imam Ali turned to his companions and said, "If they are permitted to speak they will inform you that the best provision for the next world is piety and virtue".

130. Imam Ali heard someone abusing and blaming the world and said to him, "O you, who are blaming the world, who have been allured and enticed by it, and have been tempted by its false pretenses. You allowed yourself to be enamored of, to be captivated by it and then you accuse and blame it. Have you any reason or right to accuse it and to call it a sinner and seducer? Or is the world not justified in calling you a wicked knave and a sinning hypocrite? When did it make you lose your intelligence and reasoning? And how did it cheat you or snake false pretenses to you? Did it conceal from you the fact of the ultimate end of everything that it holds, the fact of the sway of death, decay and destruction in its domain? Did it keep you in the dark about the fate of your fore-fathers and their final abode under the earth? Did it keep the resting-place of your mothers a secret from you? Do you not know that they have returned to dust? Many a time you must have attended the sick persons and many of them you must have seen beyond the scope of medicine. Neither the science of healing nor could your nursing and attendance nor your prayers and weeping prolonged the span of their lives, and they died. You were anxious for them, you procured the best medical aid, you gathered famous physicians and provided best - medicines for them. Death could not be held back and life could not be prolonged. In this drama and in this tragedy did the world not present you with a lesson and a moral?"

Certainly, this world is a house of truth for those who look into it carefully, an abode of peace and rest for those who understand its ways and moods and it is the best working ground for those who want to procure rewards for life in the Hereafter. It is a place of acquiring knowledge and wisdom for those who want to acquire them, a place of worship for the friends of Allah and for Angels. It is the place where prophets received revelations of Allah. It is the place for virtuous people and saints to do good deeds and to be assigned with rewards for the same. Only in this world they could trade with Allah's Favors and Blessings and only while living here they could barter their good deeds with His Blessings and Rewards. Where else could all this be done? Who are you to abuse the world when it has openly declared its mortality and mortality of everything connected with it, when it has given everyone of its inhabitants to understand that all of them are to face death, when through its ways it has given them all an idea of calamities they have to face here, and through the sight of its temporary and fading pleasures it has given them glimpses of eternal pleasures of Paradise and suggested them to wish and work for the same. If you study it properly you will find that simply to warn and frighten you of the consequences of evil deeds and to persuade you towards good actions, every night it raises new hopes of peace and prosperity in you and every morning it places new anxieties and new worries before you. Those who passed such lives are ashamed of and repent the time so passed abuse this world. But there are people who will praise this world on the Day of Judgment that it reminded them of the Hereafter and they took advantage of these reminders. It informed them of the effects of good deeds and they made correct use of the information it advised them and they were benefited by its advice".

131. An Angel announces daily: "Birth of more human beings means so many more will die, collection of more wealth means of much more will be destroyed, erection of more buildings means so many more ruins will come".

132. This world is not a permanent place, it is a passage, a road on which you are passing. There are two kinds of people here: One is the kind of those who have sold their souls for eternal damnation, the other is of those who have purchased their souls and freed them from damnation.

133. A friend cannot be considered a friend unless he is tested on three occasions: in time of need, behind your back and after your death.

134. Anyone who has been granted four attributes will not be deprived of their (four) effects; one who prays to Allah and implores to Him will not be deprived of granting of his prayers; one who repents for his thoughts and deeds will not be refused acceptance of the repentance; one who has atoned for his sins will not be debarred from salvation and one who thanks Allah for the Blessings and Bounties will not be denied the increase in them.

The truth of these facts is attested by the Holy Qur'an As far as prayers are concerned He says Pray to Me and I shall accept your prayers. About repentance He says: Whoever has done a bad deed or has indulged in sin and then repents and asks for His forgiveness will find Allah most Forgiving and Merciful. About being thankful He says if you are thankful for what you are given, I shall increase My Bounties and Blessings. About atonement of sin He says Allah accepts the repentance of those who have ignorantly committed vice and then soon repent for it, Allah accepts such repentance's, He is Wise and Omniscient. 135. Daily prayers are the best medium through which one can Seek the nearness to Allah. Hajj is Jihad (Holy War) for every weak person. For everything that you own there is Zakat, and Zakat of your body is fasting. The Jihad of a woman is to afford pleasant company to her husband.

136. If you want to pray to Allah for better means of subsistence, then first give something in charity

137. When someone is sure of the returns, then he shows generosity.

138. Aid (from Allah) is in proportion to the trouble.

139. He who practices moderation and frugality will never be threatened with poverty.

140. One of the conveniences in life is to have less children.

141. Loving one another is half of wisdom.

142. Grief is half of old age.

143. Grant of patience (from Allah) is in proportion to the extent of calamity you are passing through. If you exhibit fretfulness, irritation, and despair in calamities, then your patience and your exertions are wasted.

144. Many persons get nothing out of their fasts but hunger and thirst, many more get nothing out of their night prayers but exertions and sleepless nights. Wise and sagacious persons are praiseworthy even if they do not fast and sleep during the nights.

145. Defend your faith (in Allah) with the help of charity. Protect your wealth with the aid of Zakat. Let the prayers guard you from calamities and disasters.

146. Kumayl bin Ziyad Nakha'i says that once Imam Ali put his hand in his hand and took me to the grave-yard. When he passed through it and left the city behind, he heaved a sigh and said "Kumayl, these hearts are containers of the secrets of knowledge and wisdom and the best container is the one which can hold the most and what it holds, it can preserve and protect in the best way. Therefore, remember carefully what I am telling you. Remember that there are three kinds of people: one kind is of those learned people who are highly versed in the ethics of truth and philosophy of religion, second is the kind of those who are acquiring the above knowledge and the third is that class of people who are uneducated. They follow every pretender and accept every slogan, they have neither acquired any knowledge nor have they secured any support of firm and rational convictions. Remember, Kumayl, knowledge is better than wealth because it protects you while you have to guard wealth. It decreases if you keep on spending it but the more you make use of knowledge the more it increases. What you get through wealth disappears as soon as wealth disappears but what you achieve through knowledge will remain even after you.

O Kumayl ! Knowledge is power and it can command obedience. A man of knowledge during his lifetime can make people obey and follow him and he is praised and venerated after his death. Remember that knowledge is a ruler and wealth is its subject.

O Kumayl ! Those who amass wealth, though alive, are dead to realities of life, and those who achieve knowledge, will remain alive through their knowledge and wisdom even after their death, though their faces may disappear from the community of living beings, yet their ideas, the knowledge which they had left behind and their memory, will remain in the minds of people".

Kumayl says that after this brief dissertation, Imam Ali pointed towards his chest and said, "Look Kumayl! Here I hold stores and treasures of knowledge. I wish I could find somebody to share it with me. Yes, I found a few, but one of them, though quite intelligent, was untrustworthy, he would sell his salvation to get hold of the world and its pleasures, he would make religion a pretence to grasp worldly power and wealth, he would make this Blessing of Allah (knowledge) serve him to get supremacy and control over friends of Allah and he would through knowledge exploit and suppress other human beings. The other person was such that he apparently obeyed truth and knowledge, yet his mind had not achieved the true light of religion, at the slightest ambiguity or doubt he would get suspicious of truth, mistrust religion and would rush towards skepticism. So neither of them was capable of acquiring the superior knowledge that I can impart. Besides these two I find some other person One of them is a slave of self and greedy for inordinate desires, which can easily drag him away from the path of religion, the other is an avaricious, grasping and acquisitive miser who will risk his life to grasp and hold wealth, none of these two will be of any use to religion or man, both of them resemble beasts having appetite for food. If sensible trustees of knowledge and wisdom totally disappear from human society then both knowledge and wisdom will suffer severely, may bring harm to humanity and may even die out. But this earth will never be without those persons who will prove the universality of truth as disclosed by Allah, they may be well-known persons, openly and fearlessly declaring the things revealed to them or they may, under fear of harm, injury or deaths hide themselves from the public gaze and may carry on their mission privately so that the reasons proving the reality of truth as preached by religion and as demonstrated by His Prophet may not totally disappear. How many are they and where could they be found? I swear by Allah that they are very few in number but their worth and their ranks before Allah are very high. Through them

Allah preserves His Guidance so that they, while departing, may hand over these truths to persons like themselves. The knowledge which they have acquired has made them see the realities and visualize the truth and has instilled into them the spirit of faith and trust. The duties which were decreed as hard and unbearable by them. They feel happy in the company and association of things which frighten the ignorant and uneducated. They live in this world like everybody else but their souls soar to the heights of Divine Eminence. They are media of Allah on this earth and they invite people towards Him. How I love to meet them O Kumayl ! I have told you all that I have to say, you can go back to your place whenever you like".

147. A man can be valued through his sayings.

148. One who does not realize his own value is condemned to utter failure. (Every kind of complex, superiority or inferiority is harmful to man).

149. Somebody requested Imam Ali to advise him how to lead a useful and sober life. Imam Ali thereupon advised him thus: "Do not be among those people who want to gain good returns without working hard for them, who have long hopes and keep on postponing repentance and penance, who talk like pious persons but run after vicious pleasures. Do not be among those who are not satisfied if they get more in life and are not content if their lot in life's pleasures is less (they are never satisfied), who never thank Allah for what they get and keep on constantly demanding increase in what is left with them; who advise others to such good deeds that they themselves refrain from; who appreciate good people but do not follow their ways of life; who hate bad and vicious people but follow their ways of life; who, on account of their excessive sins hate death but do not give up the sinful ways of life; who, if fallen ill, repent their ways of life and on regaining their health fearlessly readopt the same frivolous ways; who get despondent and lose all hopes, but on gaining health, become arrogant and careless; who, if faced with misfortunes, dangers or afflictions, turn to Allah and keep on beseeching Him for relief and when relieved or favoured with comfort and ease they are deceived by the comfortable conditions they found themselves in and forget Allah and forsake prayers; whose minds are allured by day dreams and forlorn hopes and who abhor to face realities of life; who fear for others the enormous repercussions of vices and sins but for their own deeds expect very high rewards or very light disciplinary actions. Riches make such people arrogant, rebellious and wicked, and poverty makes them despondent and lethargic. If they have to work, they work lazily and if they put up a demand they do it stubbornly.

Under the influence of inordinate cravings, they commit sins in quick succession and keep on postponing repentance. Calamities and adversities make them give up the distinguished characteristics of Muslims (patience, hope in future and work for improvement of circumstances). They advise people with narration's of events and facts but do not take any lesson from them. They are good at preachings but bad at practice, therefore they always talk of lofty deeds but their actions belie their words. They are keen to acquire temporal pleasures but are careless and slow to achieve permanent (Divine) benefits. They think good for themselves the things which are actually injurious to them and regard harmful the things which really benefit them. They are afraid of death but waste their time and do not resort to good deeds before death overtakes them. The vices which they regard as enormous sins for others, they consider as minor shortcomings for themselves. Similarly, they attach great importance to their obedience to the

orders of Allah and belittle similar actions in others. Therefore, they often criticize others and speak very highly of their own deeds. They are happy to spend their time in society of rich persons, wasting it in luxuries and vices but are averse to employing for useful purposes in company of the poor and pious people: They are quick and free to pass verdicts against others but they never pass a verdict against their own vicious deeds. They force others to obey them but they never obey Allah. They collect their dues carefully but never pay the dues they owe. They are not afraid of Allah but fear powerful men".

150. Everyone has an end, it may be pleasant or sorrowful.

151. Everyone, who is born, has to die and once dead he is as good as having not come into existence.

152. One, who adopts patience, will never be deprived of success though it may take a long time to reach him.

153. One who assents or subscribes to the actions of a group or a party is as good as having committed the deed himself. A man who joins a sinful deed makes himself responsible for two-fold punishments, one for doing the deed and the other for assenting and subscribing to it. 154. Accept promises of only those persons who can steadfastly-adhere to their pledges.

155. You are ordained to recognize the Imams (the right successors of the Holy Prophet) and to obey them.

156. You have been shown, if you only care to see; you have been advised if you care to take advantage of advice; you have been told if you care to listen to good counsels.

157. Admonish your brother (comrade) by good deeds and kind regards, and ward off his evil by favouring him.

158. One, who enters the places of evil repute has no right to complain against a man who speaks ill of him.

159. One, who acquires power cannot avoid favouritism.

160. One, who is willful and conceited will suffer losses and calamities and one who seeks advice can secure advantages of many counsels.

161. One, who guards his secrets has complete control over his affairs.

162. Poverty is the worst form of death.

163. One, who serves a person from whom he gets no reciprocal performance of duties, in fact, worships him.

164. One should not obey anyone against the commands of Allah.

165. Do not blame a man who delays in securing what are his just rights but blame lies on him who grasps the rights which do not belong to him.

166. Conceit is a barrier to progress and improvement.

167. Death is near and our mutual company is short.

168. There is enough light for one who wants to see.

169. It is wiser to abstain than to repent.

170. Often inordinate desire to secure a single gain acts as a hindrance for the quest of many profitable pursuits.

171. People often hate those things which they do not know or cannot understand. 172. One, who seeks advice learns to realize his mistakes.

173. One who struggles for the cause of Allah secures victory over His enemies.

174. When you feel afraid or nervous to do a thing then do it because the real harm which you may thus receive is less poignant than its expectation and fear. 175. Your supremacy over others is in proportion to the extent of your knowledge and wisdom.

176. The best way to punish an evil-doer is to reward handsomely a good person for his good deeds.

177. If you want to remove evil from the minds of others then first give up evil intentions yourself.

178. Obstinacy will prevent you from a correct decision.

179. Greed is permanent slavery.

180. Deficiency will result in shame and sorrow but caution and foresight will bring peace and security.

181. To keep silent when you can say something wise and useful is as bad as keeping on propagating foolish and unwise thoughts.

182. If two opposite theories are propagated one will be wrong.

183. When truth was revealed to me I never doubted it.

184. I never lied and the things revealed to me were not false I never misled anybody nor was I misled.

185. One, who starts tyranny, will repent soon.

186. Death is never very far.

187. One who forsakes truth earns eternal damnation.

188. One who cannot benefit by patience will die in grief.

189. In this world, man is a target of death, an easy prey to calamities, here every morsel and every draught is liable to choke one, here one never receives a favour until he loses another instead, here every additional day in one's life is a day reduced from the total span of his existence, when death is the natural outcome of life, how can we expect immortality?

190. O son of Adam, if you have collected anything in excess of your actual need, you will act only as its trustee for someone else to use it.

191. Hearts have the tendency of likes and dislikes and are liable to be energetic and lethargic, therefore, make them work when they are energetic because if hearts are forced (to do a thing) they will be blinded.

192. When I feel angry with a person how and when should I satisfy my anger, whether at a time when I am not in a position to retaliate and people may advise me to bear patiently or when I have power to punish and I forgive. 193. Minds get tired like bodies. When you feel that your mind is tired, then invigorate it with sober advice.

194. If you find that somebody is not grateful for all that you have done for him, then do not get disappointed because often you will find that someone else feels under your obligation though you have done nothing for him and thus your good deeds will be compensated, and Allah will reward you for your goodness.

195. The first fruit of forbearance is that people will sympathize with you and they will go against the man who offended you arrogantly.

196. One who takes account of his shortcomings will always gain by it; one who is unmindful of them will always suffer. One who is afraid of the Day of Judgment, is safe from the Wrath of Allah. One who takes lessons from the events of life, gets vision, one who acquires vision becomes wise and one who attains wisdom achieves knowledge.

197. Bear sorrows and calamities patiently, otherwise you will never be happy.

198. One who comes into power often oppresses.

199. Adversities often bring good qualities to the front.

200. If a friend envies you, then he is not a true friend.

201. Avarice dulls the faculties of judgment and wisdom.

202. Oppression and tyranny are the worse companions for the Hereafter.

203. The best deed of a great man is to forgive and forget.

204. Silence will create respect and dignity; justice and fairplay will bring more friends; benevolence and charity will enhance prestige and position; courtesy will draw benevolence; service of mankind will secure leadership and good words will overcome powerful enemies.

205. A greedy man will always find himself in the shackles of humility.

206. There are people who worship Allah to gain His Favors, this is the worship of traders; while there are some who worship Him to keep themselves free from His Wrath, this is the worship of slaves; a few who obey Him out' of their sense of gratitude and obligations, this is the worship of free and noble men.

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