

Pearls and Corals

**Treatise on the Condition of Sincerity (Al-Ikhlās) Required by Religious
Speakers**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST
MERCIFUL**

FOREWORD

The Shi'i communities in the Western world face numerous challenges, often times strikingly inconsistent with those faced by Shi'i Muslim communities of the East. Aggression against religious philosophies, ideologies, traditions and rituals is carried out in order to belittle them, but are more often than not, presented under the guise of intellectual discourse. These attacks are generally geared to create questions and doubts, and to leave one with a strong desire for answers. Given that the masses of all religious communities are imitators - more or less - in religion, they are therefore highly dependent on the opinions of their religious authorities. Thus, the masses look towards them as a source of guidance and turn to them for answers to their doubts and queries. However, some of these individuals may not always be able to get satisfactory answers to their questions. This may be due to an inability to research the question properly, or at times it is because the expertise of a scholar may be in an area other than that of the question.

Subsequently, in recent years particularly, this quest for seeking answers and explanations has created a popular trend amongst the Shi'i Muslim communities of the West, where individuals who are not scholars in the truest sense of the word, take it upon themselves to address these issues and answer such questions from an authoritative position. Although this trend may be seen as positive by some, many indicators signify that it is truly dangerous and the communities need to be cautious of it.

We have seen in the last decade or two, the growing rise of non-scholarly speakers comfortably sitting on pulpits in order to deliver sermons, presentations and address question and answer sessions for live audiences. These - typically young - speakers generally commence on a very limited scale, perhaps at their local mosque or religious schools. Nonetheless, as they begin to gain popularity, it is not uncommon to begin seeing them recite complete sets of lecture series in the months of Muḥarram, Ramadhān or other seasons. They begin receiving invitations to different religious institutions, different cities and even different countries. What is seen on the opposite end are masses of young men and women, youth in particular, mesmerized by these speakers and we often witness alongside it a complete devaluation of knowledge. More often than not, what becomes associated with these speakers is a celebrity-like status, and many times a cult develops around them. Symptoms of narcissism begin to show themselves on social media and mistakes or incorrect conclusions made by these speakers get overshadowed by the justification done for them by the hordes of their fans.

The issue is definitely a tough one to tackle, not only because there is the issue of these speakers per se, but also because many times the initial gap between the community and true-scholars indeed does exist. Furthermore, one would be hard pressed to obtain a religious legal justification to prevent

a person from merely speaking or delivering a lecture in and of itself. Arguments can be made supporting this permissibility by the communities themselves, based on different variables, such as lack of scholars in a given area, the crowd-pulling factor that a certain speaker brings, which speaker is admired and liked by the audience, and so on. Thus, this issue needs to be seen more in light of ethical jurisprudence and in terms of what knowledge truly is meant to be and who it should be attained from.

The response that is generally provided is a simple and straightforward one. A religious speaker, or a speaker who wishes to deliver religious knowledge, should generally be someone who has studied in an Islamic seminary, be it in Qom, Najaf or elsewhere. They should be someone who would generally have a thorough understanding of religious matters - at least in one or two subjects within it, while understanding the depths that exists in other streams. Like with every field, there are institutions where individuals go and study and subsequently become experts in a specific subject. These institutions are where an individual spends a decent number of years studying the intricate details pertaining to that subject and then after meeting certain criteria is considered reliable enough to be able to comment as an authority.

Which circle of academia would take an individual, who has barely studied a little science or engineering, albeit it be through some of the very same books that the experts have used to study from, to come and lecture on that subject at an academic conference without having any verifiable and credible credentials? Which conscious audience would generally pay any heed to the opinions of such a person? The practice is extremely rare and reserved for perhaps a few gems that can be found in any given industry and many times they are linked to a higher authority from whom they get this sense of acceptance amongst an audience. Perhaps an argument can be made that this individual may simply be providing a summary of their readings of different views on a given matter and is thus not stating their own views, rather quoting experts. The slight difference there would be that a person is in reality not presenting his or her own opinions on a subject matter nor behaving as an authority. Regardless, the common practice is that one would need to have some verifiable credibility to convince an audience that they are reliable enough in their research and analysis to be able to give a presentation.

In a narration pertaining to a verse of the Holy Qur'ān, Zayd al-Shahhām asks Imam Bāqir (as) about the words "his food" in the Qur'ānic verse: Then let mankind look at his food (80:24). The Imam (as) responds to him saying: It is his knowledge which he takes, and he should look into who he is taking it from.¹

If one travels on a lengthy road trip and is informed that all the restaurants that come on the way have a real risk of giving the person a disease, would this person rather hold his hunger for a few hours or risk attaining that disease? It seems obvious that a sane person would not risk it when it is possible to control their hunger, though they may have to struggle and wait an extra few hours to fulfill their desire for food.

If the same parable can be made with certain speakers, who are not qualified or trained in the proper institutions, neither are they connected to a higher authority, and it is realized that there is a valid and serious risk in them causing harm or damage to the souls of the audience members, why then would the audience not avoid them or at the very least be cautious of what they have to say? Why then do our communities so easily permit individuals who have close to no scholarly credibility, occupy the pulpits and allow their tongues mesmerize the often young and naïve audience when it comes to religious knowledge? This is not to say that all scholars who have studied formally are infallible in their speech, or are even capable of delivering a decent lecture at all - however that is a topic on its own and it is something that needs to be re-evaluated; i.e. how important is lecturing and propagating (tablīgh) as it is commonly practiced today, opposed to building communities based on formal teaching and learning practices (tadrīs), and what role does mere lecturing itself play in the development and progress of a community. What is important here is a connection - whether physical or spiritual - that a scholar has or should have with a higher body of knowledge. This itself requires spiritual cleansing and elimination of self-conceit and worship of one's ego.

A second issue is that while a speaker or even a scholar may be very well versed in Islamic subjects, their persona does not represent that of a man of piety, or of those who are generally considered to be Islamic scholars. When one wants their words to hold any weight, one of the conditions for it to be effective is summarized by the notion of: practice what you preach. This notion has been referred to in the narrations as well, and it will be referred to in the translation of the book that follows.

When a speaker develops into a celebrity, and their conduct does not align with what the religious teachings consider to be acts of piety, humbleness, modesty etc., then there is severe danger to the audience. They, and society at large can - or rather will - suffer from negative effects that can last for an eternity. The masses unfortunately, more often than not will be aloof to this even while partaking in the celebrity-cult, and only an outsider would generally be able to witness it.

One purpose of Islamic lecturing and lecturers, especially those who stay within their communities, is to not only be a mere orator, but a spiritual guide. They should be someone who the rest can look up to and learn the value of religion through seeing them practice it to the best of their abilities. This cannot be done unless the person is sincere in its most complete sense. Going out of their way to promote themselves, turning religious lecturing into pure business deals, not practicing what they preach, etc., are examples of scenarios that do not represent sincerity in anyway whatsoever.

Sincerity is one of the most primary conditions of a religious speaker and the instantiations of sincerity are determined, and often clearly defined, by the Qur'ān, and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his progeny (as). Furthermore, an educated and well versed community understands that certain actions and certain types of behaviour or a persona undermines the intention and sincerity of an individual and brings it under doubt.

The discussion on this subject can definitely be further opened up and various aspects and scenarios can be evaluated independently. However, the general overall trend is nevertheless something that should not be encouraged or promoted. With these recent conditions of our societies, I wished to partially translate this gem of a book titled, Lu'lu wa Marjān by Muḥaddith Mirza Ḥusayn Nūri (d. 1902), for both those who speak (scholars and non-scholars) and for those who attend the gatherings where scholars or non-scholars are lecturing.

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ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The present book is a partial translation of the book Lu'lu wa Marjān (lit. Pearls and Corals) written by Muḥaddith Mirza Ḥusayn Nūri (d. 1902), covering the introduction and the first chapter that deals with sincerity. The original Farsi book used in this translation was published by Bani Zahra Publications. The published book itself was a rephrased version, slightly revised and modified from the original by Jabir Riḍwāni due to the original book making use of vocabulary that even native Iranians were struggling to understand.

The book not only explicitly deals with the phenomenon of non-scholars reciting, preaching and orating from two distinct perspectives, but scholars who do not abide by the moral conduct required of them are also clearly implied. The first section of the original book deals with sincerity, and the second section deals with truthfulness.

Martyr Murtaḍa Muṭahhari praises the book and says this specifically about the second section that deals with honesty and truthfulness:

The second requirement is honesty and truthfulness. Here, he (Muḥaddith Nūri) elaborates on the topic of false and true narration, discussing various forms of lying in such a thorough-going manner that I do not think there is any other book which deals with lying and its various form in the way that it does, and perhaps there is no such other book in the whole world. In it he exhibits a marvelous learning and scholarship.²

I chose to only translate the introduction and the first section on sincerity as that is what I felt was directly relevant to the phenomenon the Western Muslim communities are facing today - particularly where English is used as a medium of preaching.

This is not to say that honesty is not as important, however the author of the book was concerned primarily with falsehood being spread on the pulpits that relate to the tragedy of Karbala. Within the communities where English is the medium of lecturing, I have not yet found this to be a serious issue, as it may be in communities where more traditional languages such as Urdu, Arabic or Farsi are employed to relay the tragedy of Karbala.

Furthermore, I believe the book 'Ashūrā - Misrepresentations and Distortions, which is based on the lectures of Martyr Muṭahhari suffices in terms of presenting a brief summary of what Muḥaddith Nūri discusses in the second part of his book. Anyone interested in getting an overall understanding of what Muḥaddith Nūri covers and brings to attention in the second part of his book, can refer to the book of Martyr Muṭahhari.

This is reiterated by the Martyr himself:

In this book, that great man mentions several examples of falsehoods that have become prevalent in narratives of the historic event of Karbala. Those which I will mention are all or mostly the same things that the Marḥūm Hāji Nūri has lamented about.³

The book of Muḥaddith Nūri was one of the last books he wrote - perhaps during the late 19th/early 20th century - and therefore the reader should be vary of this while reading the translation. Few of the stories that the author quotes may sound odd, or the vocabulary that has been used - such as the usage of dirhams and dinars - are not commonly used in Western

societies. However it is important to understand the time, environment, geography and culture that these events took place and when the book was written. Ultimately, what is important is the message and principles being presented to the reader by the author which hold true for all times and places.

As far as the translation itself is concerned, I have not limited myself to translating every sentence as literally as possible, rather I have paid more attention with regards to remaining true to the meaning of the text itself.

INTRODUCTION

Making the believers cry and mourn over the calamities that befell Imam Ḥusayn (as) and the rest of the members of the Holy Household (as), by reciting eulogies, narrating their hardships and carrying out other relevant acts that have not been prohibited by the religious canonical law (shari'ah), is a form of worship. It is a worship that has not only been praised, but rewards and remuneration have also been ordained for it. It has been narrated in the book Kāmil al-Ziyarāt that Imam al-Ṣadiq (as) said to 'Abdullah ibn Ḥammad Baṣri:

"I have heard that in the middle of the month of Sha'bān, some people from the suburbs of Kufa – and other cities – go to him (meaning al-Ḥusayn) and their ladies lament over him, the reciters recite poems about him, the speakers narrate his story, the lamenters lament over him and the poets recite eulogies about him." I ('Abdullah) replied, "Yes, may I be sacrificed upon you! I have seen some of that which you described." The Imam said: "Praise be to Allah, who appointed some people to benefit from us, extol us and recite eulogies about us. And (praise be to Allah) who has made some of our enemies slander our Shi'a for their nearness to us while other enemies insult them and condemn their actions."⁴

In 'Uyūn al-Akḥbār of Sheikh al-Ṣadūq, it has been narrated from Imam al-Riḍa (as) who said to Ḥasan ibn 'Ali ibn Faḍḍhāl:

"Whoever remembered our tragedy and cried and made others cry, his eyes will not shed tears on the day all eyes will be shedding tears."⁵

In the books Kāmil al-Ziyarāt, Thawāb al-'Amāl and al-Amāli, it has been recorded that Imam al-Ṣadiq (as) said to Abu 'Umāra Munshid⁶:

"Anyone who recites poetry about Imam Ḥusayn (as) and makes fifty people cry, paradise is for him. Anyone who recites poetry about Imam Ḥusayn (as) and makes forty people cry, paradise is for him. Anyone who recites poetry about Imam Ḥusayn (as) and makes thirty people cry, paradise is for him. Anyone who recites poetry about Imam Ḥusayn (as) and makes twenty people cry, paradise is for him. Anyone who recites poetry about Imam Ḥusayn (as) and makes ten people cry, paradise is for him. Anyone who recites poetry about Imam Ḥusayn (as) and makes one person cry, paradise is for him. Anyone who recites poetry about Imam Ḥusayn (as) and weeps will be rewarded with paradise. Anyone who recites poetry about Imam Ḥusayn (as) and tries to weep, will be rewarded with paradise."⁷

Furthermore, in Kāmil al-Ziyarāt, it has been recorded that Imam al-Ṣadiq (as) said to Abu Harūn Makfūf⁸:

"O Abu Harūn! If one recites an elegy about Ḥusayn (as) and makes ten people weep, paradise is for him." Then the Imam kept decreasing the number of people one by one until he reached one person and then said: "If one recites an elegy about Imam Ḥusayn (as) and makes one person weep, paradise is for him."⁹

In the same book¹⁰ and as well as in Thawāb al-'Amāl it has been recorded that Imam al-Ṣadiq (as) said to Abu Harūn:

"If one recites an elegy about Ḥusayn (as) and weeps and makes ten people weep, paradise is for them. If one recites an elegy on Imam Ḥusayn

(as) and weeps and makes five people weep, paradise is for them. If one recites an elegy on Imam Ḥusayn (as) and weeps and makes one person weep, paradise is for them."¹¹

Also in the same book and in Thawāb al-'Amāl, Sheikh Ṣadūq has recorded that Imam al-Ṣadiq (as) said to Ṣāliḥ ibn 'Uqba:

*"Whoever recites a verse of poetry about Ḥusayn (as) and weeps and makes ten people weep, paradise is for them. Whoever recites a verse of poetry about Ḥusayn (as) and weeps and makes nine people weep, paradise is for them." Then he reduced the numbers until he said: "Whoever recites a verse of poetry about Ḥusayn (as) and weeps - (and the narrator says that he thinks the Imam (as) said: or he makes a sad face) - paradise is for him."*¹²

Sayyid 'Ali ibn Tāūs in his book Lahūf, has said:

*"It has been reported from the progeny of the Prophet (pbuh) that: "Whoever weeps over us and makes one-hundred people weep, paradise is for him. And whoever weeps over us and makes fifty people weep, paradise is for him. And whoever weeps and makes thirty people weep, paradise is for him. And whoever weeps and makes ten people weep, paradise is for him. And whoever weeps and makes one person weep, paradise is for him."*¹³

In Rijal al-Kāshī, it has been recorded that after Ja'far ibn 'Affān had recited poetry regarding the calamities that befell Imam Ḥusayn (as) in the presence of Imam Ṣadiq (as) and had made him (as) cry, the Imam said:

*"Allah (swt) has made paradise obligatory for you O Ja'far, with all that is within it and He (swt) has forgiven you." Then he (as) said: "O Ja'far, do you want me to say more for you?" He said: "Yes, my master." He (as) said: "There is no one who recites poetry for Ḥusayn (as) and cries and makes other cries through it, except that Allah (swt) makes heaven obligatory for him and forgives him."*¹⁴

The above narrations should suffice as a testimony to our claim that this act is indeed a worship. When all the narrations are combined, it can be understood that making others mourn by means of reciting poetry or through other means, is a way of getting closer to Allah (swt), seeking His (swt) forgiveness, attaining salvation on the Day of Judgement and achieving eternal pleasure in Heaven. This is a form of worship that existed during the time of the Imams (as) and continued on after them. Stories and anecdotes regarding it being performed are readily available in the books of narration and obituaries.

This group of believers (i.e. those who recite and make others mourn) was not known by any specific title, until the intelligent and inquisitive Mullah Ḥusayn Kashifi, who lived around the year 900 Ḥijri, compiled a book titled Rawḍa al-Shuhada. People began reciting from this book in religious gatherings with zeal, and since it was a very eloquent and difficult book, not everyone could develop the skills to recite from it. Instead, only a few talented individuals were able to recite from it in the mourning ceremonies. Thus, these individuals became famously known as Rawḍah-khwān, meaning those individuals who recited from the book Rawḍa al-Shuhada.

Thenceforth, they started to recite from other books and also off by memory, but the title of rawdah-khwān fixated itself upon them. Over the course of time, the work of this group of individuals increased, but their original purpose which was to make others cry, became subject to the addition of many different stories, anecdotes, poetries, exaggerated merits, detrimental sermons and other minor issues. Subsequently, the recitation of the elegies became such a special and stellar task that one of the scholars said as a joke: "In this day and age, rawdah-khawāni has entered the field of sciences and has developed a specific know-how, and for its definition we can define it by saying:

It is a science that deals with discussing the incidents that occurred with the bodies of the martyrs and other matters that relate to them."

In regards to this skill of recitation, knowledgeable scholars and even those devoid of knowledge have compiled books and treatises with great order and prose which have been published in Arabic, Farsi, Turkish and Hindi. The Shi'a are selfless in spending from their wealth and helping out tirelessly in order to organize these gatherings of mourning, which are led by the reciters.¹⁵

These people, besides attaining the rewards of the Hereafter, have also witnessed innumerable blessings and bounties in their health, wealth and off-spring. So for this very reason, those who fall short in other cases of giving charity and financial spending - albeit it be obligatory - and even if they do give, it is not with the same zeal and desire, in this specific case (of organizing mourning ceremonies), they tend to help out with great zeal and love. They show great character and desire, and put their wealth and health on the line. But the service offered by the reciter, who is the pillar of this noble gathering, is greater and more honourable than the services of all those who helped organized this gathering. This is because the reciters, as has been highlighted in the narrations quoted previously, are included in a category of people who have been promised forgiveness and heaven. They are also considered to be within a group of those who help other believers in doing good, assist them in remaining righteous and in doing acts that are beneficial. They are a group in regards to whom Allah (swt) has said in His Noble Words ¹⁶ : تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى

Hence, according to the many relevant narrations, they will attain rewards alongside all the listeners, mourners and organizers. They will be considered participants in the gathering, and in fact will be counted amongst the special helpers and honourable servants of the Imam (as). Therefore they hold a great, respected and lofty position and status, and it is admissible that they feel honoured over other Shi'a.

Nevertheless, attaining this great rank and entering the group of those who have been aforementioned, is reliant upon certain conditions, of which two are of great importance. The non-existence of either one of them, will render one's struggle useless, their pain fruitless, and their hardship resultless. Their names will be removed from the register of those special ones, or sometimes they will not be added to it at all. Rather, by not meeting these two conditions, their names - God Forbid - will be added to the

register of tradesmen, or in the register of liars, or in the register of those who commit treachery, inflict harm or are pagans. As a consequence, despite performing this beautiful act of worship, they will not receive the benefit of their servitude to Allah (swt) and of being service to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and the Imams (as).

Thus, every reciter who has decided to enter the ranks of these special ones and attain a lofty position, a status of greater degrees, endless rewards, and untainted honour - regarding which the reward has been ordained and the Imams (as) have given a promise for it - it is necessary that before becoming occupied in this work, they should fulfill these two conditions. After attaining them and while possessing them, one should measure themselves with confidence on the scale of justice, which

is in the capable hands of the steadfast scholars and the guardians of the clear canon law. This is so that the guile of Satan and the dangers of the ego - which are numerous - that makes falsehood appear as the truth, and robes errors with the cloth of righteousness, are unbuckled and one does not throw themselves into a great catastrophe.

These two conditions are sincerity and honesty. These two conditions are the two steps of the pulpit that one climbs up on, and if both or even one of them are not correct or without defect, one will fall face first and will be completely deprived of the blessings of reciting from the pulpit. The explanation of these two conditions will be covered within the next two chapters, God Willing.¹⁷

SINCERITY

The original goal and the overall purpose of the Messengers and the Holy Scriptures was to pull mankind towards Allah (swt). It was to show them clear signs and firm miracles in order to inform them that He (swt) is One, Wise, Able and Besought, the Creator, Sustainer, Protector, the One who takes and gives life to all, and that He (swt) has no partner in these affairs.

The Messengers and their vicegerents (as) through their clear words and sufficient proofs, clarified these Attributes of Allah (swt) for us. In order to bring mankind to a platform of belief, acknowledgment, and submission, and for mankind to act upon what they had been commanded to do, the Prophets themselves went through tribulations. They were verbally abused, experienced hardships, and sacrificed their lives and wealth for this noble cause. This was with the hope that people will recognize their Lord. Furthermore, it was with the hope that mankind would recognize themselves as being needy, incapable, and submissive servants and would not see or recognize anyone except Him (swt) as their Creator and Sustainer. It was with the hope that mankind would ask for their needs from Him (swt), fear calamities, and ask Him (swt) to remove them. If they disobeyed Him (swt), they would seek forgiveness from Him (swt) and renounce their disobedience.

For those who believed and showed conformity to the message of the Prophets, they were prescribed with rules on how to live and taught about ethics. Some of the actions that were prescribed, pertained to the heart and others to the limbs. Through these acts, people could express their servitude and admit their inabilities, constraints and neediness. They could ask Allah (swt) for their needs and give Him (swt) the right of His (swt) Divinity. In Islamic lexicon, these prescribed actions are referred to as worship (عبادة), which means to honour religious rites and display servitude. This worship will not reach the precipice of perfection and will not be considered correct unless and until the worshipper recognizes himself to be a servant and under the thralldom of Allah (swt).

Many times, people worship and are content with that which Allah (swt) has allotted for them, but they have not understood the true meaning of servitude and do not consider themselves to be true servants. Due to this, they disobey their Lord and do not abstain from committing sins. At times, it is the opposite. They recognize themselves to be servants, but are negligent in their worship. The details

of this subject have been covered in books that describe the differences between the terms worshipper (عابد), slave (عبد), worship (عبادة) and servitude (عبودية).

In both cases (of worship and servitude), worshippers must not attribute partners to Allah (swt). This means that they should not worship anything besides Allah (swt). They should not consider themselves as a servant of anyone else, nor take anyone else as their Lord, nor recognize anyone else as their master. Furthermore, in both stages they must be attentive and focused, like they should be during the recitation of the holy verse, You

alone we worship.¹⁸ The implications of the verse must be steady and firm in their hearts, and their actions should be in accordance with what is in their hearts, otherwise they will be guilty of uttering a lie. Thus, if anyone idolizes a creation to a degree that this creation becomes the cause and motivation of their worship, and the creation receives a place in the heart of the worshipper, or the worshipper receives wealth from this idolized creation for their act of worship, this worshipper has indeed taken a partner for Allah (swt) and therefore has entered into one of the categories of the polytheists.

This subject has been clearly articulated in our books and traditions, and a sane and clean intellect also testifies to its validity. In fact, after contemplation, it becomes apparent that the permissibility of carrying out such an act and considering it lawful is irrational, because it is incompatible with the original purpose of the Messengers, Prophets and Books that were sent down. Such acts are not carried out by a wise individual. For the sake of argument, even if we consider it to be permissible, it is not rational to say that such an act warrants any reward or that the doer is somehow deserving of any reward.

RECITING IS A FORM OF WORSHIP

After our introduction, we affirm that making the Shi'a and the believers mourn upon the tribulations of the Family of the Prophet (as) is a worship just like crying itself. This fact is not hidden from the sight of any intellectual. It is a worship that has been emphasized and is so desirable that we have been commanded and encouraged to perform it, and rewards have been set aside for it. Thus, all those who have reached the age of responsibility, are to take part in this worship to the best of their abilities and talents. After performing this act of worship, they are deserving of the rewards allocated for it. The worship of recitation is just like mourning upon the calamities that befell the Family of the Prophet (as), which is in itself one of the greatest acts of worship and something that essentially all are responsible for.

Both these acts (crying and making others cry) are from the same category of worship and originate from the same root. The difference is only such that crying is possible for everyone, but being able to make others cry is not practical for everyone and requires effort and hard work. Therefore, this group of individuals who are recognized as the reciters - who put in effort and endure hardships - raise the flag of this noble tradition high and spend their lives performing this great act of worship.

Of course, however, they must know and should understand that this worship is exactly like other worships. This act will only be considered worship if it is carried out solely for the sake of Allah (swt) and out of love for the Prophet (pbuh) and the Imams (as). One should not have any other purpose or goal while carrying out this worship. If one were to have any other purpose, it should only be to attain the reward that has been promised for this worship, and to remain protected from sins. This still requires one to be sincere and in principle, still requires one to carry out the act for the sake of Allah (swt). It is only through this intention that the rewards ordained for the worship will reach the reciters and only then will they remain safeguarded from sins.

This is like the first step of the pulpit. Meaning, when one places their first step on the pulpit, they must forget everyone except Allah (swt) and His rightful vicegerents (as). He must not look towards winning the heart of anyone, or seek to earn wealth when he climbs the pulpit to recite the tragic narratives and to make the audience cry.

If - God forbid - Satan is able to make the feet of the reciter tremble on the first step of the pulpit and his desires pull him towards this polluted world, and he climbs the pulpit, speaks and recites for the purpose of earning wealth, or to ensure that people around different cities are aware of his talent and excellence so that he becomes the subject of discussions, he has in fact thrown himself in a huge pit of doom, out of which there is no hope of salvation. Some of these issues will now be addressed.

OSTENTATION IN RECITATION

Firstly: Due to this corrupt reason, one prevents themselves from receiving any grace or reward which has been promised for this group of individuals. For the sake of attaining a little bit from this rotten corpse of a world, one resorts to showing-off and ostentation and subsequently deprives themselves of the flawless and eternal blessings of the Hereafter. This is because one of the clearest messages of the religion is that a reward is given for a worship which is done out of servitude. Worship without sincerity is not even considered worship, rather it is considered a concealed form of polytheism.

Sheikh Kulayni has recorded a tradition from Imam al-Ṣadiq (as) as follow:

*"He who acquires knowledge of the traditions to earn worldly gains will have no share of rewards in the Hereafter, and he who acquires this knowledge for the betterment of his Hereafter will be sanctioned by Allah the good of this life and the Hereafter."*¹⁹

The jurist Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī in his book Sarā'ir, has recorded from the book of Abu al-Qāsim Ja'far ibn Quluwayh that Abu Dharr (ra) stated:

*"Whoever acquires knowledge from the knowledge of the Hereafter while wanting to achieve a worldly purpose, will not be able to smell the scent of paradise."*²⁰

In the book 'Awāli al-La'āli, it has been recorded that Imam 'Ali (as) heard from the Prophet (pbuh) the following:

*"Whoever attains knowledge from those who possess it and acts upon it, will find salvation, and whoever desires the world from it, will receive what he had intended."*²¹

Sulaym bin Qays al-Ḥilālī, a companion of Imam 'Ali (as) has recorded many narrations from the Imam (as) on this subject in his book, such as:

*"And whoever desires the world from it, will perish and receive what he had intended."*²²

Apart from not attaining anything in the Hereafter, this narration suggests that such a person will also perish, because he spread knowledge while intending to attain the world. The explanation of this point will come later and there are plenty of other narrations on this subject.

Secondly: The person will enter the rank of those who take the progeny of the Prophet as a financial source for their income and use them (as) to gain wealth and take care of their livelihood.

Sheikh Kulayni has recorded a tradition in al-Kāfi from Imam al-Bāqir (as) who writes in one of his wills to Abu Nu'mān:

*"And do not earn a living from people through us, for it will increase you in poverty."*²³

The poverty meant in this narration is attributed to both this world and the Hereafter, as it will become clear in a narration of Mufaḍḍal later on.

Sheikh Mufīd brings this narration in his al-Amāli as follows:

*"O Abu Nu'mān, do not devour people's wealth by using our name, for that will increasing nothing but poverty."*²⁴

Sheikh Kashi in his Rijal work narrates a tradition on the authority of Qasim ibn 'Awf who says that Imam Zayn al-'Ābidīn (as) said ²⁵: وإياك أن

تستأكل بنا فيزيدك الله فقرا

And its content is similar to the aforementioned narration.

Sheikh Hasan bin 'Ali bin Shu'ba in his book Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl records a tradition where Mufaḍḍal bin 'Umar advises his own companions and says:

*"Do not take the family of Mohammed (as) as means by which you collect earnings. I heard Abu 'Abdillah (as) saying: 'People have taken three different courses in following us. Some people have followed us and expected our relief for the purpose that they may obtain worldly pleasures. They have declared their adherence to us and repeated our words, but they have omitted abiding by our deeds. God will take them to Hell in hoards. Some people declared their adherence to us, listened to our words, and showed no negligence in carrying out our orders, all for the purpose of gaining the (worldly) donations of people. God will fill their bellies with fire and will impose upon them starvation and thirst. Some people have declared their adherence to us, retained our wording, carried out our instructions, and have not dissented from our deeds. Those are from us and we are from them.'"*²⁶

The deceased Akhund Mullah Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Mazandarāni and others have explained the narrations that Sheikh Kulayni has brought forth in the chapter of Those Who Use Their Knowledge for Personal Fulfillment. They have said that these narrations are referring to someone who uses knowledge as a tool to eat the wealth of people and makes it a source for his livelihood.

The flames of this second category of individuals have indeed engulfed many knowledgeable people. The most clear example of this is that group of speakers and reciters whose real purpose of learning this skill and that which relates to it, such as learning the meritorious or sorrowful narrations, learning how to lecture and give sermons, and in fact even learning religious terms for matters where their usage is necessary, is solely for the sake of business and attaining wealth. This is done without any hesitation, dissimulation or concealment. Instead, they do transactions just like businessmen. They discuss the prices being too high or too low, and in order to get permission to recite at a gathering, they write letters citing their availability and send a middle-man who can find them a place to recite at. If they receive an amount which is less than what they had expected after reciting at the gathering - with or without permission - they get angry and speak badly about the organizer of the gathering. They shame the organizer and treat him ignominiously. In fact some ill-natured reciters start questioning them from the top of the pulpits, looking for a sponsor and make deals over what they have recited.

One of the absurd and laughable things is that despite these business-like transactions, and exchanging of the Hereafter for this world, this person sits on top of the pulpits in the gatherings, feels proud, and considers himself a special servant of Imam Ḥusayn (as). He considers himself deserving greater rights than others and considers himself more worthy of deserving respect, generosity and glorification. This is why at times, you will see them

saying statements like: "My master Imam Ḥusayn (as) did this, said this and did this for you."

This poor and self-blinded person is heedless of the fact that there is no relationship between him and Imam Ḥusayn (as). The distance between him and Imam Ḥusayn (as) is greater than the distance between the earth and the sky. His status is even lower than the lowest rank of workers in society, such as the porter or a vegetable seller. His name is registered in the books of businessmen and just like them, this reciter must also look at his income at the end of the year and pay Khums on the relevant amount as religious law dictates. Despite paying the Khums to those who are entitled to it, his status will remain worse than the rest of the businessmen. This is because permissible income by itself is not from the category of worship and thus its correctness is not conditional upon sincerity and intention of seeking proximity to Allah (swt). Therefore, if the income happens to be attained while devoid of any prohibited act and the work itself also has no prohibition on it in the religious law, one has merely done a neutral act and they would have no sin upon them. If a person works with the intention of making money so that he is able to visit the graves of the Imams (as), or to help the cause of the Progeny of the Prophet (pbuh), scholars and the poor, or to make the living conditions of his family better, or other similar acts which have been recommended in Islam, he will then be deserving of a reward.

However, reciting is like the work of students pursuing religious studies, which is considered a worship and is to be done with an intention of seeking proximity to Allah (swt). This task wavers between two things; if it is done with sincerity and the correct intention it will be greatly beneficial, but if it is done solely with the intention of attaining wealth and this world, it will result in a great loss. This is because this valuable act has been ordained for us to attain the Hereafter, to attain the Satisfaction of Allah (swt) and to attain the blessings of paradise. The purpose of this worship is not to attain the sporadic pleasures of this lowly world and the little perishable wealth.

After mentioning these points, it is clear that merely reciting the merits, virtues, stories and hardships of Imam Ḥusayn (as) does not make anyone his servant. Otherwise anyone who prints and publishes a book containing his merits and the story of his martyrdom with the intention of making money, and in fact even those who carry the book from one city to another for the purpose of earning money and anyone who delivers the book to someone's house for the sake of a few dirhams, will all be considered servants of Imam Ḥusayn (as).

Rather, a reciter will be considered in the ranks of the servants of Imam Ḥusayn (as) when that which he utters is only for the sake of Allah (swt) and for fulfilling the rights of His (swt) legates (as). Otherwise he will be like any other businessman, who considers the merits and calamities as an investment and busies himself in business with them. He would not have a right over anyone and would not have done anyone a favour, and neither will his actions be in accordance with the instructions of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). So how can such an individual consider himself a servant of theirs? How can such an individual consider himself worthy of such an honour?

Therefore, a pious and honest reciter should determine the validity of such a transaction and of that which he receives in exchange for what he recites. Instead of blindly following himself or looking for justifications from other reciters and lecturers like him, he should ask the jurists, so that he has a valid justification for his actions.

WAYS TO ATTAIN WAGES THROUGH RECITING

Is a transaction in this regard like the wage one gets for performing an act on behalf of someone else when they are hired to do so? When one performs a religious visitation (to the shrines) or Ḥajj on behalf of someone else, the wage that one receives is not for the sake of the pilgrimage or the visitation itself, rather it is for the act of representing a person. Therefore, in those cases a person must make the intention before performing an act, that they are receiving a certain amount of money for representing someone in a religious visitation to a shrine, pilgrimage or even while reciting at a gathering. So in reality what they are getting in return of reciting at a gathering is comparable to what they would get if they represented someone during pilgrimage. That is to say, that the individual who is being represented is the one who essentially performed the visitation or the pilgrimage or did the recitation.

In this situation, the intention of the person would be that they are performing a religious visitation, pilgrimage or making others mourn - which is the intended result of reciting at a gathering of mourning - as a representative for one who requests it. Through this, the person will not only be performing an act of worship, but will also be deserving of a wage. If he carries out this act without the intention of performing an act of worship and without the intention of performing the act as a representative of someone, he will not be deserving of any such wage. Or else, the wage he receives will be tantamount to receiving a payment for the noble act of making others mourn itself, rather than for representing someone.

Sometimes there may be a situation where one receives a payment for an act that is outside the folds of the above scenarios. For example when a person does not recite with the intention of it being a worship or with the intent to make others mourn. Rather, he will perhaps recite just a few specific lines of poetry and the payment he receives for that will be for the recitation of those few lines themselves. This is while, whether his act causes others to cry or not, and without he himself paying attention to whether this act of his was an act of worship or not.

In short, for all these cases there exists many lengthy discourses, which are better left for the knowledgeable jurists to deal with. Therefore, in regards to this topic, we will briefly look at the issue of receiving a wage for reciting the adhān (call to prayer), which is by itself a recommended act, just like reciting at a religious gathering. Although, some jurists have allowed a person to receive a payment for reciting the adhān in certain situations, the famous ruling amongst the great jurists is that receiving a payment for reciting the adhān is prohibited. Furthermore, various traditions have also been recorded in regards to this.

Sheikh Kulayni in his al-Kāfi, and Sheikh Tūsi in his al-Tahdhīb, have recorded a narration from Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (as), with a very reliable chain, as follows:

*"There is no performing of prayers behind the one who seeks a wage for the adhān and the ṣalah, and his testimony is not accepted."*²⁷

Sheikh Ṣadūq records this same tradition with an authentic chain, in his book al-Faḳīh, but over there it has been mentioned that "praying behind"

refers to praying behind them in congregational prayers. Sheikh Ṣadūq also records a tradition from Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a) in his al-Faqīh:

A man came near Amīr al-Mu'minīn (as) and said: "*O Amīr al-Mu'minīn, by Allah (swt) I love you.*" He (as) replied to him: "*But, I detest you.*" He said: "*Why?*" He (as) replied: "*Because you seek to make profit through the adhān.*"²⁸

Sheikh Tūsi records this same tradition in his book al-Taḥdhīb, with an addition:

"...and you take a wage for teaching the Qur'ān, and I heard from the Prophet (pbuh) of Allah (swt) who said: "*Whoever takes a wage for teaching the Qur'ān, his fortune will be similar to what he took, on the Day of Judgement.*"²⁹

In the same book, he records the following tradition from Imam 'Alī (as):

"*The last thing upon which I separated away from the love of my heart, was that he (pbuh) said: 'O 'Alī! Whenever you pray, pray the ṣalah in the same manner that the frailest person behind you is praying (in congregation), and do not take a mua'addhin (the person who says the adhān) who takes a wage for reciting the adhān.*"³⁰

In the book al-Ja'fariyāt, the author³¹ also records a narration from Imam 'Alī (as), where he says that the wage of a mua'addhin is from illegal earnings, just like the earnings made from carrying out the obligatory acts pertaining to the dead.³² Other than these, we have various other traditions that have been recorded in their relevant places.

The similarity between a reciter and a mua'addhin is very clear. A mua'addhin informs the believers of that time when they are to present themselves in the presence of their Lord (swt). He invites them towards the best of deeds, the prayers, which is the cause of redemption and salvation from the fire that we have fueled with our sins. Besides this, there are many merits and effects of prayers, both in this world and in the Hereafter. To the extent that it is even said that prayer is the ascension of the believer. Likewise, a reciter also informs the believers of the merits, virtues, and the hardships that the progeny of the Prophet (as) had to go through. He informs them of the arrival of the season of mourning, which becomes the cause of reaching proximity to Allah (swt) and the cause of happiness for the Prophet (pbuh) and the Imams (as). Mourning over the progeny of Muḥammad (as) becomes the cause of salvation in this world and the Hereafter, and the extinguisher of the firebeds of hell.

Calling the adhān is recommended for everyone, but for most people it is burdensome. Therefore the Prophet (pbuh) has said:

"*Indeed it (the adhān) has not gone beyond the weak ones amongst you.*"³³

Thus, a group of believers come together and perform this recommended act while removing the burden off of others. Making others mourn is also exactly like this, and we have discussed this nature of it previously.

In any case, it is the responsibility of a pious reciter who wishes to earn money, that he refer to a jurist whom he imitates (تقليد) and question him regarding the permissibility of earning money through this worship. If there

is a type of transaction that is permissible in this case, then one should clarify it with the jurist, and act solely upon it so that he remains protected from performing a prohibited act and earning unlawful money. If he had been earning unlawful money, he has already deprived himself of the Divine Graces of the Hereafter, and should not further throw himself in the captivity and punishment of the Hereafter.

Thirdly: The person will enter the ranks of those who have sold their Hereafter for this world. Sheikh Ja'far bin Aḥmad al-Qummi³⁴ records a narration from the Prophet (pbuh) in his book al-Ghayāt as follow:

*"The most evil of men is he who sells his Hereafter for his world, and the most evil from that is he who sells his Hereafter for the world of another."*³⁵

Narrations on this subject are plenty. A tradition that is similar to the aforementioned one in terms of its content has been recorded by Sheikh Ṣadūq in his book Iqāb al-'Amāl. It says that the Prophet (pbuh) stated the following in his last sermon:

*"...and for whoever the world is presented and he selects the world and abandons the Hereafter, he will meet Allah (swt) in such a state that he will have no good deeds through which he can protect himself from the fire."*³⁶

Furthermore, in Nahj al-Balāgha, and in Sheikh Mufīd's al-Irshād and al-Amāli, and in other books, a tradition has been recorded where Imam 'Ali (as) informs Kumayl (ra) of the categories of students of knowledge and says:

*"...yes, I did find (such a one); but he was untrustworthy. He would use the religion to seek the world."*³⁷

The meanings and implications of all these narrations are the same.

Thus, this fact is now clear that if a person sells his Hereafter for worldly pleasures - whether it be through seeking wealth or higher positions - essentially gives up his faith and religion. Just like the weak who abandon the teachings of their religion and join the religion of falsehood for the sake of attaining proximity to individuals of high status or for the sake of earning wealth from them. For example, Ibn 'Aās, who forsook the leadership and companionship of Imam 'Ali (as) for the sake of becoming a governor of Egypt. The Imam (as) repeatedly reprehended and blamed him for his trading of the religion for the world, and this incident is readily available in his biography. During that time of history, we can find numerous examples like that of Ibn 'Aās, who would sell their religion for the wealth that the son of Abu Sufyān (Mu'āwiyah) would offer them.

Sheikh Abū l-Futūḥ al-Rāzī writes in his exegesis, after a discussion on some aspects of Imam Ali's (as) asceticism:

That such was his (as) character, is it really something to be amazed by? He had a client from amongst his clients, who is famously known as Abu al-Aswad Al-Du'ali. After the Imam (as) had left the world and was in the proximity of His Divine Lord, Mu'āwiyah wished to bribe Abu al-Aswad with material wealth, given that he would devalue his friendship with the Imam (as). Mu'āwiyah would send gifts for him and would behave in a graceful manner with him. One day he had sent Abu al-Aswad a gift which consisted of different types of sweets, mixed with saffron and honey. Abu al-Aswad had a young five-year old daughter who ran and took a little of the

sweet and put it in her mouth. Her father said to her: O daughter, spit it out, for it is poison. She said: Why? He said: Do you do not know that the son of Hind has sent it for us so that we abandon the friendship of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)? O daughter, whatever is in your mouth, throw it out.³⁸ Then he said:

"Are you trying to separate us from the purified Leader by honey mixed with saffron?"³⁹

أ بِالشَّهْدِ الْمُرْعَفِ يَا ابْنَ هِنْدٍ * نَبِيْعُ إِلَيْكَ إِسْلَامًا وَدِينًا
قَلَّ وَاللَّهِ لَيْسَ يَكُونُ هَذَا * وَ مَوْلَانَا أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

With your honey mixed with saffron, O son of Hind Do you think we will sell our Islam and religion to you Refuge of Allah (God Forbid), how can this be When our master is, Amīr al-Mu'minīn (as)

However, in the case of 'Amr Ibn 'Aās and others like him, negligence has occurred in explaining their actions. This is because while he sold his religion and was able to gain the world, he did not essentially sell his religion to anyone. Mu'āwiyah did not receive any value from Ibn 'Aās abandoning his religion, even though Mu'āwiyah paid a lot for it. As a matter of fact, what Mu'āwiyah received in return was even more irreligiosity and therefore no real transaction or exchange of goods took place.

At other times, a man sells his religion for the sake of the world, by letting go of something from his Hereafter. A man can sell his means and hope of achieving salvation and blessings of the Hereafter, by trading them for wealth that he can earn in this world. This is while he can use these same means to achieve good in the Hereafter, but he does not. Instead he earns the world instead. For example, teaching the Qur'ān or religious laws are forms of worships that are extremely beloved and a person can achieve many great rewards through them. However, at times a person teaches them and furthers himself from the good of the Hereafter and in return for teaching, he accepts material wealth. In this scenario, we can say that a transaction and exchange of goods took place, and the person clearly becomes amongst those who have been described in some of the aforementioned narrations. In Tafsīr al-'Askari, there is a narration which mentions that the Prophet (pbuh) has mentioned a great reward for the Qur'ān reciter who recites one verse and for the one who closely pays attention to the recitation, and says:

"Do you know when the reciter and the attentive listener of the Qur'ān will get this great reward? This will be when he does not exaggerate in the Qur'ān, for this is a Glorious Word, nor does he hold back anything from it, nor does he eat (earn wages) from it, nor show off through it."⁴⁰

Any knowledgeable and unprejudiced person will agree that this concept is not just limited to the Qur'ān. Rather any means and tools provided by the religion to attain the good of the Hereafter will be subject to this principal and one must therefore stay away from such an act. The Imams (as) would try their utmost best to not become a party to such transactions, to such an extent that they would avoid dealing with someone who recognized their status, out of fear that the merchant might lower the price for them. This is because the price that people pay to purchase an item is one of those means to attain good in the Hereafter. The Imams (as) were purified and far away

from even intending to purchase something lower than its real value. This notion can be seen again and again in the biography of Imam Ali (as).

Ibn Shahr Āshūb and others narrate from Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (as) who says:

"One day Amīr al-Mu'minīn went to a store in the marketplace and asked a seller: 'Sell me two shirts.' The man replied saying: 'O Amīr al-Mu'minīn, I have that which you need.' Since that seller recognized the Imam, the Imam left his store and went to a store of a young man and brought one piece of shirt for three dirhams and one for two dirhams."⁴¹ In another narration, it says that he went to two different stores and both sellers recognized the Imam (as). Then he went to a third store where a slave referred to the Imam as Sheikh. So the Imam brought the clothes from him and left. When the father or the owner of the slave came to the store and realized it was Imam Ali (as) who was the customer, and that the slave had taken a greater sum, the man brought the excess amount back to the Imam and asked for forgiveness. The Imam (as) did not take the amount back and instead said: It was a transaction where both parties were satisfied.

Sheikh Shahīd Thāni, in his Exegesis of Lum'ah - after mentioning the undesirability of differentiating between customers - says:

"Yes, is there really is a difference in them (the customers) due to their merits and religiosity, then there is no issue (in discounting from the price). However it is still detested that the customer accepts such a difference. The predecessors (the scholars and pious ones), were such that they appointed others as their representatives - who would not be recognized by the sellers - to purchase on behalf of them (in order to avoid the previously mentioned scenario; i.e. for the sake of their status and religiosity, the seller does not reduce the price of the item)."⁴²

From these statements, it is clear that other variations of this act which have become a norm, should also be included in this detested act. Such as if a Sayyid, a student, a pilgrim or a visitor of the shrines brings up their status, knowledge, or the fact that they have performed the Ḥajj, during the purchase of an item and bargain over its price by saying statements like, "after all I am a Sayyid", or "I'm a student", or "I have the intention of going to visit the House of Allah (swt) and the shrine of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and visit the Imams (as), so reduce the price". More often than not, for the sake of such statements, the seller reduces the price and attains a lofty status. However, that purchaser who is ignorant of religious etiquettes, for the sake of saving a trivial amount, enters into the ranks of those who have sold the religion for the world. He turns the religion into a tool to attain the world and through this transaction ends up in a total loss.

It is not unknown that knowledge which has become a tool to reduce the price by an ounce, or even less than that, is from the knowledge that has been referred to in various supplications and we seek refuge in Allah (swt) from its harm, such as:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ

"O Allah! I seek refuge in you, from knowledge that has no benefit."⁴³

Therefore, from all that we have said so far, it is very clear that the group of reciters is like the group of students who have been referred to in previous narrations. This is because a reciter narrates events pertinent to merits and hardships, which are a tool of the religion and a great means to earn a dwelling in the Hereafter. It is very possible that just like the mua'addhin, or a teacher of the Qur'ān and religious sciences, he can earn continuous blessings and endless rewards through his acts. Or, due to the lowliness of his nature, lack of strength, the scorching existence of greed and desire for money, and fear of poverty, he exchanges the results of this noble and priceless act for a few dirhams.

What is astonishing is that when these individuals see this loss-inducing market at its peak with a lot of buyers, busy with customers who are in need of their services, their ecstasy, joy, and cheerfulness increases due to the greater possibility of attaining wealth and honour. On the contrary, when they see the dullness of their market of goods, and the lack of customers and those in need of their service, they become extremely sorrowful, sad and even complain. Then, when desperate to attract customers, they trap themselves on the path of sedition and competition - each of them being a separate cause of destruction of his religion and his life. For example, they will resort to suffering humiliation and abjectness by using flattery to ask the customer, the customer's friends or even the customer's servants, about using their services. They will try to seek information about the contracts of their own colleagues and then announce their personal hidden defects and faults. They will even search to find faults in them. Furthermore, if any of the other reciters succeed them, they will develop enmity and jealousy towards them in their hearts. If they defeat others, they feel proud and take glory in their actions, and if they cause others to leave the ground altogether, they feel as if they have just received a medal of victory. If the deal between them and the organizer of the gathering did not explicitly mention the price, and the amount the organizer gives to them happens to be less than what they had intended, they annoy the organizer of the gathering.

There is a story that one of the scholars has narrated to this lowly person (author of the book), that before the month of Ramaḍān, a famous preacher entered into a city and one of the noble men of the city invited him to his mosque or to one of the famous mosques of that place. The narrator of the story had mentioned the names of all three (the two men and the name of the city), but I do not find it to be appropriate to mention them here. The man fixed a certain amount with the preacher and said that he will be paid in the middle of the month. The preacher accepted and during the days of the holy month, began preaching and reciting in that mosque till the date of his payment arrived. The man gave the preacher the money, however the amount was a bit less than what was initially fixed.

The preacher did not say anything, until the 21st of Ramaḍān - which is generally considered the most packed night at the mosque. From atop of the pulpit he began reciting eulogies till people began slapping their cheeks, opening up their shirt-collars and removing their head coverings. The preacher at that point, took off his turban, came down the pulpit and went to the miḥrāb⁴⁴ and took the turban off of the head of the man and said to him:

You are the organizer of this mourning ceremony! Everyone in the mosque began to wail louder, hitting their cheeks, crying and hitting their heads and chests. While everyone was busy mourning in different ways, this preacher found this moment to be precious, and thought of a way to make the man pay the rest of the amount. The preacher began smashing the head of the man, while slowly whispering to him: Will you pay the rest of the amount or should I continue what I am doing?

The poor man realized that his head is about to be damaged severely and no one is noticing it. He helplessly accepted and ensured the preacher that he will receive his payment. That is when the preacher removed his hands from the man's head and with a joyful heart, went towards the pulpit in order to recite the closing supplications.

Honestly speaking, while possessing such a disturbed heart and committing such a horrible act, was he really worthy of preaching to the people and does he really have the right to feel proud of being a devotee of Imam Ḥusayn (as)?

Fourthly: Many of these individuals will enter into a category of people who have been condemned severely in various verses and narrations. This is the category of those who seem to present and deliver the truth for others, such as teaching others about good and bad morals, good and bad actions, and about the rewards and punishments of each of those actions. This is particularly true for those actions that are related to Abu Abdillah (as). However the issue is that they themselves do not act upon it, and thus they will regret it for an eternity, just as Allah (swt) has said in the Qur'ān:

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ

Do you enjoin right conduct on the people, and forget to practise it yourselves?⁴⁵

In the exegesis of Shaykh Abū l-Futūḥ al-Rāzī, it has been recorded from the Prophet (pbuh) who said: "I was taken to the skies on the night of Mi'rāj and I saw a group of people whose lips were being cut off. After cutting them off, the lips would grow again. I said: 'O Jibrāil, who are these people?' He said:

*"These are the speakers (lit. those who deliver sermons) of your nation, who would say things that they would not act upon, and they would enjoin right conduct on the people, but would forget to practice themselves."*⁴⁶

In another narration, the Prophet (pbuh) said: *"The harshest punishment on the Day of Judgement is for the scholar who did not benefit from his own knowledge."*⁴⁷

In another narration from the Prophet (pbuh), he has been reported to have said: *"He is like a person who delivers good news to the people, but does not benefit from the news himself. He is like a lamp that gives light to others, but burns itself off."*⁴⁸

Yet in another narration from him (pbuh) he says: *"The Day of Judgement will not let a single person take a step forward, until he is answerable about four matters: 1) What he spent his young age doing, 2) What he spent his life doing, 3) Where he earned his money from and where he spend it, and 4) Whether he acted upon his knowledge."*⁴⁹

In al-Amāli of Sheikh Ṣadūq and al-Maḥāsin of Barqi, it has been reported that Mufaḍḍal said to Imam al-Ṣadiq (as):

*"How can one recognize a person who has found salvation?" The Imam (as) said: "A person whose action is in agreement with his speech is a person who has found salvation. Every person whose action is not in agreement with his speech, then his faith is merely like a deposit (i.e. it is not firm in his heart, and he will give it away when facing a small test)."*⁵⁰

*"Ayyāshi records in his exegesis from Yāqūb bin Shu'ayb who says: I asked Abu 'Abdillah (as) regarding the verse "Do you enjoin right conduct on the people...". He (as) placed his hands on his throat and said: "He is like a slaughterer slaughtering himself."*⁵¹

Meaning, those who enjoin others to do good, but do not act upon it themselves are killing and destroying themselves.

In many other narrations the interpretation of the following verse has been recorded:

فَكُبِّبُوا فِيهَا هُمْ وَالْعَاوُنَ

So they shall be thrown down into it, they and the erring ones.⁵²

What is implied by the erring ones are those individuals who describe and preach the truth, such as justice, wisdom, obedience to Allah (swt), good morals and correct theological beliefs, but they themselves act contrary to what they mention, and have contrary beliefs. In various narrations, this point has been mentioned in the following manner: "On the Day of Judgement, the people facing the most severest of regrets and remorse are those who would describe justice for others, but would act contrary to it themselves."

With regards to the interpretation of the verse:

أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ يَا حَسْرَتَا عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ

Lest a soul should say: O woe to me! For what I fell short of my duty to Allah.⁵³

It has been said that these are the souls that feel regret and they will utter this statement. There are too many narrations that pertain to this subject, and a numerous amount of them have appeared in the chapters of narrations related to those who act or do not act upon what they know.

It is therefore clear now, that there is a specific group of reciters who - in this trade of speaking - preach, and sometimes present eloquent sermons, anecdotes, and describe the behaviour of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (as). They intimidate the people away from the love of the world, its calamities, destruction and motivate them to distance themselves away from the world so they move towards asceticism. They bring examples from the lives of the predecessors of the religion, special companions and the rightful scholars, and sometimes describe the horrible vices and detestable moral traits. They bring references to support their arguments from the works of Ghazālī, Shāfi'ī and their likes and present them in the most eloquent fashion, without any stutters and lisps. They mention the verses and narrations relevant to a topic in an organized manner. However, these preachers themselves are so infatuated with this world, and so polluted with the vices that if the

organizer of the gathering becomes heedless of them for even a moment with regards to their arrival or departure, or if the organizer fails to meet certain protocols that signify their respect and nobility, or if an organizer does not assign them as the last speaker of the ceremony (which is one of the undesirable innovations of this group of people - i.e. whoever is greater in status, must be the one to end the ceremony), or if an organizer happens to give them an amount less than his counterparts - for example, even two riyals less - they get upset. They complain, criticize, speak bad, and at times even give the money back, never visit that place again, consider their speaking abilities a great talent, and consider the payment of the organizer very little. They start to find faults in the behaviour, character, or in any little affair of their counterparts and do not consider them to be on par with themselves.

Despite being in such a horrible condition and carrying out these detestable acts, they speak against the people who love the world, and consider themselves men of God, and men of the Hereafter. It is as if their mentioning a few references and sources from the pulpit, have kept them distanced away from the diseases of the heart and from committing ugly deeds.

For an insightful individual, it is not a hidden matter that by such a horrible apparent conduct and an ugly soul, they are included in the description of those that the previous narrations have mentioned. They will definitely feel regretful and remorseful in the Hereafter and will be punished rightfully.

In 'Uyūn al-Akḥbār of Sheikh Ṣadūq, it has been narrated that when Zayd - the brother of Imam al-Riḍa (as) - rebelled and Ma'mūn captured him and brought him to the Imam (as), the Imam (as) reprimanded him and said:

"However, if it were the case that your father Musa ibn Ja'far (as) obeyed God, but you disobey God and claim to be equal to him (as) in the Hereafter on the Day of Judgement, this would imply that you are dearer than him (as) in the sight of Allah (swt). By Allah (swt), no one can attain the ranks near Allah (swt), the Honourable the Exalted, except by obeying Him (swt). Do you think that you can attain such ranks by committing sins? Surely you are wrong." Zayd said: "I am your brother and the son of your father." Then Abu al-Hasan al-Riḍa (as) told him: "You are only my brother when you obey Allah (swt), the Honourable the Exalted."⁵⁴

At that point, he (as) mentions the story of Prophet Nūh (as) and his son, whom Allah (swt) did not consider to be from the family of Nūh (as) due to his sins. The Imam's (as) message was that Zayd had also become disassociated from his brotherhood due to his sins. Therefore, if sins can cease the relationship of brotherhood with such an Imam (al-Riḍa), and from being the son of such an Imam (al-Kāzim), there is no way that a foreigner who sins, would remain associated with them, and continue to serve as their servant and helper.

In conclusion, from all that we have said, it is clear that even if the people of knowledge and scholars - God forbid - become afflicted with the symptoms of these individuals (who have been described in the narrations and verses), they will also fall into the abyss of destruction. If they are to

use deceit in order to use their knowledge as a source of income and wealth, they will also be punished likewise. In fact, the greater the knowledge one possesses, or if the knowledge was gained in order to use as a source of showcasing their merits and as a tool to gather wealth, their punishment will be more severe and their regret will indeed be greater. There are too many reports that describe such scholars, however since this treatise was not written specifically for them, we have not mentioned them.

IS OSTENTATION IN WORSHIP PERMISSIBLE?

It has been said that some of these reciters have diminished the value of the condition of sincerity from this act of worship. On the contrary, they consider ostentation permissible in it. In fact, they consider it to be one of the merits of Imam Ḥusayn (as) that although ostentation in all forms of obedience to Allah (swt) and worship ruin the act, it does not harm this specific act of worship. Due to the Imam's closeness to Allah (swt), He (swt) ignores this condition and accepts this act of worship even if it is accompanied by ostentation.

The root of this misconception lies in the permissibility of *tabāki*⁵⁵ which has been mentioned in a few narrations - and they have been alluded to in the introduction. That is to say, anyone who cries, makes another person cry, or pretends to cry, has a certain allocated reward.

This foolish, senseless person, who has slandered Allah (swt) and his Messenger (pbuh), does not even know that if an authentic narration which can be utilized, happens to permit ostentation in obedience and worship, it has to be understood and explained away differently as it goes against the explicit message of the Qur'ān, Sunnah, intellect and the consensus of the scholars. This vague word (*tabāki*) does in no way signify the meaning of ostentation and has no connection with their corrupted goals (i.e. deeming ostentation in this act of worship permissible). What is meant by this word is something much more important. Something that some of those who fulfil their responsibilities can utilize as a means to ask Allah (swt) for their requests, and thus it is a part and parcel of the laws of Allah (swt). From the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) it can be understood that this was an act that enables some to help perfect their internal spiritual traits.

In order to understand this point, consider the good traits such as satisfaction, dependency on Allah (swt), asceticism, perseverance etc. upon which the human-ness of mankind is reliant and suspended. Thus, the acquirement, firmness and consistency of every single one of these traits in the heart results in certain actions and effects. The intellectuals and people of insight are able to witness these effects and come to the conclusion that this individual possesses these certain spiritual traits.

For example, the reality of asceticism is this that one sincerely distances themselves from the world, does not feel attracted to it, does not tie his heart to it, does not unnecessarily like it or feel happy with attaining it, and if he gives away from it, he does not feel upset over it. Anyone who attains such a position, certainly does not feel any desire or greed towards finding it, attaining it and accumulating it. He does not express happiness when he attains it and neither does he feel stressed, upset or depressed when he loses it. Furthermore, obeying the commands of Allah (swt) that relate to giving away from his wealth - whether it is obligatory like *Zakāt* or *Khums*, or whether they be recommended such as all types of charities - becomes an easy task for him. In fact he carries out this obedience to his Lord with pleasure, because he sees no difference between gold and rocks, and silver and sand. From this outwardly behaviour of his, it is possible to determine that he is a real ascetic.

However, it is important to keep in mind that in order for this individual to express such behaviour, it is necessary for him to be a true ascetic. Sometimes, a person who is not a true ascetic will also show apparent signs of an individual who is an ascetic, when in reality his heart has not distanced itself from the world, rather it has attached itself to it completely. The latter category of people can be divided into two groups:

1) Those whose purpose of carrying out an act, is nothing but to show off and to find a spot in the hearts of people so that they consider him to be one with a noble status and a beloved of God. He uses this apparent show of asceticism to attract the worthless wealth of this world. This behaviour is a form of hidden polytheism, from which it is incumbent upon us to stay away from, and there is absolutely no permissibility for this behaviour in religion.

2) Those, who although do not hold a noble status or possess good qualities, are sincere in their quest to attaining them through means of gaining knowledge and acting upon it, in accordance with the prescribed methods given by the scholars of ethics. In fact the love and closeness that they have with the material world disgusts them, and they detest the fact that it is difficult for them to eliminate this love and relationship. One of the ways that such individuals attempt to attain those noble qualities is by acting upon the advices of the Imams (as) and expresses those apparent signs and behaviour - despite them being tough to carry out at times - with the hope that these qualities will become a part and parcel of their true self, and that they will attain a noble status. They hope that that this apparent behaviour fixates itself in their hearts after constant practice of it, so that eventually they become easier on them to perform. In other words, they go through hardships by performing these actions, but after constantly going through these hardships, those actions slowly and steadily become fixated in their hearts and it becomes easier for them to perform them.

Thereby, it is understood that those actions whose effects are positive, are at times expressed from a person in whose heart those good qualities truly exist. At other times, they are expressed by a person whose heart is empty from these good qualities. In both cases, the actions are considered good and will be counted as a form of worship. Other than that, the actions are miles away from what is considered to be ostentation and showing off. Besides the fact that this discussion can be understood through intuition, and can be tested, heard and seen in real life, a few narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt (as) have also reached us regarding this topic. In the book Ghurar wa Durar, it has been reported that Amīr al-Mu'minīn (as) said:

*"If you cannot forbear, feign to do so because it is seldom that a man likens himself to a group and does not become as one of them."*⁵⁶

On the same page, there is also another narration from him (as) stating:

*"One who does not feign to forbear, will never forbear."*⁵⁷

Since we have understood this premise, we can say that mourning upon Abu 'Abdillah (as), despite being the job of the limbs and the eyes, is caused by the love that resides in the heart. From the mere conceptualization of the great hardships that befell upon His (swt) beloved (as), the heart catches fire and causes tears to flow. The Prophet (pbuh) has said:

إِنَّ لِقَتْلِ الْحُسَيْنِ حَرَارَةً فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَا تَبْرُدُ أَبَدًا

"Surely there exists in the hearts of the believers, with respect to the martyrdom of Husayn, a heat that never subsides."⁵⁸

He (pbuh) is also reported to have said: Every believer has love for Husayn (as) in their heart.

Upon hearing the hardships, this love heats up, which then causes one to mourn. Many times, a believer would love to be in such a state, but due to that love being diminished, or because the worldly desires have covered that love, or there are obstacles that prevent one from conceptualizing the hardships, or other obstacles that do not allow the heart to burn, prevent him or her from mourning. He becomes deprived of this great blessing, and hates it, and wishes that he could mourn like the rest. Thus it is for someone like him - whose heart has been polluted, and he wishes to cleanse it - that it has been prescribed to force himself to cry and bring himself in a state like others and express the signs of one whose heart is intensely burning from hearing about the hardships.

If he performs this action (tabāki) with the intention of attaining that easiness, he will be rewarded and a path will open up for him that will allow his heart to become illuminated with the light of love and guardianship (wilāyah) of the Ahl al-Bayt (as).

Another point that is important to mention here is that, this same action has been prescribed regarding crying from the fear of Allah (swt). In al-Amāli of Sheikh Tūsi and in Makārim al-Akhlāq of Tabrasi, it has been reported from the Prophet (pbuh):

"O Abu Dharr! Whoever is given knowledge which doesn't cause him to cry simply because he has been given knowledge, it will not benefit him. Allah has described the learned and said, "Surely those who were given knowledge of it before, when it is recited onto them, they fall upon their faces in prostration and they say, "Glory be to our Lord. Surely the promise of Allah shall be done." They fall on their faces crying and they increase in humility. O Abu Dharr! Whoever is able make his heart weep, should then make it weep. Whoever is not able to cry then let him have his heart feel sadness and let him try to cry. O Abu Dharr, surely the hard heart is far from Allah (swt), but they don't realize."⁵⁹

It should also be pointed out that the word "ta'āwun", which is on the same pattern and paradigm of "tabāki", also has another graceful meaning, and perhaps this is the meaning that is implied. That is, the believers enjoin each other towards mourning, like when the brothers and sisters who have lost a father or a mother, gather around each other and recall the memories of their lost one and remember their good traits and their good works. They remember the hardships their loved one had gone through and essentially mention and describe anything else that comes to their mind for each other, and make each other cry, wail and at times even cause each other to hit their cheeks. The result of all this would be that those who faced hardships, those who recall the hardships, the mourners and others around them, all would have mourned.

What further solidifies this probable implication of tabāki is that which has come in the chapters pertaining to the behaviour one should have on 'Āshura. In the narration of the famous Ziyārat al-'Āshura, Imam al-Ṣadiq (as) has reported to have said:

*"Then he must mourn and lament over Ḥusayn (as), and order everyone in his house to lament him (as), hold a gathering in his house narrating his tragedies and express restlessness upon his (as) tragedy, meet one another weeping and consoling one another over the Imam's (as) tragedies."*⁶⁰

In any case, the form of tabāki which has been praised and is loved, is considered to be an obedience and a form of worship. It does not possess a taint of ostentation, which is a type of hidden polytheism.

Glory be to Allah! All the troubles that the Imam (as) had to endure was for the sake of strengthening the fundamental laws of religion whose basis is monotheism. He did it to exalt the truth, solidify the foundations of the true religion, and protect it from the various innovations of the godless ones. How could a person with conscience then suggest that the Imam (as) is that exception where one of the greatest sins which is polytheism, becomes permissible?

Rather the reason for this corrupt and Satanic imagination is their lack of contemplation over their own ugliness, or the concealment and justification of their extreme greed and love for wealth and money.

THE IMPERMISSIBILITY OF TELLING LIES AND FABRICATING TALE WHEN RECITING

What we have described so far with regards to the reciters, had to do with them not meeting the condition of sincerity and their seeking of wealth and position through this act of worship.

However, besides those issues, at times they may also become afflicted - God forbid - with attributing lies and fabrications to Allah (swt), the Messenger (pbuh), the Holy Imams (as), and the knowledgeable scholars. Or they may send a child to recite something in a tone that will get the crowd ready, before they themselves recite. Other times without the permission of the organizer - or sometimes even when the organizer has explicitly not allowed them - they visit a place and recite from the pulpit, and torment those in the audience who are not able to cry with words that suggest that the reason they are unable to cry is because of their illegitimacy.

Or they may promote falsehood at the time of supplication or before them, or praise someone who is not worthy of praise, condemn the scholars of the religion, reveal the secrets of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), promote corruption, help the cause of the tyrants and help such culprits feel proud, cause the lewd person to feel courageous, belittle sins in the eyes of the audience, mix one narration with another, interpret the Qur'ānic verses with their own opinions, narrate a narration with a false meaning, issue legal edicts - whether the edicts are correct or incorrect - even though they are not jurists, lower the position of the Prophets and the Messengers in order to lift the position of the Imams (as), omit parts of narrations due to them not being in line with the corrupt message they wish to get across, say contradictory things, mix one story with another, beautify their words and speech with the words of the unbelievers and storytellers in order to spark up the gathering, make use of disgusting and lewd poetry in order to prove their incorrect point, discuss certain issues with regards to the pillars of the religion and leave them unanswered or do not have the ability to answer them, or ruin the foundations of the religion for the Muslims who are weak in faith, mention things that are against the infallibility and purity of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), or extend their speech in order to get their false message across, deprive the audience of the gathering from praying at its earliest and meritorious time, and many other similar things for which I do not have the strength to list.

When a reciter resorts to things like this, his initial capital is all prohibited. Using it for business purposes is like doing business with the meat of pork, a dead body, intoxicants or prohibited musical instruments. Since his corrupted intention to speak was to attain wealth and position, subsequently his speech will also be corrupted. Furthermore, all that he attains from speaking will also be prohibited and he will remain indebted to the organizer of the gathering.

As a matter of fact, if he is popular and has a position of authority in this skill, such that the rest of the reciters imitate him, learn from him and copy his style, he will be responsible for the seditious and wrong-doings of all those who learned from him. He will be a partner and have a share of their

acts recorded in his own record of deeds without anything being subtracted from the record of those who learned from him and acted upon it. This notion can be seen in various reports such as:

*"Whoever establishes a bad Sunnah, then upon him is the sin of it, and the sin of those who act upon it, without the decreasing of the sins from their recompense in any way."*⁶¹

The ignorant and pitiful reciter should contemplate a little upon his own state and the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). He should be reciting the many narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt regarding the different issues and problems - which he has chosen willingly and consciously - for himself. He should cry and wail and feel pity over himself for the great bounties he has abandoned, while transmitting them to others. He has deprived himself of those blessings, and has registered his name in the record book of the ugly deeds. All he had to do was put in a little effort, and purify his intention of sincerity in

order to ensure that his name got registered alongside the names of the charitable, praiseworthy people and the transmitters of the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt and others like them.

*This is nothing, but a sheer loss.*⁶²

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ORGANIZERS AND MOURNERS TOWARDS THE RECITERS

The purpose of this brief chapter is to mention the responsibilities of a reciter in relation to the usage of his skill of oratory, which he has dedicated much of his time towards. The spirit of this skill is in it being performed sincerely. It should be utilized with the goal and desire to obey the command of Allah (swt), to bring happiness to the Prophet (pbuh), the Imams (as) and to assist the cause of Lady Faṭīma al-Zahra (sa). This is because the reciter himself is of the belief and persuades others to believe that they (as) are present and witnessing this gathering of mourning, looking at the mourners, and are taking participating in the gathering alongside them. The spirit of this skill does not reside in showing-off, or in attracting the wealth of this world.

However, others who benefit from this reciter and progress to higher spiritual statuses also have a responsibility. Whether they are the organizers of the gathering or just attending as listeners, their responsibility is to help the reciter, recognize their position, their honour, and their favour upon them. They should assist and gift him with their wealth, with their praise of him and through any other means possible for them. Whatever they do, they will never be able to fulfil the right of what he has done for them with his act, and neither will both their actions be equal. No matter how much from the luxuries of the world they give to him, it will not equal even one strand of heavenly dresses that they had attained from his service.

Thus, no matter how much the listeners give to him, it is still less, and no matter how much they do for him, it is not enough. This is in line with the introductory discussion presented in this book, and also in correspondence with the life of the Imams (as) and their behaviour with the people who were from this group (i.e. reciters), or others like them such as teachers of the Qur'ān. The great Sheikh, Ibn Shahr Āshūb in his Manāqib records a narration:

al-Mansūr (the Abbasid caliph) asked Imam al-Kaẓim (as) to attend the Festival of Nayrūz to receive gifts from all walks of life. The Imam said: "I have examined the reports transmitted to me from my grandfather (pbuh) the Messenger of Allah and I have not found any details regarding this day of celebration. This had been the practice of the Persians, while Islam has abolished it, and Allah's (swt) refuge, that we should enliven that which Islam abolished." al-Mansūr said: "I observe this festival as a political policy for strengthening ties with the army. I ask you by Allah (swt) to attend this festival." So the Imam attended, and the governors and commanders and soldiers, came to the Imam, congratulated him on the occasion and presented him with donations and gifts. The servant of al-Mansūr who was standing next to the Imam, counted the gifts one by one. At the end of the festival, an aged man came to the Imam saying: "O Son of the daughter of Allah's Messenger! I am a needy man who cannot present you with a gift. Instead, I have three lines of poetry which my grandfather has composed for your grandfather, Husayn ibn 'Ali:

*I am astonished at the sharp swords that were raised upon you
On the day of turmoil, while upon you was a dust cloud*

*And at the arrows that pierced your body, in sight of the free-women
Who were calling upon your grandfather, as the blood flowed plentifully,
saying:*

*Why had the arrows not fallen apart, and why had they not been
prevented*

From hitting your body, due to its honour and greatness"

The Imam (as) said: "I accept your gift. Please sit and may Allah (swt) bless you." He raised the man's head towards the servant of Mansur, Imam Kaẓim (as) said, "Go to the Amīr al-Mu'minīn and inform him of the gifts and ask what he is going to do with all these gifts." The servant carried out the task, came back and said: "Mansur says: All are gifts from me to him (as). He can do with them whatever he (as) wishes." Imam Kaẓim (as) said to the old man: "Take all these gifts which is my grant to you."⁶³

In another narration from the same book, it has been reported that:

It has been said that 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī taught one of the sons of Imam Ḥusayn (as) Surah al-Ḥamd. When the child read the Surah in the presence of his father, the Imam (as) gave a 1000 dinars to 'Abd al-Raḥmān and a thousand suits of clothes, and lavished him.

Somebody asked the Imam (as) about his act (as to why he (as) had given away so much) and the Imam (as) replied, "Where is this act of mine, compared to what he has given" - meaning his teaching, and then he recited a couplet.⁶⁴

Abu 'Ali, the son of Sheikh Tūsi, in his al-Amāli records a narration from Imam Musa al-Kaẓim (as) as follows:

"I (Imam Kaẓim) was sitting with our master (i.e. my father) Imam al-Ṣadiq (as) when Ashja' al-Sulamī came to his presence wanting to praise him, but found him to be ill. He sat beside him (as) and refrained from praising him. So our master Imam al-Ṣadiq (as) said to him: 'Ignore my illness and say what you had come here to say.' So he recited:

May Allah (swt) robe you with health - from it (illness)

In your slovenly sleep and in your insomnia

(May Allah) remove from your body the illness - just like

He (swt) removes the insignificance of questions from your neck

The Imam (as) asked his servant: "O servant, how much do you have with you?" He said: "400 dirhams." He (as) said: "Give them to Ashja'." Imam Kaẓim (as) said: "Ashja' took them, thanked him (as) and left." Imam Ṣadiq (as) said: "Call him back." Ashja' said: "O my master, I asked and you gave and made me needless, so why have you asked me to return?" Imam Ṣadiq (as) said: "My father has narrated to me from his fathers, who narrated from the Prophet (pbuh) who said: 'The best givings are those that continue to remain as a blessing.' That which I had given to you will not continue to remain as a blessing. So here is my ring, if they (the buyers) do not give you ten-thousand dirhams for it, then return it to me at such-and-such a time, and I will give you the money."⁶⁵

Qutub Rāwandi in his al-Kharāij records that because Farazdaq had recited his famous poem in praise of Imam Sajjad (as) in front of Hisham, the Imam (as) had sent an amount of money for him. Farazdaq returned it back and said that he had recited the poem out of piety, love and likeness of

the Imam (as). The Imam (as) sent the amount back to him and said: 'Allah (swt) is thanking you for your act.' Since Hisham had locked Farazdaq (in a prison) and the Imam had gotten him released, they had erased his name from the treasury book which had the names of those who would get government funds. Farazdaq complained to the Imam and the Imam asked: 'How much was it?' Farazdaq mentioned the amount, and the Imam gave him enough wealth to cover him for 40 years, and he died in the year 40th Hijri.⁶⁶

Sheikh Kashi records this event as follow:

*The Imam (as) sent him (Farazdaq) twelve-thousand dirhams and said: "Please excuse us O Aba Firas! If we had more than this, we would have gotten it to you". Farazdaq returned it back and said: "O Son of the Messenger of Allah (swt), I did not say what I said, except in a state of anger for the sake of Allah (swt) and for His Messenger, and I did not want to lose anything from that sake." So the Imam (as) returned the amount back to him and said: "For my right that I have upon you, accept the amount, for surely Allah (swt) has seen your station and knows about your intention." Then Farazdaq accepted the amount.*⁶⁷

Sheikh Mufīd in his book al-Ikhtisās records a narration from Jābir bin Yazīd as follow:

"He (Jābir) said: "It did not take long before Kumayt entered upon the Imam and said to him: 'May my soul be in ransom to you; do you permit me to recite poetry for you?' So the Imam (as) said: 'Recite,' and so he recited a poem. The Imam said: 'O servant, take out a badrah⁶⁸ from that room and give it to Kumayt.'

Then Kumayt said: 'May my soul be in ransom to you, do you permit me to recite another poem for you?' So the Imam (as) said: 'Recite,' and so he recited another poem. The Imam said: 'O servant, take out a badrah from that room and give it to Kumayt.' The slave took out the badrah and gave it to him.

Then Kumayt said: 'May my soul be in ransom to you, do you permit me to recite a third poem for you?' So the Imam (as) said: 'Recite,' and so he recited a poem. The Imam said: 'O servant, take out a badrah from that room and give it to Kumayt.'

Then Kumayt said to the Imam: 'By Allah! I do not praise you for the sake of the world intending to seek it from you. I do not intend anything from it except the kinship of the Messenger of Allah (swt) and to fulfil your right which Allah (swt) has made obligatory upon me with regards to you.'

Then Imam Bāqir (as) prayed for him and said: 'O servant, return the money to its place (i.e. Kumayt's house)."

'Alam al-Huda Syed Murtada in Ghurar wa Durar narrates that: Di'bil bin 'Ali and Ibrahim bin al-'Abbas who were both friends, came to the presence of Imam Riḍa (as) after he (as) was coerced to accept the successorship to the throne of al-Ma'mūn. Then Di'bil recited these lines:

*The schools for the Qura'nic verses are void of reciting now
and the landing site of Revelations is left like a barren desert*

Ibrahim bin al-'Abbas recited a poem, whose beginning is like this:

أَزَلَّتْ عَزَاءَ الْقَلْبِ بَعْدَالتِ جَلْدِ * مَصَارِعَ أَوْلَادِ النَّبِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ

*After enduring calamities, they will remove the weariness of the hearts:
The shrines of the children of the Prophet Muḥammad*

Then Imam al-Riḍa (as) gave them both 20,000 dirhams (10,000 each) upon which Ma'mūn had minted the name of the Imam. Di'bil went towards Qum with his share and the people of Qum bought each of his dirham for ten dirhams and he sold his entire share for hundred-thousand dirhams. Ibrahīm had instead kept his money saved until he died.⁶⁹

In 'Uyūn al-Akhbār, it has been reported that Ibrahīm had kept most of his money until he died, except for an amount which he had donated or used for his family. The expense for his coffin and burial was paid for by using that money.

In some reports, the amount that the Imam (as) had given to Di'bil after reciting that poem are different. In some reports it has been recorded that besides dirhams, the Imam also gave him an agate ring, and a green fur coat and said to him: Protect these, as I prayed a thousand rak'ah on thousand nights with these, and finished the Qur'ān a thousand times while wearing them.

In some reports, instead of a fur-coat, the word jubbah⁷⁰ is mentioned. There is a story regarding that jubbah and the people of Qum, which they ended up taking for a thousand coins. They gave Di'bil a piece of it, and a miracle is also attributed to that piece and it was finally placed with him in his coffin.⁷¹

The amount of narrations we have mentioned should suffice for our purpose.

Furthermore, we say that spending one's wealth on the reciters is one of the best type of spending. If it is done for the sake of Imam Ḥusayn (as), it will be a beloved act and carrying it out is a good deed, and the person will be rewarded greatly for it.

Sheikh Turayḥi in his book Majma' al-Baḥrayn, records:

"In the narration of the whispered prayer of Prophet Musa (as) he said: O Allah, why did you honour the nation of Muḥammad (pbuh) over all of your other nations? Allah (swt) replied: I have honoured them because of ten characteristics. Musa (as) replied: What are those ten characteristics that they will act upon, so that I can command the Bani Isrā'īl to also act upon them? Then Allah (swt) replied: Prayers, Zakāt, Fasting, Ḥajj, Jihād, Jum'ah, Congregational Prayers, Qur'ān, Knowledge and 'Ashūrā.

Musa (as) said: O My Lord, and what is 'Ashūrā? He (swt) said: It is crying and doing tabāki for the grandson of Muḥammad (pbuh) and reciting eulogies and mourning upon the calamities that befell the son of Mustafa (pbuh). O Musa, there will be no slave from my slaves during that time, who will cry, and do tabāki, and console each other upon the son of Mustafa (pbuh) except that heaven will be permanent for him.

And there will be no slave who will spend from his wealth a dirham or a dinar for the love of the son of the daughter of his Prophet (pbuh), on food or besides that, except that I will bless him with seventy dirhams in this

world, for each dirham he spends, and he will be in a state of amnesty in heaven and I will forgive his sins."

Since in this section, brevity is being taken into consideration, we will suffice here with what we have written.

Notes

- 1 al-Maḥāsīn of al-Barqī, Volume 1, Chapter 11, Page 220, #127
- 2 'Ashura - Misrepresentations and Distortions, translated by Ali Quli Qara'i - published in Volume 13, Issue # 3 of the al-Tawhid Islamic Journal
- 3 Ibid
- 4 Kāmil al-Ziyarāt, Page 325
- 5 'Uyūn al-Akḥbār, Volume 1, Page 294
- 6 Munshid is someone who composes and recites poetry
- 7 Kāmil al-Ziyarāt, Page 105; Thawāb al-'Amāl Page 84; al-Amāli of Sheikh Ṣaduq, Majlis 29, Page 141
- 8 Makfūf is someone who is blind
- 9 Kāmil al-Ziyarāt, Page 106
- 10 I was not able to locate the exact Arabic of this narration in Kāmil al-Ziyarāt, however it is similar to the previous narration where the Imam (as) is speaking to Abu Harūn.
- 11 Thawāb al-'Amāl Page 84
- 12 Kāmil al-Ziyarāt, Page 106, Thawāb al-'Amāl Page 84
- 13 Allamah Majlisi records it in Biḥār al-Anwār, Volume 44, Page 288
- 14 Rijāl al-Kāshī, Hadith #508
- 15 In the original Farsi, the author uses the term rawḍah-khawān, and has explained how this term was coined and who it implies. From here onwards, we will simply be using the word "reciter" and its variations to refer to this group of individuals.
- 16 Surah al-Mā'idā, verse 2: and help one another in goodness and piety
- 17 As mentioned in the foreword, this translation only covers the first Chapter which deals with sincerity.
- 18 Surah al-Fātiḥa, verse 5
- 19 Usūl al-Kāfi, Volume 1, The Book of Excellence of Knowledge, Chapter 14, Hadith #2
- 20 Mustatrafāt al-Sarā'ir, Page 636
- 21 'Awāli al-La'ālī by Ibn Abi Jamhūr al-Iḥsā'ī, Volume 4, #66
- 22 Book of Sulaym bin Qays, Page 718
- 23 Usūl al-Kāfi, Volume 2, The Book of Belief and Disbelief, Chapter 135, Hadith #1
- 24 al-Amāli, 23rd Assembly, Page 182, #5
- 25 Rijāl al-Kāshī, Page 124, #196
- 26 Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl, Advise of Mufaḍḍal bin 'Umar for the Shi'i Community, Page 514
- 27 Usūl al-Kāfi, VOLUME7, pg 396, #571; Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām, VOLUME6, pg 220
- 28 Man lā yahḍuruḥu al-Faqīh, VOLUME3, pg 178
- 29 Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām, VOLUME6, pg 376
- 30 Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām, V2, pg 283; Man lā yahḍuruḥu al-Faqīh, VOLUME1, pg 283
- 31 Abu 'Alī Muḥammad bin Ash'ath al-Kufī (d. 313 Hijri/925-926 CE)
- 32 al-Ja'fariyāt, pg 180
- 33 al-Ja'fariyāt, pg 245
- 34 Famously known as Ibn al-Rāzi, 4th century Hijri/10th century scholar
- 35 Jami' al-Aḥādith, in which narrations from al-Ghāyat are recorded, pg 219; Man lā yahḍuruḥu al-Faqīh, VOLUME4, pg 352
- 36 Iqāb al-'Amāl, pg 283
- 37 Nahj al-Balāgha, Sayings & Maxims, #147; al-Amāli of Sheikh Mufīd, Majlis #29, pg 249
- 38 Sheikh Muntakhab al-Dīn records this story in his book Arba'īn with a slight difference where it says that the daughter made herself vomit after eating from the sweet
- 39 Tafsīr Abū al- Futūḥ, VOLUME10, pg 164
- 40 Tafsīr al-'Askari, pg 14
- 41 Manāqib Aal Abi Tālib, Volume 2, Page 97
- 42 Sharḥ Lum'ah, Volume 3, Page 286
- 43 Miṣbāḥ al-Mujtahid, Page 66; Kanz al-Fawā'id, Volume 1, Page 385
- 44 The place from where a scholar usually leads the congregational prayers
- 45 Surah al-Baqarah, verse 44

- 46 Rawḍ al-Jinān wa Rūḥ al-Janān fi Tafsīr al-Qur' ān by Shaykh Abū l-Futūḥ al-Rāzī,
Page 253
- 47 Ibid
- 48 Ibid
- 49 Ibid
- 50 al-Amāli of Sheikh Sadūq, Majlis 57, Page 358; al-Maḥāsin of Barqī, Volume 1,
Page 252
- 51 Tafsīr Ayyāshi, Volume 1, Page 43
- 52 Surah al-Shu'arā, Verse 94
- 53 Surah al-Zumar, Verse 56
- 54 'Uyūn al-Akhbār, Sheikh Sadūq - Volume 2, Page 234, Chapter 58, Hadīth #4
- 55 The act of making oneself cry or even pretending to cry over the tragedy of Imam
Ḥusayn (as)
- 56 Ghurar al-Ḥikam, Page 286; Nahj al-Balagha, Saying #207
- 57 Ghurar al-Ḥikam, Page 286
- 58 Mustadrak al-Wasāil, Volume 10, Page 318
- 59 al-Amāli by Sheikh Tūsi, Page 529; Makārim al-Akhlāq, Page 462
- 60 Kāmil al-Ziyārāt, Page 175
- 61 al-Ikhtisās, Page 251 - book attributed to Sheikh Mufīd. This hadīth has also been
narrated in Sunni books on the authority of Jarīr bin 'Abdullah al-Bajli from the Prophet
(pбуh) in Sharḥ Riyaḍ al- Ṣaliḥīn, Page 199.
- 62 This is an adaption from Surah al-Ḥajj, Verse 11
- 63 Manāqib Aal Abi Tālib, Volume 4, Page 318
- 64 Manāqib Aal Abi Tālib, Volume 4, Pg 66
- 65 al-Amāli of Sheikh Tūsi, Page 281
- 66 See al-Kharāj wa al-Jarāih, Volume 1, Page 267, #10
- 67 Rijāl al-Kashi, Page 132
- 68 A large amount of money, generally 10,000 dirhams
- 69 Ghurar wa Durar (al-Amāli of Sayyid Murtaḍa), Volume 1, Page 484
- 70 A long outer garment, open in front with wide sleeves
- 71 These reports can all be read in Volume 2 of 'Uyūn al-Akhbār