

Imam Ja'far as Sadiq's (A.S.) Advice to his followers

It is stated in Bihar-ul-Anwar, Vol. 17, that Ismail ibn Jabir relates that Imam Ja'far as- Sadiq A.S. gave a letter to his companions and it was posted where all people could read it. This is also recorded in the book "Roza e Kafi" by Yaqub Kulayni. Presented here are excerpts from the letter, edited and arranged topically.

Bismillahir Rahmaanir Raheem

Seek Good Health¹ from your Lord. May Allah grant you health, safety, increase in sustenance, honor, tranquility, purity and protection from all the things that the righteous ones were bestowed with, and distance you from all the things that they had stayed away from. Do not compromise (in your faith) because of people. Put up with the injustices as much as you are able to. Avoid getting into arguments and quarrels. Deal with others with kindness. Bear adversities patiently, like the patience and forbearance that the great prophets of the past demonstrated. Do not be in a hurry to take revenge. Allah SWT says this in the Qur'an:

"Bear with patience, therefore, as the messengers endowed with uncompromising determination did, and do not seek to hasten (their doom) for them; ..." (46: 35).

Keep busy in beseeching and remembering Allah SWT. A believing servant has not found any act better than supplicating to Allah SWT for the fulfillment of his needs. There is nothing better than turning to Allah with affection, devotion and humility. There is no one who can estimate the abundant rewards from Him, therefore, perform such deeds in abundance. Remember and praise Allah often, day and night, because Allah likes His remembrance. Allah has promised the believers that He will answer their Dua, and the Dua will cause to elevate their ranks in paradise on the Day of Judgment. A believer who remembers Allah, Allah also remembers him, and if he remembers Him with affection, Allah reciprocates that.

Disobedience of Allah. I take pity on that group, which bartered a few moments of pleasures, bordering on regrets, by committing forbidden (Haram) acts, incurring loss of the eternal pleasures of the paradise. For you and us, there is no one Mighty and Powerful except Allah SWT.

Intercession. Whoever is rejoicing in the hope of intercession, he will not benefit from it unless he seeks Allah's pleasure through His obedience, the obedience of His messenger, and those endowed with authority (Imams). Disobeying them is disobeying Allah. Do not deny any of their distinctions, whether big or small. Whoever denies their distinctions he will be considered a liar and a hypocrite

Those who fear other than Allah. Such persons will be removed from the party of the truthful forever. They wish that if they have sway over the truthful, they would seduce them away from their

¹ The Arabic word used here by the Imam is "A'afiyah" which literarily means good health. However, scholars have commented on its use here as; seeking whatever will bring one close to Allah, and seeking to abstain from that, that will cause one to be distanced from Allah.

honored status and the path of truth. Allah says in the Qur'an that they want you to become disbelievers, just like them.²

Difference between Obedience and Worship. If one simply obeys Allah (Ita-a't) without acts of worship (I'baadat)³ and does not avoid the forbidden (Haram), then one cannot receive the blessings and rewards from Allah. This is because Allah SWT has mentioned in His book to distance yourselves from manifest and hidden sins, and know that all those acts from which you are told to keep away, are considered Haram⁴. Follow the teachings and the Sunnah of the Prophet and derive lessons from them. Do good deeds as much as you can.

The Believers. A believer is the one who feels joyous at the news that he will return to Allah (i.e., news of death). Such a person should hold dear the Prophet and the band of believers. Allah SWT has granted the believers an honorable status. He has distinguished you for your embracing the truth. Therefore, be truly happy and thankful to Him from the depths of your hearts. Allah protects you and watches over you. Do not take Allah's enemies as your patrons. Preserve your self-respect. Allah has assigned the highest attributes to your Imams and the Deen that you follow. Allah said in the Qur'an as follows.

"Shall We treat those who believe and do good deeds, as We treat the mischief makers in the world? Or shall We treat the pious as We treat the wicked?" (Chapter 38, Verse 28)

Be God-conscious. Whoever is quick in discharging the rights of Allah, then Allah is fully able to grant him due blessings in this world and (more) in the Hereafter. I advise you to restraint your tongue from sins of lying, and picking quarrels. Allah has deemed such things as abhorrent. Allah has forbidden the sharpness of tongue and overly sweet talk (Flattery), for it leads to destruction and doom in the hereafter. Pray to Allah that He fills your hearts with the light of Islam and that your tongues profess truth till your last breath. May Allah make your heart like the hearts of the virtuous. No one has the power to grant you this besides Allah. All praises be to Allah, the cherisher and sustainer of the worlds.

Arrogance and Vanity. May Allah SWT protect you and us from arrogance and vanity. None other than Allah can protect us from these. A believing subject cannot die unless he rejects wickedness, lewdness, immorality and mischief making.

Imams of Fire. Allah had created all people of fair nature. Because of their disbelief, of some of them have not only misled themselves, but they misguide others as well. Allah said this about them in His book:

"We have made them Imams, who invite people to the fire, and on the Day of resurrection they shall never be helped." (Surah 28, Verse 41)

² Surah 4, Verse 89

³ Obedience could be ritualistic, mere physical act devoid of spirit. However, the word worship is used (in the opinion of the translator) as a comprehensive word, including sincerity, truthfulness, love, seeking pleasure of Allah.

⁴ Qur'an, Surah 6, verses 151-152

Importance of Reflection. Think and reflect upon these things and do not leave (this world) without reflection. The things that Allah has made obligatory in His book, if one did not pay attention to them, it is as if he had abandoned the Deen of Allah and was sinful and would be doomed to punishment.

Conjecture in the Religion and Vain Desires. No one was permitted to act by his own opinions and conjectures when prophet was present among the people, and no one is permitted to live by his own opinions and conjectures after the death of the Prophet (Peace be upon him and family).

The prophet of Allah had obtained the promise from the people before he departed this world that they would remain obedient, but some of them chose other ways. They used innovation, personal whims, and followed the vain desires of their soul. They will be the losers in the Hereafter.

Allah has said in the Qur'an: *"Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his family) is only a messenger, messengers have already Passed away before him; therefore, if he dies or is slain, will you turn upon your heels? He who turns upon his heels will not harm Allah the slightest, and soon will Allah reward the grateful ones."* (3: 144)

The Teachers of the Qur'an. In order to teach the Qur'an, Allah appointed qualified individuals, so that His book is taught not by conjecture and personal opinion. They were forbidden to use conjecture or own opinion. Allah chose them, bestowed them with the light of knowledge, the knowledge of the Qur'an and honored them out of His Mercy. He declared them as "those who know,"⁵ and has ordered the Ummah to approach them and seek knowledge from them, so that they may guide people on the path of Allah, that they might attain His *Ma'rifah* (Gnosis). These individuals are the Imams appointed (by Allah SWT).

Do not Insult the Enemies of Allah. Observe good manners in dealing with people and exercise moderation in relationships. Do not insult the enemies of Allah, because out of their ignorance they might insult Allah in retaliation. In this situation it may be as if you have insulted Allah, because you had provoked the enemies of Allah. Therefore, you assume silence in this regard and avoid such talk.

Follow the teachings and Sunnah of the Prophet. After the Prophet (p), follow the teachings and Sunnah of the (purified) Imams of guidance, who are his Ahlul Bayt (The family of the Prophet). Whoever follows the teachings and Sunnah of the Prophet and the righteous Imams, will receive the Light of guidance, and whoever forgoes and turns away from them, will go astray. These are the personalities that Allah has ordered the Muslims to submit to and obey them as their guardians. My revered father used to Say that even if you fall short in obeying them, still Allah will grant you good in the Hereafter and it will help you to earn Allah's good pleasure.

Befriend and love the Poor. Befriend especially the destitute and underprivileged. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his family) said that Allah SWT ordered him to love and befriend the poor, especially Muslims. Keep away from showing pride and superiority, because all exaltedness and greatness belongs to Allah alone, who is all perfect, and Allah will abase the rebels on the Day of Judgment.

⁵ Surah 1, verse 7

Be with the oppressed. Avoid enmity or hostility towards people, because it is not the trait of a virtuous person. Such behavior will be turned back on him. Allah will help the wronged one and victory will belong to the oppressed. Avoid jealousy, because it is the foundation of disbelief. Fear (Allah) when you side with the oppressor rather than the oppressed. Allah's curse will be on the oppressor and the curse of the oppressed will be accepted. You should help each other. The Prophet (Peace be upon him and family) said this:

“Helping a needy Muslim brother earns rewards better than fasting for one month while performing I'tekaf (staying) in the Masjid al Haram for one month.”

Do not be Harsh with the Debtor. Fear causing hardship to your Muslim brother by dealing with him harshly for return of a loan. If someone allows time to a poor Muslim, so as to cause ease in his sustenance, then on the Day of Judgment such a person will be surrounded by Allah's Mercy.

Safeguard your Prayers (Salaat). You must be careful about observing and safeguarding your prayers (Salaat), especially the middle most prayer. Turn to Allah in your *Qunoot* which was ordained by Allah to the believers in the Past. Pay the Zakat, give out Qard-al-Hasana (beautiful loan) seeking good pleasure of Allah, and keep away from evil, manifest and hidden.

Train your Nafs to withstand the tribulations of this world. The individual who bears the hardships of life with patience, continues to be obedient to Allah, loves Allah and loves those that Allah has ordered to be loved and obeyed, bears hardships because of accepting their guardianship (Wilayat), he has thereby earned a good reward in the Hereafter, a reward better than all the wealth and possessions of this world

Islam means submission to Allah. Whoever submits (in Islam), his soul becomes firm, but if the soul does not achieve firmness, then he does not benefit from Islam. Allah has made Paradise for people who are doers of *Ehsaan* (good), and Hell is for those who are doers of evil.

Allah SWT has stated this in the Qur'an, *“And the parable of those who disbelieve is like one who shouts at someone who can only hear a cry; (They are) deaf, dumb, blind, and thus do not understand.”* (Surah 2: verse 171).⁶

When Allah wants to honor a person in this world and in the Hereafter, He fills his heart with the light of Islam. Then his tongue speaks the truth and his actions follow the tongue. When his tongue and heart are in unison with the truth, both in the word and in the action, then his Islam (Deen) becomes complete, and if he dies in such a state, then he dies as a true Muslim.

Guardianship (Wilayah). Allah has enjoined guardianship (Wilayah) of the Imams and the guides of the Deen in His book (The Qur'an).

⁶ English translation from “The Koran” by S. V. Mir Ahmed Ali, edited by Yasin T. al-Jibouri. First Edition 2005. Publisher, United Muslim Foundation. Lake Mary, Florida.

“And We made them Imams guiding (people) by our command, and we revealed to them the doing of good, the establishing of prayers, the giving of Alms, and us (alone) did they worship.”

(Surah 21, verse 73)

Allah has enjoined (Muslims) to obey these purified Imams and guardians. He has cautioned against following and taking as guardians those who mislead the Ummah into ignorance and darkness. Such leaders may also be the rulers. Pray to Allah to grant you patience over the difficulties and misfortunes.

The Love of Allah, the Obedience to the Prophet, and the position of the Imams. When an excellence of an Imam is related, one should believe in it. If such excellences are difficult to comprehend, even then one should accept them, because the status of the Imam is higher than the angels close to Allah and higher than the prophets (Except Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon him and family. If an individual loves Allah, Allah befriends him. Remember the verse of the Qur’an:

“Say, (O Prophet) if you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive your sins, and Allah is the Forgiving, Merciful.” (3:31)

By Allah, no subject of Allah is obedient to Him except that he obeys and follows us (Imams), then (only) Allah loves him. By Allah, one who disobeys us, he is our enemy and he is regarded AS disobedient to Allah. If he dies in such a state, then Allah will condemn him to the abode of the fire.

All praise belongs to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds.

(The End)

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