

# **A Guide To Practical Irfan**

# A Guide To Practical Irfan



**Mansour Leghaei**

**Al-Islam.org**

## Author(s):

[Mansour Leghaei](#) [1]

A Guide to Practical Irfan, based on the lessons delivered by Sh. Mansour Leghaei at Imam Husain Islamic

[Get PDF](#) [2] [Get EPUB](#) [3] [Get MOBI](#) [4]

## Topic Tags:

[Irfan](#) [5]

# What Is Irfan And Why Should I Study It?

*Irfan* is a 'gnostic' discipline and study of how man can reach higher heights in the realm of spirituality within the domain of Islam. It is a systematic method of gaining the knowledge, skills and tools to build the 'self' in this world for the benefit of the Hereafter.

*Irfan* is a study of how man can make better sense of the realities of this world and beyond, to capitalize on the abundant blessings poured down upon man in this world. This then awakens the student in a world where people are still asleep, to get up, prepare for the journey and begin the path as a traveler travelling towards the absolute Almighty Allah (SWT).

*Urafa* (those immersed greatly in this discipline) believe that there are certain obstacles in our life in this world that prevent one from fully realizing and achieving their ultimate goals. By studying *Irfan*, one gains the vision to see these obstacles and the means to avoid them at the same time taking maximum advantage of what has been provided by Allah (SWT) in this path. For example, pleasing an animal by feeding it for the sake of Allah (SWT) the Lord of the Worlds would help untie problems and ease our journey.

All in all, whatever we do, even by just breathing we are indebted to Allah (SWT). Therefore, one must practice appreciation and gratitude for the infinite blessings bestowed on man and his environment which has been made subservient to him. There are two supplications, which are highly recommended:

*Zhikr of Musaii* (As expressed by Prophet Moses): "*Rabbi Shrahli Sadri Wa Yassir Lee Amree*". (**O My Lord! Expand for me my capacity and ease my task for me.**) (20:25-26)

This invocation is recommended to say in *Qonoot* of our *Salah*.

*Zhikr of Yunusi* (as expressed by Prophet Yunus): "*La Ilaha Illa Ant, Subhanaka Innee Kontu Minal*

*Dthalemeen*”. (***There is no deity but You, glory to you. Indeed, I was a wrong doer.***) (21:87)

It is very recommended to say this *Zhikr* in the status of prostration as many times as possible, especially in the last *Sajdah* of our *Salah*.

## **We Are Travellers In A Journey Towards Allah (SwT)**

Allah (SWT) has created man, allotted a time for his stay in this world and in time all will be returning to him. In effect, so long as we are living and breathing, we are travelers. But where are we heading to?

To answer this question, one needs to understand and appreciate where they came from, and where they are now. In short, we are creatures of Allah (SWT)’s creation. Where you are now is relative to the boundaries you limit yourself in. Let’s just say that we are all on the path of spiritual awakening so as we can begin the study of *Irfan* on a common platform and benefit as much as possible from this valuable study.

You have probably come to read this because of a nudge from a friend or an interest in this field or for some other reason. You could have been at another place at another time and not come across this material so whilst you are conscious of this you are invited to take the life long journey as a traveler in this discipline of ‘practical *Irfan*’ from an Islamic perspective. Your stumbling across this may be the results of a prayer of a dear friend or family member. Be appreciative of this as you begin the mystical journey towards Allah (SWT).

Your soul has been created to go back to Allah (SWT) – by living as a *Salik* (traveler) and a student of *Irfan* you are on the way towards returning towards your Lord in a state of purity, piety and perfection. Be fair to your soul and help it reach Allah (SWT) in the best of shapes to reap the benefits of eternal bliss in the Hereafter as well as the joy of being close and near to Allah (SWT).

Remember that as you learn the methods of travelling in this journey ensure that you are in a state of spiritual cleanliness by making *Wudhu* or Ablution as it is called in the English language.

## **How Can I Begin Studies In Irfan?**

For the past year now, the Imam Husain Islamic Center at 6 Lang Road, Earlwood NSW Australia has been having Practical *Irfan* lessons each week on a Sunday morning just after *Fajr* prayers. The teacher is no other than Sheikh Mansour Leghei. A humbled sage having studied in the Islamic Seminary at Qom, Iran for over 12 years and in fact has never rested the pen of learning even after assuming the role of being the spiritual leader of the center. He has been blessed with the opportunity to have been taught by prominent, noble and learned men of this century, some of them being the direct students of Imam Khomeini (‘a).

Sheikh Mansour has chosen to stick with the method of Practical *Irfan* as developed by Khaje Abdullah

Al-Ansaree almost 1,000 years ago. This method holds that there are 100 stations a traveler must meet along their journey to reach Allah (SWT). The first being a spiritual awakening and the last by not least of which is being totally immersed and tranquilized into the notion and reality of *Tawheed*. It allows for a very systematic approach of teaching *Irfan* whilst simultaneously allowing the student to acquire the knowledge and tools in a logically fashioned incremental manner.

A small taste of what Practical *Irfan* offers...

## Importance Of Wudhu

The late Allamah Tabatabai – advised his students in the very first class of Practical *Irfan* that one is to be in the state of *Wudhu* as much as possible. Permanent status of *Wudhu* apart from keep the person constantly clean, serves like a shield to protect the soul against devils. A Prophetic *Hadith* also says: *“Stay always with Wudhu, your sustenance (physical and spiritual) will be increased”*.

## Importance Of Visiting The Sick/Patients

Prophet Moses (‘a) when in supplication and communication with Allah (SWT) asked:

Q – ‘O Lord, what will be the reward of someone who pays a visit to a sick patient?’

A – ‘Wasn’t it that when you paid them a visit, they were lying on the bed? – As a reward for what you have done, I compensate that visitation by appointing an angel to constantly visit the grave to comfort the one (whom has visited the patient) until the Day of Resurrection.

It has been narrated in a hadith that:

*“Whatever the patient (that you have visited) has asked Allah (SWT) to give to you in supplication is granted.”*

This along with the prayers of other people could be behind the granting of blessings or the opening of opportunities in your life.

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (S) stated:

*“Once you pay a visit to a patient you are diving into the mercy of Allah (SWT)”*

## Night Prayers

There is a special table cloth that Allah (SWT) opens exceptionally about an hour before *Fajr* time.

Although its time begins from midnight, as it gets closer to *Fajr* it becomes of more significance.

The night prayers are open to all humans in so much as the sunlight is for all. Nevertheless, many deprive themselves from it. Allah (SWT) is advising us to stay awake part of the night to gain spiritually to gain a high status by Allah (SWT).

When the pious people are introduced in the Quran, it is impossible for someone to practice piety unless they spend part of the night communicating with Allah (SWT), or in repentance.

To test yourself how much of the *Believer* you are – see how much you are willing to wake up in the morning. Allah (SWT) says that the true believers are the ones that leave their beds. They repent to God in fear and hope. Then they give charity out from what we have given them.

The late Allamah Tabtabatai said:

“I went to Najaf for further my Islamic studies. Right from the beginning my mentor in *Irfan*; the late Allamah Qadhi while padding on my back said to me: ‘Sayyid! if you want *Dunya* (prosperous life in this world) then perform Night Prayers, and if you want the *Akhira* (prosperous life in hereafter) then perform Night Prayers.’”

Allamah Tabtabatai said that he always remembered this priceless advice.

The late Bidabadi, the wonderful sage in *Irfan* narrates from one of his teachers:

“Those who have gained anything in their spiritual journey, they have gained it through their *salaat al-layl*.”

If you are not performing Night Prayers then forget about Practical *Irfan* (that much emphasis is placed on night prayers).

Hadith:

“You cannot claim to be the (true) follower of *Ahlul-Bayt* if you do not do *Salaat Al-layl*.”

Something must be there that is hidden, you will never find in the Quran so much emphasis on things that are mustahab, then this exceptional thing. That is *Salaat Al-layl*.

Prophet (S):

“*Gabriel has reminded me of salaat al-layl so much that I thought that my nation will not be sleeping. Two rak'aat in the middle of the night is more favorable to me than the whole world.*”

Prophet Jesus ('a):

“*Once his mother has passed away, he attends the grave of his mother, and is communicating with her. Even though she is dead, 'Oh Mother do you want to come back to this world. If you do, then I can make*

*that happen with Allah's (SWT) permission.'*

*'Oh son I would like to come back to this world to do only two things – and that are, night prayer in cold nights and fasting during hot days.'"*

The reason why she is saying this because her eyes are open in *Barzakh*, and she can see the true reality of things. She must have seen the significance of those two practices.

Prophet (S) will to Imam Ali ('a):

*"Take care and safeguard these things,*

*Perform Salaat Al-Layl*

*Perform Salaat Al-Layl*

*Perform Salaat Al-Layl."*

Imam Ali ('a) had been such a good student that in the last days of his life he approaches the dawn and looks at it, communicates with it and says:

*"O Twilight! Has there ever been a time– since my age of consent–that you rise up in the horizon and my eyes were closed."*

Prophet (S):

*"Any male or female that stands up in the night prayers, you immediately become the Imam of 9 rows of angels behind you. Then Allah (SWT) says, now do you know why I created humans? The length of the angels is the far east to the far west. When the person finishes salaah al-layl. The number of angels that are praying behind him his position on the Day will be elevated by the number of angels."*

See how many humans are asleep during this time.

Prophet (S) said:

*"Shaytan has three (3) ties for you:*

*The moment that you wake up you have untied Shaytan's first tie, when you do your Wudhu, and when you say Allah o Akbar in your salaah."*

Hadith:

*"One of the aspects of salaah al-layl, you will be a good looking person."*

Someone came across the bright face of the late Ayatollah Galpaygani, his face was so shiny that I could hardly look at it. Their faces are so bright, because of the numerous prostration (Quran).

There are some people whom asked Imam Al-Sadiq ('a), why is it that we see those people that perform night prayers as having bright faces. He said:

*"You know why, because they had a private communication between them and Allah (SWT) at dawn. This is the Noor of Allah (SWT), they made a private communication and Allah (SWT) covers them with his divine light."*

Hadith:

*"Salaat al-layl brings sustenance to you."*

Someone came to Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) and said that I need sustenance, I am poor and needy. He said:

*"Do you pray, salaat al-layl, the man could not see the connection. The Imam ('a) said he is lying the one whom is doing salaat al-layl and does not have the sustenance."*

Hadith:

Imam Sajjad ('a), with emphasis advises some of his companions:

*"Remember, make sure that you do not sleep before sun rise. That is the time that Allah (SWT) distributes the sustenance to the people."*

Hadith: Benefit of performing Salaat – Al-layl:

To reach a level whereby Allah (SWT) is pleased with you

Imam Ali ('a):

*"You please Allah (SWT) and his wrath will not come down to you when you stand up on your feet early in the morning."*

***"Only those believe in Our revelations who, when they are reminded of them, fall down prostrate and hymn the praise of their Lord, and they are not scornful, Who forsake their beds to cry unto their Lord in fear and hope, and spend of that We have bestowed on them. No soul knoweth what is kept hid for them of joy, as a reward for what they used to do. (32: 15-17)"***

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a):

*"When you do things the rewards are given accordingly, but when it comes to salaat al-layl the reward is concealed and sealed. The reward is hidden."*

Salaat Al-layl drops all the calamities of the day.

Imam Ali ('a):

*“If you sleep with a full stomach, forget about Night Prayers”*

Salman al-Mohammadi:

*“What happens that I cannot do night prayers? You have to look after yourself during the day.”*

Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a):

*“There is a correlation of what we do in the day to what we can do in the night.”*

Allama Tabatabai: “The more I look after myself in the day the more visible my dreams become.”

Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a):

*“How easy does the knife cut through the butter? – the sins can wipe your good deeds more easier than this.”*

***Say: I am only a mortal like you. My Lord inspireth in me that your Allah is only One Allah. And whoever hopeth for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous work, and make none sharer of the worship due unto his Lord. (18:110)***

Where there is a will there is a way, one of the roommates of Shaheed Mutaharri: “Not only was he the creams of Islamic Philosophy but also in terms of Practical *Irfan*. I had an eye problem and it was salty and I couldn’t do *Wudhu*. Shaheed Mutahhari told me that why don’t I wake up for night prayers. He said there is a river in Qom outside of the seminary. It is not too far, the water in the river is sweet. Shaheed told me don’t worry from tomorrow I will provide you with the water. (Look at this friendship). On one day he did it, and then from that point onwards I started doing it myself as I was embarrassed.”

You offer once *salaat al-layl*: Easiest way to do *salaat al-layl* is to go to the toilet, brush your teeth, and do your *Wudhu*. You will receive the benefits of *Salat Al-Layl*

– *Salaat al-layl*:

Do 4 X 2 *Rak’aat* Prayers within intention of *Salaat Al-Layl* (like 4 morning prayers), Surah *Fatiha* (other things like the second surah and *qunoot* is *mustahab*)

Do 1 X 2 *Rak’aat* Prayers within intention of *Salaat Al-Shaf* with no *Qunoot*

Do 1 X 1 *Rak’aat* Prayers with intention of *Salaat Al-Watr*, after *Hamd* you read *Surah Ikhlas* 3 times (to get benefit of reading the *Quran*), Then recite *Qunoot* which is the main part of *Salaat Al-Layl*, and if you can repeat it 70 times:

*Astaghfirallah Wa Atawbah Illayh Wa Bi As-harahom yastagfiroon*

Then pray at that time for 40 people that asked you to pray for them. Make sure that you do it as sincere

as possible, as concealed as possible, it is a secret deal with you and Allah (SWT). One of his Imam Khomenei's family members narrates that even as he wakes up he would be walking like a thief, and puts a sponge in the bathroom sink to make sure that no one wakes up.

Hadith:

*“Every morning the Prophet (S) used to repent 70 times, he used to say, Astagfirullah Waatoubo Aillayl.”*

Hadith:

*“Whoever in their Sallat Al-Watr says 70 times astagfirullah waatawbah illayl for one year, they will be counted by Allah (SWT) as the Quran says that they are people that have practiced repentance at dawn.”*

Shahadat of Fatimah (‘a):

*“Imam Mahdi (‘a) is the closest one living to Allah (SWT), being the Wali.”*

We need to make an effort to get close to Allah (SWT). As much as Prophet Jesus (‘a) is *Walih* Allah (SWT) his mother Mariyam is *Walih* Allah (SWT). In our day to day transactions we need a guide and example. This is nothing other than Imam Mahdi (‘a) as he has reached a perfection in practical doings.

We cannot reach perfection unless we take from the examples of all the *Walih*s males or females. This is not gender specific, but gender independent. To take them as our role models we must analyze and understand their lifestyle. Steadily, we should be developing a relation with them.

## [How To Get Closer To Ahlul-Bayt](#)

Develop closer relationship and connection with *Ahlul-Bayt* by attending *Majalis*. Imam Ali (‘a) for example comes to you and protects you, a *saleek* can reach a stage that so much they are attached to *Ahlul-Bayt* that they are under the protection and supervision of *Ahlul-Bayt*. In the dream they give us the guidance, without going to attend *majlis*.

*Ahlul-Bayt* become the intercessors between us and Allah (SWT).

***“O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah and seek means of nearness to Him and strive hard in His way that you may be successful.” (5:35)***

This is well established in theoretical *Irfan*, that *Ahlul-Bayt* have said that if you want to seek closeness to Allah (SWT) (*wasilah*) then get acquainted to us.

Fatima Al-Zahra (‘a), if any *majlis* is held on the name of Fatimah Al-Zahra, all of *Ahlul-Bayt* are

attending including Imam Mahdi ('a).

Cream of the Ulama for Practical *Irfan* Shiekh Jaffar Mushtahadi,

Always attended majlis of Ahlul-Bayt, and had an eye problem, he went to the doctors and they said that if you kept crying then you may go blind. He said – you know if I do not cry for Ahlul-Bayt I will not live anymore. So between choosing my life and my eye then its worth it that I lose my eye sight. There was one majlis that was read that Sheikh Jaffar said that when it was read I saw Fatimah Al-Zahra ('a).  
Prophet (S)

If you want to know Laylat Al-Qadr, get to know Fatimah Al-Zahra, the reason why she is called Fatimeh is called people are deprived of knowing her role model. She has two aspects of herself,

Lifestyle of this dunya, it is enough to quote one hadith from the Prophet (S):

*“If the righteousness could be personified it would be Fatimah ('a). Fatimah ('a) is even higher than righteousness. Because Fatimah ('a) is my daughter. She is the best of all the inhabitants of your origin, honour and dignity.”*

There is one hadith that Imam Khomeini thinks that introduces Fatimah ('a) in the best of manners.

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a):

*“During the 75 days of missing your father after his death, she suffered a deep grievance. During that time Gabriel was descending down to Fatimah ('a) to give her condolences and was pleasing her and comforting her, by informing her of the Prophets ('a) status, as well as informing her of the status of her progeny.”* Imam Ali ('a) is writing this hadith.

Status in the Hereafter: Prophet (S)

*“As if on the Day I seek my daughter, she is arriving on the Day on an outstanding light, on her right, left and behind her are 70,000 angels are escorting her, she has arrived to lead the believing women into paradise. People will be ordered to lower your eyes as Fatimah ('a) is passing by. Urafa say that this is like the angels prostrating in front of Adam ('a) out of humbleness. All those whom love Fatimah ('a) from their heart step forward there is something special for you. Then she addresses Allah (SWT), oh Allah (SWT) I want my spiritual status to be known on a day like today, Allah says oh daughter of my beloved one, turn back and look at the people. Whomever ever in their hearts has even a drop of love for you or one of your offspring, let them go into paradise.”*

To develop love for Ahlul-Bayt attend majlis for them,

Fatimah ('a) narrates this herself:

*“The first time they send somebody to their house, for Imam Ali ('a) to come to the masjid to pay*

*allegiance to Abu Bakr. Omar came and said that I am going to burn the house and get Imam Ali (‘a) out. They said that this house belongs to Fatimah Al Zahra (‘a). This is the house that the Prophet (S) stayed for some months before his ascension. Then they break the wood to burn the house and us. I stood at the gate of the house. I appealed to them in the name of God and the name of the Prophet (S) leave us alone or help us. Omar took the whip of the slave of Abu Bakr and hit me so hard on my hand that it bruised so hard. He kicked the door against me so hard and I was pregnant and I fell down. They put the door to the fire and the heat was hurting my face. They struck me until my earring dropped. I felt the pain of the child birth and I aborted the child.”*

Imam Ali (‘a) bathed and closed her during the night as he was bathing her. All of the sudden he stopped and he put his head against the door and crying. Why was he crying? Imam Ali (‘a): "She never showed me the bruise on her arm.”

He is now ready to bury his wife and daughter of the Prophet (S) as he was still in the grave he said, he stood up towards the Qibla:

*“The trust is returned; my Zahra is taken away from me. How ugly the heaven and the earth will appear to me”*

There is a special dua if you want to seek refuge between yourself and Fatimah Al-Zahra or make her an intercessor on the Day:

*Allahomma inni asaloka, bi hakki fatimata wa abee ha, wa ba’liha wa baneeha, wa sirril al mosto’da’een fi ha, an tosalli ala mohammaden wa ali mohammad, wa anta fa’ala bi ma anta ahlo wa antatheya hawaijee*

## **Special Blessings Of The Month Of Rajab:**

There are special books written about this month, Sha’ban and the month of Ramadhan. Rajab is the name of a river in paradise, that is sweeter than honey and whiter than milk and it is reserved for special people.

Prophet (S):

*“Used to call people for a special class before the month of ramadhan, Oh muslims, a very blessed month is about to embark on you, something is pouring, Allah (SWT) will be pouring his mercy onto those that worship him. With the exception of those that associate others with Allah (SWT). There is one night in this month that if you do not sleep, Allah (SWT) will prevent his body in Hellfire. 70,000 by the end of the night will greet him, and they will ask Allah (SWT) to forgive him until next year on the same night on the same day. If God gives me the blessing then next year the angels will repeat this blessing. Whoever fasts in this month, one day he will be safeguarded from the Hellfire.”*

The question is which not is this night? We have the problem of *Laylat Al-Qadr* as well. Someone asked Imam Al-Sadiq ('a):

Don't you know when *Laylat Al-Qadr* is? He said, of course we know the angels come down in descension. Is it that hard to fast for just one of these nights? Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) through Imam Ali ('a) says:

I appreciate to see that someone frees themselves on four of the following nights:

*"Laylat Al-Fatr, on night of Eid Al-Fitr*

*Laylat Al-Nah (night of Eid Al-Adha/Eid Al-Ghorban)*

*Laylat Al-Nisbeh min Al-Sha'ban (15th) (birth of Imam Mahdi as)*

*Laylat Awal min shahr Al-Rajab(1st night of month of Rajab)"*

Another month, Rajab, is a month of repentance, Prophet (S) said: "Say as much of *repentance and seek forgiveness as much as possible in this month.*" Prophet (S) brought this from his Mi'rage:

*"When the month of Rajab arrives, every night from sunset until dawn, an angel cries out – (toba is a tree in paradise, which Prophet had one fruit of it and it produced Fatimah Al-Zahra ('a)), that tree is reserved for those that remember and worship God in the month of rajab between sunset until sunrise. Allah (SWT) said directly – I am the companion of whomever sits with me, God says that I obey whomever obeys me (I listen to your invocation) I forgive whomever asks for my forgiveness, the month is my month, this slave is my slave, the blessing is my blessing, whoever then calls upon me in this month I answer him positively, whomever asks me I give him, whoever asks me for guidance I guide him, I have made this month a rope between myself and my servants, whoever gets hold of it will reach."*

Hadith: "Oh Prophet, from what we have been hearing of the month of Rajab is it better than the month of Ramadhan?" The Prophet (S) replied, "No, nothing can compete with Ramadhan, but Rajab is a special month. We should purify ourselves in the months leading up to the month of Ramadhan."

The special deputies of the Imam Mahdi ('a) have had some limited correspondence with the Imam and three of these communications are referring to the month of Rajab. *Dua Rajabiya* is one of the things that Imam Mahdi ('a) is teaching us how to read. When one of the deputies approached Imam Mahdi ('a) about fasting, he said so good is this month of Rajab for making up fasts that was missed before. Rajab being a river in Jannah is reserved for those that fast. The Prophet (S) is quoted to have said:

*"He is observing (not that he is blindly talking) one day that you fast in this month you have closed one of the gates of Hell, whoever fasts (especially three nights they are 13th, 14th and 15th of Rajab) three days in the month of rajab he has made between himself and between the Hellfire a Khandaq (gap) a distance of seventy years. Whoever fasts seven days in this month remember that the gates of heaven*

*are seven for each of the days you fast you will close all doors of hell, whomever fasts eight days, remember that there are eight gates of heaven, for every day you have fasted there will be a door open for you enter from whatever gate you have opened*

*One of the companions stood up and said, who about someone like me whom is old, Prophet (S) said, that whomever cannot fast then you should pay some charity away for each of the days, so that you can be conscious of the month of Rajab. I swear that they will receive the same reward. Someone stood up and said – oh Prophet (S) I cannot afford it. Prophet (S) replied that if you cannot afford this, at least say the dua 100 time a day:*

*Subhanal illahi al jalil, subhana mal la yambaghith tasbeh illa lah subhana al a'zel akram subhana man labisa la'ez wahowa laho ahl."*

Hadith:

One of the students of Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) towards the end of the month of Rajab. I went to visit Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) and he asked me whether I have been fasting this month. He said you have missed out on a lot and only Allah (SWT) knows how much you have missed. He encouraged him to do the *a'mal* for the rest of the month.

Prophet (S):

*"There is one dua that the Prophet (S) taught us for this month of Rajab:*

*In the name of Allah*

*Allahoma ahillaho alayna bil amni wal iman wasalamata walislam rabbi wa rabboka allah a'za wajaal allahoma baarik lana fi rajab wa sha'ban wa balighna shahro ramadhan wa a'inna alas asiyam wal qiyam wa hifdthel lisan waqodil basar wala taj'al hadthala min hol joo'aa wal'atash."*

The secret was the last few words, Oh Allah (SWT) don't make the reward for our hunger and thirst only.

Prophet (S): *"The best deed is the most repeated one"*

Hafiz: "I have been on this journey all my life and I do not know how I am going to die"

## **Meeting Our Present Imam Mahdi ('A)**

Concept of Imamah in *Irfan*, so much so that without it there is no *Irfan*. Dua Ahad is imperative because it is part of the practical *Irfan*, because in a nutshell it is very built point that Imam ('a) is the first creature that Allah (SWT) has created. Because Allah (SWT) starts the creation with the most perfect people. Their *noor* and spirit is perfect. It is like there is a corn and the top of every corn is the corn head. Before the creation there has been an Imam and there will always be an Imam.

The present Imam Mahdi (‘a) is establishing a path to Allah (SWT). Wherever the Quran mentions *Sirat Al-Mostaqim* it means following the path of Imam Ali (‘a), following the footsteps of the guide. The way to Allah (SWT) is through Imammaat.

Whenever the blessings reaches the people it goes through the Imam (‘a), because they are at the top. Any ascension from us has to go through the Imam (‘a).

The question is that – is it possible to visit the Imam ?

Method to see any Imam, either they appear in flesh and blood when everyone can see them (whether kafir or mo’min) this is good and bad at the same time, punishment of disobeying is so sever. Our concern is how we can be blessed personally with the personal visitation of our Imam.

Sayyid Ibn Tawoos:

“First step is that you must have no doubt that the gate to our Imam (‘a) is definitely open, you must not be in any doubt but be very certain of this.”

You then need to study the biography of those people whom attested that yes we have visited the Imam (‘a), how did they do this, what was special in their life, and what is lacking in my life so that we can try to do the same

For example: each and every one of us has an idol and unless we break this idol, we cannot see him. This is the inner struggle that each one of us has within us. One of the Ulama was telling his students this: Sheikh Hasan came to me once and he asked me to teach him islamic studies from scratch. I asked how do you want to learn from the beginning. My father was the sheikh of the village, and people out of respect for my father they put the imamah on my head, and I was reading majlis and as the time passed, people started asking me some questions and I was guessing, until one day I said look I cannot afford this, I confessed that in the end I could not do it. I went up on the *mimbar* and said that from today I am not the imam – at the start people didn’t believe me, but in the end I left the village. I then saw Imam (‘a) in my dream. He said go visit this person and ask him to teach me. The Imam (‘a) introduced me to you. I was not in the level of teaching elementary level, but for that case I agreed to help him out. I then realized that he really sees the Imam (‘a) and the ordinary people do not know. I said to him, next time you see the Imam (‘a) ask him how I can also visit him. He said yes I saw the Imam (‘a) and he gave me the answer and the response was that you break your idol and then I will visit you. (Pride is one of the idols)

Someone was invited to give a lecture and he gave the wrong answer – he said look how can I tell them the right answer, what will they think of me in the end – this is an idol.

Is there anyone here to rescue the needy and desperate, if you for example are in the sea and they are about to die for sure, and are in touch with Imam Mahdi (‘a) in that moment, the Imam (‘a) came to

rescue them.

Teacher – Bahait Khorasani, tips for seeing Imam ('a):

Ziyarat Ashoora and Ziyarat Imam Husain ('a), it is very important to read, there is a reason why we are to read it constantly. If you make it your habit that atleast once a day you read it until it becomes your second nature. Every time that you read it – that you read it with this intention, and give the reward to the mother of our present Imam ('a). Imam Zamman ('a) loves his mother so much and on that ask his mother to allow you to see her son.

Surah Israa each Thursday evening, to visit the Imam ('a) – you will not die before until you see the Imam. This is a hadith from a Ma'soom.

Most guaranteed method given to us by Bahait Khorasani, path of love with no doubt, the reason for this is a authentic hadith said from Prophet (S): *“you will be associated with whatever most you love.”* (if you can develop the love for our Imam ('a) then you can see if, how can you do this? There is no tablet for this, this is something that you just fall into).

ibn Arabi, an *Urafa*, says if anything comes to me then I respond by saying first fall in love with humanity.

If one is created from the same thing as from Ahlul-Bayt then the love is there.

Imam Askari ('a) tells his son ('a):

*“My son, know that the hearts of the obedient and sincere one are attracted to you in such a way that birds are attracted to nests.”*

NB: one thinks of the person that much that it comes to your dream this is genuine and real love, if one wants to meet with Imam ('a) then do it through love for our present Imam ('a). You need to miss our Imam ('a), the heart has been attached to other things, and there is no room to turn our attention to other than Imam ('a).

Another sign is that you become impatient, how many days has it been since you have seen our present Imam ('a) just as though you miss your mother.

Janade – one of the *Urafa* that benefited from the singer, a teacher studied the lyrics of one of the singers Ricky Martin from South America. She is the air I breath, when this was read he is talking nonsense that the truth is that he (imam as) is the air that I breath so much so that we feel as though we cannot live without him. How suffocated do you feel if there is no air.

Give charity for those that we have love for, how many times did we give charity for our present Imam ('a), every day put a coin aside for the health of our Imam ('a), over time it would become a relation through this charity. Every time that you send a greeting one builds the relation and then this love is

activated, and naturally one sees their present Imam ('a)

There are different degrees and levels of visiting our present Imam ('a), first step is that one sees him in our dream. We see our Imam ('a) in the form of a scholar, our soul was meant to catch our Imam – the real target was the Imam ('a). One needs to acquire the sowing of lips and not to share anything to anyone – one then has *riya* (showing off) and this deprives one of receiving more.

Next step is that you see him in your dream but you do not recognize his face – you see him in your memory. You say when you wake up that you saw him, but I cannot recognize his face in my memory saw our present Imam ('a). The higher stage is that one is still in their dream. Allamah Tabatabai said: “the more I do monitoring of self in the day the more I see him in the dream more bright.” Then one can see him and recognize him in your dream. Then you will be able to see your Imam ('a). An ayah says those whom struggle we will show them the path to the present Imam ('a). Next stage is that you come across the Imam ('a) in reality, but do not recognize him. But later they figure it out but it is too late because they haven't recognized him. The next step is that you see him and recognize him. It is possible and can have for each and every person – have no doubt that there is certainty that the path to our Imam ('a) is there. Keep all visitations to oneself, and have *muraqabah* of one's thoughts and imagination, mind your mind and you could see the Imam ('a). Then slowly do *muraqabah* on various other senses.

## **1st Station: 'Waking Up'**

### **1.1 Introduction To Waking-Up**

“Waking-Up” or *Yaktha* as it is literally known and pronounced in the Arabic language is the first of many stations one must embrace and complete in their journey towards Allah the Al-Mighty. There are multiple methods of waking up as will be evident in the ensuing discussion. Looking at them from a bird's eye view they are the physical and non-physical methods. The discussion will begin by defining this station and continue by outlining the various signs available to determine whether one has woken up or whether they are in fact still asleep.

### **1.2 Waking-Up The First Station Of A Traveler**

#### **1.2.1 Importance Of Waking Up**

It is important that one 'wakes-up' before they depart from this world, so that they are aware and ready for the realities of the Hereafter. Without applying this study to yourself you can rest assured that you are

probably in deep sleep already. Although you may be physically awake, the question we are posing here is that are you spiritually and mentally awake?

### 1.2.2 Start By Physically Waking-Up

The first step is to ensure that you are at least physically alert by physically waking up in the mornings, and performing your Salah. Offer sincere supplication and ask from Allah (SWT) to help in your timely waking up in the morning. You will soon inshallah experience that it is as if you can hear the call of someone calling you softly to wake up to the morning.

As will be discussed below – this station goes well beyond the physical notion of waking up that we know and appreciate in the mornings.

It has been narrated that Imam Ali (‘a) once said:

*“People are asleep and unless they wake up they will only not do so until their waking up on the Day of Resurrection.”*

Why are we then busying ourselves with the non-important things in our life.

### 1.3 The Study Of Irfan Sparked From One Ayah

*Urafa* (Mystics and Gnostics) relate that the study and realm of *Irfan* was sparked from one ayah in the Quran. In this ayah, Allah (SWT) informs us that He has only one advise for us:

“O Messenger, tell them – indeed I only adviser you and one thing – to stand (wake up) for the sake of Allah (SWT)”

The word in arabic used here is *‘innama’* which literally means this and only this, or absolutely this. This means that one should realize that their life was given to them by Allah (SWT) and they should want to live for the sake of Allah (SWT).

Mufassarin (those whom provide insight and commentary of the Quran) are unanimous that after the ayaat of *“Read, in the Name of the Lord”*, which was the very first ayat of the Quran, the very next ayah can be found in Surah Muddathir, where Allah (SWT) states:

***O thou enveloped in thy cloak, Arise and warn! (74: 1-2)***

It is initially intended for the Prophet (S), but the beauty and timeliness of the Quran is such that this ayah when read now is easily as applicable to one living today as it was to another living in the years gone by.

## 1.4 Starting A Journey With A Group

One of the better ways to travel in this life long journey towards *Tawhid* (Uniqueness of Allah (SWT)) is to do so in the form of a group. This will prove to be more effective for you than if you want to travel alone. A group can encourage one another and build on the collective strength of one another.

## 1.5 Signs Of Whether You Are Awake Or Asleep

There are various signs that one can utilize to assess whether they are asleep or in fact awake, some of which are detailed below:

### 1.5.1 Reciting The Holy Quran

The more you read the more it impacts you, the more you can wake you up. A good example in history can be drawn by analyzing a brief moment in the life of a person called

‘Ibn Ayan’ is one of the most outstanding Muslim *Arifs*, Fadel ibn Ayaz. Prior to being known in the world of philosophy as an *Arif* he was, believe it or not, known in the immediate areas of residence as a ‘bandit’. In fact,, he was the leader of a bandit gang – known to terrorize people in the community and get up to serious mischief.

Ibn Ayan, once noticed a girl washing some clothes by a river. He approached her and told her to be prepared as he was planning to come to her that night. She ran away crying in fear and informing others of this incident. This immediately sparked fury and dismay in the village knowing the nature of this man they were terribly frightened.

They were presented with an option in the end of either facing him or sacrificing one person. The community decided that there is nothing they can do about it and he was going to do as he planned. In the middle of the night, he came in the house as promised but not from the front gate but from the window. Before he proceeded to enter the house he came across an ayah of the Quran being recited by the neighbor doing *Tahajud*:

***“Is not the time ripe for the hearts of those who believe to submit to Allah`s reminder and to the truth which is revealed, that they become not as those who received the scripture of old but the term was prolonged for them and so their hearts were hardened, and many of them are evil-livers.” (57: 16)***

Try to imagine the situation, Ibn Ayan was planning to commit such an act and stumbled across this one ayah (without planning or willing it to happen). Of course the Quran has possessed a rather rhetorical question in which he instinctively, perhaps out of realization of guilt or acceptance of this truth that he replied ‘Yes – silly me’. Instead of jumping into the house (and committing the pre-planned bad act) he

decided to jump out.

He shed some light on this incident further on in his life saying that this single ayah changed his life completely. Remember he was known as a leader of a gang in the community and the history books testify he managed to master the peak of Islamic Philosophy.

Imagine the benefit we can attain from this living miracle the Holy Quran Al-Karim if we are switched on. See Ibn Ayan was physically awake but spiritually and religiously he was still asleep. Perhaps this ayah was the fuel he needed to wake-up. Why can't the same be applied to us too?

### **1.5.2 Be Kind To Others – Especially To Your Parents**

If we are true to this principle the gates of success will be opened to us so that we work towards a pleasant life in this world for the Hereafter. The following example was taken from Allama Tabatabai, he stated that:

“One of the secret keys to my success was when I was in Qom. I saw some people with a bird, putting it in a cage and were playing with it. I despite being in a poor financial condition at the time offered the best price I could to the people playing with the bird. They agreed, and I purchased the bird. I let it go afterwards. I felt as though from that moment onwards Allah (SWT) freed me from the chains of attachment to this materialistic centered world.”

There is another interesting example given to us in the form of Sayyid Rashid he stated that:

“As I was coming back home one day, hungry and poor, I had with me a loaf of bread which I bought for myself – I spotted a dog with her puppies. The female dog was trying to breast feed the puppies and I noticed that it apparently had no milk. There was a river nearby so I decided to take the bread that was with me and wet it in the waters of the river. I gave it to the female dog to feed on and provide for her puppies. The following day I had come to learn that one of my family members had passed away. Apparently, they had no heir and I was the only one left and become the recipient of all the inheritance.”

Sayyid Rashid did not just take the money and run, or spend it as we see happening sometimes today. Instead he utilized the money and the opportunity to build a school which is now still functioning in Iran.

Consider the above two examples, and many more than can be drawn in history. Imagine the reward that was given to the act of kindness to a bird or dog in this world let along the Hereafter and compare this with the pleasure and reward of being kind and helping one's own parents.

### **1.5.3 Take Advantage Of The Opportunity A Fellow Traveler Brings.**

This is perhaps best encapsulated in the statement:

‘tell me who your fellow travelers are, and I’ll tell you who you will become’

This means that a good friend can help you to ensure that once you have woken up that you remain alert. Similarly, a friend or fellow traveler being normal part of the circle of influence in one's life may also take them deeper asleep in this world.

The choice rests with you – choose your fellow travelers wisely.

### **1.5.4 Making Du'a**

This is another sign of whether you are awake or not. How often do you offer supplication in your prayers or in daily transactions in life? How often do you really rely on Allah (SWT) to provide for your needs? Do you even realize that a supplication is a contract and means of communication between you and the Al-Mighty Allah (SWT)?

### **1.5.5 Are You In That Magnetic Field Of Vigilance And Awakeness**

Many people are scared to get closer to Allah (SWT). They tend to not want to approach a gathering or lecture or masjid to pray. Why is it that they display these tendencies?

There have been many examples of people falling into Islam not by calculation and intent but out of chance. Well at least it appears out of chance to us however there is always a deeper wisdom behind the curtains of this world and its actions. There was one person who was brought to the center with one of his friends out of chance. He later on said that, the visitation he made changed his life completely. Perhaps it was his heart yearning towards a condition better than what its immediate owner placed on it, and this bursting energy opened up the gate for him just like being mesmerized in a magnetic field of spirituality.

The present day Shia can access this magnetic field through our present Imam Mahdi ('a). Consider the following historical event as a reminder of how our Imams ('a) invite us towards this magnetic field:

'I left Mecca, and migrated to Kufa after fulfilling my Hajj obligations and rituals. Imam Husayn ('a) was also present in the migration towards Kufa. Although I had recognized him as my present Imam, I chose to ignore him in every station along the journey so as I could not come in contact with him. I tried my best to avoid him, lest he invites me to him. One day, we had both camped out simultaneously and a messenger came to me with a message that no other than Imam Husayn ('a) had invited me to visit him. I was eating during lunch time with my family at the time but I went to see the Imam anyway. Naturally I was stunned that after much effort to try to avoid him he is now calling me and inviting me to see him. My wife told me to be shameful of myself for not initially responding. So I responded to the messenger with an affirmative.'

History has not been able to record much of the conversation that took place. However, all that has been

reported after the visitation was that the man whom was trying to avoid the Imam changed completely. He invited his wife for a divorce so that he can join the camp of Imam Husayn ('a). She declined but reassured him of her loyalty towards him by promising to join him wherever he may go.

All this can be summarized in the statement which reads:

'Out of sight out of mind'

The following is a narration from our present Imam Mahdi ('a), inviting us to understand what happened on the events within and surrounding *Ashoora*. If not for knowledge it definitely is a call for us to remember and maintain our vigilance in our patient wait for his reappearance:

Imagine for example when a relative of a person whom died is deeper than an independent person reading a majlis for the dead person. Because our Imam ('a) is reading from the heart and it goes into and finds rest in our hearts. It is more effective as a means of communicating the nature and elements of what truly happened in Karbala

You can't but help to ponder that he was in the land of Karbala and was a witness to everything that has happened. The sweetness of the details as expressed in Arabic cannot be conveyed in English.

One of the best narrations, once Imam ('a) is talking he starts by talking about the most innocent martyr of Karbala, the infant child.

He opens by talking about the moment that Imam Husayn is coming back to the camp, its only Imam Husayn by himself and only a few minutes before he departs. The mother Rubab of the child she is freaking out and asking his husband if he can get some water for the baby as he is thirsty. At this point Abu Fadlil Abbas has passed away and its only Imam Husayn ('a) left and soon he will join the other martyrs in Jannah.

Imam Husayn ('a) tells Rubab that there is no chance any more to go to the river Euphrates as it is blocked by the enemy army. So what he proposes is to take the baby and show the enemies that all he wants is water for the baby for his survival. Imagine the amount of cruelty these people (enemies) poses.

As the Imam ('a) raises the baby, Imam Mahdi ('a) Abdul Allah is the name of the little baby that was with Imam Husayn ('a), he raised this few months old baby, and said 'don't you see his dry lips' – since two days have passed there was no water in the tents. And the mother had no milk to supply to the baby. Imam Husayn ('a) states this is between me and you, spare this innocent child by nourishing him with some water – he is innocent and has nothing to do with this battle.

The baby had nearly fainted – he raised his head and showed it to the people. Imam Mahdi ('a) narrates that as soon as he did this a dispute arose in the enemy camps of Omar Ibn Sa'ad. On one hand people wanted to help this poor infant, but on the other some people didn't want to help the infant or Imam Husayn ('a) with this request

Omar Ibn Sa'ad to finish the argument told Asadi, why don't you satisfy the baby of Husayn('a), don't you see the neck of the baby, he said: I shot. All we know is the baby was nearly fainting, all of the sudden the peak of the arrow fell on the neck of the baby. And the eyes of the baby opened and looked at the father Husayn ('a).

Have you seen when they are slaughtering a chicken or a bird and their wings are flapping? The baby was moving and shaking so hard like this slaughtered chicken.

Imam Husayn ('a) collects some of the blood from the baby and throws it up to the sky. This is a very painful scene for a father, Imam Husayn ('a) returned to the tent – but how could he return the dead baby to the mother. His assigned duty was to bring nourishment to the thirsty baby. The mother was not expecting anything other than this when Imam Husayn ('a) returned. How could he return in this state?. He just dugged a hole behind the tent and buried the baby himself. The sister of Abdul Allah saw the scene, and saw Imam Husayn ('a) digging the hole. Allah (SWT) knows how much she was attached to her infant brother.

She said, I haven't said farewell to him yet.

Imam Mahdi ('a) continues the ziyarat: “when the enemies saw how strong your heart was, they tried their very best to conspire against you, and killed you in any many they could. Stopped the flow of water to you, and struck you with their arrows, I can see how patient the angels had been in seeing how patient you were, the enemies surrounded you, they wounded you with a plethora of injuries to prevented you from reaching the water of Euphrates, no one stayed with you anymore everyone was martyred, you were patient, you were defending your children and family, grandfather I can see that you looked down at the crowd you are thirsty and with hundreds of martyrs bodies, grandfather I can see that they are trampling on your father, they are shooting sharp arrows in your body.”

The Imam does not have any more energy to go to the family any more. Your horse Zilzala – rushes back to the tent to bring the bad news to the remaining family. Even the horse was distressed and upset, they were all crying out Ya Fatimatah, we have no hope any more, they were all inside the tents and ran out to see the martyred Imam ('a) where the horse was pointed them.

Imagine how Imam Mahdi ('a) was narrating this, what state he was in – how broken his heart must have been.

They placed our family in iron chains, the heat was striking their faces, and they were made slaves Now I can see your mother paying you a visit and all the angels coming down paying you a visit. You father and the mo'mineen have arrived. They have made majlis for you in the highest places in paradise. The angels are striking their faces for what has happened to you.

### 1.5.6 Sad Stories In Our Lives

So called calamities and difficulties in our lives. These are called Al-Bala in arabic. These are surprisingly hidden mercies which blossom and nourish our lives and our strength once we discover the moral behind the story so to speak.

Sad news shocks the self, the momentary paralyzation of the self soon gives way to building the strength one needs to fight one. On the other hand, happy news for us makes us more asleep. This is because we by nature like to hear good news it satisfies the senses and develops notions of contentment and comfort. However, we fail to realize that he are not created to be comfortable in this world so happy news tends to put us into hibernation. Whereas bad news as mentioned above gives us a shock and wakes us up. It is a divine and hidden message for us to wake up and review ourselves.

Consider the following example, when someone is going asleep on the road there are some road humps in the middle of the road that when the car travels over them they make a noise to wake us up – or rather prevent us from going back to sleep.

### 1.5.7 You Think You Are Already Awake

If you think that you are already awake then this is a sign that you are in fact still deep asleep. In has been narrated that Imam Ali ('a) in Nahjul Balagha states that:

*“A believer is always suspecting themselves and gives the benefit of the doubt to others.”*

This is despite our burning desire to do the opposite. A traveler that is on a journey is meant to be pessimistic about himself. This is so that they can improve and build the self.

### 1.5.8 How Much Do You Appreciate And Pay Gratitude To The Blessings Of Allah (SwT)?

One of the first things Prophet Moses ('a) taught his people was this:

*“O people, remember the blessings of Allah on you.”*

Can you count the blessings of Allah (SWT) with you – educate children that way – can you count the blessings ?, Allah (SWT) has poured the blessings unto you, things that you see and are hidden to you and your eyes and mind are full of blessings, they are so numerous, spend time to ponder over this, when you compare yourself to people that lack this blessing makes you appreciate the blessings that have been poured to you.

If you are thankful then Allah (SWT) will give you more. According to the Quran, if you are thankless you will attract the wrath of Allah (SWT)

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) was sitting in Mena (during Hajj), having some grapes and a beggar comes and said help me. He offered the grapes to the beggar.

The best thing you can do is give from what is in your hands to the poor. The beggar is said no, I want some money. Imam said, khayr, sorry I don't have some. Another beggar came and said please help me, he gave him a bunch of flowers, and said thank you, and he gave him more and he replied (beggar) with thank you, Imam asked one of his companions do you have any money with you. He said yes I have 20 dirhams, the Imam ('a) asked to get this money from him and he will pay the companion back later. He gave it to the beggar, and the beggar said Alhamdulillah Rab Al-Alamin, historians have stated that the Imam ('a) got up and gave the beggar his shirt, and the moment that the guy received the shirt – oh such a nice shirt (wasn't grateful to God any more). It wasn't my money, my shirt, the moment he lost his Tawheed he stopped getting from Allah (SWT)'s gifts and blessings.

One common mistake we have for thanks, what is our understanding of gratitude. Sometimes what we think of gratitude is to give thanks through a tasbeeh. Or 'thank you very much for giving me things' and that's it. That's not the meaning of gratitude – this is the sigha' of gratitude (the news for the gratitude) the actual gratitude is different to this. Like a marriage with sigha'. Quran Allah is oft forgiving, Shakur (thankful)

To whom is he thankful – Shakur, to himself to us?

Shakur means appreciation in English. This Allah (SWT) values what you are giving to him. Allah (SWT) differentiates between good and bad deeds. He treats people enjoyed in good and bad differently. No one will appreciate this in the best possible way then Allah (SWT).

“Allah (SWT) does not dismiss the reward of the righteous.” (quran)

This is because he is Shakur. We cannot be Shakir because we cannot do it in its absolute form. I need to appreciate for example the eyes that has been given to me, and do as I have been instructed in terms of using this blessing properly. That is how we can do Shakur otherwise we are actually committing Kufur not Shakour. No matter how many times I'm saying Shakur for Allah and say for example watching a sinful act. In fact,, this contradiction amounts to Kufur.

This is the first sign to tell whether you are awake or asleep because the person whom thinks they are giving gratitude to Allah (SWT) whilst not doing Shakour properly is in fact in deep sleep.

The ability of talking and verbal communication, compare this blessing to animals. Look at the difference – it is amazing mashallah. Think and ponder over this blessing. It is free – and I took it for granted. If I used my tongue properly then it's all good and I am doing Shakour no matter how many times I read the sigha'h.

Identify as many blessings we have been given, and be grateful by appreciating the blessings by using it

properly not abusing and misusing our granted blessings. Otherwise we are as good as sleeping.

Need then to acknowledge that we cannot be Shakur. He rewards and punishes accordingly. We cannot be Shakur because we don't know the full extent of everything. A good blessing is that we are breathing is the source of life. We don't appreciate it – even if we want to say thank you we are in debt to more than one blessing from Allah (SWT). For inhale you need one thank and then exhale we need another thank you just for saying one thank you verbal.

Imam Sajjad ('a):

*“I give up, I surrender, I cannot even meet the requirements of appreciating the blessings of breathing.”*

One of the students in the class, asked when are we going to finish this book it is so thick. The reply was – don't look at how much you have left look at how much you have learnt. They don't ask you whether you have finished the book but they asked how much you have learned.

Prescription:

Especially for the young generation, it is excellent – Be in *Wudhu* as much as possible

Remember Dhikr Yunusiah (Allama Tabatabai emphasized this dhikr a lot)

The very best ayah of the Quran, memorise it:

It has been narrated that the Prophet (S) prescribed the following to Imam Ali ('a) (remember how important this must be that it was prescribed to Imam Ali ('a):

The best of Surahs in the Quran is Surah of the Cow, and the best of Ayat in the best Surah is Ayat Al-Kursi, this ayah has 50 words, each word has 50 benefits. Imam Ali ('a) used to read Ayat Al-Kursi every night before we sleeps. Gaining 2,500 benefits by reading Ayat Al-Kursi. Someone asked the Prophet(S) what is the best ayah: he replied that the best ayah is Ayat Al-Kursi. Allamah said this ayah from the time of the prophet onwards has been always known as Ayat Al-Kursi. Quote Shia source – one of the narrators narrating from Imam Ali ('a) that: *“I don't know anyone who has got the intellect that he sleeps without reading Ayat Al-Kursi.”* If you knew what Ayat Al-Kursi is, then you wouldn't leave it.

Prophet (S): *“Ayat Al-Kursi is given to me from the treasury under the thorn of Allah (SWT).”* Imam Ali ('a) said since I heard this hadith from the prophet there was no single night that I went to bed unless I read Ayat Al-Kursi.

***“Allah is He besides Whom there is no god, the Everliving, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His***

***knowledge except what He pleases, His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great.” (2:255)***

Every time you are about to leave home or about to embark on a journey read the following Surahs: Surah Al-Ahad, Surah An-Nas, Surah Al-Falaq, and Surah Al-Kafiron. Whenever you read these Surahs, Allah (SWT) will appoint angels to protect you.

However, whenever you read Ayat Al-Kursi, it has been narrated in this hadith that Allah (SWT) tells his angels to go away because He will be protecting the person whom is reciting this ayah. Imagine waking up in our later years, the amount of rushing around trying to collect the provisions. It's great that the youth are able to make the effort in learning *Irfan*.

## **1.6 Prescription: Offer Salam To Imam Husayn ('A)**

One prescription for us is to read the ziyarat of Imam Husayn after the ending of each salah. This offering of salam that we give in Ziyarat Imam Husayn ('a) is mustahab, but the reply of which has been made wajib by Allah (SWT), so think of whom you are offering your salam to. The reply will come but can you hear it? Is it possible that you greet him and they don't reply the salam? Imagine what you can gain if you can become the recipient of the reply salam of Imam Husayn ('a). From our burial until day of resurrection we will inshallah get the reply of the salam from Imam Husayn ('a). So that we can sleep in peace. Salam is peace, how can I attract peace in my life?

## **2nd Station: Repentance, Tawbah**

### **2.1 Importance Of Previous Stations As One Progresses In The Journey**

Whatever rules we learnt in the previous station we should hold onto it. The key is to put what we learn into practice, especially whilst Allah (SWT) gives us a chance.

One of the signs of being awake is that you are on the second station. If we don't apply what we have learnt then it's like we have only acquired numbers and not knowledge and wisdom. The soul can catch much more than what we think of it. The spiritual power we have in terms of its potential is very high. It starts with the world of dreams then extends to real life

## 2.2 Introduction To This Ayah

Kharj Abdullah Ansari in his book, Manazel al-sa'aleen, introduces us to this station through the Quran:

***'Whoever does not repent, they are the ones that are unfair/ tyrants'(49: 11)***

This makes us poisoned if we don't repent. The structure of this ayah suggests that if we don't want to be tyrants then we must repent.

Another Ayah states:

***"All of you who believe, all must repent (fael al-Amr) to God"(66:8)***

This applies to the Anbiya and Aimmah as well, to everyone, we can't say that look I'm a sheikh or a righteous person because there are no exemptions. It is a command to all believers and we must practice it constantly. The repentance of the Anbiya is different from our versions.

The Prophet states:

*"The sins are like clouds, it goes over the country of my soul but everyday as a result of this I say Astagfriallohu waatawbah illah seventy (70) times."*

The word tawbah means to do turn back, to go back and repent. To regret – like in a highway the sign says 'wrong way – go back'. If we are conscious of our sins and bad deeds – the moment we want to go back to Allah (SWT) in returning to him towards the right path. This can come in one of three ways:

One has done something wrong and someone confronts him – and it is denied by the actor. The fact that he has denied then forgive him because it means that there is guilt there. Yes, admitted of fault but tries to deny it

Regrets wholeheartedly the sin and there is no buts, I am sorry full stop (no conditions, ifs or buts or justification) – this is the level that we should be yearning to reach

Imam Khomeini states: "It is not that easy to repent."

Hadith states that:

*"If you really understand the reality of tawbah it is easier not to commit a sin than to repent."*

To compensate this, one must identify the sayiat – need to know them and their realities so that the tawbah can be targeted, specific and effective.

***"(As for) those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and they shall enter burning fire." (4: 10)***

The Holy Prophet said:

*“Those who have devoured the possessions of the orphans unjustly will breathe blazing fire on the day of resurrection. Such people must fear the situation if they were to leave weak children behind them. How concerned would they be for them? So they must safeguard themselves with full awareness of Allah’s laws, otherwise they will surely burn in hell.”*

When we look at the property of the orphans or others and take it in the wrong way I am looking at the fire – just as if you are looking at the burning charcoal. This is why we are ma’soomen. The first part of repentance is to learn the reality of the sins and its effect and true essence not only how it looks or how it feels on the presentation layer.

The key to repentance is to be as conscious of our sins as we could through muhasabeh and accountability of our actions. The concentration and emphasis should be on those things that one enjoys that is in fact bad. This is one method of self-purification.

We need to write as many sins, large or small we can think of. Allah (SWT) is All-Aware of everything so really who are we trying to kid.

The moment we are in tears out of fear and remorse then, we are reaching the status of tawbah. We need to do this to cleanse ourselves and break away from the shackles of temptation and a sinful and bad record of our actions in the past and present. We need to do this as part of our internal struggle against the self and the Nafs.

If we identify our weaknesses then we should allocate more resources to help us in terms of strengthening ourselves. This is a method of spiritually raising and building ourselves. Put the sins in writing so that we become conscious of this. It is a hidden mercy from Allah (SWT) that we remember our sins so that we are conscious of it and so that we can remember that we should offer our request for repentance.

## **2.3 Coming To Realize The Reality Of Our Sins**

What ‘seems to be’ in the world may not always ‘be’ in reality. For example, consider one whom has eaten a plate of food from their knowledge they are say generally that:

I know where the food was bought, it is respectable, halal and clean. I cooked the food myself and all utensils are clean and good. The food was prepared hot, it smells good, seems good, and tastes good – so one concludes that it must be good right?

In reality how does one know the true reality of what this food will do to their physically body or what effect it will have to one’s mental balance? We simply don’t have time to do lengthy health checks – so we assume that things are good and proceed. Not much time is spent to assess whether things are

really good or bad for us. I cannot see the reality of the impact of the food because of the limitations of the eye. But a food specialist might be able to say whether the food is good or not based on their experiments and tests.

If we had the knowledge that the same food we are going to eat is in fact poisonous then we would eat it would we? This is why our Prophets and Imams are sinless – because they can through Divine Will and Protection see the reality of things are they are not only how they appear to be.

The one that has no knowledge of the reality like a baby will go ahead and touch a snake because they only see things on a surface layer. This is the same case of the world of sin. Once we realize the full extent (scientific look) of the sin then we would naturally stay away from it. For example: when one exercises gossip then we don't fully understand the reality of this gossiping.

The reality of this is gossiping is the flavour and seasoning of the food of the wild dogs in the hereafter. Or the Quran states: the reality of gossiping is like some wild dogs having a corpse and your friend is laying down and you are repeatedly biting into the flesh. If you can learn this and train this then you wouldn't go into gossiping.

Prophet (S):

*“When one is invited to drink wine – then they are really drinking the fire of hell (not like the fire of hell it is).”*

So when on the day of judgement we are served with fire to drink we cannot run away because it is stuck to us because of what our hands possessed and earned.

Imam Musa Al-Kazim says:

*“This world is like short nap, the hereafter is like the states of awaking.”*

The relation is that we dream and in our dream we drink a class of drink. The meaning of this in this world is different to the meaning and reality of this in the hereafter. The reality of this drink is that we will be given knowledge. Even a sip of milk is that we will be very knowledgeable. We mind be wondering what relation is there between the two meanings. The Prophet (saww) gave the same interpretation said

Imam Musa Al-Kazim (‘a):

*“The reality of things appears differently in there hereafter then how they appear in this world.”*

If we don't see the reality of the acts and sins in this world and repent then we will differently see the reality of this in the hereafter.

The reality of our actions is all the blessings or punishment we will be receiving in the hereafter, we only see the reactions of our deeds whether good or bad. As this world is insufficient to dish out the true

reward or the true punishment. Whereas the hereafter is not bound by relativity but in fact it is the reality of absoluteness so the reward / punishment of an act is given on a real and true level. For example, in this world if one kills five people this world is not capable of delivering a true and just punishment because the most it can punish is to kill the murder...once, it cannot bring them back again and kill them again and again – 5 times. This is one of the limitations of this world which has been designed and bestowed as a mercy from Allah (SWT). The hereafter is the only that is capable of delivering the absolute reward/punishment.

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) was asked by one of his students that – why are you ma'soom?

He answered, *“you are also infallible in terms of certain sins – you need to expand it. He offered the student a red hot charcoal. He said what you are offering me the hot charcoal and have the meat to yourself. He said – I can't it is hot there is no way I can do it.”*

## **2.4 Importance Of The Dead**

Hadith says that:

*“Go time to time to the cemetery if you are feeling miserable and feeling so low, that the calamities are striking us here and there”*

Hadith states that:

*“We should recite Surah Al-Qadr seven times when we are there in the cemetery.”*

It is a very good remedy so that we never forget that we will be going there. At-Tabatabai said:

*“Someone had paid him a visit and he tells him that you paid me a visit why you were in a rush. Don't you know that we enjoy your company. Why are you in a rush, sit down and take a break.”*

The reward for this is great because whilst in barzakh they have more powers and inshallah if they pray and do dua for us it is accepted and the effects and implications are grand when it is sent to us in this world.

## **2.5 Benefits Of Reading Ayat Al-Kursi**

Ayat Al-Kursi is a real gem, we must read it before we go to bed: go to the toilet, brush your teeth, make *Wudhu*, and then read ayat al-kursi

This ayat al-kursi was given to our Prophet from the essence of the Kursi that exists in the absolute world, get acquainted with it and read it before you sleep.

## 2.6 Practising Repentance

Regardless of whom one is, indeed one must practice tawbah to not be unfair to oneself in returning to Allah (SWT). We cannot do tawbah unless we recognise our previous sins – the reality and nature of these as the preliminary steps before practicing tawbah.

Also need feeling shame for our past actions, we need this to progress forward with repentance. For example, if you are doing a sin imagine a young person that is watching you how would you feel?, imagine then if you are being watched as you are doing the sin ? how would you feel? Imagine these people that your enemies how would you feel now? Think and believe that Allah (SWT) Knows everything, everything will be witnessing for our behalf on the Day of Judgement. We are on a stage and there are already a lot of cameras watching us. We need to feel conscious of this and feel shame and be conscious. The more we are fearful the more chance we have of repenting. We feel heaps shameful and embarrassed. All are seeing, Allah (SWT), Angels and others.

Quran: If you want to have no fear on the Day, then you need to fear Allah (SWT) in this dunya. If we do sin reluctantly then we will be punished on the Day.

Quran: If you want to have your destination in paradise then, then fear Allah (SWT)

Aren't you ashamed that God is around if we are ashamed that a little boy is for example watching you as you are doing sin? Indeed Allah (SWT) is higher than all. If you have this fear then paradise if your ending inshallah.

We must be aware of the virtues of repentance – it is one of the biggest opportunities we can give ourselves in this life. It change a person from a bandit to one of the best people, it is one of the qualities and characteristics of tawbah. Allah (SWT) is Tawwab.

Means the Allah (SWT) is searching for anyone that wants to get back to him

Imam Al-Sadiq says:

*“Have you ever been in the situation that you have been lost in the dark and you go into the darkness lost. All of a sudden you find everything and get back on track – how happy would you be. The happiness that Allah (SWT) has when one of his servants goes back to him he is Oft-Forgiven. That if we try to go back to him he forgives inshallah.”*

He is the starter of doing the tawbah, he even gives us the opportunity to do repentance. Like a father kicking his son out of the house, he always sends a messenger to tell his son to come back. Allah (SWT) is the same, he sends indirect messengers and signals to us to come back – all we have to do is to say sorry and come back – sorry I made a mistake.

Gospel of Jesus (one of the closest gospels to Jesus's gospel is the gospel of Barnaba), states:

*"If I may ask you to forgive this shaytan (I know how many bad things he has done – but how many years has he been servants). You are Oft-Forgiving, why don't you forgive him. Allah (SWT) says that its ok I forgive him but there is only one condition that must be met before hand and that is shaytan or anyone else says that 'I made a mistake'. Jesus says this doesn't sound difficult, he was happy at how much of a good deed he was doing to humanity and that he can go back and go to shaytan and is crying and said – ya Shaytan where are you? I have something for you, so that you can get forgiven. Shaytan said there is no chance, Prophet Jesus ('a) said, yes I have something for you that will allow you to be forgiven. (he was so happy that the Shaytan will be forgiven and that humanity will not be lead astray anymore), he said that I have negotiated and inshallah you wil lbe ok – there is only one condition and you admit your mistake and please forgive me. Shaytan said – what do you mean I made a mistake. Allah (SWT) made a mitake, he deceived me! Look now I have a big army since Adam, what do you mean I made a mistake? Jesus ('a) said curse be upon you – you don't deserve repentance."* So even that it is Shaytan, forgiveness is there waiting for us.

Surah Anfal: Addressing the Prophet – when the believers come to you say Sallam of Allah (SWT) be upon you (it brings nothng less than healing and peace for you) Allah (SWT) has imposed the Mercy upon you. (I have been waiting for you, where have you been?)

***Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed; so these are they of whom Allah changes the evil deeds to good ones; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (25:70)***

It doesn't say that I have erased your past, it says that I have changed all the bad to good deeds – how? In other words, the person that had committed adulterly will become the good deed – think about it. So in his record it is written as good. So in reality you can die sinless. Try to comprehend this. A cup of wine after it is boiled changed to vinegar automatically – the same contents changed from Najjis to Tahir subhanallah – the essence was the same. This is the same as what Allah (SWT) is telling us in this Ayah of the Quran.

Next step is that you make an effort and you will see how I will make your future so prosperous – Surah Hud Prophet Hud:

Repent and from now onwards your life will be changed, all the misery that you had in the past will be gone. Allah (SWT) will continuously pour his blessings on you

*Urafa* advise us that our diseases are because of the sins we cause for ourselves because of our own sins. *Urafa* advise us that we should continually request repentance from Allah (SWT).

***"Say: 'O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.'" (39:53)***

Imam Ali ('a) said: *“This ayah is the most decorative and covering in the Quran for tawbah. One that reads will not have any more excuse to leave the issue of tawbah confused.”*

Background: the verse was revealed to Wahshi, the murderer of Hamza (the Uncle of Prophet (S)).

After the morning prayer, Prophet (S) and close companions were sitting in the masjid, a young man came in, and said I'm miserable, he was in tears and was weeping, I have committed a sin. Have you lost your faith in Allah (SWT)? No I haven't, have you killed someone he said no. He said I have committed a sin. Who is higher – he said Allah (SWT) is of course higher – I have committed a sin I don't know whether Allah (SWT) will ever forgive me. This is not an ordinary sin – he asked to see Prophet in private – he confessed that for the last seven years he used to go to the cemetery and used to dig the grave and take the kafan off the girl and sell it to people – I used to (this is a big haram in Islam) make money for this. Yesterday I remembered that a girl last night died and I took her shroud off and committed fornication with the girl (see the temptation of our desire and invitation by Shaytan – knowing the reality of the sins himself he is after us to attack the big things and commit sins on a large level)/. The moment he confessed this the Prophet (S) whom can see the reality of the sins, it struck him so much that he said – get out of here, the man just left the mosque – and he said even the Prophet of Mercy (S) kicked me out. He left the city so embarrassed of what he has done – this is repentance. He just disappeared. The man desperately was weeping and was asking for repentance. And I want a sign of your acceptance and I am not leaving until you forgive me, let it be known to the Prophet. The Prophet went to ask for this guy as he has been forgiven so call him back. Regardless of what you have done – then make an effort to repent. He is waiting for us to perform forgiveness. And after you constantly repent Allah (SWT) loves us for doing this. But how to perform repentance?

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) narrates a story:

*“Born and bred in Baghdad, Beshrafi Marwi – he was about 50 years (time of Imam Al-Kazim), was indulged in sinful lifestyle. He had a party at his house, he had music and everything at his house. Imam asked the servants who is the owner of this house – is the house free or a slave? The servant said that of course he is free. Imam said, no wonder that he is having a party at his house. If he saw himself as a servant he wouldn't be doing this. The owner of the house asked who has talking to you – he asked about the Imam (although he didn't know him). However, him merely asking gave him the hint that it could be no other than Imam Musa Al-Kazim ('a). On his bare feet he ran behind the Imam and stopped him and said I swear to God I am not free – tomorrow comes not matter how wealthy I am, tomorrow comes and I have to seek refuge in God. It is because of my stupidity that I did the music. His name changed to Beshri Hafi (bear foot). He used to walk bare footed and said that everywhere is Allah's table cloth. The imam ('a) taught him how to do repentance. He became of the high ranks in the history of the Urafa (beshrafi) and a Zaheed.”*

## 2.7 How Does A Salik Repent

The question is how do we do repentance and tawbah. *Urafa* say that we need to consider two points:

We need to think of the reasons and causes of the sins that we have committed. Why did I do whatever I did? Why did it happen try to get to the root of the cause and source of the sin? There must be a reason why – some motivations and justifications. Once they are identified then we can try to uproot them. Once we do this then at least we are conscious of the source of the sins before doing repentance.

The second is the external, I must change my lifestyle in terms of friends, places I go, what I say and do etc.

Imam Ali (‘a) in Nahgul Balagha<sup>1</sup> says:

*“Someone said astaghfirallah (just to show off), Imam told him do you know what that means? – it is for the spiritually high rank people. Imam teaches us the conditions of repentance. Repentance of God has six (6) pillars. You need to build them...”*

### 2.7.1 First Condition For Repentance

You must really regret the past, comes in three layers:

I have done something silly in the past and I was busted – a big embarrassment socially. Because one is so concerned about his reputation they repent – but the focus is wrong. In fact, they are not repenting in God but that they just want the reputation back. This is not a good thing to do.

I regret what I have done, but know I am conscious of the hell fire – the true punishment. Knowing this and to avoid this I make repentance to stay away from hell fire

The best type of repentance that Imam Ali (‘a) is talking about – I reach a conclusion that what I did in the past is so hated. The moment I remember this it conjures up negative thoughts in my head. I believe that I have transgressed Gods will. And this is nothing but embarrassment to me – even though no one knows about this. It is between me and Allah (SWT). I can’t afford doing this in front of a young person so how can I do it in front of Allah (SWT) seeing that he is the All-Aware

### 2.7.2 Second Condition For Repentance

Know that we are disgust – you intend that it happened but inshallah it will not happen again. One should firmly be repeated that we should not repeat it again Quran Surah Ta-Him –

Repent to God but if you want to repent then do so (nasooH) repent in sincerity.

Prophet (S) introduced:

Tawbah NasooH is there only where the person repents has no intention to return to the sin again so much so that like when the milk comes from the bosom of the mother it doesn't go back again.

### **2.7.3 Third Condition For Repentance**

(One of the most difficult ones) – if you really want to repent then you must publicly tell people that you have wronged if you have back bitted or spoken ill to others. Imam ('a) says:

For each one whatever you have taken away from them, money wise, fame wise then you must return it to them. The Prophet (S):

Once spoke to business men: do you know who is the bankrupt? They said obviously the one who has no money. The real bankrupt is the one on the Day is the one who is brought up to Judgement and the enemies are around him (his children, spouse, parents, etc.) and each one has said that you have been unfair to me. And the bankrupt person has nothing to give him. He turns to Allah (SWT) and says help me. The Angels will come to him and say you don't have anything. They will come to that bankrupt person and say do you have any provisions that you have gathered in the worldly life – like prayers and other things? Do you have any fasting in lue of what you have taken from the others? They may be left with nothing in the end.

Dua Abu Hamazah: *“On the day of judgement I don't want to be bankrupt It is much easier to settle accounts here then later.”*

### **2.7.4 Fourth Condition For Repentance**

There is something between you and God. Try to make it up the things that you haven't done. Your worshipping is like your transport on the spiritual journey towards Allah (SWT). If the transport is missing a few parts then it won't take us there nicely.

### **2.7.5 Fifth Condition For Repentance You Always Are Living A Life Of Grievance.**

The fact that we cannot forget our sins is good and healthy because it keeps us conscious of the bad things that we have done. At night the person is crying and repenting and in the day time they are fasting

### **2.7.6 Sixth Condition For Repentance**

You have to give a taste of hardship of worshipping and doing rituals. Just as we have been given the good taste of the sin. *Urafa* say:

We need a correlation between sin and tawbah for example, know that we are conscious of the sins for eg one makes a trip to an island to do sin (pays to indulge in sin) in repentance they should pay to go to hajj

## 2.8 Who Is A True Repenter?

Prophet (saww): *“Do you know who is the true repenter? If I have repented but my worshipping has not increased then I have not done my repentance. (if their clothes have changed – clothes is symbolised of lifestyle and covering and appearance to reflect the inner self). If one has repented and has not changed his bad friends then he hasn’t done his repentance. If one has repented and has not changed the majlis and sessions that they do with the same type of people then they haven’t done their repentance. If one repents and doesn’t change their bed (sexual sin) hasn’t repented. If one repents and is still mean and stingy hasn’t repented.”*

In general, if one repents then they must change. One of the changes after they have performed repentance.

## 2.9 Final Procedures

Prophet (S) said: Now that you have done everything (lapsed and everything) then you can say I seek forgiveness. Prophet said the way you have to do it is as follows: (must be done immediately)

1. Nahjul Balagha saying 417

# **3rd Station – Accounting ‘Muhasabah’**

## 3.1 Introduction To Station Of Accounting – Muhasabah

One of the references of this station is that Ayah in Surah al-Hajj:

Oh you who believe, practice piety and it is compulsory on every person and soul (male or female) to look at what they are sending forth for the hereafter and be pious. Do not be like people who forgot. Because Allah (SWT) makes them forget themselves. They are the sinful people.

That means our words and actions and intentions that we are sending ourselves to the hereafter. Thus, the concept of watching over ourselves is recommended by Allah (SWT) as a form of practicing piety. Allah (SWT) is watching everything that we are doing anyway and is recording everything.

To understand this station, need to consider this example: Imagine that you are a director of a company, you will be keeping records of everything from a tax perspective won't you for auditing. If this has been don't truthfully and clearly then you are not afraid of being audited. If you haven't had your tax return for years or there is some sort out there – then you would be freaking out wouldn't you?

This is the same as the person who doesn't do accounting on their own actions. *Urafa* say that the more we pay attention to this the more we can climb the spiritual ladder. This is a compulsory step. It is one of the signs of sincere repentance. Like if I wasn't sincere then I would still be doing the bad.

To this extent Imam Al-Kazim ('a) says:

*"He is not one of us as our follower, the one that does not keep a record of their actions everyday. If it is a good action – he or she will ask to give them more by being appreciative. If it is a bad action then they will be making repentance."*

We need to be conscious of what we have done.

One of the great Ullama, called Said Ibni Tawous wrote a book titled – accounting the self – this is one of the best books in the area of Muhasabah. Sayyid Allamah Tabatabai was also one of the scholars that really believed in this stage of muhasabeh.

### **3.2 The Station Of Accounting – Muhasabah**

Muslim mystics say that we should start the day by having a number of conditions. Throughout the day we should be watching ourselves to keep the eyes open to whatever we say and do. At the end of the accounting then we should be:

Musharkah – placing conditions on yourself

Murakaba – watching your actions

Muhasaba – accounting your actions

Mu'akaba – punishment for your actions

Concentration on Muhasabah, Prophet (S) stated in his will, advised Abu Thar:

*"No one can be among the pious people unless they keep track of what he or she is doing. In the sense that you should be accounting everything you do."*

Ayatollah Hasan Zada said:

*"Record everything that you do during the day, and on the Day inshallah you will be given sustenance."*

Imam Khomeini (ra) said:

*"In the morning, tell yourself is it a big deal to be good for just one day, not forever but just one day. For this day promise me that you will not commit a sin."*

During the day keep watch of your actions, then remember that promise that you have made to yourself

– to beat your nafs al-ammarah. Leave bad deeds and actions to another day.

Story of the shop keeper and customer:

There was a shopkeeper that put a sign up saying 'today cash, tomorrow credit'. One customer came to him and said I don't have cash today so might as well be tomorrow. And he came back tomorrow and guess what – the same sign was hung up and the customer when coming back said – hey I don't have cash today so I might as well come back tomorrow. However, this is an endless loop if you keep thinking about it and a form of deception if you think about it because based on the sign there is no tomorrow because today's tomorrow is tomorrow's today – so in short you can't win.

This is the way we need to approach to soul. One of the benefits of doing things for forty (40) days is that the soul will eventually get used to it. This technique contributes considerably towards massaging the soul and training it to become one's second nature.

A story of an old couple:

An old couple came to see a sheikh to draft up their will. They filled it out and they came to the section on the rituals – they didn't do 50 years of lapsed prayers, fasting, khums etc etc. Unfortunately, they did not realize that they had all these obligations to do.

Allah (SWT) is the accouter.

***We shall set up scales of justice for the Day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least, and if there be (no more than) the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it (to account): and enough are We to take account. (21:47)***

Another ayah says:

The weight of an atom good / bad will not escape

This emphasizes the importance of our own accountability of our own actions before Allah (SWT) accounts for our deeds.

### **3.3 Method Of Accounting The Self And One's Actions**

A good method of doing this is the account for your sins in a table. List all the wajibat, haram, makrooh, mustahab, or I don't know, all the things I have said, all that I have eaten, saw, done during the day. At the end of the day make the total of it.

Prophet (S) went on a trip and arrived at a place with no grass, they asked them to collect some wood. They said we can't there is no wood here. He told them to try and make an effort. They came back and each had a bit here and there to make a big bundle and the Prophet (S) captured that opportunity and

said. ‘And such the sins of your actions will be collected.

We have been given the opportunity through the blessings of Allah (SWT) to have life to utilize these blessings to build our lives and buildings in the hereafter. What have we built for ourselves on the Day of Judgement. We should be asking Allah (SWT) to change these actions to be beneficial for us in the hereafter. Who cares how many buildings and possessions we have in this world if it is the hereafter that we should be focusing on. We desperately need this on the Day.

The Quran says: Why don’t you consider and plan for things as you need them in the hereafter

*Urafa say:*

Keep a record of the deeds that you do, and the blessings that you have received. Compare the blessings you have received (breathing is a blessing) with the sins that you have committed. And see how much we have not been appreciative

Do not be proud of your good deeds – otherwise this is the fuel burning the trees that we are planted for ourselves on the day of Judgement. Say after this that ‘this was a blessing from Allah (SWT)’ it’s not from ourself.

Be mindful of the obligations we have to make between us and Allah (SWT). At the end of the day after you have seen your book of action for today, go towards the Qibla, and after you have said glory and thank you for the blessings that you have received during that day as well as ask for repentance for the sins that you have committed. Say:

*illahi ‘afwaka, ‘afwaka, ‘afwak – illahi ‘afwaka, ‘afwaka, ‘afwak ya man khitaman naboowata bi mohammaden (S) ikhdimli fi youmi hatha bikhayr, washahree bikhayr, ya sanatee bikhayr, wa ‘omree bikhayr*

Oh you the one whom sealed the Prophethood with Prophet Mohammad (S), seal for me today with good, and this month with good, and this year with good, and end my life in this world with good.

Hadith states:

*“You will get the reward of Martyrs in the way of Allah (SWT) when you recite this dua.”*

This is imperative in our quest to end our lives like martyrs, do Jihad al-Akbar in striving against the sinful soul.

# 4th Station – Returning To Allah (SWT)

## 4.1 A Brief Look Back At The Station Of Repentance 3rd Station

### – Accountability:

Ask others to help you out in this station as most of us can't really see our own mistakes and sins

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a): *"May Allah (SWT) bless the one whom gives me a gift of correcting/showing me my mistakes."*

He will be giving me a gift because it is a source of benefit for us. Encourage people to have this attitude amongst us. We have to develop ourselves when people comment on our mistakes, it is worth considering – because it allows us to identify our wrongs.

*Urafa* hate friends who flatter them and loves their bold enemies. Friends who flatter them aren't friends because they don't benefit me. The friend is the one that may seem to be our enemy for pointing bad things in us out. We need someone like this to help us out

Main reference:

***"Turn ye to our Lord (in repentance) and bow to His (Will), before the Penalty comes on you: after that ye shall not be helped." (39:54)***

***Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (39:53)***

Imam Ali has said: "There is no better verse than this to give heart, joy and confidence to a believer for the availability of divine mercy."

There is one of the things in this ayah that states that all of my sins are forgiven. But are they really forgiven? – what are the conditions? We need to be aware of any of these conditions. We need to work hard to make sure that all of our sins are forgiven. These stations allows one to wipe away their sins.

This station is there to complement the station of repentance. In that station one made a covenant – but this more of a verbal agreement. This station takes us that step higher in our journey:

Story of friends:

Two friends could be good together, friend one makes bad with friend two. Two says I forgive (this is like repentance – this is the most we can receive in the 2nd station, or like someone that has been discredited – and repays the due balance, but still the file is there in case) two has forgiven but he still is

mindful of the injustice committed against him

After one performs repentance Allah (SWT) says you are forgiven, but that is not enough for me. One needs to delete this file altogether. This station allows for this file to be deleted.

## 4.2 Introduction To The Station Of Returning Back To Allah (Swt)

There are various levels of this station:

*Al A'f* : (expression in Quran) you are forgiven,

*Al Safh*: This is deleted, forgiveness + record is removed

*Al-'inabah* has a root of Al-Nooub (another name for bee returning to the hive), means to return to something frequently.

*Al-'inabah* means one that return to Allah (SWT), tawbah was also return – but here it means returning in repentance and in good deeds and action. Good deeds washes away bad deeds (Quran). The emphasis is on putting it into practice.

## 4.3 The Three Pillars Of Returning To Allah (Swt)

Kharj Abdullah Ansari has said to get this station done you need to build 3 pillars:

1. To return to Allah (SWT) with as many good deeds as possible (in correcting ourselves). One of the best ways of doing it is to do *istigfar* and to stop doing what is bad. Also, we need to put in our financial analysis something called '*Rad Al-thaleb*' in case we have been unfair to anyone. As a compensation in case we do not know whether we have committed or not committed a sin to someone (like doing backbiting or bad relations) do a good deed like paying zakat or fasting and in your intention dedicate the reward to them. The reasoning behind this is that you are seeking your just reconciliation or compensation as a form of balance in this world so that you are not punished in the hereafter.

On the other hand, if you have been treated unjustly – this is a blessing. If you can come to erasing the bad deeds that people have done to us. The more you feel hurt the more of your own sins would be forgiven. I have forgiven this person for example for the things that they have done to us. At this stage we can ask Allah (SWT) to wipe away our sins. Any of our lapsed prayers or deeds that we were supposed to do and didn't start doing.

Remember in the station of repentance you made a promise to return to Allah (SWT). Now is the time to be loyal to the promise (not to do the action/bad deed again). This is the opportunity not to do it again – how? *Urafa* and Ansari suggest the following – you have to change your system of thinking. Before we do anything we should go through the following:

- Think about it, we imagine it before hand, we calculated in our mind the costs and benefits
- Make Intention about it
- Implementation

The sin sounded good, made an intention and then we went about actioning the sin.

Is there any correlation between the ringing of the bell and the mouthwatering. Pavalov the Russian physician said that there is a relation. *Urafa* about 1,000 years ago said that we can condition ourselves with anything. Pavalov every time he would feed the dog he would ring the bell. After a while the bell rang and the food wasn't served, the dogs mouth was wet. This formed the 'classical conditioning' Humans work the same way. We can condition ourselves to see for example semi-naked women as semi-naked donkeys. If we can condition ourselves to this point then we would be far away from committing sins. What we should be doing is condition ourselves such that we see and feel the burning fire of Hell when we see and witness bad deeds or sins being committed by ourselves or being in an area where haram is being committed.

Imam Khomeini was very punctual, even the time that his son was assassinated he still turned up for class. There was a time where he didn't turn up to class and people were wondering why not. This happened for the second day. A few people visited the Imam and he was sick in bed. What has happened? His family said that he was feverish and we don't know why. When we sat down and asked him what happened? He said that he was in a majlis a few nights ago where he overheard someone gossiping against a *Marja*, this affected him so much that he became feverish. This lasted for three days.

He has gone through that much that his body was so sensitive to not only doing sin but even hearing it. What was once good in now bad – it has worked for others and can work for you. You have to rescue yourself from the pleasure of the sin. It has happened before and will happen again. Do not feel as though you are better than others. This is a plague for your good deeds. Never look down upon others – if you think they are still asleep might wake up and beat you. You whom might wake up might die still asleep spiritually. Just that you have building the good deeds you don't have to wreck this by burning the good deeds. The bad deeds wash away the good deeds. Do not ever be proud of our good deeds. Because no one really knows whether their deeds will be accepted or not. So we should be living on a level such that we are conscious of this and not feel good and have pride when we do good and look down upon others.

You had verbal said that you repent to Allah (SWT). It is time that you practically say so. Steps to reach this is that:

You lose hope in your action. In other words, you do not see any deeds that you have done. This is so that we cannot burn our good deeds. We should not see things that we are

the source of the good deeds. When in reality everything is from Allah (SWT). He is the source of all the blessings. This is so that we turn ourselves to him in practice – this could attract more blessings from Allah (SWT). We are in so much need of Allah (SWT). The moment we come to this level and attitude we would be seeing Allah (SWT) pour a lot of blessings to us.

## 5th Station – Thinking – At-Tafakkur

### 5.1 Introduction To The Station Of Thinking (At-Tafakkur)

Some *Urafa* say that this station is still counted as the preliminary steps of the starting of the journey. Imam Khomeini says that this is the first stage to the journey. Khar Abdul Ansari – says that this is the fifth station to reaching Allah (SWT). Either way this is one of the important steps to change one's lifestyle.

Muslim Philosophy state that '*Attafakoor*' or 'thinking' is relating to, to go and utilize the information that you have to come up with a question that you need to answer. For example some information is given to solve a problem. Thinking in philosophy means that we come up with the questions relating to a particular problem. This is a broad meaning and even includes the cunning and bad element of analysis

*Urafa* say that '*Attafakour*' relates to 'searching for insight of the heart', or in other terms – trying to activate the inner senses. So that we can find what we do not know. The *Arif* has nothing other to look for than Allah (SWT). Thinking means an endeavor for one to pursue to active the inner senses so that they are more able to find Allah (SWT). One can apply this

Quran – the purpose of the revelation to explain to the people, and so that they think (this is the objective of the Quran, to get people to think and activate their inner senses)

*Urafa* believe that Quran comes in two formats:

1. The creation of the whole universe
2. The written Quran that we have with us

Each sentence in the Quran is called an '*Ayah*', because each ayah is in effect a sign of Allah (SWT). The whole universe is an ayat of Allah. Each ayah in the Quran is not to be called a verse. The Quran was revealed so that we can think and activate our inner senses.

In Islam we are encouraged to do our ritual obligations and think about our deeds. For example, Allah (SWT) doesn't say pray because I said so, but rather that we should pray because it protects us from the

evils out there.

## 5.2 The Significance Of Thinking

Someone once asked that Prophet (S) what is the worthiest act, he said thinking. This is the key, to think for one hour about the Quran is better than worshipping for one night, or one year, or sixty years, or seventy years. As reported by various ahadith – because it is based on peoples own situations.

Imam Ali ('a) said: *"We have committed a lot of sins from just thinking. You need to have positive thinking."*

We need to wash away these thoughts by good thinking. French Philosopher, (founder of modern philosophy) – coined the term – 'I think therefore I am'. This is the main differentiation between man and beast. This station is a means of travelling and a prescription as well.

## 5.3 The Levels Of Thinking

*Urafa* say that we should spend our time thinking, the levels are:

Spend some times during the day and night to think about the whole universe and ourselves (where did we come from, who developed me, who protected me when I was in the fetus, what happened that I am this old age, who has protected me, think about the blessings of the eyes, what if I cannot see, every part of us is a miracle, step out at night and look at the stars)

If you think, you will see that everything is the fingerprint of Allah (SWT).

Ali Imran 190 – 191, changed the life of the Prophet (S) completely:

***Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day,- there are indeed Signs for men of understanding, (3: 190)***

-----Aga Pooya commentary-----

The Holy Prophet said:

"Woe to him who reads this verse and does not ponder thereon".

Imam Muhammad bin Ali al Baqir said: *"Observe and examine the creation of Allah."*

The Holy Prophet said:

*"There is no form of devotion like meditation."*

(Refer to Imam Ali's sayings on page 20 and 33 of this book, and his sermons in Nahj al Balagha dealing with the creation of the heavens and the earth).

-----End of Aga Pooya commentary-----

***“Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (With the thought): ‘Our Lord! not for naught Hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire.’” (3: 191)***

The Hadith says the lifestyle of the Prophet (S) changed as a result of these two ayat, whenever he used to go out to do *Wudhu* he used to recite these two ayat, there are signs in the creations of Allah (SWT), they were not created in vain – there is a purpose in them. We can get the answers from pondering and reflecting.

Sheikh Jawad Tabrizi used to go out for tahajud, he used to go out early morning to do the *Wudhu*, he used to read these two ayat every time he used to go out in making the *Wudhu*.

What is the benefit of thinking before we do anything?

Allah (SWT) is the creator everything. To be thankful of Allah (SWT) and increase our worshipping. Spend time thinking about the dunya and the hereafter as well. We will be signing out of this life eventually like others. This dunya does not become loyal to anyone.

Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) says:

*“Spend some time thinking about this dunya, and compare it to our ancestors – did they stay with the dunya or the dunya stay with the them.”*

They are not anywhere except underground, think about all these things. Don’t you realize how close the angel of death is to us.

One of the *Urafa* was asked why did you start this journey – he said:

“The fact that I am dying, it alerted me and it motivated me to get into practical *Irfan*. Who is your guide people asked him? He said my guide is my intellect and rationality (thinking and reflecting). What is your provision people asked him? My provision is taqwa that is all that I have in my suit case it is the best provision I could take for me. What is your love people asked him? My love is my worshipping – if you know what you are doing you would enjoy it, I am in love with Allah (SWT).”

Who is your companion people asked him? Allah (SWT) is my companion. I am going towards him with him. (he cannot step without Allah (SWT)) Where did you learn this stuff from? He said Quran. These are types of things we can reflect on.

We need to think about the blessings that Allah (SWT) has given us. Once you start having real dreams, some intuition. The moment that you think you are proud of yourself you should thank Allah (SWT)

asince we do not deserve it. It is not the result of our actions; it is all the blessings of Allah (SWT). If you believe that the good things like winning in a court case is a result of our good deeds then we would be losers as the element of pride will kick in. Allah (SWT) wants humble people.

The Quran says that after the victory of Prophet (S) had with the infidels – you didn't kill them, Allah (SWT) killed them. A higher step than this can be seen in the Surah an-Nasr:

***When comes the Help of Allah, and Victory, And thou dost see the people enter Allah's Religion in crowds, Celebrate the praises of thy Lord, and pray for His Forgiveness: For He is Oft-Returning (in Grace and Mercy). (110: 1-3)***

Refer to the commentary of (*Surah Mumin: 55*), (*Fath: 2*) and (*Muhammad: 15*) and ayat 19 for the meaning of the phrase "*wastaghfirhu*" whenever it is used for the infallible Holy Prophet and his Ahl ul Bayt.

You achieved victory in Mecca, and groups of people come forth and become Muslim. It is not me, myself and I – but rather give glory to Allah (SWT) and give forgiveness for the mistakes that I might have done. You need to be always conscious of this.

One of the highest levels of thinking: thinking that you will never understand Allah (SWT) by the means of thinking. This means 'thinking' is really insufficient to know Allah (SWT).

There is a hot debate between philosophers and *Urafa* – the following examples highlights this debate.

Q – Can you see with your ears? A – Of course not

*Urafa* say that to know Allah (SWT) you cannot use the wrong means and instrument – through thinking.

Ahadith say that we are using the wrong means – to know the real essence and reality of Allah (SWT) you need to activate your heart not your mind thinking. This will allow one to reach tawhid – and one comes to the point where you say 'Oh Lord introduce yourself to me, if you do not do this I will not know your Messenger Prophet (S), if I do not know your Messenger I will not know your Hujjah Imam Mahdi ('a) and if you do not know of our present Hujjah I will be going astray'. (Dua from our Aimmah, whom have reached the highest stage of thinking) This is a stage of absolute tawhid, that I give up I endeavoured to try but I give up. I do not know anything in the end. I cannot come to know you as you're the only one that can introduce yourself to me. Prescription:

One of our distinguished Maraje' Sayyid Marashi Najafi (Shabourdeen) whom has passed away some years back said: When I was in najaf, I decided to go to Samare on a moqam of Sayyid Muhammad (son of Imam Hadi ('a), as I was going I got lost, it was my first experience, I was hungry and hot, all I remember is that I felt unconscious, and I woke up and all I could see was that my head was resting on the lap of someone whom was pouring water on me and was a very handsome sayyid. He asked him – where are you going? He replied I was going to visit Sayyid Muhammad moqam. He said but you are

here and the Marja' was freaking out that how he got to that place. How come I didn't see it before when I was conscious. I couldn't figure it out that the water I was given was so sweet and so light. It was that it was Imam Mahdi ('a) visiting him because he visited him before but he just came and helped him and left. This time Sayyid Shahbourdeen ceased the opportunity being a salek to ask the Imam Mahdi ('a) for a prescription (something to benefit from him) for benefit of this world and the hereafter. The Imam ('a) gave him eight (8) points and said beforehand consider and take care of all these eight (8) points and you will be alright in this world and the hereafter:

1. Recite Quran as much as you can,
2. Aqiq with names of the Ma'soomen and put it under the tongue of a dead person,
3. Be kind and respectful for ones parents (dead or alive), do good things for them,
4. As much as you can you go to Hajj, go to Shrines of the Aimmah ('a) as much as you can,
5. Respect the sayyid and the ofspring as much as you can, because one can respect the Prophet (S) through this,
6. Do not forget the salaah al-layl, it is shame for those that relate themselves to us but they are not doing salaah al-layl,
7. Tasbeeh of Fatimah ('a) as much as one can (before one sleeps), and ziyarat of Imam Husain ('a)
8. Read the sermons of the Ahlul-Bayt sremom of jadditah of Fatimah in Mosque in Meidna, of Shaqshiqeya of Imam Ali ('a) in Iraq, sermon of zaynab of court of Yazid.

## **6th Station – Remembering Allah (SWT) – Zhikr**

### **6.1 Introduction To Station Of Rememberance (Zhikr)**

It is essentially needed for the beginner as well as those in advanced level of perfection in their journey towards Allah (SWT). It is both a means and a station. How can we remember Allah (SWT) when Shaytan is tempting? (in a sinful situation)

One cannot commit a sin unless they are God unconscious, the light of guidance is very dim. In the back of your mind your faith is still there – but this is weaker than the temptation. If we come across this magnetic field of shaytan how to control this?

To reduce the risk of falling into shaytan:

Stay in touch and in tuned with majalis al-Zhikr Prophet (S) said if you want to have remembrance of God, then attend places of spiritual gathering. The more you charge it the more it will stay with you. Over time it will become our second nature.

Hadith says – that don't stay away from the Muslim community

Find the right companion, that if you find the right person or the right people. If you get the pressure from the right friends then this will save you years of studying. Over a period of time you begin to assimilate into the group's collective spirituality. The group can either turn you away or towards Allah (SWT). The presence of the right people will help you out. 3You can create that angel of guidance for you by associating yourself with good people.

What happens that two people get friendly and others do not. When you meet some people you feel so comfortable with them for some reason. The opposite is also true.

Hadith says that:

*“The souls of humans are like soldiers of an army, those whom know each other in the previous world once they come across each other today they find themselves compatible.”*

Like when you meet your spouse – the right person, it feels as though you have known them for a very long time. Those that do not know each other they do not get along with each other.

Philosophers express this as follows:

Compatibility is the cause of association

If there is something in common than you will associate yourself with others.

One of the more renown Muslim *Arifs* and Poet said that:

If you want to sit with God, don't you remember that Allah (SWT) told Prophet Mosa ('a) that:

“I'm sitting with the one that remembers me.”

If you want to sit with God, let him sit with people of *Urafa* (people that remind you of Allah (SWT)), so it is just like that you are sitting with Allah (SWT).

Once upon a time there were two birds, a crow and a stalk.

One *Arif* noticed this and said how is that they are walking and flying with each other as friends they look and seem different birds. I came closer and found out that both of them are limping.

There is a reason why people stick together. The younger you are the more prone you are to peer pressure. You are to be very mindful of whom your friends are, it makes a big difference to your life.

Have you ever questioned yourself? – what are you doing to yourself. Why are we so influenced by others? Naturally we change based on our surroundings.

If you want to be with God you need to associate yourself with good and right people.

Surah Nisa – Ayah 140

***He hath already revealed unto you in the Scripture that, when ye hear the revelations of Allah rejected and derided, (ye) sit not with them (who disbelieve and mock) until they engage in some other conversation. Lo! in that case (if ye stayed) ye would be like unto them. Lo! Allah will gather hypocrites and disbelievers, all together, into hell; (4: 140)***

-----Aga pooya-----

In verse 68 of al-An-am also the believers in Allah have been advised not to sit in the company of scoffers and blasphemers, otherwise they will be no different from them. As the guilt of the infidels and the hypocrites is the same, the punishment will also be the same—eternal burning in hell.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

If the aim is to understand the truth, a meaningful discussion can be made with the critics of Islam as has been enjoined in verse 125 of al-Nahl.

-----end of ag pooya commentary-----

Don't hang around with a hypocrite – like those that pray and drink at the same time.

## **6.2 Principles Of Remembering Allah Swt**

Second principle of remembering God in a provocative situation – is find the right people to hang around with. An associate guide.

Prophet Jesus ('a) was approached by the disciples and said who should we hang around with? Sit with those that when you see them they remind you of God. Once he talks he encourages you to do better things. When you see his action it encourages you to do things of the hereafter.

Prophet Muhammad ('a) make sure you don't answer the call of the dead he advised to the companions. Avoid to be associated with the dead people. How can we hang around with the dead. I mean, those rich people who have luxurious house and once you go to their house and all they talk about is this and that worldly things.

Nothing is mentioned of Allah (SWT), it's all about the share market. If you mix with these guys much you become absent minded.

You don't need to spend much time with these people.

Imam Ali ('a) he would cease any opportunity to talk about the death.

He said don't you need an adviser and guide always helping you, then remember the dead. How can you not remember death.

How can you afford it not to forget death when death doesn't forget you?

If at that moment of committing sin you think of death you naturally conclude that you cannot afford dying like this.

Remembering death prohibited me (Imam Ali as) from committing death

Reduce your wishes, the long wishes accordingly to Imam Ali ('a) prohibits you from doing good. What is our priority.

We are not like that and that *Arif* is because the priority in life is different to their priorities. Change your system of priority in your mind. Give more chance to yourself to be more associated with Allah (SWT). So that Allah (SWT) can be with you more.

Allama Tabatabai:

In terms of socialisation he used to say – some brothers or sisters say that they find it difficult to fast for example. Is there any alternative to fasting. There is an alternative that is mentioned in the Quran. Whenever you are ready do it over three days – it is called the fasting of silence. Talk only for prayers and very necessary things that you need to do in your daily transactions and life. Make a nadhir (vow) between you and Allah (SWT). Every three days you extend it for another three days.

Maryam and Zakariah ('a) made the same fasting, the spiritual fasting.

It is possible to fast by not talking. It trains the mind and tongue not to divert in your ways and talking. It stops you from swearing and other things.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

If it was not for your idle talk, you would see what I see, and hear what I hear

Surah A'raf

There are certain group that when shaytan tries to touch them they remember Allah (SWT).

Prophet Yusuf was in that provocative situation, and he remembered Allah (SWT)

The opposite of which is being absent minded, and God unconscious

Ayat in Surah Kafir come after previous stations:

No-one can come to remembering Allah (SWT) except those that have done Inaba

Surah Baqarah:

If you want to achieve station of thinkr you need to be of people that think and reflect

## 6.3 Benefits Of Remembering Allah Swt

Before the benefits of this station is detailed, a key point to remember is that it is impossible for us get to this station unless the traveler has studied and learnt about and applied the things learnt in previous stations.

The root of all our sins is due to the fact that I go absent minded, what happens that as soon as I step out of the masjid I find that I cannot control my eyes etc, the shaytan is so tempting in this situation. The difference is are we God conscious or not? The more we are mindful of Allah (SWT) the more we are able to control ourselves

For example if we know for sure that Allah (SWT) is watching us then there is no way that we would commit a sin. Sometimes we forget about this and it leads us to committing a sin.

For those whom have reached this stage – it is important for them because we are in need of this remembrance especially when we are lonely. It is so easy for Imam Husayn ('a) to give away his baby for the sake of Allah (SWT) because it is all happening in the vision of Allah. Because he believed that to be mindful and God conscious it amounts to a tranquil heart. Even if the whole world backs on me I can never give up Allah (SWT).

There is no room to even think about committing suicide,

Allah (SWT) advises us in the Quran that:

***Therefore remember Me, I will remember you. Give thanks to Me, and reject not Me. (Quran 2: 152)***

-----commentary with Aga pooya-----

If you remember Allah, avoiding other than He, you are in the midst of reality. Allah, reality, will reflect the remembrance – if the sincere seeker remembers Allah, Allah remembers him.

Forgetfulness can never be attributed to the all-perfect. His remembrance refers to His special favours and bounties bestowed on those who remember Him.

To be grateful (shukr) is the key to the fulfilment and application of remembrance which neutralises desires and generates joy of inner contentment – deep and peaceful.

The opposite of this condition is Kufr—the falling over hurdles on the road of disobedience.

-----end of commentary with Aga pooya-----

In this ayah, Allah (SWT) is not saying Remember me, THEN (in light of what you have done) I will remember you. The moment that you remember Allah (SWT) Allah (SWT) remembers you – the element of time does not come into play here at all. The structure of the ayah in arabic is so well put that there is no mention of time through the word ‘THEN’.

Story: Someone at the time of Sayyid At-Tabatabai wanted to go to

Hajj: He said I went to him (Tabatabai was a leader of practical *Irfan*) and said: “give me some advice I am going to Hajj. Just remember this ayah Remember God, God remembers you, remember this ayah and you will be taken care of. Whichever situation you are in.

## 6.4 Thinking (Fikr) Is Different To Remembering (Fikr)

Zhikr has a difference to Fikr:

Zhikr – doesn’t mean that we do not know it, in fact we know it. *Urafa* say that the mirror of the heart collates dust over time. The heart is still there like the knowledge. Its just sometimes we have to rub the heart from the dust to allow it to reflect the reality more and more. The more you remember the story and knowledge of Allah (SWT) (for example moral issues we don’t need a degree to work out whether something is good or bad – we just need to remember, learning and remembering are two different realms. Once we are reminded we should have sufficient knowledge of it.

Fikr – Thinking means that there is something we do not know and by the means of the things we do know we endeavour to turn the unknown to the known

There are plenty of ahadith when it comes to the chapter of Zhikr. The ahadith is so abundantly rich.

One of the best known maraje’ and *Urafa*, if you remember this hadith it will be sufficient, just think about this:

Hadith tells us that there was a communication Allah (SWT) has had with Prophet Moses (‘a):

Oh Moses, I am the companion for anyone whom remembers me

You will be in safe hands, you just need to have faith.

Allah (SWT) says:

There is a group of people that when the Shayateen come and touch them there is one means that are safeguarded, and they are the ones whom remember Allah (SWT). The Quran says:

Those that are pious that when a group of Shayateen they attack them and touch them, in that situation they remember God. Then the eyes of their hearts will open

Prophet Yusuf ('a):

As prophet Yusuf ('a) did when he was in that difficult situation. By remembering Allah (SWT) the eyes of your heart will be open in terms of the true reality of this situation is and you will stay away from it.

Hadith from Imam Al-Sadiq ('a):

Whoever remembers Allah (SWT) in reality he is the one that is obeying God,

## **6.5 Different Levels Of Remembrance Zhikr**

Zhikr starts from the very low level and progresses through to a more advanced level:

### **6.5.1 Verbal Zhikr**

The verbal Zhikr is the lowest level on the tip of my tongue, this is like the words that we are expressing:

Zhikr Khafeh – are the words that do not require our lips much (like la ilaha illallah) people that are around you do not see the vibrations of the lips. This is better because there is less chance of Riya; or showing off.

Zhikr al-jaleh – are the verbal thinkr like subhanallah, s,s, s, it is very sharp on the ears. It attracts attention, try to avoid it as much as possible. If you are in public try to do Zhikr khafeh instead of Zhikr al-jaleh. The proper Zhikr should be close to the heart.

It requires a prescription and even the dosage is relative to the person. An example of this verbal Zhikr is found below:

Ya hayyo ya qayyom ya la illa ha illa ant

Another Zhikr that is very important

La illaha illa ant subhanaka inni kontom minal dhtalameen

(Zhikr Yunusiyyi, say it especially in prostration, you intend when you say this that you have been unfair to yourself and the whole glory belongs to Allah (SWT))

Repeat this as much as possible

## 6.5.2 Zhikr Of The Heart (Zhikr Al-Qolby)

Zhikr al-Qolby (Zhikr of the heart), when we say one has to be God conscious and mindful it means that one has to have Zhikr in the heart. This station belongs in the heart. Imam Khoemeini shahabadi (his teacher in practical and theoretical *Irfan*) the example of remembering Allah (SWT) in the heart is like a mother that wants to teach the child how to talk, you repeat it so many times that the child will eventually say it without much effort. This is so that we can open up the tongue of the heart to say 'ya Allah'. You practice it that much that you begin to hear it from the heart. Then after the child has learnt how to speak the mother can respond back to the child.

To understand this better, consider the following story from Allamah Mutahari (there was a genius *Arif* Sayiid Hashim Haddar)

He met him and I got some prescription from him, one day he approached him and said that how do you pray, he said (mutaharri) I am so mindful of the pronunciation of the words. Mutahari thought that he was doing a good job of concentrating on the meanings. His response was so when do you pray to God if you are just careful of the meanings of things.

It means that still the tongue of your heart has not yet activated. You need to reach the stage where the heart is communicating with Allah (SWT) and tongue is just repeating.

Story of two brothers:

There were two brother great scholars – Ahmad Gazali, and Abu hamd Gazali (were known for their practical *Irfan*)

Abu Hamd asked his brother why don't you come down to pray with us in the masjid one day (being the Imam of the masjid and prayers) his brother kept to himself until finally he agreed and said that inshallah he will come down. In the middle of the prayer people noticed that he left the prayers. Some of the students of Abu Hamd said that look your brother should not attend prayers in future being your brother his act of leaving prayers in the middle is disrespectful. He said let me ask him what you have done. Did you do this to defame me? You forced me to come and I came the brother said. But the moment that you lead the prayers all of the sudden I found myself lost. He said, remember that second that you thought of the hay that you should be feeding your horse, you were not with Allah (SWT) any more, at that second I felt as though the spaceship that we went aboard all of a sudden had no captain. How can I let him drive and lead me in prayer, so I left.

This is the Zhikr of the heart.

One of the *Urafa* said:

Something happens to me that I woke up, I was thinking that I was doing a perfect job in my salat.

Hadith say that if one pray is accepting its good. We have to keep praying hoping that there is only one prayer that is accepted.

### **6.5.3 Practical Zhikr**

Practical Zhikr: this type of Zhikr 'Zhikr kathir' mentioned in the Qur'aan, there is one type of people that will not be effected by Shaytan and they are the ones that do Zhikr kathir.

Imam Sadiq ('a) said

One of the more difficult duty that Allah (SWT) has made to people is three:

- a. To share your wealth with others (health, wisdom etc)
- b. To be fair and just to others (treat them as you are treated)
- c. Not talking about subhannalla walhamdolillah wa la illha illalaho allaho akbar, to remember Allah (SWT) in whatever he has made compulsory to us and avoid those things that Allah (SWT) has made not good for us.

For example – it is pointless doing Zhikr while watching a dirty movie saying allaho akbar, allaho akbar. If one really wants to practice Zhikr they would switch the television off completely.

*Urafa* say that the best Zhikr amari is to do practical Zhikr, in terms of when you are in a situation where you are thinking of doing sharr, they abstain from progressing through to actioning it.

### **6.6 Deeper Meaning Of Remembrance – Zhikr**

Deeper meaning of Zhikr is to remain God conscious in preventing one from committing wrong and sharr.

Unless you know yourself and your soul you cannot find treatment for the problem. In this spiritual journey you need to know enough information about the spiritually anatomy of the self. The background lies in the life of the Prophet (S):

Allah (SWT) has created angels and has made them with intellect (they are absolute spirituality and nothing else), and Allah (SWT) has created the animals with whim and desires (shahwah) and no spirituality. And Allah (SWT) has created mankind and he is the intellect between soul and body (both spirituality and desire). Whoever overcomes his whims and desires will go to a higher level than angels. On the other hand whomever gives the positive response to his whim and desire they will become less than any animal.

This is the diagnosis – these two forces exist in the self, one force is leaning towards the 'its seems and

feels good' whilst the other force is leaning towards the 'it is bad for the self'. There is an obvious conflict of interest, and because of this when one attends a spiritual gathering they feel better.

*Urafa* say that unless you combat these two forces in terms of controlling yourself, one will not rest and be a God conscious person.

## **6.7 Significance Of Stories In History In Your Journey Towards Allah Swt**

*Urafa* benefit from stories that for centuries people have been reading them as fairytales, they use them as parables of describing divine examples.

One of these stories is between Layla and Majnoon:

One famous arabic poet Ibn Hawzan, Molana mashabi in Farsi.

Majnoon was in love with Layla and was trying to do his best to reach her. One day he said that enough is enough I will go to ride to her house (what is going to happen are they going to kill me?) early in the morning he rides his she camel to Layla. The she camel has just given birth to a baby camel – her heart was naturally with the baby. The further they were from the baby the more the camel was at rest. Majnoon hit the camel to get the camel to go forward. However, when Majnoon stops and has a rest on the camel – it takes steps backwards. Why? Because there are two forces here that are in conflict of interest. Naturally the camels heart is with its newly born whereas the heart of Majnoon is beating towards Layla. Rider on one hand is forcing the camel to go forward and the camel is trying to go towards the child. Majnoon after waking up decides that look – what am I doing all these hours I haven't moved much in my travel to Layla. In the end he says your heart is with your baby and my heart is with your lady he said you go your way and will go my way.

*Urafa* say if you want to be God conscious then one day you have to get off the camel of the tempting Nafs. Until you decide to get off the camel then you wouldn't know whther you will respond to your Nafs or your Intellect.

## **6.8 Advise From The Prophet (S)**

Hadith from the Prophet (S):

The example of your heart is the example of the feather in a windy day

Hadith:

One day you come to the masjid (*Irfan* lessons of the Prophet (S) used to happen after morning prayer) a student came to the Prophet (S) and told him that when we are around you we feel so spiritual but

when we go out of this magnetic field onto our own lives we go back to our ways. The Prophet (S) told them that:

Hurry up towards the gardens of paradise

Where is the address for the gardens of paradise ya Rasool? He said – yes attend the majalis al-Zhikr

The more you are staying in touch the more you will seek closeness and nearness to Allah (SWT).

We are the combination of soul and spirituality.

## **6.9 Final Three (3) Tips For Remembering Allah Swt**

### **6.9.1 Seize Any Opportunity To Remember Allah Swt**

Seize any opportunity you have of majlis, Allah (SWT) says that:

I am with the companion of anyone whom accompanies me (attending the majalis of Zhikr, to remind you of the Hellfire and the Heaven)

To look at the face of the Alim is an act of worship

The more you stay in touch the more you can concrete the spirituality

Hadith:

When deciding on a friend choose one that reminds you more of Allah (SWT).

### **6.9.2 Never Say You Cannot Attend A Majlis Of Al-Zhikr**

Never say that you cannot attend the Majalis al-Zhikr, I know it all, because that way you have put an obstacle in front of you. Be humbled in attending the majalis.

Imam Ali ('a) used to sit around his companions and ask them: Give me a piece of advise, what us advise you? He said yes, there is a benefit in listening that is not in knowing. We are sitting around between sunrise and have the best opportunity from Dawn to Sunset to gain from the best topic.

People spend all day and all night playing or watching football, but when it comes down to attending a session of Zhikr–Allah they say oh I don't have time, I cant be bothered.

### **6.9.3 There Is A Duty To Listen**

There is a duty for the listeners as Imam Ali ('a) states:

Listen to what is said, not whom has said it

You can benefit from the knowledge that you attain

As for the adviser there is a duty:

Any lecture if it comes from the heart it goes to the heart of the listeners (*Urafa* say)

Hadith;

If it comes from the tongues then it doesn't penetrate through the heart.

Sometimes we come across certain people that have this power.

Imam Khomeini was given this ability of being influential. Look at the sermons of Imam Ali ('a) describes attitudes of the pious man, just fainted and lost his life it affected him that much. Others may try to read the same words in the sermon but they will not necessarily have the same effect on the audience why?

Ibn Abi Hadid one of the best commentators of Nahjul Balagha says:

There is one sermon in NB sermon 221, Allah, Allah – I swear to whatever all the nations swear to, it has been more than 50 years of my life, that I have been reading this sermon more than 1,000 times and with no fail every time I read it again it gets to me more and more. I feel more spiritual every time, it encourages me of paradise and fearful of the hellfire. He said

– I have no doubt that it is the spiritual influence of Imam Ali ('a) even though he is not around.

Sermon 221 from Imam Ali ('a) is found below:

Amir al-mu'minin recited the verse:

***O' thou man! what hath beguiled thee from thy Lord, the Most Gracious One. (Quran, 82:6)***

Then he said:

The addressee (in this verse) is devoid of argument and his excuse is most deceptive. He is detaining himself in ignorance. O' man! what has emboldened you to (commit) sins, what had deceived you about your Allah and what has made you satisfied with the destruction of yourself. Is there no cure for your ailment or no awakening from your sleep? Do you not have pity on yourself as you have on others? Generally, when you see anyone exposed to the heat of the sun you cover him with shade, or if you see anyone afflicted with grief that pains his body you weep out of pity for him. What has then made you patient over your own disease, what has made you firm in your own afflictions, and what has consoled you from weeping over yourself although your life is the most precious of all lives to you, and why does not the fear of an ailment that may befall you in the night keep you wakeful although you lie on the way to Allah's wrath due to your sins?

You should cure the disease of languor in your heart by determination, and the sleep of neglectfulness in your eyes by wakefulness. Be obedient to Allah, and love His remembrance, and picture to yourself that you are running away while He is approaching you. He is calling you to His forgiveness and concealing your faults with His kindness,

while you are fleeing away from Him towards others. Certainly, Great is Allah the powerful, Who is so generous, and how humble and weak are you and still so bold to commit His disobedience although you live in His protection and undergo changes of life in the expanse of His kindness. He does not refuse you His kindness and does not remove His protection from you. In fact,, you have not been without His kindness even for a moment, whether it be a favour that He conferred upon you or a sin of yours that He has concealed or a calamity that He has warded off from you. What is your idea about Him if you had obeyed Him? By Allah, if this had been the case with two persons equal in power and matching in might (one being inattentive and the other showering favours upon you) then you would have been the first to adjudge yourself to be of bad behaviour and evil deeds.

I truthfully say that the world has not deceived you but you have had yourself deceived by it. The world had opened to you the curtains and divulged to you (everything) equally. And in all that it foretold you about the troubles befalling your bodies and the decay in your power, it has been too true and faithful in promise, and did not speak a lie to you or deceive you. There are many who advise you about it but they are blamed, and speak the truth about it but they are opposed. If you understand the world by means of dilapidated houses and forlorn abodes, then with your good understanding and far reaching power of drawing lessons you will find it like one who is kind over you and cautious about you. It is good abode for him who does not like it as an abode, and a good place of stay for him who does not regard it a permanent home for stay.

Only those who run away from this world today will be regarded virtuous tomorrow. When the earthquake occurs, the Day of Resurrection approaches with all its severities, the people of every worshipping place cling to it, all the devotees cling to the object of their devotion and all the followers cling to their leader. Then on that day even the opening of an eye in the air and the sound of a footstep on the ground will be assigned its due through His Justice and His Equity. On that day many an argument will prove void and a contention for excuses will stand rejected.

Therefore, you should now adopt for yourself the course with which your excuse may hold good and your plea may be proved. Take from the transient things of this world that which will stay for you (in the next world), provide for your journey, keep (your) gaze on the brightness of deliverance and keep ready the saddles (for setting off).

One of the methods of gaining effective spirituality is when you are face to face with the speaker as opposed to indirect method of listening. The words go to your ears but the effects are different.

## 6.9.4 Make More Time In Your Life For Learning

Make a plan in your life to keep learning and studying. We are always in need of advice and wisdom. It is a fraud if we believe we do not need advice.

Prophet (S) said:

Didn't you want that armour when you are out, to make sure that Shaytan doesn't touch you, whomever creates that atmosphere of staying in touch the more you will be protected from Allah (SWT).

# 7th Station – Fleeing To God 'Itisam'

## Introduction To This Station

Ahadih and points that will be mentioned in this station is something that is not at the disposal of the public so easily. There is not heaps of literature available about these. Imam Ali ('a) said:

Gives example of knowledge, is like tying a bird (it can't fly), once you write it down the bird cannot fly away After passing the previous stations, there is one situation if you have ever experienced will allow you to value this particular station. The meaning of this station is:

Have you ever experienced mountain climbing?

When you do this, whether amateur or professional – safety comes first. Because, otherwise, it will cost your life. What they do is they put a rope around the belt, and also they make some handles so that you can hold onto them. You need to be well equipped for mountain climbing

In your life you are climbing a mountain, now that you have started the journey Shaytan does not want you to continue in this elevation. You also need to carry rope of safety, hanging on and holding fast to something – this is the meaning of the term l'tisam. This is derived from the word in Arabic called 'isma,

The bracelet that some people mean is a protection, wearing something for protection without paying attention and being conscious or that we are conscious of it. We must believe that we have a handle of hope 'it'isam whenever we are in a sinful situation. We have the intellect and the freewill to stop a sinful act.

Don't expect a guardian to help you all the time. You need to seek refuge from Allah (SWT). If you are conscious of this fact regardless of the situation you are in, regardless of how many shayateen are surrounding you that you are conscious of saying :

A'othou billahi mina shaytan al-rajeem, billahi a'taseem

I seek refuge from the cursed shaytan, and hold fast to Allah (SWT)

Ali Imran, it's a command that Allah (SWT) is making for us

And hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah, and do not separate. And remember Allah's favour unto you: How ye were enemies and He made friendship between your hearts so that ye became as brothers by His grace; and (how) ye were upon the brink of an abyss of fire, and He did save you from it.

***“Thus Allah maketh clear His revelations unto you, that haply ye may be guided.” (3: 103)***

-----Aga Pooya commentary-----

"Hold fast, all of you together, to the cord of Allah"-gives a mental impression that a rope is hanging from the heaven so that those who are lying down on the ground (earth) may climb up, by holding it, in the presence of the Lord to seek His nearness.

Abu Sa-id Khudri reports that he heard the Holy Prophet saying:

*“I leave behind me, among you, two ropes. If my people hold fast to these two ropes, after me, they shall not go astray. They are the book of Allah, hung from the heaven unto the earth, and my Ahl ul Bayt. One of them is greater than the other. Be it known that these two shall never be separated from each other; and joined together, they shall meet me at the spring of Kawthar.”*

The Holy Prophet has also said:

*“My Ahl ul Bayt, among you, are like the ark of Nuh. He who sails on it will be safe, but he who holds back shall perish.”* The Holy Prophet has said:

*“Verily the Quran has been revealed in seven letters. There is no letter which has not an evident and a latent meaning; and verily Ali knows the evident as well as the latent.”* (Itiqan-Sahih Bukhari)

Also refer to urwatil wuthqa in al Baqarah: 256.

-----end of Aga Pooya commentary-----

You are climbing the mountain and about to drop dead, a divine rope is given to you all you have to do is hold fast. All you have to do is hold fast and they will get you up.

As we elevate Allah (SWT) tells us that:

## 7.2 Two Attitudes When In A Provocative Situation

When we are in a sinful situation, in our daily transactions.

We can have two attitudes:

### 7.2.1 Rely On The Self

Son of Prophet Noah ('a), it is a negative example when there was a flood. Noah ('a) invite his son into the ship otherwise you will drown. He said don't worry dad I can take care of myself. If the person is conscious of what he is saying is a *Mushrik* as *Urafa* say. The moment that we say that we trust ourselves we have committed shirk. Some people think that their wealth or friends or pride can safeguard them. When you want to climb the mountain you need to analyze the rope you have with you. How long do you want to live in this world. You need to make sure that the rope is reliable. In the mountain climbing of life if we drop dead then we will have eternal hellfire. Noah's ('a) son relied on the mountain to save him, the water wont touch me there.

If we rely on anything other than Allah (SWT) including ourselves is not reliable at all. In a hadith Allah (SWT) whispers to David ('a), *"Oh Dawood, if any of my creatures sincerely holds fast to me, even if all the inhabitants of the heavens and earth plot."* against him to destroy him I will find a way to get him out of the situation. Once I know that you want to hold fast to another rope that is other than me, I make sure that I cut it. I don't care where you are going to drop. (Allah (SWT) wants to introduce himself to us)

### 7.2.2 Attitude Of A Ma'soom

The attitude of a ma'soom like Prophet Yusuf ('a). He says I seek refuge with Allah (SWT). After what happened to Prophet Yusuf ('a) the women (Queen of the time) tried to seduce the Prophet (S). After the failed attempt she invited a lot of women in a gathering a had Prophet Yusuf ('a) attend that gathering to try to win him over. The moment they saw him they got excited. Then she said:

"I seduced him (and tried to attract him) but yet, he asked God to rescue him." Then she said: "Still I haven't given up, if he is not going to respond to what I am doing I am going to put him in prison."

One woman said, she has promised that she is going to jail you, another said look it is going to cost you your life, another said don't you have any desires. This is the example of the *Shayateen* coming back and trying to harm us in greater number. He said:

*"Oh God, prison is more sweeter to me than what they are. If you do not safeguard me from their plots. God there is a limit to my patience. If you don't help me I will be deceived by them."*

He sincerely invoked Allah (SWT), and Allah (SWT) responded by helping him. A good supplication to make in this situation is:

*A'othou billahi mina shaytan al-rajeem, billahi a'taseem*

*"I seek refuge from the cursed shaytan, and hold fast to Allah (SWT)."*

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a):

*"Whoever believer (male or female) approaches what Allah (SWT) likes, Allah (SWT) approaches towards all of what you like. Whoever is hanging on to Allah (SWT), Allah (SWT) will safeguard you. If you have sincerely asked Allah (SWT) for help, let the heavens fall down – it will not affect you."*

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a):

*"If you want to be victorious then hold onto the rope of Allah (SWT)."*

One of the examples with the rope of Allah (SWT) is the Quran, another example is being a good muslim. Also meaning holding fast to Ahlul-Bayt. Hadith Qudsi states that:

*"On the Day of Judgement Allah (SWT) addresses Fatimah, you will go forward so remember that whoever held fast to you in this world. On that Day everyone would wish to be follower of Fatimah ('a)."*

Hold fast to Allah (SWT), He himself is around for you and not his rope. Prophet Yusuf ('a) asked for help from Allah (SWT) himself.

Prophet (S):

*"Yes you have all your resources, but we have Allah (SWT) – the best of resources. Such a good helper we have."*

## **7.3 Ways Of Seeking Help With Allah (Swt)**

### **7.3.1 Decide Not To Want Anything, Be Content In Whatever Allah Swt Provides**

You need to exercise this – decide not to want anything, whatever Allah (SWT) wants. I am at the disposal at the will of Allah (SWT). Then in situation of sin Allah (SWT) will help you.

A young fellow fell in love with a girl and they wrote to each other, and he proposed to her again and again but she refused. She however found a way out by saying do you really love me? He said of course I do – so she said if you really love me then leave me alone. If you choose not to leave me alone then you would show that you are loving yourself. He then left what he willed and succumbed to her will.

### **7.3.2 Cut Your Attachment To This Dunya**

Do you know what happens when the temptations are there – cut your attachment to this *dunya* and the *akhira*. So that when they tell you that islamically you should stop doing this and that you have no

problem with it.

### 7.3.3 Keep In Touch And In-Tune With Allah (Swt)

Keep in touch and stay tuned with Allah (SWT). So that your engagement is more in line with what Allah (SWT) wants you to do.

## 7.4 Final Words

This mountain of life that we are climbing cannot be made by oneself.

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a):

*“Man has its degrees, if you are on the second or third degree do not look down upon people.”*

Each on their own time, we were all on a worse level before. The methodology of tabligh is very sensitive.

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a)

*“Do not push people, otherwise they might reach higher stage than you and what then if you castigate down upon you.”*

# 8th Station – Fleeing Away From Bad – Al-Farar

## 8.1 Important Reminders

We are getting close to the gates of perfection.

These 100 stations have been divided into 10 stages and each stage contains 10 stations.

It is right about the time that we make sure that our seat belts are fastened. Whether you are young or old – make sure that you not only collect the medicine. The key is to put it into practice.

In practical *Irfan* the more time we have the better it is

Usually all these stations concern the beginners (al-mooreed), intermediate (as-salik) and those in the advanced levels (al-wasaleen):

Imagine a triangle with three different shapes – it applies to the beginner as much as it does to someone

that is in the intermediate and then the advanced level. For example, the repentance of Ahlul-Bayt is different to the repentance that we normal people make.

## 8.2 Introduction To This Station

Reference for this station is in Surah Al-Zariyat: [Pickthal 51:50] Therefor flee unto Allah; lo! I am a plain warner unto you from him.

This station in particular is only mentioned by Khary Abdullah Ansari,

Also in Surah Jam'eh

***Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Lo! the death from which ye shrink will surely meet you, and afterward ye will be returned unto the Knower of the Invisible and the Visible, and He will tell you what ye used to do. (Quran, 62:8)***

For example:

In a war situation whenever the sirens go off your main priority is to find a safe place to hide, regardless of whatever you are doing.

This is like the situations where one is fleeing from a dangerous creature or situation to a safer place. Quran keeps advising us that Shaytan is your clear enemy and had sworn that eh wants to put your down. Seeing that he has made you an enemy, you also have made him an enemy. This Farr is a command from Allah (SWT). You are to run away from Shaytan to Allah (SWT).

## 8.3 Two (2) Types Of Jurisprudence In Islam

### 8.3.1 Lower Jurisprudence

Lower Jurisprudence – Islamic law, the focus is how to offer my prayer in a correct manner.

### 8.3.2 Greater Jurisprudence

Greater Jurisprudence – there are certain commands which are present in the Quran, and the *Arif* would know and apply them through practical *Irfan*. For example, – when you hear the call of prayer leave all trading before. An *Arif* teaches us how to offer our prayer in a manner that is accepted by Allah (SWT).

Both the Faqeh and the *Arif* looks at the Quran, but they take from it different things. For example, – wherever there is a command given by Allah (SWT) in the Quran the *Arif* takes it as an obligatory act just as praying five (5) times a day.

## **8.4 Best Meaning Of Al-Farar**

The best meaning of Al-Farar:

To flee from what doesn't exist to whatever always exists An *Arif* believes that everything other than Allah (SWT) does not exist. So anything other than Allah (SWT) is not a place of refuge because in reality it doesn't exist. There is no reality in these non-existent items. If you want to flee the only place you can go is Allah (SWT) it is the only safe place you can go.

## **8.5 Three (3) Stages For Al-Farar**

### **8.5.1 Fleeing From Ignorance To Knowledge**

Flee from ignorance to knowledge, you have faith in what you are doing – you need to seek refuge from knowledge. Hadith quoted from Ahlul-Bayt from Prophet Jesus ('a):

Flee from these types of people (person whom is not intellectual) as much as you would flee from a wild lion attacking you.

Quran tells us that there are some people that are the opposite – they flee from knowledge.

Their situation is like wild donkeys flee from the hunter Not only do they flee from the invitation of good – but they are offended

### **8.5.2 Fleeing From Laziness To Readiness**

Flee from laziness to readiness (enthusiastic): – if you want to get close to God you always need to be motivated Imam Ali ('a):

There is a virus for success and that is laziness

This virus also applies to the declination of the civilizations and communities. When they lose their things and projects is because you lose your motivation and enthusiasm. If you are always motivated then you should always be prosperous. Prophet Muhammad (S) in a hadith informs us that the lazy person is introduced in four attitudes and signs:

- a. He delays until he neglects
- b. He neglects until he misses
- c. He misses until he commits a sin
- d. He is fed up

This is the plot of Shaytan, he gets us to miss things – be aware of this.

Khar Abdul says that you have to flee from laziness to being enthusiastic to get to the second level of Fleeing to Allah (SWT). There are three practical ways to do this:

a. There is no such thing to be upset and depressed when others get upset and depressed. Also, in the most stressful situation you can make yourself very happy. How you react can convince yourself that you are the happiest person in the most in the most stressful situation. You are just put in a situation – enjoy it! We need to re-wire our brain for reaction. For example, there was a man whom got a lift in an open van in the back on a very cold middle of the winter and snowy. The man sat there gave himself a hug and kept telling himself that it is so hot outside. The physically situation can be such that you rewire your brain to change your reaction to external environment.

b. There is a part of the brain called – reticular activation system (RAS), it is the centre of attention and motivation. It determines whether the person is highly motivated or a bored person. Have you ever experienced this – that you purchased a car, from the day that you started driving the car you noticed how many similar cars there are in the community. Do you know why? The reason is because of the RAS part of the brain. In our day to day life there are numerous signals to the brain and the RAS filters this and picks up the points that are relevant and that it is interested in. The reason why the brain picked up that there are other similar cars out there to the one that was bought is that that RAS part of the brain picked it up. In the commercial world the way things are marketed is such that when we think of drinks, we think of fizzy drinks like Coca Cola. If you are very lazy for example like *Jammat* (congregational prayers). In your journey towards perfection you want to flee from this towards Allah (SWT). To do this you need to come across signals and send them to the RAS part of the brain for motivation.

Hadith (very authentic and no doubt) from Imam Al-Sadiq ('a):

*“Every prayer offered by yourself in comparison with the same prayer in congregation, the later prayer is 24 degrees higher and takes you the level 25.”*

On the Day of Judgement do you want to go to level 1 or go up to level 25? For someone whom is serious for their journey they should take this into consideration. Actually, they should get this hadith and take them into the RAS component of the brain. That way the boredom could be killed.

c. There is one Dua – one of the characteristics of Islamic *Irfan* is that you need to ask Allah (SWT) to help you out all the time through supplication and Dua:

*Allahoma inni a'outho bika minal hammi walhozn wal a'jze walkasel*

*Pray to Allah (SWT) to take the laziness from me*

### 8.5.3 Be Generous

Put into your day to day agenda to be generous. When you are giving the charity out you are helping yourself spiritually before anyone else. *Zakaat* means that there is a tree and that you are cutting the tree such that the tree grows more. For a *salek* it is key to flee from being stingy to being generous.

## 9th Station – Spiritual Exercise – Al-Riyadha

### 9.1 Introduction Of This Station

Sometimes when people want to talk about Practical *Irfan* they mention *Al-Riyadha*. It is key in the practical element and realm of *Irfan*. *Riyadha* or self-exercise or self discipline. People that have done this *Riyadha* – say that it is not enough that you can just wish that good will come to you. You need to start practicing it in your day to day transactions. *Riyadha* is taken from the word *Al-Roudha*. As is mentioned in the Quran – in Arabic it means where there is a piece of land that attracts some water because of its lower ground. Another expression is translated into gardens. Gardens of Heaven is called *Al-Roudha*.

*Al-Riyadha* is meant literally for when the animal or horse trains break the wild animal as suggested by Khary Abdullah Ansari. To domesticate the animal, it is called *Al-Riyadha* on a literal level. To make the animal ready for whatever you want it to. To tame the wildness out of the animal as well as train it to do whatever you want through some exercise.

The same can be applied to humanity to tame the animal of the self. *Urafa* are adopting the term used in another world for their own perfection and promotion.

### 9.2 Three Types Of Nafs

This analogy is important to understand the self, we have three types of souls:

#### 9.2.1 Nafs Al-Ammarra

*Nafs Al-Ammarra*, means the soul of a human whom is not trained or domesticated and is commanding to do whatever bad there is. This is itself is divided into three (3):

i. *Nafs Al-Behemeyya*: wild animal soul, this is a type of a soul of a human that is acting like an animal. If there is a provocative situation, they cannot control their desire and go with they *Nafs*

ii. *Nafs As-Sabo'eyya*: a person whom acts like an animal when they are angry. The person whom has controlled himself and his anger is better. The less you can control your anger the stronger the power of this *Nafs* and vice versa.

iii. *Nafs As-Shaytani*: this is an evil or satanic, which is all sorts of devilish elements embedded into the soul. To commit a sin for this person is like second nature. They do not even feel guilty about it, this is because they are indulging into it. The more you give it the more demand there is for this and on and on until they die. Quran tells us that such people, their hearts are rusted – what you need to do is polish it. The more you polish the heart the more it reflects reality.

### **9.2.2 Nafs Al-Lawamah**

*Nafs Al-Lawamah*: the blaming soul, the person in this situation is better than the previous one. The person commits sin sometimes but feels guilty eventually. They go absent minded at times leading to sin and then they feel guilty then make a commitment to change. In their spiritual life they are not settled. Quran is warning as well as the *Urafa* – for how long will you be unsettled in your life. Either way you cannot afford it to be one minute sinful or one minute righteous. Because you could die when in a sinful situation. If you feel guilty then this is a good thing because you can repent and change.

### **9.2.3 Nafs Al-Mutma'enna**

*Nafs Al-Mutma'enna*: the soul which does not commit sin any more. It controls the *shawya* (desire), as well as other things. The purpose of *Riyadha* is to domestic all such powers of desire and lust and anger under control. The focus is not to kill these but to control it because they are relative things. Good or bad relative to how it is used.

## **9.3 Four Differences Between Riyadha And Other Schools Of Thought**

There are four differences between *Riyadha* and other schools of thought or religions:

### **9.3.1 Nature Of Riyadha**

Difference between *Riyadha* and like the hindu spirituality is mainly in its nature. The intention of Islamic *Riyadha* is not to kill the desire so that they do not have it any more. It is not that Prophet Yusuf ('a) practiced the killing of his desire so that Zulakhar could not get to him. Rather he domesticated his animal instinct in relation to desire, lust and anger. *Urafa* say that isn't it amazing that you do physical training on a baby and when it comes to spiritual exercise they are like a chicken. Like a person whom cannot even close his eyes. *Urafa* say that you should not kill you desire.

A man decided to live in the cave, and people came to him and said that why don't you join us in the

city. He said that there is a lot of sin in the city, I cannot control myself this is why I cannot go to the city. An *Arif* advised him that make sure that you make yourself deaf, dumb and blind because you will come across a sinful situation somehow. This is not *Riyadha*. Go to the city and do your business. But when it comes to a sinful situation then just be strong and you will be ok. In the beginning it may seem embarrassing but it is not embarrassing because it's us that are looking at ourselves mostly. It is us that have the problem

A story of Abu Sai'd Abu Khayr:

One of the great scholars of the 4th and 5th decades. In one sentence he met with Abu Ali Sinah. Whatever I know he sees (Abu Sinah said about Abu Sai'd). What he was doing was that he was giving a lecture, and was giving out home work – per student. One day someone came to him from a rich background and said that I want to enroll in the practical *Irfan* classes. Abu Sai'd said that there is going to be a large cost involved in this are you ready? The man said yes, money is not a problem I am determined to enroll in the session. Abu Sai'd said I didn't not mean money but are you serious. He said yes. He came to the class and Hasan Muaddab the student was given homework and that was the he was to go to the shops and buy some meat the liver, and heart of the animal and put it on the back and walk back and bring it here. Hasan said, I can not I have some slaves which can do this work for me. I have not done this before its ok ill get the slaves to get the meat. Abu Sai'd say no, you have to do it all by yourself. This is your personal homework. Hasan said that on the way he was sweating and it was very embarrassing Because I was instructed that on the way back I have to walk through the city *bazzar*. All the shopkeepers know me and my family. It is a rude embarrassment and shamefully situation that I was in, sweating, embarrassed I was dejected. Anyway, I returned the meat back to the teacher Abu Sai'd and informed him that I didn't see any point to the whole exercise. I could have done this in the easier way. He was instructed to go to the other side of the river and wash the meat in the river and bring it back to him. Hasan said oh no, no way I would do that give me a break. Do you want to learn *Irfan*? Yes, I am serious.

I went again and was baffled as to why the sheikh is giving me a hard time. I came back and sheikh told me that now you get changed and wash yourself and go back to the bazzah where you think that the people have saw you. He said of course they saw me and would testify to this; it would be a big embarrassment. Go and ask him. Hasan said that one the way I was preparing on the way how to talk with the people when they interrogate him – with things like why did you have to carry the meat on your shoulders. It is a shame to your family and background. He said that I was preparing some answers for how to answer the questions. He asked each one of the people and not a single person testified to noticing him. He went back to the sheikh and said what did you do – did you do some magic that the people couldn't see me. Abu Sai'd said there was no magic involved the only problem that you thought that you were embarrassed is that the problem is with you. It is an internal problem. People don't really care in reality. Fix this problem. Sheikh Abu Sai'd informed all his students that stick around tonight you will be having some nice food. It is called the pride of Hasan Muaddab because I wanted him to kill his

pride.

### 9.3.2 Quality Of Nafs

In its quality, the way in which it is performed. This is important for anyone that wants to undertake Islamic *Irfan*. Imam Ali ('a) says:

If you want to take any *Riyadha* then refer to Jurisprudence Story:

There was a scholar that to punish himself he would lie on nails naked. His team mate couldn't work out why he was doing this. The person said that he was lying down on the nails to kill the nafs. One day they went to Allamah Tabatabai and asked him – that there is someone that wants to take the comfort of the body. The answer was that if you want to do *Riyadha* you need to go to Jurisprudence. Do the Wjibat, abstain from the Haram things, then you can continue with the Mustahabat and analyze the Makrooh things. The best exercise is to be religious and sleeping on nails is not *Riyadha*. Prophet (S) advise to Abu Dhar:

To hold hot charcoal is easier than to be religious

Some people from other religions (Hinduism) with their own exercises say that look they can walk of fire. In the end this is not a big deal, it is easy to walk on fire but it is harder to walk on yourself – think about it. It is a big deal to kill your pride so that you don't show off any more. The human diseases are harder to control. Imam Ali ('a) in NB in letter sent to one of his delegates:

If you want to know how Imam Ali ('a) is doing *riyadha*, practice piety.

### 9.3.3 Purpose Of Nafs

Purpose of *Riyadha* is not to do miraculous things in the world. Some monks are able to do some amazing things. Like pointing at people and plains in a war situation and automatically killing them. In Islamic *Irfan* the key is not to do these types of things. In reality this is simply misusing the

power of the self. Is there more in life than meeting Imam Mahdi ('a)? The Imam Mahdi ('a) says that you will show off and collapse spiritually if I visit you. For example, we are told to read Dua Ahad

Imam Khomayni in his book 40th Hadith, quotes from his teachers teacher:

We want to know whether this *Riyadha* is Islamic or not. One method to verify as to whether it is within the bounds of Islamic Jurisprudence. But there is another check – not only is it done by Islamic Principles, but is it done by pleasing God or pleasing yourself. If you do it only for Allah (SWT) then this is Islamic *Riyadha*. The intention is very important in getting the focus right.

### 9.3.4 Benefit Of Riyadha

The benefit of the *riyadha*. In other schools of thoughts they think that their exercise is such that when it is done you can for example walk on fire. *Urafa* say that in the end yes, it is possible to meet the Imam of our time (‘a) after a spiritual exercise, but you need Allah’s help.

To catch a fish, you need to go fishing, but not everyone that goes fishing catches a fish. *Urafa* mean that you try your very best, that is the most you can do. At the end of the day if there is no blessing from Allah (SWT) then it is useless. The blessings come for those that put in the efforts. We are absolutely dependent on Allah (SWT). This is the key in understanding Tawheed – nothing is from us. An *Arif* doesn’t see himself, it was all the blessing of Allah (SWT), not my own endeavor. Even though this endeavor was required to attract the blessings.

One of the students of sheikh Tehrani (was one of the people of the creams of *Irfan*) noticed one of his students was going too fast in this journey. I saw him really killing himself. Why are you doing this? He said because I am trying to purify myself. I told him pray to God that the gates of blessings can be open to you. You know when I learnt this? It was when I was invited to someone’s house. There was a big guard dog – I tried a lot of tricks to try to get him away from me but they didn’t work. At the end of the day after I lost all my hope I just cried to the owner of the house – please just stop the dog. In one second the owner whistled to the dog and in that split second the dog automatically became domesticated. So quiet and like a chicken, and I passed. I learnt a good lesson from this in my spiritual journey. At the end of the day do all the tricks you can do – but then pray to Allah (SWT) the All-Sustainer to help domestic my soul. Unless we do this we cannot reach high levels of spirituality.

A Muslim Murtath – says that whatever good you see in me is from Allah (SWT). Nothing is from me in reality.

## 9.4 Two Types Of Al-Riyadha

### 9.4.1 Direct Riyadha

Direct *Riyadha* and self-discipline, it is divided into two branches:

#### Theoretical Method

Related to in a simple language is simply *riyadha* through learning and studying. You have to give up some sleeping hours and the beauties of life to gain something for yourself. The process of learning does not get together with the comforts of this life. The key is to learn your religion. The student in *deen* is not expecting much in return. Imam Ali (‘a)

It is impossible for you to step into the world of practical *Irfan* unless you have enough knowledge of the religion. For example: Islamic Theology, Jurisprudence,

Teachers of *Irfan* do not teach *Irfan* unless you are Faqih or you are on the way to reaching Ijtihad. If you are studying *Irfan* you need to be aware and apply the theoretical side of *Riyadha* which is following the jurisprudential and ethical and moral obligations.

Need to activate the type of intellect that *Urafa* say – that you start learning by activating your main senses of touch, feel, smelling, then you activate your inner senses, then you start learning about things in a subjective level. (for example you are not teaching a child subjective issues just that this apple plus this apple equals two, then over time you are getting them into the subjective method of learning). In each level the memory, capacity and processing power of each level is so rich that you become ready for practical *Irfan*.

If a person learns but do not practice it, Prophet (S) said:

*“That those people that learnt what to practice and have not practiced it will be on the Day Judgement will stay away from him because of their stench.”*

### Practical Method

There are many branches:

a. To polish: to polish your soul and your heart by means of what you have learnt in the previous steps of theoretical *riyadha*.

Your mission in polishing yourself is that you have to be mindful of everything you have to do in Islam.

Abu Bakhair one of the students of Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a):

He said in our neighbourhood his income was not halal. His house was like a nightclub, drinking, music, etc etc, we were not comfortable. I started to preach to him every opportunity I had I was talking to him. One day I was going crazy because of the music in Ramadhan. I want to sit with him for one hour talking to him so sincerely that I was in tears – what sort of lifestyle is this. In the end the person said that ok I am doing wrong but I cannot help it, I am addicted. Even though I want to stop I can’t because my friends will not allow me. Next time you go to Medina to visit the Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) ask him to help me out with some advice.

A few months later he went to Hajj then to Medina. He met with Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a), the imam said that when you go back to the guy give him our sallam and tell him one thing. Leave this lifestyle that you have and I will guarantee paradise for you. Abu Basih went back to Kufa and said that after his visit he went to the guy and informed him of the message from Imam Jaffar Al-Sadiq (‘a). After the message with communicated he said are you serious do you swear to God about this? Abu Basih said yes, I swear to God that that was his exact words, the other guy was in tears – yes I understand I got the message. He left that lifestyle and a few days after that he left the house and his lifestyle. Until a messenger came to me (Abu Basih) I am wallah practicing what Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) has advised me. All

the things that I have acquired I am selling I don't have enough food to eat and clothes because I had acquired them in a non halal method. I went home and got him some food and clothes. A few days later I came to learn that he was sick. I paid him a visit. The man was poor and miserable and was sick and doesn't have all those things that he had before but happy that he is practicing what Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) had told him to do. He was in a grave situation at times conscious and at times not, he opened his eyes and he said that ya Abu Basih the promise of Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) was true. He later on went to Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) and before he went in to talk to him he said we have fulfilled our promise to the guy and now he is living in paradise.

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) had no personal benefit for promising that person in paradise. Whatever Allah (SWT) has given to Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) he has given to Imam Mahdi ('a). Have no doubt that Imam Mahdi ('a) also is telling us the same. This is not a simply exercise to do that is why it is called *Riyadha* in Islam.

b. Put all the rubbish out, there are so many idols in our heart. We have to kick them out one by one. One method is to get rid of all types of gossiping, lying, backbiting etc they are obstacles between you and clear vision. Prophet (S) said: *"If you are mindful of what you say and hear then you can see what I can see."*

This means being able to see the angels and other things. Why is it that we cannot see the angels? Because there are some obstacles in the way of our vision. *Urafa* say that in this stage you have to reduce your sleeping and other things.

Imam Ali ('a):

*"When Allah (SWT) wants to share something good with one of his servants with belittling his food and sleeping time."* One Physician said: We are digging out graves with our teeth (because of the extra foods we are eating).

Prophet (S) said:

*"To have a full stomach causes a lot of diseases Make sure that if you are finished eating and want to eat just leave it. Don't let your desire go freely. This is the way to control your Nafs and Soul."*

Imam Ali ('a) in the Sermon of Pious people:

*"One of the ways that I have trained myself is this – and this is how the pious people train themselves that every time your soul disobeys you have to punish him. (today you have to fast, so that your Nafs comes under your control not vice versa)."*

c. There is a golden hadith from someone called Onwan al-Basri over age of 90 when he comes to Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) he asks Imam ('a) to do *riyadha* al-nafs. Teacher of Allamah Tabatabai in Iran was Sayyid Kozim At-tabatabai was an amazing man in theoretical and practical *Irfan*. Allamah says that his teacher used to say that you should write this hadith down and put it in your pocket with you everywhere.

And a few times a day refer to it.

Private Session Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) gave to one of his students (hadith):

Tabatabai:

Ayatollah Said Qadhi, was a blessed man in performing the Karamat and *Irfan*.

They quoted from this Ayatollah, he used to say write this down and every day read it once or twice a week. (Any advice from these people is a gem).

(Background to this story someone with the age of Onwan al-Basri, he was 94 years old and I used to attend the lesson of Imam Maliki Ibn Annas until Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) came to Medina, when he came I wanted to learn from him. I asked him to come, the servant came back and said that he was busy. I left that he said that if he saw some good in me and would have accepted me. He went to Masjid An Nabbi and prayed to Allah (SWT) make the heart of your son Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) to be more inclined towards me. I stayed at home and didn't attend the lessons of Imam Maliki, until after a while I lost my patience because I need to learn from Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) the second time and it was Afternoon prayer. The servant came out and asked to see the Imam ('a) he said the Imam is praying. I don't care until he is finishing the prayer I will be waiting for him. Until finally he was allowed to come in and visit the Imam ('a)).

Hadith:

"I greeted the Imam and he greeted me, (the kunya of O'waan was Abu Abdullah) may Allah (SWT) really make you deserved of your name and practice based on your name. (just make sure that you are Abd Allah) then he says what do you need, he said that I asked Allah (SWT) to make your heart inclined towards me, (indirectly he says that he wants you to be his teacher). (imam wanted to see how serious the student want). The Imam ('a) said: knowledge is not by acquiring, it is a light that Allah (SWT) plants in the heart of those that he wishes to guide. If you want to learn this type of knowledge you need to find the reality of devotion of Allah (SWT). (major part of learning how to emerge oneself into Practical *Irfan* – you will be told word by word in your dreams, things that you haven't learned in the books) Imam says that if you want knowledge then practice what you know and Allah (SWT) will fill in the rest. What is the reality that the central core of knowledge is the devotion. (servitude to Allah (SWT) through devotion). If you want to meet this reality to devotion to God do the following:

Abd – the slave of God is the one that whatever Allah (SWT) entrusted him with he doesn't see it as owned by himself. Because a slave doesn't own any property. They see the property as the possession of God. They spend it the way that Allah (SWT) wants them to spend it.

Once you can do this – then giving charity becomes easy, because it is not 'our' property it is Allah (SWT)s property.

He does not plan for himself, He has left all the plan based on Gods plan (it may sound difficult at first). Once you leave all affairs to God then tolerating calamities of God is so easy. (whatever happens is in your best interest)

All his engagement is with what Allah (SWT) has ordered him to do and avoided what Allah (SWT) has prohibited him to do. (do wajibat and avoid muharramat). If you do this then you will not get any chance to argue with people, to gossip etc

If one is blessed with these three, it becomes easy to challenge Iblis and people as well, and their journey in this world becomes easy, then acquiring things in this dunya is not to show off, they are not trying to get wealth so that they have an upper hand against them, they do not waste any time. This is the first stage of Taqwah.

Imam ('a) referred to the ayah in Surah Qasas

***“That Home of the Hereafter We shall give to those who intend not high-handedness or mischief on earth: and the end is (best) for the righteous.” (28:83)***

Sometimes we are in a situation where we believe that we have to fix the other person up, we don't have to have the upper hand.

Now Imam ('a) said that you need to find the reality of devotion for the initial classes. Student said ok, please advise me. Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) says that I have the following nine pieces of advice for those that are travelling towards Allah (SWT) I ask Allah (SWT) to give you the blessings to be able to practice these (3 out of the 9 recommendations is for the *Riyadha* al-Nafs):

i. Beware, beware, don't ever eat what you are not desirous for. If you eat it will cause your foolishness and stupidity.

Do not eat unless you are hungry,

When you eat make sure that the food is halal,

Say *bismillahi rahman arraheem* before you start eating,

Remember the hadith of the Prophet(S):

*“Mankind has not filled up any worse container than his stomach. If you have to fill it up then divide it into three –one third for food, one third for drink and one third to be able to breath.”*

– 3 are in relation to power to control your anger:

i. If someone turns around and threatens you by saying things 10 times against you, you turn around and say even if you say it ten times bad about me, I will not say a word.

ii. If you are in a situation that someone is insulting or accusing you, tell him if you are right may Allah (SWT) forgive me, if you are wrong may Allah (SWT) forgive you.

iii. If someone is threatening you with insult then promise him with advice and care.

– 3 of them are in regard to knowledge

i. Whatever you do not know ask the scholars. But remember that when you are asking, don't ask to embarrass or hassle them.

ii. Beware, never act your own opinion. Escape from giving your opinion just like you will run away from a lion. Never tie your responsibility with giving personal opinion Get hold to precaution, if you can find a way for precaution then its better.

That is enough ya Abu Abdullah, you wanted me to advise you and I advised you. I am a type of person that I have so much to do for myself. If you are among those that follow my guidance my greeting is for you, otherwise you do not have my greeting. (initially when Owaan wanted to see Imam ('a) he was busy with prayers not other)

d. *At-Tahliya* – How to deal with people in the social life. This is one of the serious battles and obstacles for anyone that wants to fulfil their journey towards their perfection. Previous acts of *riyadha* like night prayers is personal whereas there are other things relating to the social life because it is harder. Imam Ali ('a) said:

Suggests that if you want to train yourself do this *riyadha* by gaining the good manners. Because by doing so you can reach the status of someone whom is constantly fasting and doing night prayers

Prophet (S) said:

*“Man through their good characters can reach high position in the Hereafter, even though they don't do all the mustahabbat in terms of their acts of worship.”* A story:

A poor man was sitting and crying, a man approach him and the poor person said the whole day I was looking for a job and had no luck, I don't even have enough money to buy some bread. The visiting man also began to cry and said I will stay with you all night crying. The poor man said, look I don't need you to cry I need some of your bread. Im crying as a sympathy for you, I will cry all night with you but don't touch my bread.

Sometimes it is easy for people to cry, but due to pride hard to give something from that which they love.

According to Ibn Arabi this is the real *Riyadha*, he says that the real *Riyadha* is when one goes against their Nafs. The more *Arif* you want to become the happier you should be. Ibn Sina – the *Arif* is one that enjoys these characters, they are joyful, they are always happy, always has a smile on his face, very

approachable.

Prophet (S):

*“If you want me to tell you why I have come to you, it is to complete the high and noble ethics and morals.”*

Do you want me to tell you whom among yourselves (there was a group of them sitting with him) is most similar to me? People said yes, and started making some suggestions like the one whom prays 100 rak'at etc. The Prophet (S) said: *“The one that has the best character.”*

Why? Because the Quran introduces the Prophet (S) as very approachable.

Imam Ali (‘a):

*“When people were blaming me, one of the ways the enemies were trying to put him down they were saying that he was humorous.”*

They were very friendly and people would find it very friendly to talk to them

Hadith: Islam is good manners

Said Ibn ‘Obadi (good companion of Prophet(S): Participated in battles of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq and soon afterwards he died. The moment the news reached the Prophet (S) he rushed to his house to participate in the funerals. He was holding the kaffin until it was taken to the cemetery. He even dugged the grave for him. His mother said – lucky you enjoy the paradise, he even put you into the grave. Prophet (S) said that 70,000 angels attended his burial. But the moment that his mother said – lucky you enjoy the paradise, the Prophet (S) said that I do not want to break the heart of the mother but do you know that I put him in the grave, but the moment I put him in the grave he received a great pressure in the grave. When they asked the Prophet (S) even Said? His death was due to being caused by the battlefield, and all the angels attending the funeral and you with you hands laid him in the grave how could this be so asked the companions? He said (S) yes, because he did not have a good attitude with his family. He was tough and gave them a hard time. The moment when dad arrives his children were scared.

Sheikh Hasan Hafiz Allah:

Was telling his students, that when I was younger it was a long hot summers day and I had a quick nap at home to reenergize. My children were making a lot of noise and I was very exhausted. It was annoying, I lost my temper and was shouting and they were scared. They kept quiet but then I

regretted this. It is not only my house it is theirs too. The following day when I went to *Irfan* class my teacher told me that with this hot temper that you have forget about the spirituality that you have. He

advised me that if you want to control your temper say – salawaat. My teacher told me that *Riyadha* is not in the mosque it is outside the mosque.

Another teacher:

I was eager to meet Imam Mahdi (‘a), there is a Masjid Sahleh in Iraq if you go attend Maghrib and Isha prayers there. He had to do this for 40 days, he did this again and again. Once that I was not doing it between being awake and asleep. I was asked do you want to meet the Imam (‘a) he said yes. To get to him you have to travel to another city. I started doing the 40 days until it was the 37th night I received another voice advised him that you must go to another city and go to a shop keeper the locksmith. I went there and the moment I entered the shop I saw Imam (‘a) was sitting at the end of the shop and I greeted the Imam (‘a). He also greeted him back and pointed to him to be quiet. One old lady whom could hardly walk was asking the shop keeper was willing to buy the lock for three dollars. The shopkeeper looked at the lock and there was nothing wrong with it. Why do you want to sell it for \$3 it is worth more? She said you must be kidding any locksmiths I asked along the bazah said that it was only worth \$1, and I needed \$3 so that is why I am asking you for this amount. The shopkeeper said easy I can sell it for \$8, and I will buy it from you for \$7. Imam (‘a) told me inside, talking, he told me that do you know how you can see us with arba’een, fasting and

praying is good. If you want to see me then be fair to people and we will come to see you. The shopkeeper is not an Alim but he is a fair businessman. Once a week I make sure I pay him a visit.

This is the difficulty of *riyadha*.

Two concepts of Morals in Islam:

We have two concepts of Islamic Morals, the *riyadha* we are talking about refers to the second type of Islam Moral code.

#### 1. Mahaseem Al-Akhlaq

Mahaseem al-akhlaq – good character and good manners, how to deal with people nicely. It is good to do this but doesn’t require much *riyadha*.

Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) was asked, what is Mahaseem al-Akhlaq? He said:

*“To be humble with other people, to be polite conversation and greet your friend with a smile on your face.”*

# 10th Station – Hearing – As-Sama’

## 10.1 Introduction To This Station

The concept of Hearing, is one of the more controversial issues in the area of *Irfan*. Some people ignorantly think of music and dancing from a jurisprudential perspective. *Urafa* make the wording of their books quite ambiguous because they feel as though not everyone should be able to understand the terminology of their wordings and what they mean.

The music that the *Urafa* are talking about is a spiritual music, The lowest level of hearing covers. They say when you really open your ears and hear, the whole universe is based on this music. There is a universal harmony. If the meaning of music is a harmonious melody. If you go to the beach or the forest and open your ears you can hear a lot of things. Like stepping outside your house in the morning. You can even apply it – if music is a harmonious melody then we are born with the beating of your mother’s heart. This is the very first sound that we have heard.

*Urafa* believe that sinful people have misused the term ‘wine’ it is not the same meaning as liquor. On the same token the word ‘hearing’ is different to music as *Urafa* and others look at the word. Before we are created, there was a melody put in our brain, and that makes a melody like ‘music’ so far as it is harmonious, we enjoy it. We naturally react to it.

To ignore a harmonious sound is going against our nature. Before the fall of Adam (‘a), they took an oath from all of us from Allah (SWT), this is why we enjoy the harmonious melody that we hear in this world. There is a melody in the Quran and it is not poetry – it is harmonious, it is the wording of nature and words of Allah (SWT).

In this session *Urafa*, say you need to develop such a stage that you become the recipient of heavenly voices. You keep listening until you do not need to attend any lectures. The lessons that you will receive should come from the sources themselves. Why is it that we do not hear the reply of the Prophet (S) when we give him our salam in our salah? What is the problem that our inner senses are not activated?

The reference for this is in the Quran: If Allah (SWT) Knows a benefit in that persons he will make him hear those voices. Why?

## 10.2 Three Approaches To Hearing

There are three (3) approaches that allow us to be or not to be the recipient of this hearing:

### 10.2.1 Putting Your Fingers In Your Ears To Stop Hearing

People when they come across this religious and heavenly sounds – their attitude is that they immediately put their fingers in their ears. This is the expression that the Quran is using.

***“They block the gates of receiving these voices – the result is that they become deaf, dumb, and blind not physically but because they used it that much in the wrong way it is as though they don’t have it.” (2: 18 or 2: 171)***

For example – a husband that hides money away from his family, he has and has not the money

### 10.2.2 They Listen But Mock At It:

Yes they listen, but they listen just to mock at it.

***“We have heard. If we wish we can speak the like of this. Lo! this is naught but fables of the men of old.” (8:31)***

Please refer to the commentary of Anam: 25 and 26, for "the tales of the ancients"; and al Baqarah 23 and 24–the challenge of the Quran to the infidels (who said: "We have heard this before, and we could say words like these which are the tales of the ancients") to "produce a chapter like it, and you will never do it."

The only problem they have is that they haven’t had a taste of this. If you start hearing and ill tell you how, then you can reach a stage whereby you sleep and you intend to wake up for :50am 11 to 5am you here the voice of the angel so clearly that you open your eyes. This is ‘hearing’ – there are some voices that if I am deaf it doesn’t mean I cant listen to them.

Story of an Ulama:

You can elevate yourself that you hear the *tasbeeh* of the trees

You become like Prophet Ibrahim (S) so that you can hear it again. Once you hear the heavenly voice, then you are happy to give your life for this. If you know whether you heard the 2 *rakaat* in your life then see whether you hear the reply of Prophet (S).

### 10.2.3 They Come And They Listen With Divergent Intentions:

They come and they listen but their intention for listening is not to improve themselves.

Some people come to the majlis to get the reward for it, or for the food or other things.

Reference in Surah Mohammad:

***“Among them are some who give ear unto thee (Muhammad) till, when they go forth from thy presence they say unto those who have been given knowledge: What was that he said just now? Those are they whose hearts Allah hath sealed, and they follow their own lusts.” (47: 16)***

You need to take notes in studying and learning, because the brain is not a tape recorder.

ø best approach to activate the inner senses, Quran [Pickthal 8:2] They only are the (true) believers whose hearts feel fear when Allah is mentioned, and when His revelations are recited unto them they increase their faith, and who trust in their Lord;

You make some promises to yourself to be a better person. Once you reach this stage, then Allah (SWT) (he is so Merciful) he pulls you to himself. You just need to make a serious intention. If Allah (SWT) Knows that there is any good to you he will make you hear it.

To the highest stage of this then you can hear things from Allah (SWT).

There are some turning points in your life that Allah (SWT) will make you come across a situation..

Refer to the story of Fazel ibn Ayaz in the station of Waking Up.

There is a difference between being stubborn and stupidly stubborn. Allah (SWT) knew that Fazel will turn good even though he was supposedly sinful.

One Ayah turned his life, imagine what the whole Quran.

Become one of the best students of Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a), and wrote numerous books of Nasbah Al-Sharia’ compiled from the lessons on *Irfan* from Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a).

Take advantage of the message given to us from Allah (SWT).

## **10.3 Speaker Is Also Important**

The speaker is also important that we hear from.

The speaker plays an important role in this

1st rule is that the speaker does what he preaches otherwise it is not going to be effective

Imam Khomeini (ra) was given the power of the influence of the people.

After the Revolution the whole world was freaking out – this old man comes, and gives a lecture 20 mins so calm and relaxed not very motivating. Broadcast to whole country and all of a sudden the whole situation of the country is changed. There is a propaganda that tomorrow is going to be an election and the Islamic Revolution is going down. He fixed it up immediately. It is the spiritual magic of his wording.

Imam Ali (‘a)

Someone with the name of Hamman comes to him, asks him about the attitude of the pious. Before Imam Ali (‘a) finished he died out of the words of Imam Ali (‘a).

Remember that in this concept he start by attending the majalis, put yourself in the magnetic field, these are our spiritual food, we need to recharge ourselves. Then we begin to hear the voices ourselves. It may start from a dream and then you hear it yourself.

If Allah (SWT) Knows that you really need it He will give it to you (Quran).

Then you understand what *Urafa* mean when they say:

Ibn Farid, When I step outside I hear the singing of the birds, the dancing of the trees, any voice I hear is the voice of Allah (SWT). This is the parable like the baby of the bosom of the mother the mother is trying to put the baby to bed with tranquillizing voices.

Moses (‘a) Heard voices from a tree

Dependant upon the stage that we have reached – have you reached the highest stage that we are created for?

Tabatabai said:

Put this in your agenda – that you try your best to reach a higher level, that you see and hear what others do not.

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.al-islam.org/guide-practical-irfan-mansour-leghaei>

### Links

[1] <https://www.al-islam.org/person/shaykh-mansour-leghaei>

[2] <https://www.al-islam.org/printpdf/book/export/html/100224>

[3] <https://www.al-islam.org/printepub/book/export/html/100224>

[4] <https://www.al-islam.org/printmobi/book/export/html/100224>

[5] <https://www.al-islam.org/tags/irfan>