

FATHER - SON ADVICES ON

Ahmed (A)

HOW TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD

On return from the battle of <sup>ff</sup> Siffin against his adversary Moawiya bin Abi Sufyaan, Ali (A.S.) prescribed to the world a number of invaluable advices on how to live a sublime life in this world. They were written in the form of a long will addressed to one of his sons. Hereunder is given the simplified and abreviated version as adapted from Nahjul Balagha, followed by explanatory notes.

1) FEAR OF GOD

FEAR GOD. BE HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT. KEEP THE THOUGHT OF HIM ALWAYS FRESH IN YOUR MIND. BE ATTACHED TO HIM.

The emphasis on fear of God is not meant to depict Allah as an oppressive and frightful Master. Certainly He is All Merciful and Compassionate as proclaimed in the first ayat of the Holy Qura'n BISMILLAH RRAHMANI RRAHIM and many other ayats. The fear of Allah is meant to alert us of His presence in every place and time and that He is aware and watchful of our actions for which we are answerable to Him. It is meant to arouse consciousness of our shortcomings and failures in our duties towards Him despite His countless blessings. It is meant to boost our sense of obedience to Him.

With the help of constant thought and remembrance of Allah in our mind and by remaining attached to Him, we are in fact desired to preserve our faith and reliance on Him and Him alone. In so doing, we could then be expected to submit totally to His Will and not to lower ourselves by bowing down before anyone else in this world.

2) PIETY

ADOPT PIETY. KILL YOUR EXCESSIVE DESIRES WITH ITS HELP

Piety means to free oneself from vicious desires and wicked deeds. This freedom and self-control cannot be obtained but by constant efforts and endeavours. No one can be free from vices and sins unless he develops the capacity to abhor and hate them. When once this capacity is developed then to lead a pious and pure life becomes a habit and second nature.

Ali (A.S.) advises us to kill our excessive desires with the help of piety. Why? Because it is the excessive ~~desires~~ <sup>desires</sup> and uncontrolled <sup>desires</sup> that lead us to sins and which prove harmful to our this wordly life and the next.

3) FAITH IN GOD

BUILD YOUR CHARACTER WITH THE HELP OF FAITH IN RELIGION AND GOD

It is but natural that unless we have faith and trust in someone, we would not believe in what he tells us nor would we be inclined to follow his advices. Only after we have illuminated our heart with faith and understanding of Islam that we could be expected to adorn ourselves with elevated character

in the light of Islamic teachings and exemplary lives of the Prophet and his Ahl ul Bait. Therefore Ali (A.S.) advises us to build our character with the help of faith in God and in religion.

4) VISION OF DEATH

SUBJUGATE YOUR SELF-WILLED, OBSTINATE AND UNCONTROLLABLE NATURE WITH THE VISION OF DEATH. MAKE IT SEE THE MORTALITY OF LIFE

Man has the tendency of becoming obstinate to his inner imaginations and desires. He tends to insist that what he thinks and does is always right irrespective of the fact that it can be harmful to himself and others. Quite often he may be oppressing others yet he tends to justify his action by- through his obstinate nature. What can assist him in subjugating his obstinate nature is that of which he is frightened yet he is absolutely certain to come at any time and that is death. It is the constant thought of death that would make him undervalue his worldly aspirations and desires and <sup>make him</sup> ~~be~~ more concerned with preparation for life after death. The obstinate nature of man can only be bent when it is made to see the mortality and uncertain span of his this worldly life.

5) CHANGE OF TIMES

FORCE YOUR NATURE TO REALIZE THE ACTUALITY OF MISFORTUNES AND ADVERSITIES, THE CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND TIMES

Man has the tendency of being negligent and unmindful of his duties when he sees himself blessed all round with health, wealth and abundance. He tends to think that this state of affairs would last long and no affliction nor any bad time would overtake him.

The advice of Ali (A.S.) <sup>for us</sup> here is to remain constantly on guard by making one's nature always realize that it does not take time for circumstances to change and for one to be punished or tested with misfortunes and afflictions. That nothing in this world is lasting and everything is ultimately to perish except ~~but~~ the existence of Almighty Allah the Ever-Living.

6) STUDY OF HISTORY OF THE PAST

COMPEL IT TO STUDY THE HISTORIES OF THE PAST PEOPLE. PERSUADE IT TO SEE THE RUINED CITIES- THE DILAPIDATED PALACES AND DECAYING SIGNS OF FALLEN EMPIRES. MEDITATE OVER THE ACTIVITIES OF THESE PEOPLE, OVER WHAT THEY DID WHEN ALIVE AND IN POWER, WHAT THEY ACHIEVED, FROM WHERE THEY STARTED THEIR CAREER, HOW THEY WERE BROUGHT TO AN END, WHERE THEY ARE NOW, WHAT THEY GAINED AND WHAT THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO HUMAN WELFARE WAS. THEY ~~ARE~~ <sup>II</sup> PARTED FROM WHAT THEY CHERISHED AND LOVED. THEY ARE NOW ALL IN SOLITARY ABODE ALONE UNATTENDED