

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

We seek forgiveness from Allah
We stand witness to Allah that there is no God but Him
That Muhammad (saww) is his slave and messenger

The secret of Abjad

- According to Imam Ali (as) the letter raa ر denotes "Al-Ra'oof" which embodies kindness and mercy.
- In Surah Al Hadid 57:9, Allah SWT says:

وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُمْ لَرَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

And verify Allah is to you most kind and Merciful

- Linguistically, this Attribute is derived from ra'fa, which means intense mercy or compassion which is the ultimate limit of rahma. When applied to the Almighty, it means His warding off all types of evil.
- The Attribute "al-Ra'oof" refers to the One Who does not cease being kind and compassionate to the sinners by accepting their repentance, and to His friends by protecting them from committing sins. It conveys the same meaning conveyed by the Attribute "al-Rahim" with an intensification of the meaning embedded in the latter.
- The Most Exalted One has advanced the Attribute "al-Ra'oof" over that of "al-Rahim," preferring "ra'fah" over "rahmah" and giving precedence to the first over the latter. Indeed, in Surah Al Baqarah, verse 2:143, Allah SWT says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

Most surely Allah is Affectionate, Merciful, to people

- The Messenger of Allah was traveling once as he happened to pass by a woman baking bread. Her young son was with her. She was told that the Messenger of Allah was passing by, so she came to him and said, "O Messenger of Allah! It has come to my

knowledge that you have said, 'Allah is more compassionate towards His servants than a mother towards her son.' Is this the correct statement which you have spoken?" He answered her in the affirmative, whereupon she said, "A mother does not hurl her son in an oven like this one." Having heard her say so, the Messenger of Allah wept, and then he said, "Allah does not torment anyone by the fire [of hell] except one who is too arrogant to bear witness that there is no god but He."

- If a servant of Allah wishes to model his conduct after the inspiration of this Attribute, he has first to remember and mention it quite often, hence the light of al-Ra'oof will manifest itself to his heart, so much so that he will become compassionate towards all people, the commoners as well as the elite, always remembering the saying of the Messenger of Allah, "Be merciful unto the people of the earth so that the people of the heavens may be merciful to you."

Greed

Surah Al-maa'rij verses 70:19-21

- In Surah Al-Ma'arij, verses 70:19-21, Allah SWT says:

**إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ
مُنُوعًا**

Indeed man has been created covetous. When evil befalls him, he becomes perturbed. When good comes to him, he becomes niggardly

- The word covetous refers to those who are greedy, desirous, jealous or envious.
- There are three things, which Allah (SWT) has mentioned about man in these three verses:
 1. *Firstly*, man by nature is **Covetous**. In English, **Covetous** is a person who wants to have something that someone else has. In other words, it means 'Greed'. If someone here is rich, then I too want to be rich; If someone here has a huge bungalow, then I too must have a huge bungalow; If someone here has the most expensive car, then I too must have the same. This is called a covetous and a greedy person.
 2. *Secondly*, when ill befalls him, he becomes anxious and perturbed. The students who go to universities encounter atheists who do not believe in God. When asked, they refer to only bad things happening in this life and conclude that there is no God. If God were there, the Tsunami would not have come and killed so many people; If God was there, there would have been no sufferings in this life. Many a time, even the believers get perturbed and anxious when anything ill befalls them. A person becomes ill for a long time and gives up praying. He claims, 'If prayers healed, I wouldn't be sick'. Or if

somebody loses a closest person in life and complains 'Why me?' So man becomes perturbed when ill befalls him. Such people by asking these questions depict their ignorance of the truth and justice of the Almighty.

3. And *thirdly*, when good comes his way, he becomes niggardly and miserly. As long as a person does not have wealth, he prays to God to bless him with it and promises to spend it in so many good things. But as soon as he is blessed with wealth, gradually he becomes a miser and emphasizes on the needs of economizing particularly when it comes to spending in Allah (SWT)'s cause.
- If we look at all these three things carefully, we will realize that they have been mentioned together because they are also inter-connected with each other. Ayatullah Naser Makarem Shirazi states in his Tafseer: *A person, who is greedy, will also be niggardly and will not have the ability to control himself over any material loss* [Tafseer-e-Namoona].

Prayer keeps you away from greed

- Allah SWT says in verses 70:22-25:

**إِنَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي
أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ**

Not so those devoted to Prayer. Those who remain steadfast to their prayer. And those in whose wealth are a recognized right. For the beggar and the destitute.

- In Surah Ankabut, verse 29:45, Allah SWT says:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil.

- The Holy Prophet said:

من لم تنهه صلاته عن الفحشاء و المنكر لم يزد من الله إلا بعدا

“One whose prayer does not keeps him away from indecency and evil will not increase his proximity with Allah, thus being distanced away.”

[Al Mizan fi al tafseer]

- In another riwayat, the Prophet said:

لا صلاة لمن لم تطع الصلاة و طاعة الصلاة أن تنتهي عن الفحشاء
و المنكر

“There is no salat for those who are not faithful to salat. Faithfulness to salat is keeping oneself away from indecency and evil”

[Al Mizan fi al tafseer]

- In a similar hadith, Imam Sadiq said:

من أحب أن يعلم قبلت صلاته أم لم تقبل، فليُنظر هل منعه صلاته
عن الفحشاء و المنكر فبقدر ما منعه قبلت صلاته.

“If you want to know whether your salat is maqboolah (accepted) or maghdooda (rejected) check whether or not your salat is keeping you away from indecency and evil. The extent of salat accepted dependable on the extend ones been kept away from indecency and evil”

[Al Mizan fi al tafseer]

Satan reveals two secrets to Hazrat Noah

- In Surah Noah, verse 71:26-27 the Holy Quran says

وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لِمَا تَذَرُ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دِيَارًا إِنَّكَ إِنْ
تَذَرَهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا

And Nuh said: My Lord! leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers. For surely if Thou leave them they will lead astray Thy servants, and will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful (children)

- It is said that Satan approached Nabi Noah after his ark embarked on land and said that there is no man in land more favourable to me than you. You have prayed against the people of immoral and thus have saved me the trouble, I will reveal to you, two secrets. First, beware of hasad. It has done to me what it has done. Second, beware of covetous. Greed has done to Adam what it has done. **[Bihar al Anwar, Vol 70 pg 163].**

The Superiority of Imam Ali (as) over Hazrat Adam (as)

- Sha'sha'ah Ibn Shauhaan once asked Imam Ali (as), "Are you superior to Adam?" To this, the Imam humbly replied, "To promote one self is unethical. It is not good ethics to project one self. However, the fact is that Allah said to Adam: O Adam dwell you and your spouse al jannah, eat and drink both of you as you wish but don't come close to the forbidden tree or else you will end up among the zalimeen. On the other hand, most things for me are permissible but still I refrain from these and do not get myself near to them " **[Saluuni abla an tafquduuni]**.

Tha'labah Ansaari breaks his covenant

Once, Tha'labah Ibn Haatib Ansaari approached the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and beseeched:

"O' Prophet of God! Pray to God that He grants me wealth and riches."

**يا ثعلبة قليل تؤدي شكره خير من كثير لا تطيقه؟ و الذي نفسي بيده لو أردت أن تسير الجبال معي ذهباً
و فضة لسارت**

The Prophet said: "Little wealth for which you are able to offer thanksgiving, is better than immense riches for which you are unable to offer thanksgiving," By God! If I wished that the mountains would turn into gold for me, they would do so."

Tha'labah went away but approached the Holy Prophet for the second time, repeating his request.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "You shall not obey me."

For the second time, Tha'labah went away, but returned a third time and again placed his request before the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and implored, "Do pray for me. I avow that if God grants me wealth, whoever possesses a right in it, I shall give it to him."

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) prayed for him and God answered his prayers. Tha'labah initially purchased some sheep, which slowly grew in number till they became plentiful.

Earlier, he used to offer all his prayers behind the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) but after his wealth and riches began to increase, he would only be present for the Dhuhr and the A'sr prayers, and spent the rest of his time looking after his sheep.

As time passed, his work increased to such an extent that he could only manage to come to Madinah for the Friday prayers and eventually even this became a thing of the past. He would only come up to the road leading towards Madinah and seek news of the city from the passers-by.

Classical Tafseer Class (Relaunched) - Notes
Session 10- Friday, 21 July 2006

One day, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) inquired about him, whereupon he was informed that Tha'labah's sheep had increased manifold and he had settled outside Madinah. Hearing this, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) cried out three times: "Woe be unto Tha'labah!"

After a period of time, the verse pertaining to *zakaat* was revealed. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) selected two people, one from *Bani Sulaim* and the other from *Juhniyah*, and gave them written authority, empowering them to collect the *zakaat*.

Approaching Tha'labah, they read out the order for the collection of *zakaat*. After some thought, Tha'labah said:

"This is Jizyah (poll-tax) or something akin to it. Go and collect it from others and come back to me later."

They proceeded to a person from the tribe of *Bani Sulaim* and read out the Holy Prophet's (s.a.w.) orders at which he handed over the best of his camels to them as his *zakaat*. The collectors explained to him that they had not asked him to give the best of his camels, but he insisted by saying that he was giving the camel through his own choice.

The collectors collected the *zakaat* from the others and on the way back, again approached Tha'labah and sought his *zakaat*.

He said, *"Let me have a look at that decree."*

After reading it, he once again repeated, "This appears to be *Jizyah* or something similar to it. Go away and let me ponder over it."

The collectors returned to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), but before they could speak he exclaimed: "Woe unto Tha'labah!" and then prayed for the generous person from *Bani Sulaim*. The collectors explicitly narrated to him their encounter with Tha'labah.

Allah SWT then revealed the following verses (Surah At Taubah, verses 9:75-78)

**وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ عَاهَدَ اللَّهَ لَئِنِ آتَانَا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَلَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ
فَلَمَّا آتَاهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهِ بَخِلُوا بِهِ وَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ
فَأَعْقَبَهُمْ نِقَافًا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهُ بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا اللَّهَ مَا
وَعَدُوهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ
أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ**

Classical Tafseer Class (Relaunched) - Notes
Session 10- Friday, 21 July 2006

And there are those of them who made a covenant with Allah: If He gives us out of His grace, we will certainly give alms and we will certainly be of the righteous ones.

But when He gave them out of His grace, they became niggardly of it and they turned back, and they withdrew.

So in consequence He affected hypocrisy into their hearts till the day when they shall meet Him because they failed to fulfil towards Allah what they had promised with Him and because they told lies.

Do they not know that Allah knows their hidden thoughts and their secret counsels, and that Allah is the great Knower of the unseen things?

[Pand-e-Taareekh, vol. 1, pg. 73; Asad al-Ghaabbah, vol. 1, pg. 237.]

If greed is in the nature of man, then why should it be condemned?

- The question that arises is: If 'Greed' is the nature of man, it means Allah (SWT) has created him in that manner. Then why should 'Greed' be condemned? It is true that Allah (SWT) has put 'Greed' in man. BUT He (SWT) has done so for its positive application and not negative application.
- The answer for example: You buy a house and put in so many things that are both useful as well as harmful. For instance: Gas. It is useful for cooking and for keeping the house warm. As long as you take care of it properly, it does you good, BUT the moment you are careless of it, it can blow your entire house up.
- When Allah (SWT) created us, He (SWT) put in us certain things that are necessary for our progress towards perfection. However, if those things are used incorrectly and misappropriated, they can turn us in to the lowest of the low. They can make us animals and even worse. One of those things is 'Greed'. Greed for knowledge leads man to perfection; Greed for rewards in the Hereafter makes a person do good; Greed for peace and harmony in society makes a man a true and worthy human being. However, 'Greed' of this wretched world and its possessions is unhealthy because it eventually makes man niggardly and perturbed at its losses. **"We certainly created man in the best of forms". (95:4)** the best of forms is not only the outer of man BUT also his inner self and what is in the heart. They help man to move forward. But since those things can also be dangerous for man, Allah (SWT) has forewarned about them. **"Then We relegated him to the lowest of the low". (95:5)** meaning 'We put into him things that can also make him lowest of the low'. One of those things is 'Greed' and the method of safeguarding from it and from other such things is: **"Except those who have faith and do righteous deeds". (95:6)**

Prophet 'Isa and his greedy companion

Prophet 'Isa (as) was once travelling with a person. After having journeyed for a period, they were overcome by hunger. When they reached a village, Prophet 'Isa (as) requested his companion to go and bring some bread while he (as) engaged in prayers. The man returned with 3 loaves of bread and waited for Prophet 'Isa (as) to join him. But as the prayers of Prophet 'Isa (as) continued for a long time, the man quietly consumed one loaf of bread.

After his prayers, Prophet 'Isa (as) asked the man, "*Were there 3 loaves of bread?*" The man said, "*No! There were only two*". The Prophet (as) did not say anything. He (as) just ate with the man and then, they both continued with their journey. On the way, they encountered a herd of deer. Prophet 'Isa (as) summoned one of the deer towards him, sacrificed it and both men sat down to it.

After eating, Prophet 'Isa (as) said (addressing to the remains of that deer), "*O deer! Move by the permission of Allah!*" The deer came to life and sprinted away. Witnessing this, the man was dumbfounded and uttered, "*Subhanallah*". Prophet 'Isa (as) said to him, "*I put you under the oath of He, who manifested this sign of His power before you! Tell me what happened to the third loaf of bread?*" The man insisted again that there were only 2 loaves of bread. They both continued with their journey until they arrived on the outskirts of a large village. There, they saw 3 gold bricks lying before them. The man said, "*There appears to be great wealth here*". Prophet 'Isa (as) said, "*Yes, one brick is yours, one is mine and I will give the third to one who ate the 3rd loaf of bread*". The greedy man blurted out, "*I ate the 3rd loaf of bread*". Prophet 'Isa (as) gave him all the 3 gold bricks and went away.

The man was sitting wondering how he would carry all the 3 bricks and how would he use them when 3 men passed. When their eyes fell upon the bricks, they killed the man and took possession of the 3 bricks. Since they were all hungry, they decided one of them should go and bring food for them. The person who went to bring food decided to put poison in it to kill the other two so that he could have all the bricks to himself. Meanwhile, these two also had planned to kill the man on his return so that they could divide the 3 bricks. As a result, when the man arrived with the food, the two killed him. They then sat to eat and were killed by the poison. No one benefited from the gold bricks. On his return, Prophet 'Isa (as) saw all the 4 men dead and the bricks were intact. He (as) said, "*This is how the world conducts itself with those who are greedy over it*". **[Anwaar al-Nu'maniyyah]**

The moral of the story is: ***Greedy people are always the losers. They think that they are successful but in reality what they accumulate out of greed, they never are satiated with it!***

In this tafseer class, there might be shortcomings in imparting the knowledge of the tafseer. If there is any information that requires correction, please do not hesitate to let us know via e-mail: jaafari_tafseer_committee@yahoo.com.sg. Allah knows best.