

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 Jeem ج refers to 'Jalla sana u'wataqa dasa asmaau. The Arabic word *Jalla* means greatness and hence the letter Jeem symbolizes the Greatness of the Almighty.
- The letter haa ح denotes the *asmaul husna* such as *haqun*, *haleemun*. The Arabic word *haqun* means 'truth'. Thus, the letter haa indicates that the ultimate truth is the existence and the reality of Allah SWT.
- In Surah Al-Hajj 22:6, Allah SWT says:

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّهُ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَأَنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ

*This is so, because God is the reality. It is He who gives life to the dead,
And it is He who has Power over all things¹*

- Furthermore, in Surah Luqman, verse 31:30, Allah SWT says:

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ

*This is because God is the (only) Reality and because whatever else they invoke² besides
Him is falsehood; and because God-He is The Most High, Most Great*

¹The reality behind the life and nature of this beautiful world is none other than the Almighty God. Nature and life will perish but He is eternal. They are but shadows, shifting and illusory, in the sense that they have neither permanency nor an independent existence. But they have a sort of secondary reality in the sense in which a shadow is a real reflection from a substance. No Power or Existence has any meaning except as a reflection of God's ineffable Glory.

² All the wonderful complexities and nuances that we find in Creation are blended in one harmonious whole that obeys Laws and exemplifies Order. They therefore point to the One True God (Al Haq). All other things are but

Classical Tafseer Class (Relaunched) - Summary
Session 06- Friday, 9 June 2006

- The Holy Prophet said: “Ali is with the truth and the truth is with Ali. The two are inseparable till it returns to me at the well of *kauthar* on the day of *qiamah*. [*Ali fi al kiab wa assunah Vol 2 pg 54*].
- *The Hadith* implies that Ali is with the truth and the truth is with Ali. Therefore it is important that we follow Imam Ali since the path of Ali is the path of truth. Unfortunately today many Muslims have forgotten this hadith of the Holy Prophet and have decided not to be amongst the shia of Ali.

Trials in relation to creation, death and life

Surah Al-Mulk verse 67:2

- In Surah Al-Mulk verse 67:2 Allah SWT says:

**الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْغَفُورُ**

*He Who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deed
And He is the Exalted in Might, in Forgiving.*

- Some commentators commented that *ahsanu ‘amala* refers to the one who is best in conduct. However, others have translated it as the one who takes wise actions with good intentions. The implication is that Allah will test how we take our actions and what our intentions were behind our actions.
- In the above verse, death is mentioned before life; and death is stated to have been created. This proves that death is not cessation of existence.
- In Surah Baqarah verse 2:28, Allah SWT mentions death before life. Similarly in Surah Najm verse 53: 44, death is put before life.

The meaning of death

- Death is not cessation of existence but a change of direction or transforming into another form. The state before our present life, or the state after, is not known to us or unknowable to

shadows and if any of them is put up in competition or equality with Him, it can only be Falsehood (Al Batil).For He is higher and greater than anything we can imagine.

Classical Tafseer Class (Relaunched) - Summary
Session 06- Friday, 9 June 2006

us, but our present life is given to us as a trial, to either do good and move to a nobler state of existence or follow the evil delusions and go to a place where existence is eternal damnation.

- The literal meaning of the word *intiqal* is 'shift'. *Intiqal* therefore refers to the transformation from one world to the other world.
- Imam Muhammad Al Baqir was once questioned the meaning of death. He answered that Death is actually sleep that comes to you every night except that this sleep is longer and you are only awakened on the day of Qiyamah [*Mizaan al hikmah hadith # 18808*].

The meaning of trials in relation to life and death

- Trial implies freedom of action and free will given to man, otherwise, if the theory of determinism is accepted, it would mean Allah does not know who will do what. Allah has given man intelligence, power of observation and contemplation and discretion to decide which path he will walk on. The idea of death reminds him about the life he will have after he crosses the frontiers of this life and enters a new state of existence. As man sows, so shall he reap. The consequences of his deeds in this life he shall face at once as soon as he leaves this world, and will continue to exist amid them, a state of existence known as *barzakh*.

Surah Al-Baqarah 2:28

- In Surah Al- Baqarah, verse 2:28 Allah SWT says:

**كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمَيِّتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ
إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ**

*How can you deny Allah seeing that you were without life,
and He gave you life; then He will cause you to die
and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return.*

- Through *kuntum amwatan* it is made clear that the soul existed in the spiritual realm but was unable to take any active part in the visible creation.
- Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

The human ego, which was not as it is now - a conscious self -, is addressed here. The previous state is termed as "being dead". "Giving life" is the present conscious state. The departure of the conscious self from the body is death. The state after this departure is revivification. It is a continuous evolutionary transformation of a conscious self up to the communion with the infinite, not in the sense of annihilation, nor the absorption of the finite into the infinite, but in the sense of the realisation of the fact that nothing is real save Allah.

Classical Tafseer Class (Relaunched) - Summary
Session 06- Friday, 9 June 2006

- After departing from one life to live another life, the pain or pleasure in the succeeding life is the result of the mode of life adopted in the preceding life. Therefore the return is for the final retribution.
- The Holy Prophet said: “You shall not be annihilated, because you have been created to last till eternity. You only go from this life of actions (good or bad) to the life of happiness or misery.” *[Agha Mahdi Puya commentary of verse 2:28].*
- The mysteries of life and death are in His hands. When you die on this earth this is not the end. To Him you belong and to Him you shall return. His knowledge is all comprehending. And yet will you deliberately reject or deny the faculty of Faith which has been put into you? This clearly portrays the ungratefulness of mankind towards Allah. Denying Allah is a form of ingratitude. Satan’s refusal to bow in front of Adam placed him amongst the Kafirun. Satan’s downfall was his ego since he thought himself to be superior.

Surah Al-Insan verse 76:1

- In Surah Al-Insan, verse 76:1, Allah SWT says:

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا

*Has there not been over man a long period of time,
when he was nothing- (not even) mentioned?*

- The literal meaning of this verse is that the physical world existed long before man was ever heard of or mentioned.
- *Dahr* means "time from the beginning of the world to its end".
- Rasulullah saaw said to Ali: “O Ali express the fact what is the first “nikmat” blessing that Allah has tried you and hast bestowed favors with it.” Ali replied: “He (Allah) The Most Exalted & Excellence has created me when I was a thing not worth mentioning.” Rasulullah saaw said: “You are absolutely right.” *[Tafseer Nur Athsaqalain Vol 5 pg 466].*

The meaning and importance of Sajdah

- **Sajdah** is an action that exhibits the highest degree of humility of a creature before his Creator. When a person performs **Sajdah** he is basically acknowledging the fact that he is completely inferior to Allah SWT.
- A person asked Imam ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (as) to explain the meaning of the **Sajdahs** in Salaat.

Imam (as) said:

Classical Tafseer Class (Relaunched) - Summary
Session 06- Friday, 9 June 2006

- When a person performs the first **Sajdah**, he is actually telling Allah SWT: **MINHAA KHALAQTANEE** (You have created me from it i.e. dust).
 - Then he raises his head from **Sajdah**, he is telling: **MINHAA AKHRAJTANEE** (You have removed me from it i.e. dust).
 - Then again he goes into the second **Sajdah** implying: **WA ILAIHAA TA'EEDUNEE** (You will return me into it i.e. dust).
 - And finally when he raises his head up again, he is saying: **WA MINHAA TUKHRIJUNEE TAARATAN UKHRAA** (And You will remove me from it i.e. dust again for the second time) [*Bihar al-Anwaar*].
- Throughout the actions of performing **Sajdahs** the concentration is only on one fact that our creation, return and coming back to life is related to dust. We are nothing but inferior in front of Allah SWT!
 - And we acknowledge this through the kind of Dhikr that we recite in **Sajdahs**:

SUB-HAANA RABBIYAL A'ALAA WA BIHAMDIHI
(Glory and all praise be to my Lord who is the Most high)

- Whenever we perform **Sajdah**, we must strive to extend it as much as possible. Why? Because **Sajdah** reminds our enemy **Iblees** about his disobedience to Allah (SWT) and the reason for his banishment from Paradise.
- Imam Ja'ffar al-Sadiq (as) has said, "Verily when a servant prolongs his prostrations in a manner that no one sees him, Shaytan says: 'Woe unto me! They are obedient and I disobeyed. They prostrated and I refused'." [*Bihar al-Anwar*].
- Indeed in Surah Al- A'la, verse 96:19, Allah SWT says:

كَلَّا لَا تُطِيعُهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ

No indeed; do thou not obey him, and bow thyself, and draw nigh (to God).

Note that performing Sajdah is wajib (compulsory) after reading the above verse

Why does Allah SWT afflict believers with misfortunes?

There are a few reasons we have been given for this in the traditions. Some of them are as follows:

1. One reason why believers are afflicted with misfortunes is because these are a test of our "Imaan". Allah takes trials to see whether or not we are strong in our belief and our faith.

- In Surah An-Qabut verse 29:2, Allah SWT says:

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ

Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, We believe, and not be tried?

- In verse 29:3, Allah SWT then says:

**وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ
الْكَاذِبِينَ**

*And certainly We tried those before them, so Allah will certainly know those who are true
and He will certainly know the liars.*

- Islam aims at the actual practice and not a mere verbal declaration of faith. There is no salvation of any individual at mere profession of faith without disciplining his self in line with the dictates of Islam. No one will be let off merely on saying that they have believed.
- Mere profession of Faith is insufficient. It must be tested in the real turmoil of life. The test will be applied in all kinds of circumstances in individual life and in relation to the environment around us, to see whether we can strive constantly and put Allah above ourselves. Pain, sorrow and self sacrifice may be necessary, not because they are good in themselves, but because they will purify us.
- Ayyashi narrates from Imam Ali bin Muhammad an Naqi that Ibn Abbas, after the departure of the Holy Prophet from this world, told Ali: "Go to the people. They will pay allegiance to you." In reply Ali quoted verse 29:3:

**وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ
الْكَاذِبِينَ**

Classical Tafseer Class (Relaunched) - Summary
Session 06- Friday, 9 June 2006

And certainly We tried those before them, so Allah will certainly know those who are true and He will certainly know the liars.

Imam Ali then said: " 'Allah knows' means that He examines and tests the believers to distinguish the righteous from the wicked." *[Agha Puya commentary of verses 29:2-3].*

2. The second reason why Allah afflicts believers with calamities is to jolt, remind and bring believers back to Allah SWT.

- This world and its adornments are such that man is bound to forget Allah SWT and his responsibilities towards Him. Allah SWT, through misfortunes, jolts the believers to bring them back to His remembrance.
- In Surah Sajdah, verse 32:21 of the Holy Quran, Allah SWT says:

**وَلَنُذِيقَهُمْ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَرْجِعُونَ**

Verify We shall make them taste the smaller torment before the greater punishment that haply they may return (to Us).³

- Imam Ali (a.s) says: "If you see that Allah SWT is sending one after another affliction to you, then know that He is awakening you. And if you see, despite your disobedience, Allah SWT is blessing you with bounties then be watchful-for He is letting you loose". *[Ghurar al-Hikam]*

3. Thirdly, Allah SWT cleanses the sins of His believers through misfortunes.

- Any misfortune is a kind of punishment. After this punishment has corrected a believer, he will not be held accountable again in the hereafter for the same sin for which he has been punished already.
- Imam Ali (a.s) said, "Don't you want me to inform you about the best verse in the Holy Quran? The Holy Prophet (saww) said that it is verse 42:30, where Allah SWT says:

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

³ Creator's punishment is to come in the Hereafter. But before it comes; small torments come in this very life. It may be some kind of misfortune, pangs of tortured conscience or secret sorrow. This small torment may really be a mercy as it gives them a chance of repentance and amendment.

Classical Tafseer Class (Relaunched) - Summary
Session 06- Friday, 9 June 2006

And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and (yet) He pardons most (of your faults).

It is above Allah to punish someone for a sin for which He has already punished in this world or to punish one whom He has already forgiven". **[Bihar]**

- Evil is not normal. The nature of Allah's creation is orderly, harmonious and normal. When twisted and corrupted, it becomes evil.
- The hardships the righteous suffer in the cause of Allah are a trial to distinguish them from ordinary people.
- Once Ma'mun the Abbasid ruler asked Imam Ali Ridha (a.s.) "What is the proof that Hazrat Ali "Qaseem al jannah wa annar" (who will decide whom will enter Paradise and Hell?)" Imam replied: "Did your father not narrate the hadith of the Prophet: 'Ali's affection is *imaan* and his hatred is *kufr*, *Al Ma'mun reply, certainly yes. The Imam then said*" Obviously from this hadith Ali is indeed "Qaseem al jannah wa annar" **[Ali fi al kiab wa assunah Vol 2 pg 63].**
- Imam Muhammad Al Baqir said: "If Allah loves his servant he will sight his attention on the servant. He will bestow him with one of the three gifts namely headache, fever and sore eyes." **[Bihar al-Anwaar].**
- The hadith implies that if Allah SWT loves his servants he would afflict them in this world by headaches, fever or eye infection so that he does not have to punish them in the Hereafter.
- Hence misfortunes or calamities around us may actually be blessings in disguise.

Mind Blowing Story

Haroun Rashid's Questions and Bohlool's Answers

Haroun Rashid was returning from his journey to Hajj, and Bohlool was waiting for him on the side of the road. As soon as he saw Haroun, he loudly said three times, "Haroun! Haroun! Haroun!"

The Khalifa asked, "Who is this caller?"

The people said, "It is Bohlool."

Classical Tafseer Class (Relaunched) - Summary
Session 06- Friday, 9 June 2006

Haroun called Bohlool. When he came near him, the Khalifa asked, "Who am I?"

Bohlool said: "You are the person who is responsible for the oppression of weak people."

Haroun started crying at this and said, "You spoke truly. Now request something from me."

At this, Bahlool replied: "My request is that you forgive my sins and permit me into Heaven."

Haroun answered: "This is beyond my control; on the other hand, I can pay your debts."

Bohlool quipped: "A debt can't be fulfilled by another debt; because you yourself are indebted to the public. Thus, return to the public their wealth. It is not decent or elegant of you to give me the wealth of others."

The Khalifa then said, "I give the order to grant you some assets, which will be guarded, as the means of your livelihood so you can pass your life with comfort and ease."

On hearing this, Bohlool said: "We are all servants of Allah and receive salary from Him; is it possible that He may give you subsistence and forget about me?"

Disclaimer:

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.