

‘Ashara Mubarakah 1441 H, Colombo
Majlis 8
Reflections

Today on the 9th of Moharram al-Haram, Syedna Aali Qadr Mufaddal Saifuddin ^{TUS} expounded upon the eighth set of counsels given by Maulana Ali ^{SA} to Imam Hasan ^{AS}. Imam Hasan ^{AS} asked his revered father, ‘Which are the three things towards which one should shift one’s attention?’

Maulana Ali ^{SA} replied:

1. Shift your attention towards understanding your soul. Identify your flaws and shortcomings and develop a strong aversion towards them until you see that your soul is rid of them and the fragrance of good character emanates from it.
2. Shift your attention towards Allah’s *taqwa* (piety, *mohabbat* and *ta’at*)
3. After attaining the above two, shift your focus towards your soul becoming unpretentious and the concealment of deeds. Do not boast about your achievements and make humility and humbleness your defining traits.

Over the course of history there have been numerous shifts in thoughts and mindsets. Previously, it was believed that the world was flat. However, the ancient Greeks established that the earth was in fact round and the world shifted to this new reality. It is largely due to the progress of science that a shift occurs from old ideas to new. The main purpose behind such innovation and advancement is the betterment of the human experience. A medicine that was once prescribed by doctors is now considered detrimental.

Amirul Mumineen ^{SA} states, 'I am aware of all things'. He enjoins us to acquire an understanding of all things, yet to realize that the most important understanding is that of the soul. It is towards this understanding that we should shift our attention to. The soul's purity is paramount and it can only be attained by ridding it of its flaws. This understanding is not something to be done publicly, but is rather a process of self-assessment and self-realization. Once a person has identified his flaws he should acknowledge them and not seek to deny them. He should not become complacent but instead should strive to eradicate them and thereafter move on with his life.

In this context, Muffadal Maula ^{TUS} narrated that both Maulatona Umme Salama ^{RA} and her first husband, Abu Salama, embraced Islam in Makkah al-Mukarrama but due to persecution sought refuge in Habasha (Absynnia). Once Islam took root they returned to Makkah. In 4 H, Abu Salama passed away, at that time Maulatona Umme Salama was 33 years old. Following this both Talha and another sent her a marriage proposal. Nabi Mohammed ^{SA} too sent her a proposal to which she replied, 'O Rasul Allah, I have reached quite an old age, I have children and I possess *ghairat*¹.

Rasul Allah ^{SAW} replied, 'I am older than you, your children are my children and I will pray to Allah that you overcome your *ghairat*.' Maulatona Umme Salama ^{RA} was well aware of the condition and traits of her soul and subsequently her shortcomings. Thus, she was able to do *araz* to Rasul Allah ^{SA} who prayed for her, and the prayers of Allah's Nabi will always be answered.

¹ Ghairat: a strong sense of ardency and honour due to which one cannot tolerate anything he/she dislikes'

Imam Ali Zainul Abideen^{AS} has said that when people are preoccupied with the shortcomings of others, occupy yourself with your own shortcomings. When everyone around us is discussing and focusing on the faults of others, it is important to take stock of our own attributes, actions and character, identifying the faults that lie therein. His words of wisdom were apparent in his own actions. Imam^{SA} refrained from responding to a man who had insulted him while he was seated with his companions. Rather, he stood and sought out the man's house. When he opened the door and saw the Imam^{AS} he expected that he was there to retaliate. However, Imam^{SA} told him to not worry and instead offered the following *du'a mubarak*:

If what you have said about me is true, may Allah Ta'ala forgive my sins. If what you have said about me is false, may Allah Ta'ala forgive your sins.

Upon hearing Imam's^{SA} words, the man kissed Imam's^{AS} *paishani mubarak* and embarrassingly confessed that what he had said about Imam^{AS} was untrue.

Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal^{TUS} expounded on the act of *muhaasabat al-nafs bi al-nafs*: self-assessment, or more accurately, assessing one's own soul using one's soul. He explained that self-assessment in this manner is a door to prosperity, although it is difficult to achieve since most people find very little wrong with their own actions. We are always prone to justifying what we do. In the truest sense, a Mumin's soul, his *jaan* and what he holds most dear, is his Maula^{TUS}. His Maula^{TUS} is the measure of what is good and bad. Imam Ahmed al-Mastur^{SA} writes in the *Rasaa'il Ikhwaan al-Safaa* that, 'If you wish to learn how to assess and carry out *hisaab*, then you must come to the *majlis* of our Brethren'.

Mufaddal Maula^{TUS} illustrated the notion of *muhaasabat al-nafs* in the presence of Wali Allah^{AS} in the actions of Syedi Khanjee

Feer ^{QR} whose *ziyarat* is in Udaipur. He was a scholar and devoted his time to teaching and also regularly incurred expenses for Dawat's various purposes. Because of his many responsibilities, he was unable to keep an account of his expenses in a satisfactory manner. With Syedna Abdutayyib Zakiuddin ^{RA} upset over his actions, Syedi Khanjee Feer ^{QR} came to Syedna's ^{RA} residences and sought an audience and an opportunity for *qadambosi*. When the gatekeeper informed Syedna ^{RA} that Syedi Khanjee Feer ^{QR} was at the door, he remained silent. The gatekeeper returned and mentioned what had occurred. Syedi Khanjee Feer ^{QR} withdrew to the main gate where everyone else would normally wait. Later in the night, when Syedna Zakiuddin ^{RA} woke for prayers, being the discerning Maula that he was, enquired into Syedi Khanjee Feer ^{QR} asking his attendant when he had left. The attendant responded, 'Maula, he has not left; he is still waiting at the gate.' Syedna Zakiuddin ^{RA} called Syedi Khanjee Feer ^{QR} and asked him why he had not returned home and gone to bed. He said, 'Maula, how could I return without having done your *qadambosi*?' He then sought forgiveness for his inability to fulfill what was required of him. Syedna ^{RA} graciously forgave him and stated that this entire series of events was in order to exonerate him and purify him of his sins.

The second thing one should shift their focus towards, is Allah's *taqwa*. *Taqwa*, Mufaddal Maula ^{TUS} explained, is to carry out acts for the sake of *muhabbat* and in order to please Wali Allah ^{AS}. To further illustrate this concept, Maulana al-Min'am ^{TUS} cited Imam Ali Zainul Abideen's ^{SA} *kalaam*, 'When people become preoccupied with the number of obligatory deeds they have carried out, occupy yourself with the quality and sincerity of yours.' He also quoted Imam's ^{AS} similar statement, 'When people become preoccupied with what pleases those created, occupy yourself with what pleases the Creator.'

The third and final thing one should shift towards is to always remain modest, unassuming and low-key. Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal ^{TUS} explained that arrogance and pride will accentuate one's worst qualities for which he or she will become notorious. On the other hand, modesty and humility will automatically bring out one's best qualities. Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal ^{TUS} cited additional maxims of Imam Ali Zainul Abideen ^{AS} to further clarify the third aspect of this *wasiyyat*: 'When people become preoccupied with physical and apparent beauty, occupy yourself with the purity of what is hidden' and 'When people become preoccupied with seeking prosperity in this world, occupy yourself with seeking prosperity in the next'. He illustrated this by citing the example of Syedna Ja'far bin Mansur al-Yemen ^{RA} and Syedna al-Qadi al-Nu'man ^{RA} who both remained modest and unassuming throughout their illustrious lives.

Relating from the *nasihat* of Syedna Taher Saifuddin ^{RA}, Maulana ^{TUS} reiterated how being true to namaz guards against the influence of Satan. Keeping a complete *saff* in namaz blocks the avenues of entry to him. How is that *saff* kept together? By preventing negative thoughts about others from creeping in. 'Why did someone do such and such to me!?' Find a reason for it, give them the benefit of the doubt and seal off the entry point for Satan.

On the topic of marriage, Maulana ^{TUS} spoke of the special bond between fathers and daughters. A daughter will remember her father's death anniversary while a son is prone to forget. When daughters reach the appropriate age it's incumbent that they be married. Maulana ^{TUS} also warned us to remain wary of outside influences. When choosing a marriage partner there are many facets to look at, emotion can be overwhelming, but the practicalities of a future together in faith must be considered.

In Karbala the enemy was set for battle today the 9th of Moharram; they had mobilised. But Imam Husain ^{AS} asked for one night's respite. Why? When all had been parched for two days, Maulana Aliasger ^{AS} was quivering out of thirst. Why? Why remain parched and hungry for one more day? So that he could gather everyone together to pray for *us* that final night!

After the *shahadat* the *sayyidaat* were mounted on bare-back camels. When Maulatona Zainab ^{AS} came to from having fainted she saw that the mount she was on was also weeping. Maulatona Zainab ^{AS} asked the camel, "I am weeping for my brother and the separation between siblings; why do you weep?" The camel replied, "O' granddaughter of Rasul Allah! I weep because your head is uncovered and you are mounted upon me bare-back." He added, "That they are taking you prisoner to Shaam; I wish that they would take you instead to Madina! I pray that death strikes me down here and now!" No sooner had the camel prayed thus but it collapsed and died on the spot and Maulatona Zainab ^{AS} prayed for the mount. As he completed this narrative, Maulana ^{TUS} exclaimed, 'Crying and *matam* elevate us in status!'

There is but one day left, tomorrow is Aashura. On this day of Taasu', Maulana ^{TUS} related the *shahadat* of Imam Hasan ^{AS} and how the respected brothers embraced at the end. Imam Hasan ^{AS} is weeping for the tortures Imam Husain ^{AS} is yet to face in Karbala. He tells him, 'Come again and again to my grave.' As we think ahead to tomorrow's tragedy, may we pray that our focus never wavers from the *zikh* of Imam Husain ^{AS}, pray we year after year are privileged to see the tears, hear the words and do *matam* before Imam Husain's ^{AS} Dai. May Allah preserve Aqa Syedna Aali Qadr Maula in perfect health until *qiyamat*.

