

مُتَّقِينَ Sermon 193

Nahjul Balagheh

Hazrat Ali Ibn Abi Talib (AS)

إمام المتقين "Leader of the Pious"

أمير المؤمنين "Commander of the Believers"

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Hazrat Ali Ibn Abu Talib (AS) – Sermon 193

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This is the Book; in it is Guidance sure, without doubt, to those who are mindful of Allah. 2:1

Piety (تقوى) is considered a capability and skill that helps a person to remain mindful of Allah (SWT) while controlling his/her desires, actions, and thoughts. The “Muttageen, مُتَّقِينَ” (pious) are those who possess such capabilities and virtues in their lives. Various English translations of the Holy Qur’an describe “Muttageen, مُتَّقِينَ” (pious) as:

- Those who fear Allah (SWT)
- Those who ward off (evil)
- God-conscious
- Those mindful of Allah (SWT)
- The pious and righteous people who fear Allah (SWT) much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allah (SWT) much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)
- Godfearing

The Persian explanation of this sermon, kindly offered by Dr. Muhammad Ali Ansari in 2009, provides a profound exploration of its themes. Here, the content shared in English encapsulates only a concise essence of what was elaborated upon during the ten 1-hour sessions. This summary serves as a distilled interpretation rather than a verbatim, word-for-word translation.

Introduction

Imam Ali (AS) describes the character and virtues of the *Muttageen* (مُتَّقِينَ) and this sermon serves as an example for achieving piety. One of his loyal companions (i.e. “Hammam”) asked him the following question: “Could you please describe the *Muttageen* (مُتَّقِينَ) clearly and vividly as if I can actually visualize it?”

Imam began by expressing his gratitude and praise for Allah (SWT) followed by warm greetings to the prophet (PBUH). Next, he gave a brief introduction of humans’ creation before discussing piety (تقوى).

Allah (SWT) created humans while He neither benefits from nor needs their submission to His Commands; and their righteousness and wrongdoings don’t cause any problem for Him. However, the creation of humans is neither useless nor for entertainment. Since Allah (SWT) doesn’t need anything then who is benefiting from the creation of humans?

Humans are the ones who benefit and gain advantage from their creation by Allah (SWT). He created human beings but didn’t leave them on their own. He provided for them everything that they physically and spiritually need. To realize the full benefits of their creation, humans need to focus on piety (تقوى). In other words, (تقوى) piety is the recipe for reaching our full potential.

Allah (SWT) gives us different talents and capabilities as part of our nature, and He places each of us at our own unique stage and position in the world. As part of our nature, we can either choose to expand such natural talents or waste them. Similar abilities and talents also exist in our spirit, and we can either grow them or ignore them. Would the humans utilize the above gifts in the best way? By nurturing and growing our physical and spiritual gifts, we can reach our full potential.

Description

The Imam describes the virtues of the *Muttageen* (the ones who know well how to protect themselves from external and internal mischievous factors, thoughts, intents, and actions). Sura 113 of the Holy Qur’an describes seeking refuge to Allah (SWT) from the potential external mischiefs while Sura 114 explains the internal ones. The *Muttageen* are folks who always think about growing their virtues, always learning so the presence would be more fruitful than the past. They always guard themselves against Satan and are mindful of their own actions and thoughts. They continuously focus on raising their virtues and becoming better human beings using what Allah (SWT) has given them. Imam Ali (AS) begins with three worldly attributes of the *Muttageen*.

1 - The way they speak (مَنْطِقُهُمُ الصَّوَابُ)

The *Muttageen* are those who adhere to the highest standards of ethics and methods in their conversations. Their speech is to the point. They always speak humbly and ensure that their words do not hurt others. Their honest and impactful words are carefully chosen and well-organized. They avoid engaging in futile conversations and have a keen sense of when and where to speak or to remain silent.

Why is Imam Ali (AS) mentioning this characteristic first? In the Holy Qur'an, human speech is the first feature that is pointed out after describing their creation. Through speaking, individuals exchange ideas and opinions. Speech is a vehicle for both kindness and animosity. Generally, a person's personality is revealed through their words. Our words can either crush hopes or encourage efforts, break a heart or provide support. The impact of what we say and how we say it is crucial in our relationships with others.

2 - What do they wear? (مَلْبَسُهُمُ الْأَقْتِصَادُ)

Their clothes are modest and frugal. They follow the Holy Qur'an in choosing and wearing clothes. They always exercise moderation in the number of clothes they purchase and the amount they spend. Wearing expensive clothing is not their goal while they are not careless about what they wear. Verse 7:26 of Holy Qur'an describes how Allah (SWT) sent clothing to cover humans' bodies and to beautify them. Respect for a person should be based on their actions and character rather than their expensive clothing. However, one should avoid wearing dirty or immodest clothing.

3 - Their demeanor (مَشْيُهُمُ التَّوَاضُّعُ)

Their demeanor reflects humility, evident in both the way they walk and how they carry themselves. Arrogance was the root of why Satan decided not to obey Allah (SWT) (2:35). Majority of human problems are caused by arrogance. Ignorance and arrogance go hand in hand. The more our knowledge is expanded, the humbler we should become. The Muttageen are those who know how to stay away from arrogance. Humility and modesty are central to their way of life so much that it is even reflected in the way they walk.

4 - Controlling and lowering the gaze (غَضُّوا أَبْصَارَهُمْ)

Among the five senses, vision and hearing play the most significant roles in shaping human character and personality. These senses allow individuals to interact with and interpret the world around them,

profoundly influencing their development, perception, and experiences. Visual and auditory stimuli provide essential information, foster communication, and contribute to learning, ultimately molding one's identity and behavior. **Being mindful of what we gaze upon and how we direct our attention is crucial to maintaining virtue and righteousness.** Visual stimuli, whether they're from media, personal experiences, or our environment, can influence our emotions and decision-making processes. This is why exposure to positive, educational, and uplifting content can be beneficial, while exposure to negative or harmful content can have adverse effects. **Visual discipline is a way to cultivate inner purity** and avoid distractions that could lead to inappropriate thoughts or actions. **This aligns with the notion that what we allow into our minds through our senses can influence our behavior and moral standing.**

It's important to be mindful of the information we consume and to seek out experiences that contribute positively to our mental and emotional well-being.

The Holy Qur'an names these two senses, and regarding the vision, it asks us to lower our gaze (24:30). However, it doesn't go into any further details.

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

Tell the believing men to lower [some] their gaze and guard their modesty.

That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do. 24:30

It's true that the images and experiences we encounter can have a lasting impact on our thoughts and behaviors. The information we take in through our senses, particularly our vision, can shape our perceptions, beliefs, and actions. **Imam Ali (AS) describes it as guarding our gaze against what Allah (SWT) has forbidden (Haram).** We need to lower our gaze when facing three branches of forbidden (Haram) things. **Lives of others, belongings and wealth of others, and opposite sex members of other families.** Admiring the luxurious lives of others, how fortunate they are, their race and color, position in society, and many other factors may lead us to jealousy, hopelessness, and other undesirable emotions. Overwhelmed by thinking about the wealth of others may make us lose confidence and even lose respect for ourselves. Consequently, it may lead to illegal activities such as robbery, cheating, etc. Gazing at opposite sex members of other families may bring temptations that destroy lives and families.

Carelessness and impudence in gaze destroy the virtues of pious and righteous people. One sinful look can easily change one's life!

5 - What do they listen to? (وَقَفُّوا أَسْمَاعَهُمْ)

They only listen to things that are beneficial to them in this world and the next.

The Imam explains what is considered “beneficial” in Islam:

1. Whatever we listen to must be something that **has good (Halal) intent and goal**. If listening to something expands our knowledge in a way that helps us in this world towards Halal goals and supports us for the next world by getting us closer to Allah (SWT) then it is considered beneficial.
2. Whatever we listen to must **contain useful information**.
3. Whatever we listen to must be something that we **approach seriously** as opposed to nonchalantly listening to whatever people say. **The Muttageen are completely aware of what they should/should not listen to and control their hearing.**

6 - Handling hardship and comfort

They approach both hardship and comfort with the same level of composure and steadfastness. It's insightful to recognize that human nature often seeks comfort and tends to avoid hardship. This tendency can sometimes lead to a lack of patience when facing challenges. When people encounter difficulties, they might try to find the quickest or easiest way out rather than facing the problem head-on. Once the hardship has passed, it's common for individuals to move on and forget about it, focusing instead on the more comfortable aspects of life.

This behavior can hinder personal growth and resilience. Embracing challenges and learning from hardships can lead to greater strength, wisdom, and adaptability.

The Muttageen strive to become stronger spiritually in dealing with life's highs and lows. They are aware that by Allah's Design they must face both comfort and hardship, happiness and sadness, good and bad, etc. They don't give up or run away. They remember both past hardships and comfort and they are satisfied in submission to the Will of Allah (SWT). They expect hardship along with comfort and they are prepared to deal with it.

7 - Desire to ascend to the next world

Had it not been for their predetermined lifespan, their lives would not remain in their bodies even for a blink of an eye. Allah (SWT) determines the lifespan of people. However, are we able to utilize our lives properly? Our inappropriate actions and thoughts **may** shave away time from our allotted lifespan while

good deeds **may** increase our time in this world. The Holy Qur'an mentions two types of lifespans as described above (the original allotted one and the adjusted one).

Imam Ali (AS) describes that the spirit of the *Muttageen* would leave their bodies willingly had it not been for the predetermined life that Allah (SWT) had given them to live in this world. The *Muttageen* understand well that the world we live in is a temporary place and the next world is the real goal. **They are always anxious and ready to depart this world to reach the ultimate bliss and get closer to the blessings of Allah (SWT).** However, they are also extremely concerned about consequences of their actions if such actions fall short of what's prescribed in the Holy Qur'an. The closer you get to Allah (SWT), the more responsibility you feel about your actions. **They know that this world's tribulations are both a test of their faith and an opportunity to elevate their spirits.**

8 - Their primary focus

Allah (SWT) is the primary focus of their lives. **On the contrary, they view everything else in this world as insignificant.** **The *Muttageen* are those who have immersed their lives in complete submission to Allah (SWT), leaving no space for anything else.** Their spiritual journey has brought them to the profound realization that God's True Greatness is beyond human comprehension. **They perceive the Signs of Allah (SWT) in every aspect of creation.** As a result, they maintain full control over their desires, viewing everything else in this world as insignificant. **They understand that allowing anything other than the Creator to become the main focus of their lives would divert them from their ultimate goal** — remaining steadfast in their devotion to Him.

9 - Perceiving the divine rewards and punishments

They can vividly perceive and envision the divine rewards and punishments of Allah (SWT). Due to their profound spiritual knowledge, **the *Muttageen* can vividly perceive and envision the promised divine rewards of Allah (SWT) in paradise.** Likewise, they can feel the promised chastisements of hell with a deep **sense of awareness.** They hold a true understanding of His Fairness and Justice, knowing that every detail, no matter how small, will be accounted for. After death, the veils of the unseen are lifted, and the human spirit gains the ability to perceive beyond the physical realm. However, owing to their elevated spiritual insight, the *Muttageen* may be granted glimpses of the unseen even while still alive in this world. **For them, the Light of Allah (SWT) illuminates all — both the seen and the unseen.** Their hearts are imbued with an overflowing love and profound understanding of Allah (SWT).

10 - Their hearts are grieved (قُلُوبُهُمْ مَحْزُونَةٌ)

10.1 - Sadness because of separation from the other world

There are two types of sadness. The first type is linked to worldly matters and the misfortunes we encounter in life. The *Muttageen*, having attained a higher spiritual state, remain unaffected by this form of sadness. They perceive misfortunes not as setbacks, but as divine tests and opportunities for growth and elevation. This understanding keeps them steadfast in their focus on the Creator, ensuring that such sadness never distracts them from their ultimate purpose.

The second type of sadness pertains to the human spirit. The spirit, confined within the limitations of body much like a bird in a cage, yearns to be free and ascend to its eternal home. The *Muttageen* feel an intense longing to return to the Creator, eager for liberation from the temporary bonds of this world. This yearning arises from the spirit's awareness of its separation from its true abode. As the great Persian philosopher Abu Ali Sina (Avicenna) once remarked, when a person realizes that his/her spirit resides in a body that is not its permanent home, he/she experiences a profound sense of homesickness—akin to a bird dreaming of escaping its cage.

10.2 - Regret because of lost opportunities and wasted life

When we realize how much time we have spent on useless things that will not benefit us in the next world, we begin questioning our past choices. What might we have done? What knowledge might we have gained? The key is being steadfast in learning and doing things that would help us in the next world.

10.3 - Concern for the well-being of others

When the *Muttageen* see how people have lost their connection with Allah (SWT), they become sad and wish that people come to their senses and see the Light of Allah (SWT). There are many examples in the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) when he felt sad for his enemies and idol worshippers. We also see it in the lives of the holy Imams. Imam Hussain (AS) said: “Don’t you see how the ‘wrong’ has replaced the ‘right’ in the society? I can’t stand for this”. The sadness that he felt was indescribable.

11 - They don’t harm or hurt others (سُرُورُهُمْ مَّأْمُونَةٌ)

They harbor only kind and positive thoughts for others, with no space in their minds for causing harm. The *Muttageen* are free from any inclination to hurt others—whether through their thoughts, words, or actions. They speak with kindness and consideration, ensuring their words never cause discomfort, and their actions remain gentle and respectful. Exemplifying self-mastery, they maintain complete control over

their thoughts, words, and deeds. After Imam Ali (AS) was hit by a sword while performing prayers, he asked the attacker the following: *"How could you wish to take my life when all I wish for you is to live?"*

12 - Their bodies are slender (أَجْسَادُهُمْ نَحِيفَةٌ)

Eating and drinking are not their primary focus in life. They consume only what is necessary for the body to function efficiently, avoiding excess. They understand that the true purpose lies in the growth and enlightenment of the spirit, while the body serves merely as a vessel for the soul. By concentrating on self-discipline and spiritual development, they progress on their journey toward the next world. They recognize that the body belongs to this earthly realm, but the spirit will continue its voyage into the hereafter. Deeply devoted to submitting to Allah (SWT) and upholding the rights of others, they embody a profound spiritual strength paired with a disciplined, slender physique.

13 - Light aspiration for worldly things (حَاجَاتُهُمْ خَفِيفَةٌ)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that He was concerned about two issues among the people: first, their tendency to follow unchecked desires; and second, their inclination toward illogical and unreasonable aspirations. To achieve these goals, one might take any possible measures, disregarding whether they align with religious principles. Aspirations in life are essential, provided they are logical and attainable through diligent effort and thoughtful planning. The *Muttagheen* exercise complete mastery over their desires and aspirations, ensuring they align with higher values and principles. Their self-discipline allows them to remain steadfast on their righteous path, unaffected by fleeting temptations or unworthy goals.

14 - They are virtuous (أَنفُسُهُمْ عَفِيفَةٌ)

Unchecked desires—sexual or otherwise—can ripple through society in complex ways. They might influence relationships, media, and even cultural norms. The *Muttagheen* (men and women) are in full control of their sexual desires. Islam forbids us celibacy while it also warns us about becoming slaves of our desires. The word (عَفِيفٌ), for both women and men, mainly refers to the ability of controlling such desires, while keeping them in moderation and in accordance with religious guidelines.

15 - They exercise patience (صَبَرُوا)

Patience is the cornerstone of success. However, it is not merely about sitting idly and doing nothing; rather, it is an active process that involves applying all our skills and knowledge guided by religion and

wisdom. The *Muttageen* embody this principle, having cultivated their noble attributes through steadfast patience and unwavering effort. Sura 103 of Holy Qur'an states that humans are lost unless such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and advising each other to the Truth and Patience. **The last part of the verse, "Patience" is needed to achieve all the other parts of the verse!**

16 - Life is short (أَيَّاماً قَصِيرَةً)

In the hereafter, people are asked how long they lived in this world, and they respond that it felt as brief as a single day. Yet, the life of the hereafter is eternal. Patience in this fleeting life brings comfort and reward in the next. The spirit is akin to a wild horse, requiring dedicated effort and patience to tame and guide. It is a challenging endeavor, but through perseverance, the spirit is refined and strengthened for the journey ahead. **The Muttageen understand how life is short and how to spend it efficiently in getting closer to God.**

17 - Exceptional profits and gains (تِجَارَةً مَّزِيدَةً)

Allah (SWT) has granted us a business with exceptional profits. **Every action triggers a corresponding reaction. Our spirit reflects the sum of our actions and their consequences.** These actions and reactions are imprinted upon us, shaping who we are and ultimately manifesting in the hereafter. This process is often likened to engaging in business with the Creator—**He accepts our deeds and, in turn, grants us the appointed returns.** We do a good deed and Allah (SWT) returns 10 times more to us. The *Muttageen* utilize what Allah (SWT) has given them in the best Islamic way. They understand the exceptional value of doing business with Him. This is completely different than the worldly business. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was in Mecca at the night of Hijra when he told Imam Ali (AS) the following. Archangel Jibraeel has told me that 40 armed men will attack my house to kill me tonight. Allah (SWT) wants me to leave Mecca tonight, but the status and appearance of my house must not look different when I leave tonight. Would you agree to stay in my house and sleep in my bed? **Imam Ali (AS) fell to the ground in prostration and thanked Allah (SWT) for being chosen to be sacrificed for the holy prophet.** Verse 2:207 was revealed for the above occasion!

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

"And there is someone from the people who sells his life to earn the pleasure of Allah.

And Allah is full of kindness to (His) devotees" 2:207

18 - The world is chasing them, but they are not chasing the world

Are we consumed by the pursuit of worldly desires? Power, wealth, and sexual temptations seek to captivate us at every turn. To reach these goals, some people are willing to sacrifice and crush everything under their feet, but they don't realize that they gradually become slaves of this world. Is this fleeting world truly our goal? The *Muttageen* view it only as a tool and means to reach their spiritual goals. They remain conscious of the worldly attractions but are not swayed by them. Through their faith, self-control and unwavering willpower, they rise above such distractions and stay focused on their higher purpose. The *Muttageen* are those who gain spiritual profit in this world. They are truly free of the worldly chains.

19 - Reciting the Holy Qur'an

Mindful of its meaning, they recite the Holy Qur'an with measured tones during the night, specially before dawn. Allah has made the night for rest and tranquility both for the body and spirit. He has placed in the night special blessings and opportunities for the pious. One of the first Allah's (SWT) recommendations to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was to take advantage of the night to worship. Sura Al-Muzzammil clearly describes it.

O you folded in garments! 73:1

Stand (to prayer) by night, but not all night, 73:2

Half of it, - or a little less 73:3

Or a little more; and recite the Qur'an in slow, measured rhythmic tones. 73:4

Allah gave the praised station of “Mahmood مَحْمُودًا” to the prophet for praying during the night (17:79). There are also many references to those who pray and repent during the early hours of dawn (51:18, 25:64).

- A- The *Muttageen* (pious) are steadfast in reciting the Holy Qur'an carefully while paying attention to its meanings. Feeling responsible, they form their thoughts and deeds according to the verses they read. Reciting the Holy Qur'an is the main factor for their fondness of those early dawn hours.
- B- Their careful recitation method consists of measured rhythmic tones. Anytime Imam Ali ibn Hussain (AS) recited the Holy Qur'an in his house in Medina, it was so pleasant and enjoyable that everyone in the street stopped to listen.

19.1 - Deep concern while reciting the Holy Qur'an (يُحْزِنُونَ بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ)

While reading the Holy Qur'an, sadness and deep concern takes over their hearts. By immersing themselves in the Holy Qur'an, they become acutely aware of the precious opportunities they have lost to uplift their spirits and draw closer to Allah (SWT). This self-reflection leads them to examine their past actions, moments squandered, and the spiritual barriers created by ignorance and humiliation.

19.2 - Seeking remedy from the verses (يَسْتَنْيِرُونَ بِهِ دَوَاءَ دَائِهِمْ)

Seeking remedy for their spiritual pain, they research the verses with sincerity and devotion. Amidst this introspection, their hearts find solace and joy in the verses that radiate hope, kindness, and divine forgiveness. It feels as though the heavens themselves draw near, enveloping them in a tender embrace. These words of Allah (SWT) become an anchor for their souls, resonating so deeply that every cell in their bodies absorbs their profound meaning.

19.3 - Their hearts are showered with blessings

In the early hours of dawn, they feel and embrace the peace and joy that Allah (SWT) awards them. The verses overwhelm them with passion and excitement.

19.4 - Hearing the unpleasant rise and fall of the sound from Hell

When they review the verses containing divine wrath, they feel it in their hearts. They can vividly perceive the unsettling ebb and flow of the tormented cries emanating from Hell.

20 - Bowing down humbly

They bend their backs and fall to the ground during the night. The *Muttageen* bow down during the stillness of the night. Who am I to stand before my Creator? Imam Ali (AS) eloquently conveys that the *Muttageen* engage in nightly prayers while also prostrating before Allah (SWT) for purposes that transcend Salat. Their sleepless nights are adorned with special blessings and divine grace, reserved for those who devote themselves to such sincerity and humility.

20.1 - They place their forehead, palms, knees and feet on the ground

Once more, the Imam directs our focus to the parts of our bodies that meet the ground during prostration. As I bow down in humility, I come to the profound realization that even this act falls short of the gratitude

and submission my Creator deserves. Overwhelmed by this truth, I surrender further, falling to the ground in complete devotion.

21 - Begging to be free of worldly shackles

They implore Allah (SWT) to liberate them from the shackles that weigh upon their necks. They know that their souls are pawned and can only be released through good deeds. Otherwise, those chains will burden us in the next world. During the night, the *Muttageen* beg Allah (SWT) earnestly to free them of such chains.

إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَلَاسِلًا وَأَغْلَالًا وَسَعِيرًا

For the Rejecters we have prepared chains, yokes, and a blazing Fire. (76:4)

22 - Four attributes during the day

But when the day breaks, they have these four attributes:

22.1 - Tolerance and patience

The *Muttageen* embody tolerance and patience that spring from wisdom, not mere necessity or fear. They recognize the diversity of personalities, opinions, and needs among people and remain unselfish, channeling this understanding into restraint over their words and actions. Their patience enables them to navigate this diversity with grace. It is as though the blessings they receive from Allah (SWT) during the night are graciously passed on to others through their deeds and words during the day.

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأً وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا

*Indeed, the hours of the night are more effective for concurrence
[of heart and tongue] and more suitable for words. 73:6*

22.2 - Navigating the life challenges

The profound knowledge and keen awareness that they possess enables them to navigate the challenges of daily life with wisdom and grace. Without knowledge and awareness, tolerance and patience will not be possible.

22.3 - Contributing to different good causes

They always contribute to all different good causes instead of picking and choosing. They possess a deep understanding of society's needs, and the struggles people face. What does society expect from Islam? What do the youth need from Islam? With this awareness, they carefully evaluate every aspect and extend their comprehensive support where it is needed.

22.4 - Interacting with people based on piety

They interact with people according to the principles of piety (تقوى). Rather than retreating into seclusion, they actively engage with society, guided by principles of piety and righteousness.

23 - Devoted to taking steps for Allah (SWT)

The awe and reverence they hold for Allah (SWT) have instilled within them a readiness, like an arrow poised and released from a taut bow, swift and decisive in purpose. Their fear of Allah (SWT) is not based on ignorance and lack of knowledge/awareness. Instead, it stems from their knowledge of the boundaries set by Him and that every little thing they do or think will be accounted for. This is equivalent of what the Holy Qur'an refers to as fear of Allah (SWT) (حَشْيَةُ اللَّهِ). The awe they hold for Him inspires a profound readiness to embrace His Commands and remain vigilant of the boundaries He has established. Like a finely sharpened arrow, they stand poised to act with precision and unwavering swiftness.

24 - Are their lifestyles and behavior problematic?

While their lifestyles and behaviors may appear problematic to others, in truth, they experience no genuine issues. When discussing them, others often remark that these individuals appear overly simple-minded and lack sharpness in navigating life. Being profoundly mindful of divine guidelines, they approach life's decisions with exceptional care. They resist the allure of economic gains that contravene religious principles and maintain great sensitivity in social interactions to avoid causing harm to others. Their understanding of Halal and Haram extends beyond the obvious, as they also steer clear of doubtful matters that might compromise their spiritual integrity. The attractions in their lives differ greatly from those of

non-Muttageen. While others may see certain economic and social opportunities as chances for quick gains driven by greed, jealousy, or arrogance, the Muttageen perceive these situations as unwise and inconsistent with their values.

25 - A few isolated good deeds are not enough

يَتَأْتِيهَا الْإِنْسَنُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ

O mankind, indeed, you are laboring toward your Lord with [great] exertion and will meet it. 84:6

The Muttageen are never content with performing only a handful of isolated good deeds. Shallow thinking seldom leads to the achievement of significant goals. With profound and purposeful thoughts, the Muttageen aspire to higher goals, overcoming life's challenges with unwavering resolve. They are not satisfied with merely fulfilling obligatory prayers and religious duties; their ambition drives them to contribute meaningfully to society. Even when they achieve great accomplishments, they humbly perceive them as small, always aspiring toward greater heights. Their refusal to settle for modest milestones and their relentless pursuit of higher aspirations are key factors in their success. The Muttageen consistently strive to move forward, ceaselessly working toward achieving more and elevating their impact but they still consider it little.

26 - Questioning their own spirits (فَهَمْ لِأَنفُسِهِمْ مُتَّهِمُونَ)

The Muttageen engage in continuous self-examination, questioning their actions and intentions to ensure alignment with the path of righteousness. The human spirit is among the most intricate aspects of existence, requiring constant and deliberate attention to maintain its connection with the Creator. Without vigilance, it risks drifting away from its divine purpose. In striving to understand and nurture our spirits, we tend to evaluate them through three distinct perspectives.

26.1 – Questioning and accusing (اتَّهَام) the spirit

This process of introspection serves as a safeguard against moral deviation. As illustrated by Prophet Yusuf (PBUH), he acknowledged that without careful stewardship, his spirit might falter and wander astray. This wisdom reminds us that even a minor deviation from the righteous path can evolve into a significant divide between truth and falsehood. Such reflections underscore the critical role of self-discipline and unwavering commitment in preserving the purity of the human spirit.

26.2 - Convicting the spirit (اجرام)

At times, we may judge our spirit to be guilty, which can lead to a profound sense of despair. This state of hopelessness erodes our ability to carry out good deeds effectively and weakens our connection with the divine. When self-recrimination overtakes us, it creates barriers that hinder our spiritual growth and productivity. **To overcome this, it is essential to balance accountability with mercy—reminding ourselves that the Creator is both Just and Compassionate.** By seeking forgiveness, renewing our intentions, and persevering in righteous actions, we can restore hope and revive our spiritual strength.

26.3 - Acquitting the spirit (ابراء)

Human nature often inclines us to rationalize our actions, seeking ways to absolve ourselves of any wrongdoing. This tendency to justify our misdeeds not only dulls our sense of accountability but also sets us on a perilous path. Such self-deception mirrors the way of Satan, who persuades souls to trivialize sin and forsake the truth.

By refusing to confront our faults and repent sincerely, we risk distancing ourselves from the Creator. This deceptive justification can erode the moral compass that guides our spirit, leading us away from the path of righteousness and toward spiritual ruin.

It is essential, therefore, to remain vigilant against such tendencies, embracing humility and a commitment to self-reform as safeguards for the soul.

وَمَا أُبْرِئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful." 12:53

27 - Hope with concern

The *Muttageen* approach their deeds with a profound equilibrium, embodying a **delicate blend of hope and apprehension** (اشفاق). After performing a good deed, they experience a sense of joy and contentment, yet this is tempered by concerns—wondering whether the deed was sufficient, executed with sincerity, or accepted by God. **In their hearts, there exists a harmonious tension between hope and concern, driving them to strive for greater excellence in their actions.** This vigilance ensures humility, as

they remain guarded against arrogance, recognizing that their efforts are a means to draw nearer to divine acceptance, rather than a source of self-congratulation.

28 - Hearing people praising him

The *Muttageen* strive to rid themselves of arrogance, redirecting their focus inward to nurture spiritual awareness, **especially when faced with the praises of others**. This process of refinement begins with a deep understanding of the elements that may harm the soul. True spiritual growth is only possible once we identify and address these inner obstacles. What are our weaknesses in dealing with desires? In Sura 91, the importance of purifying and growing is emphasized after 11 oaths:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

Truly he succeeds that purifies it 91:9

28.1 - First type of refinement

There are two types of refinements (تزكیه). **Harmful pride arises when one boasts about oneself**. While it is reasonable to share aspects of our lives or insights to help others understand us and learn from our experiences, anything beyond this essential level of self-expression risks veering into arrogance. Striking this delicate balance is crucial for nurturing humility and fostering authentic connections with others. Don't claim that you are pious since only Allah (SWT) knows it.

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ

أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى

Those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, only [committing] slight ones. Indeed, your Lord is vast in forgiveness. He was most knowing of you when He produced you from the earth and when you were fetuses in the wombs of your mothers.

So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him. 53:32

28.2 - Second type of refinement

Recognizing the weaknesses within our souls is only the first step; actively **seeking solutions to address and rectify these flaws is essential for spiritual growth**. This process involves a thorough examination—acknowledging both strengths and weaknesses, opportunities for improvement, and inherent limitations.

Without this deep understanding of oneself, the path to knowing the Creator remains obscured, as self-awareness lays the foundation for spiritual enlightenment.

Regarding the first type of arrogance—boasting about oneself—it is important to distinguish between arrogance and rightful praise. While self-glorification can harm the soul, it is permitted, and even encouraged, to acknowledge the virtues and achievements of others, provided that such praise is rooted in fairness and truth. This practice fosters humility and gratitude, both key attributes of the *Muttageen*.

28.3 - Lowers his head when others praise him

When he hears that others praise him, he says to himself: I know what's in my heart and my Lord knows me better than myself. You praise me while you don't know my shortcomings. He doesn't become proud; he just lowers his head and thinks about his weaknesses and evaluates himself more seriously.

28.4 – Worried about being questioned by the Creator

When he hears that others praise him, he is worried that maybe the Creator would question him about what is being said. He wonders “maybe I am not exactly what people claim”.

28.5 - Raise me above what people say about me

Even when others praise them, the *Muttageen* remain deeply committed to self-improvement. Such praises do not lead them to complacency or satisfaction with their current spiritual state. Instead, they serve as reminders of the ongoing journey to refine and elevate their souls. Their wishes to grow and improve transcend external recognition, rooted in a profound understanding that spiritual excellence is a continuous journey rather than a final destination. They ask for Allah's Help!

28.6 - Forgive me for things that are hidden from people, but You are aware of them

People praise me while they don't know many things about me. However, You (Allah) know everything about me so forgive my shortcomings and weaknesses that are hidden from people.

29 - Some of their signs

Imam Ali (AS) eloquently points out some more signs of the pious. Imam Ali's style and choice of words are exceptionally unique and mesmerizing.

30 - Mighty and steadfast in religion (قُوَّةً فِي دِينٍ)

They possess strong intellectual foundations in religion while being mighty and steadfast in their actions. They treat the contents of the Holy Qur'an with might and determination. They are devout and always seek closeness of God. This is not limited to special religious events or limited times during the year. For example, some people become interested in religion only during Ramadhan or Eids, etc. The Holy Qur'an directs us to be different.

يَتَّخِذِيْ خُذِ الْكِتٰبَ بِقُوَّةٍ وَّءَاتَيْنٰهُ الْحَكْمَ صَبِيًّا

"O Yahya! take hold of the Book with might": and We gave him Wisdom even as a youth, 19:12

31 - Gentleness in their demeanor (حَرَمًا فِي لِينٍ)

The *Muttageen* embody a deliberate and measured gentleness, expressed through their words, demeanor, actions, and the very essence of their hearts. They possess the discernment to know when gentleness and leniency are appropriate and when they are not, guided by their keen understanding of the character and disposition of those they encounter. Their conduct is deeply rooted in adherence to principles of social harmony and relational ethics.

32 - Absolute certainty in belief (إِيمَانًا فِي يَقِينٍ)

Faith spans a vast spectrum, beginning with its initial acquisition and evolving into a flourishing state of growth and fruition. At its peak, faith transforms into certainty (يقين) —a steadfast, unshakable conviction. To nurture and expand one's belief, two essential pillars are required. The first is the pursuit of knowledge, achieved through research and contemplation, which deepens understanding. The second is wholehearted submission to God, accompanied by living in alignment with divine principles, manifesting faith through action and obedience.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

For, Believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His signs rehearsed, find their faith strengthened, and put (all) their trust in their Lord 8:2

33 - Greedy in seeking knowledge (حِرْصاً فِي عِلْمٍ)

They are never satisfied with their knowledge and always seek more. They enjoy increasing their knowledge. Knowledge is one of the important foundations of spiritual growth. That's why there is so much emphasis on learning and gaining knowledge in Islam. Our knowledge resembling a drop of water is against an ocean of unknowns. There are many narrations from the pure Imams regarding to learning something new every day.

34 - Their knowledge is accompanied by patience and insight (عِلْماً فِي حِلْمٍ)

The true usefulness of knowledge depends on whether it is applied wisely. Does the application of such knowledge meet the guidelines that are set in the Holy Qur'an? Is knowledge used for the benefit of society or to tear it apart? It all depends on the moral and spiritual capacity of the person who has the knowledge. To apply the acquired knowledge, one must have strength of mind and character and act according to principals of Islam.

35 - Moderation in making money and wealth (قَصْداً فِي غِنَى)

The *Muttageen* care about their wealth but only in moderation. They make their best effort in making money, but they don't let it become their primary goal in life. Business neither prevents them from reaching their spiritual goals nor distracts them from their worldly responsibilities.

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْواً أَنْفَضُوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِو وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

But when they see some bargain or some amusement, they disperse headlong to it, and leave you standing. Say: "The (blessing) from the Presence of Allah is better than any amusement or bargain! and Allah is the Best to provide (for all needs)." 62:11

36 - Special humility during worship (خُشُوعاً فِي عِبَادَةِ)

The *Muttageen* exemplify profound humility (الْخُشُوعِ) in their worship of Allah (SWT). Acts of worship—such as daily prayers, fasting Ramadan, and performing Hajj—demand complete presence and heartfelt devotion. Engaging in these rituals without mindfulness reduces them to mere obligations and robs them of their transformative power, hindering the journey toward closeness to Allah (SWT).

وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ

And seek help through patience and prayer, and this task is truly hard except for the humble. 2:45

37 - Confronting adversity with honor and dignity

Despite their financial challenges, they embody grace and unwavering integrity. The *Muttageen* hold steadfast to their moral values, never compromising them for material gain. They confront poverty with honor and dignity, projecting such self-respect and composure that others often perceive them as free from any financial hardship.

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَحْصَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ
تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْتَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِلْحَافًا وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

These charitable giving are for the poor who have become restrained in the way of God and are unable to travel in the land to earn a living. The unaware would think they are rich due to their self-restraint. You will recognize them by their signs: They do not ask people for something insistently. And whatever wealth you spend charitably, so God surely knows about it. 2:273

38 - Patient during hardships (صَبْرًا فِي شِدَّةٍ)

When facing hardships in life, they remain patient. They handle it with patience, wisdom, and complete trust in God. They don't let it impact their moral values and behavior.

39 - Seeking only Halal (ظَلَبًا فِي خِلَالٍ)

They seek only what is Halal in every aspect of life—be it business, food, drink, or other daily practices. Their unwavering commitment to Halal living reflects their deep consciousness of accountability before Allah (SWT). They avoid the Haram, recognizing that its consequences extend beyond the individual, creating ripples that can affect future generations. The story of the People of the Cave is an example of those who were seeking Halal food.

وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِئْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِئْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِئْتُمْ فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ
هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْكى طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا

And this is how We awakened them so that they may ask one another. A speaker among them said, "How long have you stayed in the cave?" They said, "We have stayed a day, or part of a day." They said, "Your Lord knows better how long you have stayed." "So, send one of you to the city with this money of yours, and he should see which food in that city is purer and bring you some provision from it. And he should be careful not to let anyone become aware of your situation," 18:19

40 - Cheerful and active in life (نَشَاطاً فِي هُدًى)

They approach the path of spiritual growth with energy and cheerfulness, embodying an active and diligent spirit. Neither laziness nor idleness has a place in their journey. They remain consistently eager to learn and embrace each opportunity to progress, finding joy in their forward momentum.

41 - They avoid greed (تَحَرُّجاً عَنْ طَمَعٍ)

The *Muttageen* carefully assess every situation, and if they discern the possibility of greed emerging, they consciously distant themselves from it. Greed stands as one of the most significant causes of humiliation and the degradation of one's character. In their wisdom and self-awareness, the *Muttageen* alter their course in life to avoid falling into the snares of greed.

42 - They do everything the best way (يَعْمَلُ الْأَعْمَالُ الصَّالِحَةَ)

They approach every task with meticulous planning, care and a commitment to the highest standards, recognizing that excellence is not confined to the righteous deeds highlighted in the Holy Qur'an. Rather, it extends to all aspects of daily life. For instance, even the act of cleaning one's home can become a good deed (عمل صالح) when done thoughtfully, considering all elements of thoroughness and integrity, avoiding any shortcuts. However, after completing a task, they evaluate it to see if they could have done it better. This self-evaluation results in improvements.

43 - During the day, their hearts are filled with gratitude (شكر)

Being thankful consists of appreciating Allah's blessings, opportunities that He gives us, and using them in the best possible Halal way. The primary thoughts of the *Muttageen*, from dawn until night, revolve around gratitude." Neglecting to recognize His blessings is one of the greatest spiritual plagues. In Verse 7:17, Satan promises to do his best to prevent humans from having gratitude for God. It demonstrates how important having gratitude is.

ثُمَّ لَا يَأْتِيَهُمْ مِّنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ

Then I (Iblis) will assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and their left. Nor will You (Allah) find, in most of them, gratitude (for Your mercies). - 7:17

The second major spiritual pitfall waiting for us is negligence (غفلت). Being heedless about ourselves, others, and God.

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْحَوْتَ وَمَا أَنَسْنِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا

He said, "Did you see when we retired to the rock? Indeed, I forgot [there] the fish. And none made me forget it except Satan - that I should mention it. And it took its course into the sea amazingly 18:63

وَأَذْكُر رَبِّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

And remember your Lord within yourself in humility and in fear without being apparent in speech - in the mornings and the evenings. And do not be among the heedless. 7:205

44 - During the night, they remember (ذُكِرَ) Allah (SWT)

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ

So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me 2:152

Any choice they make, the *Muttageen* are mindful (ذُكِرَ) of Allah (SWT). Would this choice be acceptable by Allah (SWT)? Would it lead me closer to Him or drag me away from Him? Uttering His names, reciting the Holy Qur'an, and similar actions would be considered "Remembering" (ذُكِرَ) Him if they are intertwined with actions (good deeds) in our lives.

45 - Concerned during the night, happy during the day

As night falls, they reflect on the day gone by, pondering if they gave due diligence to their tasks and adhered faithfully to His Commands. They question how they spent their hours and how they might approach the next day with greater mindfulness. Amid these concerns, their heart is lifted by gratitude and hope, as they find solace in His Boundless Blessings and Grace, showered upon them throughout the day.

46 - The struggle within the soul

The human soul is composed of two distinct components. The first seeks divine inspiration and aspires to draw closer to Allah (SWT), embodying the essence of spiritual growth and alignment with divine will. The second, in contrast, is entangled in worldly desires and the pursuit of ease and comfort. It resists life's trials and hardships, showing reluctance to submit to the Creator's will.

These two forces are engaged in a perpetual inner struggle. **The *Muttageen*, through their profound discipline and spiritual mastery, have developed the essential skills to control the second component, compelling it to yield to the first.** This victory reflects their unwavering commitment to righteousness and their ability to transcend the limitations of earthly inclinations.

47 - Passionate and happy with the divine affairs

The joy of alignment with divine guidance can be so profound that it moves a person to tears. **Such is the state of the *Muttageen*—they embody a deep, unshakeable realization that all worldly pursuits are fleeting, while those connected to the divine path are eternal.** Every action they undertake is imbued with mindfulness of God, reflecting a life of intentionality and unwavering faith.

This elevated perspective not only brings clarity but also strengthens their resolve to stay true to the path that leads to everlasting fulfillment. Such devotion is a testament to their spiritual maturity and understanding of life's true purpose.

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

Whatever you have will end, but what Allah has is lasting. And We will surely give those who were patient their reward according to the best of what they used to do. 16:96

48 – Mixture of knowledge with patience (يَمُزُجُ الْحِلْمَ بِالْعِلْمِ)

Their knowledge and patience are combined as if they are one. They don't let their knowledge steer them towards arrogance, greed, and selfishness.

49 - Actions speak louder than words (الْقَوْلَ بِالْعَمَلِ)

The *Muttageen* uphold their promises with unwavering commitment and let their actions speak louder than words. Their integrity lies not in grand speeches but in the tangible deeds that reflect their words. In stark contrast, speaking abundantly without corresponding action is a form of hypocrisy (نفاق), as it betrays the essence of sincerity and accountability. This discipline of aligning words with actions exemplifies the *Muttageen's* dedication to truth and their mindfulness of divine expectations. Their conduct serves as a living testament to their faith, inspiring trust and embodying the principle that genuine character is revealed not in what one says, but in what one does.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do? 61:2

50 - Reasonable desires and aspirations

Their desires and aspirations are grounded in practicality and logic, carefully considered and strategically planned. They pursue only what can be achieved through diligent effort, meticulous preparation, and thoughtful execution. Unrealistic or unattainable ambitions hold no appeal for them, as they remain firmly rooted in reality.

51 - Few mistakes in life (قَلِيلًا زَلُّ)

The *Muttageen* exhibit an exceptional ability to minimize mistakes through deliberate and thoughtful choices. They approach every decision and task with meticulous preparation, profound wisdom, and unwavering faith, which significantly reduces the likelihood of errors. This intentionality and mindfulness are evident not only in their actions but also in their speech and overall demeanor.

52 - Pious heart (خَاشِعًا قَلْبُهُ)

Their piety is genuine and deeply rooted within, arising from an authentic sense of devotion rather than external appearances or a desire to gain the approval of others.

53 - Contentment with what they have (قَانِعَةً نَفْسُهُ)

They embody contentment and find happiness with what they have, their hearts radiating a profound sense of peace. Free from jealousy, they remain untouched by the chains of envy or the preoccupation with wealth, living with a true sense of freedom and inner tranquility.

54 - Easy going and flexible (سَهْلًا أَمْرُهُ)

They approach daily matters and social interactions with a spirit of adaptability and ease. Their flexibility ensures they are not overly rigid or demanding with others, and they avoid creating unnecessary complexities in tasks, fostering simplicity and harmony in their relationships and endeavors.

55 - Unwavering faith (حَرِيْزاً دِيْنُهُ)

They hold their faith as invaluable and unwavering, refusing to compromise it under any circumstances. Their steadfastness in upholding their religious principles reflects a profound commitment to their beliefs. This is exemplified by Imam Hussain (AS), who sacrificed his life to safeguard the Holy Qur'an and preserve its teachings, embodying the ultimate devotion to the Divine Truth.

56 - Refining the soul (مَيِّتَةً شَهْوَتُهُ)

They are in a constant state of striving for the purification of their souls, working diligently to overcome destructive desires such as arrogance, greed, jealousy, and others that hinder their spiritual growth. They sacrifice these worldly inclinations in pursuit of piety and closeness to God. This profound dedication resonates with the words of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who advised, '*Kill your worldly desires before you die*', inspiring them to live with humility and devotion.

57 - Restraining the anger (مَكْظُومًا غَيْظُهُ)

They demonstrate remarkable self-control, even at the height of anger, embodying patience and restraint. Aware that anger lies at the root of many societal issues and crimes, the *Muttageen* possess the exceptional ability to temper their emotions, preventing anger from escalating into harmful actions. Their mastery of self-restraint reflects their deep commitment to moral discipline and societal harmony.

58 - Always good, never bad (الْحَيْرُ مِنْهُ مَأْمُولٌ، وَالشَّرُّ مِنْهُ مَأْمُونٌ)

The *Muttageen* are known for their consistent display of virtuous deeds and exemplary behavior, inspiring trust and admiration among those who observe them. Their character is so unwavering in goodness that it becomes unimaginable for others to associate them with any harmful actions. This reputation reflects their deep commitment to righteousness and the profound impact of their moral integrity on the community around them.

59 - Remaining steadfast

The *Muttageen* exhibit unwavering steadfastness, unaffected by the fluctuations of those around them. Their dedication to cultivating faith, refining their thoughts, and shaping their personalities has reached such depth that external influences no longer compromise their firmly held beliefs or noble actions. The *Muttageen* remain steadfast irrespective of where they live or the actions of those around them. Their hearts and minds are continually anchored in the remembrance of Allah (SWT), unshaken by external circumstances or influences. When among fellow believers, they seize the opportunity to engage in the remembrance of the Creator and exchange profound thoughts, enriching both their faith and their connection with others.

60 - No revenge, not depriving others, not cutting off relationships

When mistreated by fellow believers, they rise above vengeance, embracing patience and forgiveness as a reflection of their philosophy, which is rooted in higher principles rather than getting even. However, this does not extend to serious oppression, as they uphold justice and dignity in all circumstances. The *Muttageen* forgive others so God would forgive them!

The *Muttageen* do not withhold assistance or kindness from those who once deprived them. For instance, if someone failed to help them in their time of need, they rise above resentment and offer help when the roles are reversed. Their actions are guided by principles of generosity and forgiveness, rather than dwelling on past grievances. The *Muttageen* always ready to help others so God would help them!

The *Muttageen* never sever their relationship with someone who has chosen to break ties. Instead, they keep the doors of reconciliation open, demonstrating patience and hope that the individual may return and restore the bond in the future. Don't we often cut off our relationship with Allah (SWT) while He is always ready to send His blessings to us?!

61 - Highest standards of conduct (بَعِيداً فُحْشُهُ)

The qualities of the *Muttageen* truly encapsulate their essence—striving for the highest standards of speech, conduct, and interactions. They never speak in a bad tone or use ugly words. Their commitment to spreading grace and goodwill is a reflection of their deep inner refinement and unwavering dedication to goodness in all forms.

It's inspiring how their choices—whether in words or actions—are imbued with worthiness and meaning. Their avoidance of violence and harmful behavior embodies a complete harmony between their values and their conduct. This level of consistency is both admirable and rare.

62 - Strong when facing major life events (فِي الزَّلَازِلِ وَفُورٍ)

Major life events shaking their lives, hardly unsettle them, as their unwavering faith forms deep, unshakable roots. Anxiety and pressure find no foothold in their hearts, for God bestows upon them a profound sense of tranquility and peace, keeping them calm and steadfast.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيُزَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith. And to Allah belongs the forces of the heavens and the earth, and ever is Allah Knowing and Wise. 48:4

63 - Patient when facing hardships and undesirable events (فِي الْمَكَارِهِ صَبُورٌ)

When confronted with challenging events such as the loss of a loved one, job insecurity, or financial difficulties, they approach the situation with patience and a thoughtful mindset. They diligently analyze the circumstances, identify the root causes, and work towards practical solutions. Fully aware of their responsibilities, they persevere and remain steadfast, never succumbing to despair or making excuses. Instead of justifying the issues, they focus on resolving them with unwavering determination.

Conversely, when they experience ease and joy in life (فِي الرِّخَاءِ شُكُورٌ), they remain grounded and humble, never succumbing to pride or arrogance. Their gratitude and self-awareness keep them anchored, ensuring their character remains noble and untainted.

64 - They don't mistreat those whom they dislike (لَا يَحِيفُ عَلَى مَنْ يُبْغِضُ)

The *Muttageen* hold themselves to the highest standards of justice and fairness, regardless of any grudges or past negative experiences. They do not allow personal feelings to influence their treatment of others, ensuring their actions remain impartial and principled. While others may occasionally compromise rules to satisfy loved ones, the *Muttageen* always maintain a delicate balance between love and righteousness. Their fairness, kindness and compassion are guided by steadfast principles, preventing them from being swayed into wrongdoing or compromising their integrity (لَا يَأْتُمُ فِيمَنْ يُحِبُّ).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاكُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا أَعْدِلُوا هُوَ

أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah , witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah ; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do. 5:8

65 - They confess against themselves (يَعْتَرِفُ بِالْحَقِّ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُشْهَدَ عَلَيْهِ)

Before anyone has the opportunity to bear witness against them, the *Muttageen* willingly confess their shortcomings, driven by their unwavering commitment to fairness and justice. Their concern for upholding justice surpasses any fear of the consequences that may arise from their confession. They take it upon themselves to self-reflect and critique their own actions, ensuring accountability and integrity, rather than waiting for others to point out their faults."

66 – Guardians (لَا يُضَيِّعُ مَا اسْتُحْفِظَ)

The *Muttageen* honor their covenants with Allah (SWT) and with people, upholding their commitments with unwavering integrity. They serve as vigilant guardians of their religion and faith, embodying their principles in both thought and action. In addition, they safeguard not only their own rights but also those of others, ensuring justice and fairness for all.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

And who (strictly) guard their prayers 23:9

67 - Not forgetting things that need remembering (لَا يَنْسَى مَا ذُكِّرَ)

They remain mindful of Allah (SWT), His countless blessings, and their own character and soul. This constant remembrance keeps them steadfast on the Right Path. Neglecting to appreciate or forgetting His blessings can risk losing them. Similarly, failing to reflect on our purpose, our destination (hereafter), or the strengths and weaknesses of our character may lead us astray. Through self-awareness, gratitude and remembrance, they safeguard their spiritual journey and stay anchored in truth and righteousness.

68 – No name-calling or insulting (لَا يُتَابَرُ بِالْأَلْقَابِ)

The *Muttageen* abstain from name-calling when addressing or referring to others, recognizing its potential to sow discord and harm societal harmony. The Imam draws our focus to Surah Al-Hujurat, emphasizing its profound teachings and the principles it conveys. Name-calling is among the six behaviors outlined in the verses following Verse 49:10 of the above sura, which are identified as threats to the bond of brotherhood. By avoiding such actions, the *Muttageen* uphold the values of respect and unity, fostering an environment of mutual understanding and trust.

69 - Respecting the rights of others (لَا يُضَارُّ بِالْجَارِ)

The *Muttageen* uphold the rights of their neighbors, co-workers, friends, and members of their community, fostering relationships grounded in respect and care. At the very least, they ensure they do no harm to others. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) placed significant emphasis on respecting the rights of neighbors, highlighting its importance in building harmonious communities.

70 - Not blaming others (لَا يَشْمَتُ بِالْمَصَائِبِ)

The *Muttageen* refrain from blaming or insulting individuals who face hardship or calamity. Sometimes, such trials come as a decree from God, and it is not our place to judge or hold others accountable for their circumstances. At other times, a person's difficulties may result from their own actions or decisions. Even in these cases, the *Muttageen* choose compassion over blame and humiliation, recognizing the importance of understanding and support.

71 - Refraining from illogical things (لَا يَدْخُلُ فِي الْبَاطِلِ)

The *Muttageen* aim to steer clear of illogical and unproductive conversations, actions, and thoughts, recognizing their potential to divert from meaningful pursuits. On the other hand, when they encounter something beneficial and grounded in logic, they hold onto it firmly (لَا يَخْرُجُ مِنَ الْحَقِّ), incorporating it into their lives with intention and care.

72 - Deliberate silence when needed (إِنْ صَمَتَ لَمْ يَغْمَهُ صَمْتُهُ)

Guided by wisdom, intellect, and thoughtful reflection, the *Muttageen* choose silence on certain occasions, embracing it without grieving or regret. This deliberate silence, known as 'صمت', holds greater value than speech, signifying a profound understanding of when words are unnecessary, and silence becomes eloquence.

73 - Not raising their voices when laughing (إِنْ صَحِكَ لَمْ يَغْلُ صَوْتُهُ)

Allah (SWT) makes us laugh and cry as we see in this verse:

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى

And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep 53:43

Laughter and crying are integral aspects of life. However, their acceptability depends on their root causes, the context of place and time, and their intensity. Excessive laughter, such as a 'horse laugh,' is not deemed appropriate. The *Muttageen* embody this principle by ensuring that their laughter remains measured and gentle, refraining from raising their voices.

74 - Not losing control when wronged (إِنْ يُغَيَّ عَلَيَّهِ صَبَرَ)

The *Muttageen* maintain their composure even in the face of oppression. Rather than acting impulsively, they exercise patience and deliberate reflection, seeking guidance from Allah's Commands to determine their course of action.

75 - Stressful for own self (نَفْسُهُ مِنْهُ فِي عَنَاءٍ)

A pious individual feels a deep sense of distress within himself. Yet, they rise above this inner turmoil, compelling their soul to prioritize the well-being of others, even at personal cost. This selflessness stands in stark contrast to the prevalent attitudes in society today, where many prioritize their own desires above all else, often disregarding the consequences for others. The *Muttageen* embody this self-sacrificial spirit, driven by their profound love for Allah (SWT) and their hope for promise of the hereafter. Consequently, people feel safe from them.

76 – Careful about choosing whom to socialize with

Their distancing from some people stems from asceticism and purification, while their nearness to some is characterized by leniency and compassion. Their withdrawal is neither out of vanity nor a sense of superiority, and their closeness is free from deceit or ulterior motives.

The *Muttageen* seek proximity to others with the sincere intent of offering help and support. Conversely, people often distance themselves from others due to negative traits such as:

- **Arrogance:** Viewing themselves as superior and unwilling to associate with others they deem beneath them.
- **Greed:** Avoiding social interactions to escape the responsibility of helping others.
- **Jealousy:** Harboring envy and choosing to avoid those whose lives they covet.

However, when the *Muttageen* distance themselves from certain individuals, it is not out of arrogance or hostility but rather to protect their own faith from being negatively influenced by harmful behaviors.

77 - Conclusion

When the sermon ended, a sound was heard from “Hamam”, and he passed away. The Imam remarked, "I feared that Hamam might pass away upon hearing the sermon. Could one imagine any outcome other than this? Shouldn't preaching, filled with wisdom and guidance, yield such profound results?"

Hamam's soul was fully prepared and receptive to the true essence of the sermon. At this moment, a rude individual in the audience addressed the Imam, saying, "Why didn't you die?" The Imam, with kindness and wisdom, advised the man to be cautious, explaining that it was Satan who had planted such

a thought in him. He then reminded the audience that the time and cause of each person's death are predetermined by Allah (SWT).