

Hadiths of Imam Ali (AS)

Knowledge and Ignorance

In reply to some one who posed Imam Ali (as) a difficult question, Imam Ali (as) said : 'Ask in order to understand, and do not ask in order to find fault, for surely the ignorant man who wants to learn resembles a man of knowledge, and surely a man of knowledge who wants to be difficult resembles an ignorant man who wants to find fault. '

The Station of the men of Knowledge

The man of knowledge is the one who recognizes that what is known is very little compared to what is not known, and as a result he considers himself ignorant, and accordingly he increases his efforts to know more by going out in search of knowledge.

The Purity and the Nobility of Knowledge

Do not talk about knowledge with the foolish so that they deny you, nor with the ignorant so that they find you oppressive, but talk about it with those of its people whom you meet who will accept it and understand it.

Knowledge and Acting on it

O you who carry knowledge around with you; are you only carrying it around with you ? For surely knowledge belongs to who ever knows and then acts accordingly, so that his action corresponds to his knowledge. There will be a people who will carry knowledge around with them, but it will not pass beyond their shoulders. Their inner most thoughts will contradict what they display in public, and their actions will contradict what they know.

The purity and nobility of knowledge

When a dead person is placed in his grave, four kinds of fire will cover him, but then the prayer will come and put one of them out, and the fast will come and put another one of them out, and then charity will come and put another one out, and knowledge will come and put the forth one out, and it will say : 'If I had come sooner, I would a have put all of them out, and given

you delight for I am with you now, and you'll not see anything else distressing.

On the Heart

I am amazed at the heart of man: It possesses the substance of wisdom as well as the opposites contrary to it ... for if hope arises in it, it is brought low by covetousness: and if covetousness is aroused in it, greed destroys it. If despair possesses it, self piety kills it: and if it is seized by anger, this is intensified by rage. If it is blessed with contentment, then it forgets to be careful; and if it is filled with fear, then it becomes preoccupied with being cautious. If it feels secure, then it is overcome by vain hopes; and if it is given wealth, then its independence makes it extravagant. If want strikes it, then it is smitten by anxiety. If it is weakened by hunger, then it gives way to exhaustion; and if it goes too far in satisfying its appetites, then its inner becomes clogged up. So all its shortcomings are harmful to it, and all its excesses corrupt it.

There are four things that make the heart die: wrong action followed by wrong action, playing around with foolish people, spending a lot of time with women, and sitting with the dead. Then they asked Imam Ali: 'And who are the dead, O Commander of the believers?' He replied: 'Every slave who follows his desires.'

Surely want is a trial, and having sickness of the body is more difficult to bear than indigence, and having a sickness of the heart is more difficult to bear than having a sickness of the body. Surely being very wealthy is a blessing, and having a healthy body is better than being very wealthy, and having awe of Allah in your heart is better than having a healthy body.

Surely hearts have desires, and they turn towards, and they turn away ... so approach them by means of what they desire and what they turn towards, for surely if the heart is forced to do some thing against its will, it goes blind.

On Intellect

A person's intellect becomes apparent through his dealings, and a man's character is known by the way he exercises authority. The intellect is a king and characteristics are its subjects, so if it is weak in governing them, disorder takes place.

The intellect is better than desire, for the intellect makes you a king over your destiny, and desire makes you a slave of your destiny.

The intellect is a natural disposition which learns from experience.

The intellect is what arrives at what is correct through reasoning, and recognizes what has not yet happened through what has already taken place. Use your intellect to understand something when you hear about the intellect that examines, that is, and not just the intellect that repeats what it hears, for surely there are many who repeat the knowledge that they hear, and there are few who examine it.

The one who has an intellect longs to be like the righteous people so that he can be of one of them, and he loves them so that he can be united with them in his love, even if he falls short in emulating their actions.

The one who has an intellect does not openly display it except in one of two situations: when he is furthest away from seeking something in the world, and when he is furthest away from abandoning it.

Surely hated adversity has final objectives in which it will inevitably end, so the one who has an intellect should try to sleep over it until this happens, for surely any attempt to stop it before it has come to an end will only intensify that hated diversity even more.

The first opinion of the person of intellect is the last opinion of an ignorant person.

The one who has an intellect finds harshness of life amongst persons of intellect more agreeable than a life of ease amongst the foolish.

The Station of men of Knowledge

Know that the slaves of Allah are those who seek to preserve knowledge of Him, safeguarding what safeguards it, and letting its springs flow freely. They are united by friendship, and they meet with love, and they drink from the cup that quenches their thirst, and they go on with their thirst satisfied. They are not troubled by doubt, and they are not quick to backbite. It is on this basis that their natural disposition and character rest, and on this is based their love, and by this they are united. They are like seeds that have been assessed and selected, some to be kept and some to be thrown away, identified through purification, and refined through clarification.

This World and the Next

Imam Ali (as) wrote to Salman al Farsi (ra) : To continue, surely, the likeness of this world is that of a snake: it is soft to touch, and deadly

poisonous. The ignorant child is distracted by it, and the one with understanding and intellect is cautious of it. So turn away from what fascinates you in it, for how little of it stays with you.

The Life Transaction (Religion) of Islam

I am making a connection which no one has made before me: Islam is submission, and submission is certainty, and certainty is the affirmation of the truth, and affirmation of the truth is acknowledgement, and acknowledgement is performance of what is obligatory, and performance of what is obligatory is appropriate action.