

*Islam Fundamental
Principles and
Teachings*

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Islamic Worship Reference series

Islam

Fundamental Principles and Teachings

Ayatollah al-Uḍmā
Sayyid Şādiq Shirazi



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In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent The Merciful,
All Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,
and Peace and Blessings be upon the most honourable of all
creatures, Muhammad the Chosen One and his righteous progeny
and perpetual curse be upon all their enemies.

Imam Riḍā peace be upon him said:

May Allah have mercy upon he who keeps our affair alive.

I asked the Imam: And how may one keep your affair alive?

The Imam replied:

**By learning our teachings and teaching them to the people, for
if the people learn of the beauty of our teachings they will
follow us.**

In this work Ayatollah al-Uḍmā Sayyid Ṣādiq Shirazi states:

The teachings of Ahl al-Bayt may be divided in three parts:

1. *Oṣool al-Deen*; the five fundamental principles of Islam,
2. *Foroo‘ al-Deen*; the rulings of Islam (on the ḥalāh and ḥarām, e.g. the material covered in the *Risālah* or the Manual of Islamic Law),
3. The ethics and etiquettes of Islam, (*Akhlāq* and *Ādāb*).

Foroo‘ al-Deen are many; there are the famous ten, as well as some of the important principles, which are of particular significance in the modern times, such as human community, social order, politics, economy, the armed forces, the justice system, culture, mass media, health, medical issues, individual and social freedoms, and suchlike. [This is discussed in this work, by the will of Almighty Allah]

Therefore, whoever believes in *Oṣool al-Deen* of Islam, acts upon its *Foroo' al-Deen* [on the obligatory and prohibited], and adorns himself with its ethical morals and etiquettes (*Akhlāq* and *Ādāb*) he will attain happiness in both worlds, and wins both lives, lives happy and dies while being praised.

The second stage is the attainment of real and genuine piety or *taqwā*:

The genuine piety is abstention from all and any ḥarām.

It is imperative and binding obligation that one distances oneself from sins and disobediences, avoids and evades temptations, desires and lusts; instead one must practice and adhere to the mandatory duties. The will and determination of the individual should be to strive for Allah's sake and to endeavour to attain the pleasure and contentment of Almighty Allah. The first step towards *taqwā* and striving for Allah's sake is for the individual to hold oneself to account. One should assess, examine and evaluate his conducts and behaviours every day¹, even if only for a few minutes; and so one must seek forgiveness for the conducts one would stand accountable to and make a resolute determination not to ever commit them again.

¹ This is in reference to such hadith from Ahl al-Bayt peace be upon them as:

Allah's messenger peace be upon him and his progeny declares, "He is not one of us if one does not call himself to account everyday . . . and if he has done good he should ask Allah to help him do more, and if he has done bad, he should seek forgiveness from Allah for that and return to Him", *Wasā'el al-Shi'a*, vol. 16, p95; *al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, p453.

Allah's messenger states, "Call yourselves to account before you are called to account, and weigh yourselves [in terms of the good deeds you've done] before you are weighed". *Wasā'el al-Shi'a*, vol. 16, p99.

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Editor's Foreword

Islam is a unique and indivisible system that provides a complete and comprehensive set of teachings that address the issues of concern to mankind for his life in this world and in the hereafter. Adherence to the teachings of Islam, which are devised by the designer and creator of mankind, brings about bliss and happiness in this world and prepare the individual for the eternal life in the hereafter.

Furthermore, when one looks at the teachings of Islam, one will find they are not difficult or cumbersome to implement. This is because those teachings come from the same source that brought man into existence, and therefore one finds them to be in harmony with the nature of mankind and his natural disposition.

It is clear from the evidence before us that mankind – even in non-Muslim communities – gradually and by piecemeal is implementing the teachings of Islam, but without realising it. Left to his own devices, he would probably continue doing so until he ultimately comes to realise the truth of the teachings of Islam. The teachings of Islam are revealed to help mankind attain his perfect achievement both in this world and the hereafter.

In part one of this discourse the author discusses *Oṣool al-Deen* or the fundamental principles of Islam, which are *tawḥeed* or the indivisible Oneness of God, *'adl* or Divine Justice, *nobowwah* or Prophethood, *imāmah* or leadership, and *mi'ād* or Resurrection. In the section on *imāmah*, the author gives a brief biography of the 12 Imams or leaders divinely appointed to lead mankind after the Prophet Muhammad until the end of time. To facilitate the reader with a better perception of the prophet and his household, Ahl al-Bayt, some of their sayings (*ḥadith*) are presented following the brief biography of each imam. This has been included by the editor with the prior permission of the author. The author also addresses the issue of the eternal miracle or legacy the Messenger of Islam presented to mankind; namely the glorious Qur'an,

presenting *ḥadīth* from Prophet Muhammad (S)², and the infallible Imams (A)³.

In part two of this work, the author addresses *Foroo‘ al-Deen* or the essential rulings and practices of Islam, which are not only the famous ten acts of worship such as the daily prayers, fasting, hajj but other aspects of the teachings of Islam that are significantly relevant in modern times; issues such as the human community and social order, politics and economy, the army and the armed forces, the justice system, culture and mass media, education, health and medical issues, individual and social freedoms. Through this discussion the author establishes that a government based on the teachings of Islam would provide the most favourable system of government for mankind.

In the final part of this work, the author discusses the third component that a Muslim is required adhere to; namely the Islamic morals and etiquettes (*Akhlaq* and *Ādāb*). Here the author outlines and discusses the ‘four pillars’ of Islamic ethics and the ‘two pillars’ of its etiquettes. The author then lists conducts and behaviours that Islam prescribes as being obligatory, forbidden, the unethical conducts, as well as the recommended moral conducts. These are presented under the four separate headings.

Almost all footnotes are by the editor. Texts between [] are from the editor. Verses from the Qur’an are given between ﴿ 》. The citation of Qur’anic verses is in the form of: The Qur’an, The Star (53):3-4, where ‘The Star’ is the name of the surah, ‘53’ the order number of the surah, and ‘3-4’ are the verses’ number within the surah. The short form citation is 53: 3-4.

Z.O.

² *ṣal-lal-lāh alayhi wa ālih*, meaning Allah’s Peace and Blessings be upon him and his progeny. This invocation is always made after the mention of the name of Allah’s messenger as taught by the Prophet, and out of respect and devotion for the Prophet Muhammad (S).

³ *alayhum as-salām* (plural) or *alayhis-salām* (singular), meaning “peace be upon them or him/her”. This invocation is always made after the mention of the name of a prophet or infallible Imam, or an immaculate individual (A).

Introduction

It is imperative that any Muslim is not contented with Islam by name only, and with the Qur'an by the recitation and the script only, but rather it is obligatory to act according to Islam and to implement the rulings of the Qur'an in all aspects of his life, and in all his affairs; personal, social, economical, political, and suchlike so that s/he would be a Muslim in the true sense of the word; happy, prosperous in this world, and triumphant and content in the hereafter.

It is needless to say that happiness in this world and triumph in the hereafter is not achieved by title only, and is not obtained by supplication only, but rather the thing that brings them about and facilitates for the Muslim individual is – and this is after firm belief in the fundamentals of Islam and its true doctrines – to act upon the excellent teachings of Islam, and implement the true and progressive rulings of the Qur'an.

It is from this viewpoint that it becomes essential for every Muslim who loves to live happy and prosperous in this world and victorious and content in the hereafter – and all of us love that – to endeavour to learn the true and right Islamic beliefs, become familiar with the exalted teachings of Islam, acquire knowledge of the excellent rulings of the Qur'an, develop a firm belief in the doctrines and a relentless and serious endeavour to act according to the teachings of Islam and complete implementation of the rulings of the Qur'an, so Almighty Allah, His messenger, and the *ma'soom* Ahl al-Bayt of the messenger peace be upon them all, may be contented with us, and we are happy in this world and victorious in the hereafter.

In facilitating what is mandatory for every Muslim to know in this respect, the following outlines are presented.

The excellent teachings of Islam and the exalted rulings of the Qur'an may be divided into the three following categories:

1. *Oṣool al-Deen*; the fundamental principles or beliefs of Islam,
2. *Foroo' al-Deen*; the essential rulings and practices of Islam,
3. The Islamic *Akhlāq* and *Ādāb* or the Islamic ethical morals and etiquettes.

Therefore, whoever believes in *Oṣool al-Deen* of Islam, acts upon its *Foroo' al-Deen*, and adorns himself with its ethical morals and etiquettes (*Akhlāq* and *Ādāb*) would attain happiness in both worlds, and wins both lives, lives happy and dies while being praised.

The following are a brief outline of each of these three categories.

PART ONE

Oṣool al-Deen

OR

The Fundamental Principles of Islam

The fundamental principles or beliefs of Islam (*Oṣool al-Deen*), [or the ‘pillars’ of Islam], are five:

1. *Tawḥeed* or the indivisible oneness of the supreme being and creator of all things.
2. *‘Adl* or the justice of the supreme being.
3. *Nobowwah* or the Prophethood.
4. *Imāmah* or the Leadership of mankind.
5. *Me‘ād* or Resurrection.

1. The Indivisible Oneness of Allah

Tawḥeed is the belief that the universe, all existence, has a deity who created them all, and brought everything into existence from non-existence and that he sustains and maintains everything. Therefore creation, sustenance, bestowing, denying, death, life, sickness, health, etc. are all under His control and will:

﴿Verily His command is that if He wills a thing, He says to it “Be”, and it becomes﴾.⁴

The evidence for the existence of Almighty Allah is what we see around us; the sky and whatever there is in it; the illuminating sun, the bright moon, all other stars and galaxies, the clouds, the winds, the rain . . . and the earth and whatever in it such as the seas and rivers, the trees and fruits, the various kinds of precious minerals

⁴ The Holy Qur’an; Yāseen (36): 82.

such as gold, silver, emerald and suchlike. As well as the various categories of animals; those that fly, and those that swim in water or those that walk or move on land in various forms, having distinctive sounds and similar and dissimilar shapes and sizes. And then there is this astonishing being, the human, who has a variety of sensory powers such as hearing and seeing, smelling and tasting, touching as well the gut feeling or hunch, and has many organs and limbs such as eyes and ears, tongue and heart, hand and legs, and other states or aspects such as health, disease, contentment, anger, happiness, sadness, and suchlike.

All of these are evidence of the existence of an all-wise and omniscient deity, in whom we believe, whom we worship, from whom we seek help and in whom we trust and rely upon.

Almighty Allah and the Attributes of Beauty

Allah, the Most High, has many attributes:

He is omniscient, He knows about all things big and small. He knows what people may have in their hearts.

He has the power and ability to do everything, He has the power of creation, of giving sustenance, and He has the power of life and death, and suchlike.

He is forever living and never dies.

He wills things that are useful, and He does not will things that are not useful.

He sees all things, He hears all sounds even if a whisper in the ears, or a thought or an imagination.

His existence is from eternity to eternity; for He, exalted and high, alone who is eternal, perpetual, endless, and ceaseless. He was before everything else, then He created all the things, and He will live forever after them. The universe in its entirety is created by His power, in need of Him not only for its existence but also for its survival and continuance. Everything that is created is *ḥaadith* [i.e.

an event, something that has taken place], and there is no *qadeem* [i.e. perpetual, a being that has always been and will eternally be] except for Almighty Allah.

He speaks to any of His sincere servants whom He wills; such as His messengers, and the angels.

He is truthful and never breaks His promise.

He is the Creator, the provider, the life giver, the source of bounties with the power to stop them also; He is Merciful, Forgiving, Mighty, Honourable, and Noble.

Almighty Allah and the Attributes of Majesty

Allah – Immaculate and Most High – is free of all shortcomings:

He is not matter, nor is He a composition [of other constituents].

He does not occupy any space.

It is not possible to see Him, neither in this world nor in the hereafter.

He is not subject to effects, changes, or developments. So He does not feel thirsty or hungry, He never ages, ceases, sleeps, or is oblivious or unaware.

He has neither partner nor peer, but He is One and Singular, Unique and Absolute, who takes neither spouse nor offspring.

His attributes are the same as His Essence, they are not secondary to Him.

Thus, He is Omniscient, Almighty, along with all His other attributes, since eternity, unlike us who were ignorant at times and then acquired knowledge, or were weak at times and then became strong.

He is not in need of anything or anyone. He does not need any consultation, or helper, or assistant, or any troops, and suchlike.

2. Divine Justice

Divine justice means that Allah does not do any injustice to anyone and does not do anything that would be contrary to wisdom. Therefore, whatever He has created, or whatever amount of sustenance He has given to someone or withheld from someone are all on the basis of wisdom and on good grounds even though we do not know the reasons for. It is like a physician prescribing a certain medicine for a patient; that we consider is good and useful even though we may not know all the evidence for its usefulness.

If we see that Allah has granted someone wealth and He did not do so for someone else, or He made one to have certain qualities and not the other, or He caused someone to become sick and has kept another person healthy, and suchlike in all such cases we must believe that all such cases are based on some kind of benefit and wisdom even though we may not be aware of their benefit and wisdom.⁵

It is stated in a *hadith*, or tradition, that “Moses (A) asked Allah to let him know something about His Justice, which looks otherwise on the surface. Allah ordered him to go to a certain water fountain in the wilderness to monitor the events that would take place therein. When Moses (A) arrived at the fountain, he saw a horseman who had arrived at the fountain to freshen up. When the horseman left the scene, he forgot a bag of money behind. Afterwards, a boy came to the fountain, saw the bag by the fountain, with all eagerness and happiness picked it up and hurriedly left the scene. Then a blind man came to the fountain to wash himself for prayer, and at this time the horseman came back searching for his bag of money, and when he did not find it, he accused the blind man of taking it. Consequently a dispute flared up between the horseman and the blind man, and eventually the horseman killed the blind man, and left the scene.

Moses was astonished at all this. Allah then revealed to Moses (A) that the horseman had stolen the bag of money from the father of the boy (who had found the bag of money left behind at the fountain by the horseman.) In this way the property was returned to the rightful owner. The blind man had previously killed the father of the horseman and therefore the horseman at the end punished the killer of his father.”⁶

This is how Allah’s justice and wisdom works, even though it may look some how far from the conventional rules.

3. Prophethood

When Almighty Allah created man, He wished him happiness and prosperity in this world, and felicity and paradise for the hereafter. And this cannot be achieved unless mankind has a programme that coincides with his mind and nature, and a course that is in harmony with his body and soul. And such a comprehensive programme that addresses all the requirements of the mind and nature, and the complete course that attends to the entire needs of the body and soul may not be perfected except by the creator of man who is well aware and knowledgeable of all his needs and requirements.

And since Almighty Allah wished happiness for man when He created him, it is necessary for Him to perfect this comprehensive programme to bring about happiness to him, and to send this programme to the masses by those of his creation and servants who are trustworthy, who are immune to error, negligence and forgetting, purified from deficiencies and sins – who are none other than the prophets and messengers, peace be upon them.

Thus, a prophet is the human being whom Almighty Allah reveals to. And so a prophet conveys from Almighty Allah without the

⁵ Needless to say many cases of poverty, disease, and suchlike are due to mankind’s inappropriate dealing and management.

intermediary of any human being. The prophets are of two kinds of status:

(1) The *Mursal* Prophets

The *mursal* or dispatched prophets were those who were commissioned to guide people out of darkness to light, out of falsehood to the truth, from myths and superstition to reality, and out of ignorance to knowledge.

(2) The non-*mursal* Prophets

They were those prophets who received divine revelations for themselves only and they had not received orders to preach such revelations to people.

In total there were one hundred and twenty four thousand prophets but the *mursal* prophets among them were just a few.

The first of the prophets was Prophet Adam (A) and the last of them was Prophet Muhammad (S).

The *mursal* prophets are in two categories,

1. *Olul-Azm* prophets,
2. non-*Olul-Azm* prophets.

The *Olul-Azm* prophets are universal prophets whom Almighty Allah had sent to the east and west of the Earth, and to the whole of mankind. The non-*Olul-Azm* prophets are those who have been sent to limited areas, or specific territories, particular groups or nations.

The *Olul-Azm* prophets are five:

- i. Noah, (*Nuh*) peace be upon him,
- ii. Abraham, (*Ibrahīm*) peace be upon him,
- iii. Moses, (*Mosā*) peace be upon him,
- iv. Jesus, (*Esa*) peace be upon him,
- v. Muhammad, peace be upon him and his pure progeny.

⁶ Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 61, p117.

The followers of Moses (A) are the Jews, and the followers of Jesus (A) are the Christians, and the followers of Muhammad (S) are the Muslims.

However, Islam has abrogated and superseded all the previous religions, and therefore one may not persist on them, and it is imperative upon all to follow the Teachings of Islam, as Almighty Allah says:

﴿Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers﴾⁷

Therefore Judaism and Christianity are false and Islam remains the Law of Allah until the Day of Judgment and will never be abrogated or superseded.

The Final Prophet

Therefore, Prophet Muhammad (S) is the last of all prophets, and the religion revealed to him, which is Islam, abrogates other religions and supersede them all, and that his Law – the *shari'ah* – remains effective and valid until the Day of Judgment, and it alone is the law capable to bring happiness to mankind, and realise his hopes and dreams in this world and in the hereafter. Similarly he – the prophet Muhammad – is the symbol of leadership for mankind and the perfect example and complete model for the essence of the good and the virtue. Therefore it is imperative upon all the Muslims – rather all the peoples of the world if they wished good for themselves – to follow his model in his way of life, and adopt his morals and ethics, peace be upon him and his pure progeny. In order to know some of his historical background, it is necessary to mention some of his traits⁸:

⁷ The Holy Qur'an; The Family of 'Emran (3): 85

⁸ For more details see the books "*for the first time in the history of the world*", vols. 1-2, "*a scented bouquet of the life of the seal of the prophets*", "*the*

He is Muhammad the son of Abdullah, and his mother is Āminah *bint* Wahab.

He was born in Mecca at the dawn of Friday on the seventeenth day of the month of Rabi'-I in the year of the Elephant⁹, and that was during the reign of Khosrau I or Chosroes I (also known as Anushirwan the Just in Persian), the Just King of Persia.

The Noble Prophetic Mission

He received divine revelation on the twenty-seventh day of the month of Rajab at the age of forty. Archangel Gabriel, peace be upon him, one of Almighty Allah's elite angels, descended upon him while he was in cave Ḥarā' in the Meccan mountains, and revealed to him five verses from the surah of '*alaq*':

﴿In the name of Allah, the Beneficent the Merciful,
Read in the Name of your Lord who created,
Created man from a clot (of congealed blood),
Read, and your Lord is most bountiful,
Who taught by the pen,
Taught man that that he knew not﴾¹⁰.

After that, from mount Ṣafā, from within the Grand Mosque¹¹, and from other public places the Prophet Muhammad began preaching the divine message to the people, guiding them to Almighty Allah,

perfumed way of life", and "*Muhammad and the Qur'an*" by the late Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Shirazi.

⁹ The year of the Elephant, circa 570 CE, is in reference to the year when Abrahah, king of the Yemen, decided to invade Mecca and demolish the Ka'bah in a bid to pave the way for making his capital city the centre for trade and the focal point for religious festivities. This episode is referred to in the holy Qur'an in the surah of the Elephant, #105.

¹⁰ On various occasions the entire content of the Qur'an was revealed to the Messenger of Allah – ﴿We brought it down on the night of Qadr﴾ – and thenceforth, in a gradual process particular verses, *āyah/āyāt*, were revealed on the occasions of various events. The occasion of this revelation was the first instance of the 'official' or 'public' revelation of the Holy Qur'an. Editor.

¹¹ The Grand Mosque is that that houses the Ka'bah.

and inviting them to believe in Him, saying to them “O people! Say *la ilāha illal-lāh* – there is no god but Allah – you will prosper”.¹²

The Meccans were polytheists and idolaters, and as their leaders had personal interests in polytheism and idolatry, and in order to protect their interest they opposed him, they began mocking him and ridiculing him, and caused him great sufferings, and as the prophet persisted on his attempts to guide them the polytheists persisted on causing him greater and greater hardship and hurt him to the extent that he said, “No other prophet was hurt as much as I have been hurt.”¹³

Only a few people from Mecca accepted his Divine message and the first among them was Imam Ali (A) and then the Prophet’s wife, Khadijah (A) and then a few others.

The first to believe in him amongst the men was *Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib*, peace be upon them, and from amongst the women was *Khadijah bint Khoweilid* peace be upon her.

When the prophet’s persecution at the hands of the polytheists mounted, the prophet migrated to the Medinah, and this migration is marks the starting point of Muslim calendar.¹⁴

In Medinah the number of Muslims increased, and their strength and valour augmented, and by the grace of the prophet’s outstanding and beautiful teachings and the wise and generous laws of Islam, they became a model of moral and human values, and an example for progress and civilisation such that they exceeded and excelled all other civilisations and religions – the divine ones and the non-divine.

¹² *Manāqib Āl Abi Ṭālib*, by ibn Shahr Āshoub, vol. 1, p56.

¹³ *Kashf al-Ghummah*, by Ali ibn Esa al-Erbeli, vol. 2, p537

¹⁴ The lunar calendar used by the Muslims. The word hijri is in reference to the hijrah or migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, which was about 621CE.

During his abode in Medina, the Prophet (S) faced wars and conflicts all of which were defensive wars in a bid to repel the aggressions of the polytheists, Jews and Christians against the Muslims. In all of those conflicts the Prophet would always adopt the policy of peace, mercy, forgiveness, and moral virtues with his enemies. Therefore in all of the some eighty such conflicts [that took place] the total number of casualties on both sides – the Muslims and their opponents – was not more than fourteen hundred, as recorded by history.

The Sorrowful Demise

From the first day of his divine mission until his death, the divine revelation always supported him. Archangel Gabriel, peace be upon him, the Trustee of the revelations, used to reveal the Qur'an from Almighty Allah bit by bit on various occasions until [the revelation of] this great book was complete [for the people] in twenty-three years. He then ordered for this book to be compiled and collated, and thus it was compiled and ordered during his lifetime, peace be upon him and his pure progeny, just as it is today without any addition or deletion.

Indeed, the Prophet used to formulate and organise the religious and worldly affairs of the Muslims; he used to teach them the Divine Book and wisdom, he used to show them the laws of worship and obedience, business and transaction, social coexistence, politics, economics, and various other issues from amongst the teachings of Islam.

After the perfection of the religion, which was by appointing Ali *ibn* Abi Ṭālib as the Commander of the Believers (*Amir al-Mo'mineen*) and the Leader of the Pious (*Imam al-Muttaqeen*) and the (*caliph*) Successor to the Prophet, which took place on the Day of Ghadir on the eighteenth day of the month of Dhil-Hijjah of the year of the Farewell Hajj, and the Almighty Allah revealed ﴿Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My

grace upon you and approved Islam as a religion for you¹⁵, Allah's Messenger (S) suddenly fell seriously ill and died as a result of this particular illness on the twenty-eighth day of the month of Şafar, year 11 Hijri. The prophet's *waşi* (executor of his will and the teachings revealed to him) and *caliph* (successor) Imam Ali (A) undertook the task of preparing the Prophet's body for burial, and buried him in his house, in the holy city of Medinah where his holy shrine stands today.

Allah's Messenger (S), in all his states and in every situation was an exemplary model and an example of the highest merit in trust and sincerity, truthfulness and honesty, high morals and noble disposition, knowledge and forbearance, kindness and forgiving, generosity and bravery, abstinence and piety, modesty and virtue, justice, humbleness and striving.

His body and physique was in the best and most beautiful shape possible with total balance and excellence, and his face was bright, radiant and attractive. Similarly, his heart and high spirit was in the peak of spiritual perfection, his morals and etiquettes were most perfect they could possibly be, and his way of life, conduct, teachings, and practices were luminous and bright like a shining sun in the middle of the day.

In short, he was the collection of all excellence and noble traits, the focal point of honour and dignity, source of knowledge and justice, and piety and virtue. He was the axis of religion and civilization, the world and the hereafter. There has never been a man like him before, and there will never come anyone like him in the future.

This is the Prophet of the Muslims, and this is the religion of Islam . . . his religion is the best of all religions, and his book is the best of all books, just as the Almighty said, ﴿Falsehood shall not come

¹⁵ The holy Qur'an, The Table Spread (5): 3.

to it from before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One ﴿﴾¹⁶.

Hadith from Allah's Messenger

‘The example of my Ahl al-Bayt is that of Noah’s ark; whoever boards it is saved and whoever turns away from it drowns.’

‘O people! I have left behind for you that which if you adhere to, you will never go astray: the Book of Allah (i.e. the Qur’an) and members of my Ahl al-Bayt . . .’

‘Indeed, He who dies with the love of Āl-Muhammad (the descendants of Muhammad) in his heart, he dies a martyr,

Indeed He who dies with the love of Āl-Muhammad in his heart, he dies and his sins are forgiven,

Indeed, He who dies with the love of Āl-Muhammad in his heart, he dies as a repentant,

Indeed, He who dies with the love of Āl-Muhammad in his heart, he dies as a faithful whose faith has been perfected,

Indeed, He who dies, with the love of Āl-Muhammad in his heart, the angel of death, as well as Munkar and Nakir¹⁷ give him the good news of Paradise,

Indeed, He who dies, with the love of Āl-Muhammad in his heart, he is received in Paradise just as a bride is received in her (new) house.’

‘Cursed is he who burdens others with his responsibilities and lives off them.’

‘On the Day of Judgement, one will not move one step unless he is questioned about four things:

About his life and what he spent it on,

About his youth and what he used it for,

About what he earned, where he earned it from, and how he spent it,

¹⁶ The holy Qur’an, (41): 42.

¹⁷ They are the angels of the grave.

About the love of us, the Ahl-ul-Bayt’.

‘My Lord has recommended nine things to me:

Sincerity in private and in public,
Justice and equity in contentment and in anger,
Moderation in poverty and in wealth,
To forgive he who transgressed against and oppressed me,
To give to he who deprived me,
To keep bond with he who severed ties with me,
To contemplate when I am silent,
To say *dhikr*, [remember Allah and adhere to His laws, orders
and creations] when I talk,
To take heed and learn when I observe.’

‘O Aba Dharr! Value five things before five others:

Value your youth before your old age,
Value your health before your sickness,
Value your wealth before your poverty,
Value your calm (time) before your hectic (time),
Value your life before your death.’

‘O servants of Allah! You are like the patients and the Lord of the worlds is like the physician. The interest of the patient lies in (implementing) what the physician knows and administers, and not in what the patient desires or suggests. Therefore obey the command of Allah so that you would be amongst the victors.’

‘O Muslim people! Avoid adultery at all cost! For it has six features; three of which are applicable to this world and three to the hereafter. As for those of this world, it (adultery) destroys dignity, brings about poverty, and shortens the life span. And as for those of the hereafter, it brings about the wrath and anger of Allah, severity and graveness of judgement, and eternity and perpetuity in the hell fire.’

‘Whoever from you observes something evil (in society) must change it physically; if he is not able, then he must object to it verbally, and if that is not possible, he must object to it by his

heart, (he must not remain indifferent) for this is the lowest status of faith.’

‘He who drinks alcohol is similar to he who worships an idol. He who drinks alcohol, Allah would not accept his prayers for forty days, and if he dies within those forty days, he would have died an infidel.’

‘The looking (of a man at a woman and vice versa) is a poisonous arrow from Satan’s arrows. He who avoids it in fear of Almighty Allah, Allah would bestow upon him a faith the wetness of which he can find in his heart.’

The Qur’an, the Prophet’s Eternal Miracle

The holy Qur’an is the Prophet’s living and eternal miracle, since it is the only divine scripture that the divine will wished it to remain immune from addition, deletion, and changes despite the great number of those who attempt to distort it or the scribes who attempt to forge it, so that it remains the eternal book, and the timeless constitution for life until the day of judgement, so long as there is man living on the planet earth. This is because of what it contains between its covers in terms of excellent rulings and outstanding teachings the implementation of which guarantees man’s happiness, progress, development and achievement.

In addition to being the book of knowledge and education, rules and rights, morals and etiquettes, politics and economics, the holy Qur’an is the miracle of the heavens that carries great spiritual and metaphysical influence.

The Qur’an challenged the eloquent writers of the Arabs who had hanged their seven magnificent masterpieces [on the walls of the Ka‘bah] to produce something resembling its verses. They were not able to produce the like of one surah of the holy Qur’an. But instead, having being put to shame, they went on to remove their hanging masterpieces in total defeat before the Qur’an that is

compelling in eloquence and style, and if they were able to produce one surah like that of the Qur'an, they would not have resorted to those wars that reflected on their personalities, destroyed their power and establishment, and rendered them living in hunger and fear, destitution and humiliation.

This compelling Qur'an, and this eternal divine book, in which there is that that brings happiness for mankind, and opulence for his life, and disseminates good and blessing, and spreads peace and tranquillity throughout the land, various traditions have been narrated on the virtue of learning it, reciting and memorising it, and implementing its teachings, urging one to pay particular attention to it. Here we will point to some of them by the will and power of Almighty Allah.

The virtue of learning and teaching the Qur'an

In the following we quote some hadith from *Wasā'el al-Shi'ah*,¹⁸ on the topic of the prominence of the holy Qur'an:

Sa'ad al-Khaffāf reports Imam Ṣādiq saying, "O Sa'ad, learn the Qur'an, because on the day of judgment the Qur'an will come in the best form that people may have ever seen."

(The Imam continued . . .) "until the holy Qur'an comes to Allah, the Most high, and Allah, addressing the Qur'an, says, "O my authority on earth and my true spoken words, look up and ask for your wishes shall be granted, and intercede for your intercession shall be accepted. How did you find my servants?" The holy Qur'an replies, "My Lord, some of them kept my teachings and did not lose anything from me, but some of them lost me and disrespected me and did not believe me even though I was your authority to all your creatures." Allah then replies, "I swear by My Majesty, Greatness and Highness that today I shall give the

best reward for your sake, and I shall punish severely because of you.”

The Imam (A) continued, “Then the Qur’an approaches a follower of ours and says to him, “do you know me? I am the Qur’an for which you kept awake the whole night and faced sufferings in your life. Come let us go to Almighty Allah.” The Qur’an then will say, “Lord, this servant of yours was very close to me and very careful about me. He would love others because of me and would hate others just because of me.” Allah, the most High, will then say, “Let my servant enter Paradise and let him be dressed from the garments of the heaven and be crowned.” Then he is presented to the Qur’an. Then the Qur’an is asked “Are you happy with the rewards given to your friend?” The Qur’an will say, “Lord, I see this as a small reward, give him all the good things.” Allah then will say, “I swear by my Majesty, Honour and Highness I shall reward him and others like him with five things with all the good things: I shall give them eternal youth, health, richness, happiness and life.”¹⁹

Imam Ṣādiq (A) said: ‘The faithful son of Adam will be summoned for the reckoning and the Qur’an will go before him in the most beautiful of form and say: ‘O Lord, I am the Qur’an and this is your faithful servant who used to tire himself by reciting me and spend long nights reading me and his eyes would stream when he spent the nights in prayer, so please him just as he has pleased me.’ Almighty Allah will say: ‘My servant open your right hand, then he will fill it with Allah’s Riḍwān and he will fill his left hand with the Allah’s mercy then he will be told: ‘This garden of

¹⁸ *Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah ilā-Tahṣeel Masā’el al-Shari‘ah*, compiled by Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Ḥurr al-Āmeli, volume 6, from p165 onwards. The work is also referred to as “*Wasā’el*” for short.

¹⁹ *ibid*, p165

Paradise is free to you so recite and ascend, so for every verse he recites he will ascend a station.²⁰

The Believer and the Qur'an

Imam Ṣādiq (A) said: 'it is imperative that the believer does not die before learning the Qur'an or be in the process of learning it.'²¹

Allah's Messenger (S) said: 'Allah does not punish the heart which is a vessel for the Qur'an.'²²

Allah's Messenger (S) said: 'The best of you is the one who learns the Qur'an and teaches it.'²³

In one of his speeches cited in Nahj-ul-Balāghah, sermon 110, Imam Ali (A) said: "Learn ye the Qur'an for it is the best of speech, and study it for it is the springtime of the heart. Seek cure by its light for it heals the breast, and recite it beautifully for it is the most beneficial of narratives. The learned man who acts without using his knowledge is as the confused ignorant man who does not awake and rid himself from his ignorance; in fact the case against him is greater, and regret is more fitting for him, and in the sight of Allah he is the most blameworthy."

Allah's Messenger (S) said: "Allah will crown the parents of the one who teaches his child the Qur'an with a kingly crown and clothe them in robes the like of which has never been seen before."²⁴

Allah's Messenger (S) said: "The people of the Qur'an are the people of Allah and His elect."²⁵

Allah's Messenger (S) said: "The best worship is the recitation of the Qur'an."²⁶

²⁰ ibid, p166

²¹ ibid, p167

²² ibid, p167

²³ ibid, p167

²⁴ ibid, p168

²⁵ ibid, p168

²⁶ ibid, p168

The Imam (A) said: “The Qur’an is riches; there are no riches without it, and no poverty after it.”²⁷

Allah’s Messenger said: “The most noble and honourable of my nation are those who bear the Qur’an, and the people of the night (who worship Allah during the hours of darkness).”²⁸

Allah’s Messenger (S) said: “This Qur’an is the etiquette of Allah so learn his etiquette as much as you can.” He also said: “This Qur’an is the Rope of Allah and it is the Elucidating Light, and the Beneficial Cure . . . it is the stronghold for those who adhere to it and salvation for those who follow it.”²⁹

Allah’s Messenger (S) also said: “Whoever reads the Qur’an in order to learn it by heart, Allah will allow him to enter the garden and his intercession will be accepted for ten of his family who had been condemned to the fire.”³⁰

The Imam (A) said: “The bearers of the Qur’an in this world are the wise men of the people of paradise on the day of resurrection.”³¹

Imam Ali (A) said: “If the teacher says to a boy: say: ‘In the Name of Allah The Beneficent The Merciful’ and the pupil says: ‘In The Name of Allah The Beneficent The Merciful’ Allah will give absolution to the boy and to his parents, and to the teacher.”³²

The Qur’an – the Interceder

Ishāq ibn Ghālib narrates from Imam Ṣādiq, (A), who said, “On the day of judgement when all people are brought back to life at one place, a person will appear in such a beautiful form that no one would have ever seen such beauty before. The faithful will look at the individual, who is in fact the Qur’an, and will say that

²⁷ ibid, p168

²⁸ ibid, p168

²⁹ ibid, p168

³⁰ ibid, p169

³¹ ibid, p169

³² ibid, p169

he is from our people but he has the best form that we have ever seen. This individual goes to the Divine throne and stands to its right. The Almighty Lord will say to the Qur'an, "I swear by My Majesty, Greatness and Highness that I shall honour those who have honoured and respected you and disgrace those who disrespected you."³³

Abil-Jārood narrated from Imam Bāqir (A) who has narrated from the holy Prophet who has said, "On the day of judgement I will be the first to come to Almighty Allah then the holy Qur'an then my family – the Ahl al-Bayt –and then my nation. Then I will ask them about how they treated my family and the holy Qur'an."

The holy Prophet (S) said, "One who reads the holy Qur'an and then thinks that someone else has received something better, such person has belittled what Allah has made great, and has considered great what Allah has belittled."³⁴

Ṭalḥah ibn Zayd has narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (A) who said, "In this Qur'an is the torch of guidance and the light for darkness. So let one who wishes to polishes his [heart's] vision do so [by the light of Qur'an to enable him to gain clear understanding], and open his eyes for the light [of the Qur'an], for thinking is the lifeline of heart of the alert just as one with light torch walks in the darkness with the light."³⁵

Soma'ah has narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (A) who has said, "while reading the Qur'an, when one comes across a verse of the Qur'an that contains warning or about making a request, one should pray to Allah for salvation, and for protection from punishment and Hell fire and request Allah the best."³⁶

³³ ibid, p169

³⁴ ibid, p170

³⁵ ibid, p170

³⁶ ibid, p171

Al-Sakooni has narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (A) who narrates from his fathers from the holy Prophet who said, “When commotions envelope you like a dark night, seek refuge in the holy Qur’an, for it is an interceder and is interceded, and it is a claimant whose testimony is held true. Whoever puts it ahead of him [as his guide] it will guide him to Paradise, and whoever [ignores it and] puts it behind his back it will drive him to Hell. It is the guide that guides to the best path, and it is a book in which there is detail, explanation, and proof. It is the discerner but not in jest. It has an outward and an inward [dimension]³⁷, its outward dimension is judgement, and its inward is knowledge. Its outward is elegant, and its inward is deep. It has stars and further to those stars there are [further] star.³⁸ Its marvels cannot be tallied, and its wonders never cease. In it are the lanterns of guidance, the lighthouses of wisdom, and the guide to understanding for those who seek the description [of the Qur’an]. So let one who wishes to polish his [heart’s] vision do so [by the light of Qur’an to enable him to gain clear understanding] and let his eyes see the fact. He will thus be saved from destruction, and freed from entanglement. Thinking is the lifeline of the heart³⁹ of the alert just as one with light torch walks in the darkness with the light. So make sure that seek your salvation in the best form, and stop approaching and dealing with doubtful [or devious issues].”⁴⁰

³⁷ In a hadith from Imam Bāqir peace be upon him, it is stated: the Qur’an’s *dāhir* (outward manifestation) is its *tanzeel* (revelation), and its *bāṭin* (inward) is its *ta’weel* (interpretation).

³⁸ In the original Arabic, by the term ‘stars’ it is probably meant ‘illuminating’ and ‘guides’. So the hadith probably means: “It has star or illuminating verses that guide to others, and one follows from another. They guide to the laws of Allah that in turn guide the people to His Pleasure.” Allah and His messenger know best. Editor.

³⁹ i.e. the mind.

⁴⁰ *ibid*, p171

The Prophet and the Qur'an

Allah's Messenger said: "I am astonished at how I do not grow old when I read the Qur'an."⁴¹

The People of the Qur'an and their Merit

Imam Ṣādiq has narrated from Imam Ali, (A), who said in a long statement about the pious people, "At night they array their feet, stand up (for prayers) and recite the holy Qur'an one part (juz') after another, reciting it beautifully. They make their souls to feel sad and reading the holy Qur'an makes their sadness increase. They weep for their sins and the pains of the cuts in their wounded feelings. Whenever they come across a verse of the holy Qur'an that speaks of warnings they open wide the ears of their hearts to them, their hairs standing on end, their hearts frightened as they imagine the roaring and the pounding of the flames of the Hell fire striking against their ears. And whenever they come across a verse of the holy Qur'an that speaks of good news and encouragements they incline on them with hope and their souls filled with delight of reaching such goals."⁴²

Imam Bāqir, (A), said: The Commander of the Faithful, (A), said: "Shall I inform you about the true learned scholar? He is the one who does not invoke in the people a despair of the mercy of Allah, nor does he invoke in them a sense of security from the punishment of Allah, nor does he invoke hopelessness from the soothing mercy of Allah. He does not give licence to disobey Allah and does not neglect the Qur'an seeking other than it. Indeed there is no good in a knowledge in which there is not a deep understanding, nor is there any good in a recital of the

⁴¹ *ibid*, p171

⁴² *ibid*, p172

Qur'an in which there is no pondering, nor is there any good in an act of worship in which there is no heartfelt comprehension.”⁴³

Allah's Messenger said: “The people of the Qur'an have reached the highest degree of all the children of Adam, apart from the prophets and messengers. Therefore do not belittle their rights for they have been assigned by Almighty Allah a lofty station.”⁴⁴

Allah's Messenger (S) said: “The noble and honourable people of my nation are those who bear the Qur'an, and the people of the night [who worship Allah during the hours of darkness]”⁴⁵

Allah's Messenger said: “The bearers of Qur'an are the people with best knowledge of the truth in Paradise.”⁴⁶

Imam Hasan al-Askari (A) has said in his commentary of the holy Qur'an narrating from his grandfathers, from the holy Prophet (S), “The bearers or upholders of the Qur'an are specially favoured with the mercy of Allah, they are clothed from the light of Allah, are taught the words of Allah, and have been drawn near to Allah. Whoever loves them has loved Allah and whoever is hostile to them is hostile to Allah. Allah repels the misfortunes of the world from one who listens to the Qur'an, and repels the misfortunes of the hereafter from the one who recites it. I swear by the One in Whose hands is Muhammad's soul, that listening, with faith and understanding, to the Qur'an being recited is of greater reward than gold the amount of [mount] Thabir spent for a good cause, and the reward for reciting the Qur'an, with faith and understanding, is greater than whatever there is between the Throne and below the centre of the earth.”⁴⁷

Fodayl ibn Yasār has narrated from Imam Şādiq (A) who has said, “One who memorizes the Qur'an and lives according to its

⁴³ ibid, p173

⁴⁴ ibid, p174

⁴⁵ ibid, p174

⁴⁶ ibid, p175

guidance will have equal ranks with the honourable and virtuous divine ambassadors.”⁴⁸

It is narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (A) who said, “One who memorizes the holy Qur’an with difficulty, because of weaker memory, receives twice as much reward.”⁴⁹

The Youths and Reciting the Qur’an

Related from Imam Ṣādiq (A) who said: “If one reads the Qur’an in his youth as a true believer, the Qur’an will blend with his flesh and blood, and Allah places him alongside the pious and noble ambassadors, and on the day of resurrection the Qur’an will be his protector saying: ‘O Lord, every doer of deeds has received the reward for his deeds except for him whose work was with me, so let him have the noblest of your gifts. Then Almighty Allah will clothe him in two robes of Paradise and the crown of honour will be placed upon his head. Then the Qur’an will be asked: ‘Is this to your satisfaction?’ The Qur’an will answer: ‘O Lord I desire for him something better than this.’ So he will be given security in his right hand and everlasting life in his left then he will be ushered into Paradise and will be told: ‘Recite a verse and for every verse ascend a station.’ Then the Qur’an will be asked: ‘Have We treated him to your satisfaction?’ The Qur’an will answer ‘Yes.’ (The Imam went on to say): ‘Whoever recites of the Qur’an a great amount, keeps [reciting] it and undergoes hardship due to the difficulty of memorisation Allah will give him the reward of this twice over.”⁵⁰

Abān ibn Taghlib has narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (A) who said, “He who has both the Qur’an and the faith his example is like that of the citron with nice taste and aroma, and the example of he who

⁴⁷ ibid, p175

⁴⁸ ibid, p176

⁴⁹ ibid, p176

⁵⁰ ibid, p177-178

does not have the Qur'an and the faith is like that of ḥandalah (colocynth) which is bitter and has no good aroma.”⁵¹

Foḍayl ibn Yasār has narrated from the Imam Ṣādiq (A) who has narrated from the holy Prophet who said, “Learn the Qur'an; for on the day of judgement it will come to his companion in the form of a most beautiful young person of pale complexion and will speak to him saying, “I am the Qur'an for which you kept awake so often and endured thirst during the heat of midday, dried up your mouth and let your tears flow ... I have good news for you. Then the man will receive a crown, and peace and security will be placed on his right hand and eternal life in Paradise in his left, and he will be dressed with two dresses of Paradise and then he will be told, “recite and rise.” For each verse that he recites he will ascend one degree, and his parents, if they are of the believers, each will receive two garments of Paradise and they will be told that this is because of your teaching your child the holy Qur'an.”⁵²

Al-Aṣḥabīh ibn Nabātah narrates from Amir al-Mo'mineen - Imam Ali - saying: “Allah, seeing people of the earth knowingly committing sins, decides to punish them all, but when He finds the old people going for prayer and the children learning the holy Qur'an, He then treats them with His mercy and postpones the punishment.”⁵³

Bearers of the Qur'an and its Traits

Imam Ṣādiq (A) said the Prophet, (S), said, “The first people who should be submissive to Allah in private and in public are the bearers and upholders⁵⁴ of the Qur'an, and the first people who should observe prayer and fasting in public and in private are the

⁵¹ ibid, p178

⁵² ibid, p179

⁵³ ibid, p180

⁵⁴ i.e. uphold and adhere to the teachings of the Qur'an in all aspects of his life, personal, social, etc.

bearers and upholders of the Qur'an. Then the Prophet said in his loudest voice, "O upholders of the Qur'an, be humble by virtue of the Qur'an, Allah will uplift you and do not boast by it for Allah will bring you low. O upholders of the Qur'an adorn yourself by it for Allah's sake and Allah will adorn you by it. And adorn not for the people for Allah would disgrace you by it. He who completes reading the whole Qur'an [learning and implementing its teachings] he would subsequently [be such that] insults not those who insult him, angers not those who annoy him, saddens not those who sadden him. Instead he forgives, ignores, pardons and forebears in concordance with the Qur'an and honouring its teachings. If one has some knowledge of the Qur'an but thinks someone else has some thing better than what he has, he certainly has revered what Allah has belittled, and belittled what Allah has revered."⁵⁵

Imam Bāqir (A) has said, "The readers of the holy Qur'an are three: one who considers the reading of the Qur'an as a commodity to go round to the kings and seeks to dominate people. And there is one who learns and memorizes the letters of Qur'an but loses its laws and teachings and treats it like the treatment of water cup⁵⁶. May Allah let not the number of such carriers of the Qur'an increase. And there is one who reads the Qur'an and holds it to be the medicine for the ills of his heart. He keeps awake reading it at night, and endures thirst in the heat of the midday, and he stands up with it in his mosques, and leaves his bed empty at night for prayer with the holy Qur'an. It is through these people that Allah repels misfortunes, and defeats the enemies, and through these people Allah sends down the rain from the skies. I swear by Allah that amongst the readers of Qur'an they are more precious than red sulphur."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ ibid, p181

⁵⁶ i.e. just as traveller who leaves the cup behind him when he finishes with it.

⁵⁷ ibid, p182

Allah's Messenger (S) said, "If two categories of people in my Ommah were virtuous the whole of my Ommah will be righteous, and if these two were corrupt, it will be corrupt; the leaders and readers⁵⁸ ."⁵⁹

The learned of the Qur'an who does not practice it

Allah's Messenger (S) said, "If one reads the Qur'an and then drinks something unlawful or gets indulged in love of the worldly things, he becomes subject to the wrath of Allah unless he repents, and if he dies without repenting, He would refute and rebut him on the Day of Judgement, and He would not leave him until He has proven as false all his arguments and excuses⁶⁰ ."⁶¹

Allah's Messenger (S) said, "One who learns the Qur'an and does not follow its guidance and instead prefers to love the worldly things and its adornment, he becomes subject to the wrath of Allah and he would be of the same rank as the Jews and Christians who threw the Book of Allah behind their backs. One who reads the Qur'an seeking reputation and worldly gains, he will meet Allah on the day of judgement with his face is only bone with no flesh on, and the Qur'an will push him at his back until he is thrown into Hell wherein he will fall with all those who will fall therein. He who reads the Qur'an and does not act upon it, he will be resurrected blind on the day of judgement, and he will say, ﴿My Lord, why have you raised me blind while in the world I was a seeing one? [Allah] will say, "so did you when Our signs came to you but you neglected them and so today you will be neglected﴾⁶² and he will be ordered to Hell. One who reads the Qur'an in order to please Allah and to understand religion, his reward will be like the rewards of all the angels, the prophets, and the messengers.

⁵⁸ By 'readers' it is meant 'scholars', and '*Ommah*' means 'nation'.

⁵⁹ *ibid*, p183

⁶⁰ . . . and thus he would not be allowed to paradise.

⁶¹ *ibid*, p182

⁶² The Qur'an, [20:125-126]

One who reads the Qur'an seeking boast and fame in order to argue with the unlearned and boast before the scholars and make worldly gains, Allah will scatter his bones on the day of judgement and no one in the fire will have more severe sufferings than him, and there will be no punishment which he will not suffer given the severity of Allah's wrath against him. And he who learns the Qur'an and is humble in knowledge and teaches the servants of Allah seeking Allah's rewards, no one in Paradise will be of greater rewards than him, nor of higher ranks than him, and there shall be no position or prominent degree in Paradise except that he will have the greatest share in and most honourable position of."⁶³

Allah's Messenger (S) said, "In Hell there is a valley that the people of Hell seek protection from seventy thousand times every day." The Prophet was asked who this punishment is for. The prophet replied, "For the wine drinker and he who gives up his prayers from amongst the people of the Qur'an."⁶⁴

Husayn ibn Zayd has narrated from Imam Şādiq, (A), who has narrated from the holy Prophet, (S), who said, "Whoever learns the holy Qur'an and then forgets it, he will meet Allah on the day of judgement tied up in chains and for each verse that he has forgotten Allah will send to him a snake that will stay with him in Hell until Allah forgives him."⁶⁵ What is meant by "forgetting" in the hadith is to ignore and abandon the laws and guidance of the holy Qur'an.

⁶³ ibid, p183-184

⁶⁴ ibid, p184

⁶⁵ ibid, p196

The Qur'an in all circumstances

Mo'āwiyah ibn Ammār narrates from Imam Ṣādiq, (A), who said about the Prophet's guidance to Imam Ali, (A), "You must read the holy Qur'an in all circumstances."⁶⁶

Al-Zuhri has said, I asked Imam Zayn al-Ābidin (A), "Which deed is more virtuous?" He said, "Opening the Qur'an and reading to the end and whenever coming to the beginning of the Qur'an read it to the end."⁶⁷

Imam Mossā al-Kādim (A), said, "The degrees of ranks in Paradise are equal to the number of the verses of holy Qur'an. One is told to read a verse and ascend and so one would read and ascend."⁶⁸

Imam Bāqir, (A) said, "Whoever reads the Qur'an in his prayer standing up Allah will write for him for each letter one hundred virtues, and for one who reads from the holy Qur'an in the sitting position Allah will write fifty virtues for each letter read. One who reads the holy Qur'an in a state other than during one's prayer, Allah will write for him ten virtues for each letter."⁶⁹

Bashir ibn Ghālib al-Asadi narrates from Imam Husayn (A) who said, "Whoever reads from the holy Qur'an in his prayer in a standing position, Allah will write for him one hundred virtues for each letter, and if one reads from the holy Qur'an in the conditions other than during prayer, Allah will write for him ten virtues for each letter, and if one listens to when the holy Qur'an is read, Allah will reward him for each letter one virtue. If one completes reading the holy Qur'an at night, the angels will pray for him until morning, and if he completes during the day the angels will pray for him until evening and his prayers will be accepted, and this

⁶⁶ ibid, p186

⁶⁷ ibid, p186

⁶⁸ ibid, p187

⁶⁹ ibid, p187

will be better for him than all that is between the heavens and earth.” I said, “This is for the reader of the holy Qur’an, how about one who does not read the holy Qur’an?” He said, “Allah is generous and glorious and kind, whatever one would read from the holy Qur’an from memory Allah will reward him accordingly.”⁷⁰

Listening to the Qur’an

Muhammad ibn Bashir narrates from Imam Zayn ul-Ābidin, (A), and this Hadith is also narrated from Imam Ṣādiq, (A), who said, “One who just listens to the holy Qur’an being recited, for every letter Allah will register for him one good deed, deletes one of his bad deeds and raises him one degree higher. One who reads the holy Qur’an by looking at it but not in the state of prayer, Allah will write for him one good deed for each letter, deletes one of his bad deeds, and raises him one degree higher. One who learns one visible letter from the holy Qur’an, Allah will write for him the ten good deeds, delete ten of his bad deeds and raise him ten degrees higher.” The Imam said, “I do not say for each verse, but I say for each letter, like Alif, or Bā’, or Tā’, or suchlike.” The Imam then said, “One who reads from the holy Qur’an in his prayers in the sitting position, Allah will register for him fifty good deeds for each letter, delete fifty of his bad deeds, and raise him fifty degrees higher. One who reads from the holy Qur’an in his prayer while standing, Allah will register for him one hundred good deeds, delete one hundred of his bad deeds, and raise him one hundred degrees higher. One who reads the holy Qur’an completely, his prayers will be answered sooner or later.” I asked the Imam, “Sir, all of the Qur’an?” He said, “yes, all of the Qur’an.”⁷¹

Ishāq ibn Ammār has narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (A) who said, “One who reads one hundred verses of the holy Qur’an in his

⁷⁰ ibid, p187

⁷¹ ibid, p188

prayer during the night, Allah will write for him the reward for worshipping for the whole night. One who reads two hundred verses of the holy Qur'an in a condition other than the state of night prayer, Allah will write for him on the protected tablet a Quintal of good deeds, and a Quintal is equal to one thousand two hundred measures each of which is bigger than Mount Oḥod.”⁷²

Anas narrates from the holy Prophet (S) who said, “One who reads one hundred verses of the Qur'an his name will not be written among the names of the ghāfileen (the people who are heedless) and one who reads two hundred verses from the holy Qur'an, his name will be written among the names of qāniteen (the obedient) and one who reads three hundred verses, the holy Qur'an will not argue against him.”⁷³

The Opening Surah of the Qur'an and its Merits

Imam Hasan al-Askary (A) narrates from his forefathers who said, “The Opening Surah of the Book is the most honourable of all the treasures of the throne . . . Whoever reads with faith in the love of the Prophet and his family, Allah will give him for each letter one good deed, each of which is better for him than the whole world and all that it contains of the various kinds of wealth and good things, and one who listens to this Surah being recited he will have the same amount of reward as that of the reader, thus you should read it as much as you can.”⁷⁴

Allah's messenger said, “The best act of worship is reading the Qur'an”⁷⁵

It is narrated from the holy Prophet, (S), who said, “This Qur'an is the rope of Allah and it is the elucidating light, and the beneficial cure . . . so read it for Allah will give you the reward of ten good

⁷² ibid, p190

⁷³ ibid, p190

⁷⁴ ibid, p190

⁷⁵ ibid, p191

deeds for each letter that you read. I do not say that for ‘ALM’ is ten, but in fact, for ‘A’ is ten and for ‘L’ is ten and for ‘M’ is ten.”⁷⁶

It is narrated from the holy Prophet, (S), who said, “The companion of the holy Qur’an will be told, “read and ascend, and recite the way you use to recite in the world before this; your final destination will be the last verse that you recite.”⁷⁷

The holy Prophet (S) has said, “One who reads the Qur’an is as if prophethood is incorporated within him except that divine revelation does not come to him.”⁷⁸

The prophet said, “Almighty Allah said, ‘He who got carried away with reading the Qur’an and did not perform supplication to me, I shall give him the best reward of the thankful.’”⁷⁹

On Forgetting the Holy Qur’an

Abu Başir has narrated from Imam Şādiq, (A), who said, “If one forgets a surah of the holy Qur’an that he had memorized, on the day of judgement that surah will come to him in a beautiful form and with a high rank in Paradise, and when one sees it, asks, “what are you? how beautiful you are! I wish you belonged to me.” The surah will say, “Do you not know me? I am surah so and so of the Qur’an, had you not forgotten me; I could have taken you to this high position.”⁸⁰

Ya’qub al-Aḥmar said, “I said to Imam Şādiq, (A), “I have a lot of debt and the consequences from this is affecting me such that I am about to forget some of the holy Qur’an.” The Imam, (A), said, “The Qur’an! The Qur’an! On the day of judgement the verses and the surah of the holy Qur’an will ascend one thousand degrees

⁷⁶ ibid, p191

⁷⁷ ibid, p191

⁷⁸ ibid, p191

⁷⁹ ibid, p192

⁸⁰ ibid, p193

in Paradise and say, “If you had not forgotten me I would have taken you here.”⁸¹

Ya’qub al-Aḥmar has said, “I said to Imam Ṣādiq, (A), “Master, I am facing such problems, and difficulties that there remains none of the mustaḥab [i.e. desirable and recommended] acts save that some of it has escaped me, to the extent that even some of the Qur’an has escaped me.” The Imam was shocked and said, “If a man forgets a surah of the Qur’an on the day of judgement that surah will come to him with a certain rank and greets him and the man asks, “Who are you? The Surah of the holy Qur’an will say, “I am Surah so and so of the holy Qur’an which you forgot, and I wish you had not have forgotten me, so that today I could have taken you to such and such high ranks and it will point to a certain rank.” The Imam then said, “You must be very careful about the holy Qur’an. Some people learn the holy Qur’an so that others would call him a very good reciter of the holy Qur’an. Some people learn the holy Qur’an so that others would praise him for very good tune of reciting the holy Qur’an and there is nothing good in all of this. Some people learn the holy Qur’an and all night reading and contemplating the holy Qur’an, and during the day too, and they do not care whether others know his learning the holy Qur’an or not.”⁸²

Saed ibn Abdullah al-A’raj has said, “I asked Imam Ṣādiq about a person who reads the Qur’an and then forgets it, reads it and then forgets it again, will there be any blame against him?” The Imam said, “No.”⁸³

Etiquettes of Reading the Qur’an

Muhammad ibn Foḍayl has said that I said to Imam Ṣādiq, (A), “On occasions when I am reading the Holy Qur’an, I need to use

⁸¹ ibid, p194

⁸² ibid, p194

⁸³ ibid, p195

the lavatory. I return once I have washed myself and my hands and continue reading the Holy Qur'an, [is this ok]?" The Imam responded, "not until you have performed the wuḍu [the ritual wash] for prayers."⁸⁴

The author of al-Khiṣāl narrates from Imam Ali, (A), who said, "One must not read the holy Qur'an without wuḍu."⁸⁵

Ahmad ibn Fahd has said in 'Oddat-ul-Dā'i that Imam Ali, (A), has said, "For every letter that one reads of the holy Qur'an in his prayer in a standing position Allah will give the reward for one hundred good deeds, fifty for each letter if one reads them in his prayers sitting and the reward of twenty good deeds if one reads them with wuḍu but not in the state of prayer and the reward of ten good deeds if one reads them without wuḍu. I do not say that 'ALMR' as one, but in fact, for each letters (A) (L) (M) (R) there will be ten rewards."⁸⁶

It is narrated from Imam Hasan al-Askari, (A), who has said in his commentary of the holy Qur'an, "as for His word that Allah has called upon you and commanded you to it when reciting the Qur'an: "I seek refuge in Allah, the Listening and the Omniscient, from the Satan, the condemned", Amir-ul-Mu'minin has said, His word "I seek refuge in Allah", means I protect myself through Allah." Seeking refuge is what Allah has commanded His servants to when they read the Qur'an, in His word ﴿So when you read the Qur'an, seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the accursed﴾. And when one disciplines himself with Allah's discipline it will lead him to eternal prosperity. Then he mentioned the long Hadith from the holy Prophet, (S), in which he said, "If you want to be not harmed by the evils of Satan, you should say every morning,

⁸⁴ ibid, p196

⁸⁵ ibid, p 196

⁸⁶ ibid, p197

“I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan, for Allah will give you protection against their evils.”⁸⁷

The Qur’an is Allah’s Covenant, so Adhere to it

Imam Ṣādiq (A) said, “The Qur’an is the covenant between Allah and His creatures. A Muslim must look into his covenant and read at least fifty verses from it every day.”⁸⁸

Imam Sajjād (A) said, “Verses of the Qur’an are treasures, and whenever a treasure is opened one should look into it to find what there is in it.”⁸⁹

Imam Riḍā, (A), said, “it is imperative for one read (at least) fifty verses of the Qur’an after the ta’qeebāt [the follow on supplications and acts of worship of the Morning Prayer].”⁹⁰

Imam Ṣādiq, (A), said, “The house in which a Muslim recites the holy Qur’an in is seen by the people of the heavens just as the people of the Earth see the star in the heavens.”⁹¹

Imam Ṣādiq quotes Amir-ul-Mu’minin, Ali, (A), who said, “A house in which the holy Qur’an is read and Allah is mentioned often, its blessings increase, the angels come to it, the devils move out of it, and it shines to the people in heavens just as stars shine to the people of the earth. And the house in which the holy Qur’an is not read and Allah is not mentioned, its blessings decrease, the angels move out of it and devils move in.”⁹²

Imam Ṣādiq said, “My father would assemble us together and would order us to say dhikr until sunrise; he would order those of us who could read to read [the Qur’an] and to those who could not

⁸⁷ ibid, p197

⁸⁸ ibid, p198

⁸⁹ ibid, p198

⁹⁰ ibid, p198

⁹¹ ibid, p199

⁹² ibid, p199

read, he would order them to say dhikr. The house in which the Qur'an is read and Allah is mentioned has its blessings increase."⁹³

The Prophet (S) said, "Light up your houses by reciting the Qur'an and do not turn them into graves as the Jews and Christians had done; they would pray in their Synagogue and Churches and abandoned their houses. For the house in which Qur'an is often recited would have its blessings increase, its people prosper and it would shine to the people of the heavens just as stars of the heavens shine to the people of the earth."⁹⁴

Imam Ali al-Riḍā (A) has narrated from the holy Prophet (S) who said, "Set for your house a share from the holy Qur'an; for the house in which the Qur'an is recited brings ease and comfort for its people, its blessings increase, and its dwellers will be plenty, and if the Qur'an is not recited in it then it will become difficult for the household, its blessings diminish, and its inhabitants will be in need."⁹⁵

The Trader and the Qur'an

Imam Ṣādiq said, "What stops a trader, when he returns home from work, from reading a surah of the Qur'an before he goes to sleep? For he will be accredited with ten good deeds for each verse he reads, and ten bad deeds erased from him."⁹⁶

Imam Ṣādiq has narrated from the holy Prophet who said, "One who reads ten verses a night he will not be registered among the ghāfileen [heedless], and one who reads fifty verses a night he will be registered with the dhākireen [those who remember Allah], and one who reads one hundred verses every night he will be registered with the qāniteen [the worshiper], and one who reads

⁹³ ibid, p199

⁹⁴ ibid, p200

⁹⁵ ibid, p200

⁹⁶ ibid, p201

two hundred verses he will be registered with the khāshe‘een [those who are humble and fearful before Allah], and one who reads three hundred verses, he will be registered with the fā’ezeen [the victorious ones], and one who reads five hundred verses he will be registered with the mujtahideen [those striving for the cause of Allah], and one who reads one thousand verses one *Quinṭār* will be registered for him and a *Quinṭār* is fifteen thousand (in some texts it is stated as being fifty thousand) *Mithqāl* of gold and a *Mithqāl* is twenty four *Quirāt*, the smallest of which is the size of the mount *Oḥod* and the biggest is that of the expanse between heaven and earth.”⁹⁷

Abu Ḥamza al-Thamāli narrates from Imam Bāqir, “One who reads the entire Qur’an in Mecca in one week or less than a week or more and completes it on Friday, Allah will write for him the reward of all the good deeds that have taken place since the first Friday in this world to the last Friday that will come. The same would be if reading is completed on other days.”⁹⁸

Jābir al-Anṣāri narrates from Imam Bāqir, “everything has a spring, and the spring of the Qur’an is the month of Ramaḍān.”⁹⁹

Reciting the Holy Qur’an from the Script

Imam Ṣādiq, (A), said, “One who recites the Qur’an from a copy of the Qur’an he will enhance his insight and lighten his parents’ burden even if they were non-believers”.¹⁰⁰

It is narrated from the holy Prophet (S) who said, “There is nothing more difficult for the Satan (to tackle) than someone’s reading the Qur’an from a copy (of the Qur’an)”.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ ibid, p202

⁹⁸ ibid, p203

⁹⁹ ibid, p203

¹⁰⁰ ibid, p204

¹⁰¹ ibid, p204

Ishāq ibn Ammār said, I asked Imam Ṣādiq, (A), “Sir, I have learnt the holy Qur’an by heart. Which would be more rewarding, reciting the Qur’an from memory, or from a muṣ-ḥaf (copy of the holy book)?” The Imam, (A), said, “indeed read it while looking at the muṣ-ḥaf for it is more rewarding [than from reciting it from memory]. Don’t you know that looking at the muṣ-ḥaf is an act of worship?”¹⁰²

It is narrated from Abu Dharr who narrated from the Prophet, who said, “Looking at Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib is an act of worship, looking at one’s parents affectionately and kindly is an act of worship, looking at the pages of the Qur’an is an act of worship, and looking at the Ka‘bah is an act of worship.”¹⁰³

Imam Ṣādiq, (A), quotes his father who said, “I admire that there be a muṣ-ḥaf [copy of the holy Qur’an] in the house with which Allah repels the devils.”¹⁰⁴

Imam Ṣādiq, (A), said, “Three things complain to Allah, the Most Glorious: a derelict mosque where people of the mosque do not pray in, a scholar among the ignorant people, and muṣ-ḥaf left on a shelf covered in dust that no one reads from.”¹⁰⁵

Reciting the Qur’an

Abdullah ibn Sulaymān has said, “I asked Imam Ṣādiq, (A), about the verse ﴿recite the Qur’an distinctly﴾¹⁰⁶ The Imam said Amir-ul-Mu’minin Imam Ali, (A) has said, “read it clearly, not in a rapid and hectic form like in reciting poetry, nor scatter it like grains of sand, but strike with it your hardened hearts, and your concern should not be [reaching] the end of the surah”.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² ibid, p204-205

¹⁰³ ibid, p205

¹⁰⁴ ibid, p206

¹⁰⁵ ibid, p206

¹⁰⁶ The Qur’an, (73):4

¹⁰⁷ ibid, p207

Abu Baṣīr has narrated from Imam Ṣādiq, (A), who said about the verse ﴿recite the Qur'an distinctly﴾, “It means that you should pause, [as and when punctuation rules require] and recite it in a nice voice.”¹⁰⁸

Imam Ṣādiq said, “Read the Qur'an with correct diacritics for it is Arabic, [and diacritics preserve its accuracy]”.¹⁰⁹

Imam Ṣādiq said, “It is discouraged to read the whole surah of ‘tawḥeed’ in one breath [without a pause between its verses]”.¹¹⁰

It is narrated from Omm Salamah who has said, “The Prophet, (S), used to read the Qur'an pausing between the verses.”¹¹¹

Imam Ṣādiq, (A), said, “The Qur'an is revealed in sorrow and it should be read in the same way.”

Abdullah ibn Sinan has narrated from Imam Ṣādiq, (A), who said, “Allah, the Most High, told Moses “Whenever you stand before Me, stand as a humble deprived person and when you read Torah let me hear it in a sorrowing voice.”¹¹²

It is narrated from Ḥafṣ who said, “I never saw anyone more afraid (of Allah) about himself than Mossā al-Kāḍim, (A), nor anyone more hopeful (for Allah's mercy) than him. He would recite the Qur'an with sorrow, and when he recited it, it was as if he was addressing someone.”¹¹³

Reading the Qur'an silently or aloud

Imam Bāqir, (A), said, “One who recites the surah “al-Qadr” (#97) with a loud voice, he would be like one who has drawn his sword for Allah's cause and one who reads it silently, he would be like

¹⁰⁸ ibid, p207

¹⁰⁹ ibid, p206

¹¹⁰ ibid, p207

¹¹¹ ibid, p208

¹¹² ibid, p208

¹¹³ ibid, p209

one who is killed in Allah's cause, and one who reads it ten times has one thousand of his sins deleted.”¹¹⁴

Mo'āwiyah ibn Ammār has said, “I told Imam Ṣādiq, “one does not think that he has read anything from the Qur'an or the prayers unless he says them loudly.” The Imam, (A), said, “It does not matter. Imam Zayn al-Ābidin, (A), would recite the holy Qur'an in the most pleasant tune and he would read it loudly such that every one in the house would hear him. Imam Bāqir, had the best reciting tune and he would recite the holy Qur'an loudly during the night and whoever would pass by would stop to listen to his recitation.”¹¹⁵

It is narrated from Abu Dharr who narrated from the Prophet, who said in his recommendations to him, “O Aba Dharr! Lower your voice when walking in a funeral procession, in combat, and when hearing the recitation of the Qur'an.”¹¹⁶

Abdullah ibn Sinān has narrated from Imam Ṣādiq who has narrated from the Prophet, who said, “Read the holy Qur'an in Arabic cadence and voice, and never recite it in the cadence of the sinful and people committing major sins; for after me will come people who reverberate their tune when reciting the Qur'an as in singing, and as in the hymns of monks, going no further than their throats; their hearts are perverted and so too are the hearts of those who are impressed by their state.”¹¹⁷

Ali ibn Muhammad al-Nawfali narrates from Imam Mossa al-Kādim, who said, “When ‘voice’ were mentioned before him, upon this he said, “when one passed by when Ali ibn al-Husayn

¹¹⁴ ibid, p209

¹¹⁵ ibid, p209

¹¹⁶ ibid, p210

¹¹⁷ ibid, p210

[Zayn al-Ābidin] was reciting the Qur'an, the person would be enchanted by the Imam's beautiful recitation."¹¹⁸

Abdullah ibn Sinān has narrated from the holy Prophet who said, "For everything there is an ornament and the ornament of the Qur'an is fine reciting."¹¹⁹

Imam Ali Riḍā, said, "The holy Prophet said, "beautify the Qur'an with your voice, for a nice voice gives beauty to the Qur'an."¹²⁰

The Etiquettes of reciting and listening to the Qur'an

It is narrated from Jābir who said, "I asked Imam Bāqir about a people who on hearing some of the Qur'an or anything about it faint to an extent that even if the hands or legs of one of them were amputated they would not notice." The Imam, (A), said, "Glory be to Allah. They were not told to behave as such. It is only serenity, soft heartedness, tears, fear and sorrow."¹²¹

Imam Ṣādiq, (A), was asked, "When one reads from the holy Qur'an is it obligatory for others to keep silent and listen to it?" The Imam replied, "Yes, when the Qur'an is recited it is mandatory for you to keep silent and listen to it."¹²²

Ali ibn Mughirah said, "I asked Imam Kādim (A), "My father asked your grandfather about reading the whole Qur'an in one night", so your grandfather said to him, "[yes] every night." Then he said, "in the month of Ramaḍān?" so your grandfather said to him, "[yes] in the month of Ramaḍān." My father said, "Yes, according to my ability." So my father used to read the holy Qur'an forty times in the whole month of Ramaḍān. Then after my father I would read the holy Qur'an some times more and

¹¹⁸ ibid, p211

¹¹⁹ ibid, p211

¹²⁰ ibid, p212

¹²¹ ibid, p213

¹²² ibid, p214, this is in reference to the Qur'anic verse 7:204 ﴿when the Qur'an is being recited, listen to it and be silent, may be you will receive mercy﴾.

some time less than him according to my time, work, energy, and laziness. On the day of Eid after the month of Ramaḍān, I would assign the [reward for] reading the holy Qur'an once for the holy Prophet, one for Imam Ali, one for Lady Fatimah and one for each Imam until yourself and I assigned the reward for reciting the holy Qur'an once for you, and this is from the time I have been doing this. Will there be any thing for me in this?" The Imam said, "because of this, on the Day of Judgment, you will be with them." I said: Allah is great! This [honour] is for me? The Imam said, "Yes" three times.¹²³

Imam Ṣādiq (A) narrated that Allah's messenger came to some youth from Anṣār and said to them, "I want to recite to you, and whoever weeps, Paradise will be for him, and then he recited ﴿the disbelievers will be driven into Hell in groups...﴾ to the end of the surah. Every one wept except one young man who said, "O messenger of Allah I tried to weep but no tears came out." The holy Prophet said, "I repeat for you, if any one who would try to weep, Paradise will be for him." He repeated and people wept and the young man made himself to weep and they all went to Paradise."¹²⁴

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq from his forefathers who have narrated from the holy Prophet, peace be up on them, who said, "learn the Qur'an in its Arabic form".¹²⁵

Imam Ṣādiq, (A), said, "Learn Arabic for it is the speech in which Allah has spoken to His creatures and talked to the people of the past."¹²⁶

Narrated from Imam al-Jawād, who said, "There are no two people who are equal in position and religion except that the preferred one in the sight of Allah is the well mannered one

¹²³ ibid, p218

¹²⁴ ibid, p219

¹²⁵ ibid, p220

¹²⁶ ibid, p220

amongst them.” I said, “I can see his virtue in the eyes of the people in gatherings and meetings but what is his virtue in the sight of Allah?” The Imam said, “By his reading the Qur’an the way it was descended, and by his supplication without tunes; for supplication with tunes are not ascended to Allah.”¹²⁷

Imam Ṣādiq, said, “The Prophet said, “A non-Arab of my nation reads the Qur’an in his non-Arabic way but the angels raise his reading in its Arabic form.”¹²⁸

4. Imāmah

The *imāmah* – as it is defined – is the general leadership in matters of the religion and the affairs of the world for an individual in lieu of the prophet peace be upon him and his pure progeny. It is mandatory from the rational view point, for it, the *imāmah*, is a grace. And we know with certainty that if the people have a guiding leader who is obeyed and who applies justice to defend the victim against the offender and discourages the offender from his offence and aggression, those people are closer to righteousness and happiness, and most distant from corruption and misfortune.¹²⁹ The discussion of *imāmah* follows from that of

¹²⁷ *ibid*, p221

¹²⁸ *ibid*, p221

¹²⁹ The following example may be considered to elucidate on this matter. It is said that after the end of World War II, Iraq and Japan were in similar conditions from the viewpoint of destruction, ruin, and under-development. But after a period of time, Japan managed to catch up and even surpass the most powerful western states in technology, manufacture, progress and prosperity. Iraq on the other hand remained ruined, backward, impoverished, and underdeveloped needing to import everything it needs even its wheat, meat, and even thread and needle. Analysts say that the reason for this difference between these two countries lies with the leaders’ competence in Japan on the one hand, and the incompetence of those who ruled Iraq, on the other. In her famous speech . . . Lady Fatimah al-Zahrā’, the immaculate daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, said “if the governance were left to its rightful owners, and they had not snapped up *khilāfah* [or the leadership of the Muslim Ommah after the Prophet Muhammad], all aspects of people’s life in this world and in the hereafter would have prospered and perfected, and no two would have disputed”.

prophethood and its details, for it is a continuation to prophethood and an extension to it, and it is mandatory in it everything that is mandatory in prophethood such as infallibility [*‘eṣmah*], purity [*tahārah*] and such matters as his appointment by Almighty Allah, and identification by name. In a nut shell, the imam has everything common with the prophet except for revelation [*wahy*], for the imam does not receive *wahy* in the common sense of the word.

So, just as Almighty Allah appoints the prophets and the messengers peace be upon them, He also appoints the imām as the *waṣī* (deputy, heir, and executor of his will and the teachings revealed to) the Prophet peace be upon him and his pure progeny, and his *caliph* (successor).

Indeed Almighty Allah appointed for our prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his pure progeny, twelve *waṣī* (executor of his will/heir/deputy) and *caliph* (successors), and they are the renowned Twelve Imams known to all the Muslims.¹³⁰

In order they are as follows:

¹³⁰ This is in reference to the speech of the prophet Muhammad peace be upon him and his pure progeny who said, “The caliphs after me are 12”. This hadith is accepted by all Muslims. See for example al-Khiṣāl vol. 2, p467 under the heading “the caliphs and the imams after the prophet”, al-Irshād vol. 2, p345, Kashf al-Ghummah, vol. 2, p 447, A‘lām al-Warā, *rukn* 4, part 1, p 381, The Book of Sulaym, p 141, and the six Sunni Ṣiḥāḥ reference books. For example, in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, vol. 3, book of Imārah, pp 1452-1453, it is reported the prophet said, “*Islam is established until the day of resurrection, or there will be upon the Muslims twelve caliphs all of them from Quraysh.*” This hadith, and many like it, is reported in the Sunni Ṣiḥāḥ reference books such as Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhāri, book of Aḥkām, hadith # 6682, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, book of Fitān, hadith # 2149, Sunan Abi Dawood, book of al-Mahdi, vol. 4, p106, hadith 3731, [Dar al-Fikr], Musnad Ahmad, book of al-Muktherin min al-Ṣaḥābah, hadith 3593, Musnad Ahmad, book of al-Basriyeen, hadith 19875, Musnad Ahmad, vol. 5, pp 86-90, 92, 93, 98, 10, 101, [Qurtubat Misr] etc. The prominent Sunni scholar al-Ḥāfiḍ al-Qunduzi al-Ḥanafi quotes the prophet in his book, Yanābi’ al-Mawaddah, p 529, as saying, “*I am the master of the prophets and Ali is the master of the successors, and indeed my successors after me are twelve, the first of whom is Ali and the last is al-Qā’em al-Mahdi.*”

1. Imam Amir al-Mo'mineen,¹³¹ Ali ibn Abi-Ṭālib, the Prophet's cousin and the husband of his daughter Fāṭimah al-Zahrā', peace be upon them all.
2. Imam Hasan, son of Imam Ali and Fāṭimah al-Zahrā', daughter of the Prophet, (A).
3. Imam Husayn, the Martyr, son of Imam Ali and Fāṭimah al-Zahrā', daughter of the Prophet, (A).
4. Imam Zayn-al-Ābidin, Ali son of al-Husayn, (A).
5. Imam al-Bāqir, Muhammad son of Ali, (A).
6. Imam al-Ṣādiq, Ja'far son of Muhammad, (A).
7. Imam al-Kādim, Mossā son of Ja'far, (A).
8. Imam al-Riḍā, Ali son of Mossā, (A).
9. Imam al-Jawād, Muhammad son of Ali, (A).
10. Imam al-Hādi, Ali son of Muhammad, (A).
11. Imam al-Askari, Hasan son of Ali, (A).
12. Imam al-Mahdi, Muhammad son of Hasan, al-Qā'em (The Upholder of Allah's command), al-Muntadar (The Awaited One) (may Allah hasten his reappearance).¹³²

¹³¹ On instructions from Almighty Allah, the prophet exclusively awarded Imam Ali (A) the title of *Amir-ul-Mu'mineen*, meaning "the Commander of the Believers".

¹³² Note: All the Imams after Imam Hussain (A) are his descendants. On various occasions the prophet Muhammad defined himself, his daughter Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' (A), and all these twelve Imams as the *Ahl-ul-Bayt (A)*. Thus every time *Ahl-ul-Bayt* is mentioned, only these fourteen infallible individuals are being referred to. They are also referred to in the Qur'an in 33:33.

In his last days the prophet used to say to the people: 'I leave with you the two momentous entities, as long as you adhere to them two you will never go astray - the book of Allah, and my kin the people of my household. Indeed these two will never separate from one another until they arrive at the well (of Kawthar in Paradise)'. This hadith and many others similar to it have been reported by many

These Imams are Allah's authorities upon all creation, and His Messenger's blessed successors. They are all from the sacred light of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his pure family. They were like Allah's Messenger in knowledge, forbearance, moral excellence, piety, justice, immunity from sin or error, high moral values, noble disposition, and all other praiseworthy attributes . . . and how can it be otherwise while they are his successors and deputies, and leaders of all creation and Allah's authorities over all mankind after the prophet.

Describing the role and the significance of *Imam* and *Imāmah*, Imam Riḍā (A) states:

‘It is only by the means of the Imāmah that Islam is established and its aims achieved. Through it the order of the Muslims is accomplished, the prosperity of the world attained, and the honour and the glory of the faithful are safeguarded. Imāmah is the growing and ongoing root of Islam as well as its exalted branch. It is only through the leadership of the Imam¹³³ that completeness is attained in daily prayers, zakāh, fasting, hajj, jihād, tribute, income, executing the Ḥodood and jurisdictions, and safeguarding the borders of the Muslim lands.’

In addition to numerous prophetic hadith in this respect, there are many verses in the holy Qur'an regarding the vital issue of *Imāmah*. One such verse that the above hadith is referring to, and therefore it is supported by, is: ﴿O Messenger! Convey that that has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you will not have conveyed His Message﴾¹³⁴

Ṣaḥābah, and narrators and have been quoted in major references, e.g. the Ṣiḥāh, such as: Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim, volume 4 page 123, Dar-al-Ma'ārif, Beirut. Musnad Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, vol. 3, pp 17, 26, 59, Dar-Sadir, Beirut. Al-Tirmidhi, vol. 5, pp 662-663, Dar-Ihya-al-Turath-al-Arabi.

¹³³ i.e. the Imam who has been chosen by Allah.

¹³⁴ The Qur'an: The Table Spread (5): 67.

In this holy verse Almighty Allah is equating the proclamation of a particular message to the fulfilment of His entire message, and Allah warns that failure to make this proclamation is tantamount to failing His entire mission. This holy verse was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S) at Ghadir Khum on the 18th of Dhil-Hijjah year 10 H, only two months before the death of the Prophet of Islam (S). The particular message or revelation concerned the appointment of Imam Ali (A) as the immediate successor or caliph of Allah's messenger (S). Prophet Muhammad (S) had always, and throughout the 23 years of his mission stated that Ali is his successor. After this revelation, and on direct instructions from Almighty Allah, the prophet (S) appointed Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (A) as Amir-ul-Mo'mineen and his first caliph and Imam of his Ommah¹³⁵. The significance and importance of this appointment is indicated by the comparison Almighty Allah makes between this appointment and the mission of the prophet (S), which is Islam. In this holy verse Almighty Allah equates the appointment of Imam Ali (A) to the entire mission of the prophet (S), which is the final revelation for mankind. Furthermore Almighty Allah then goes on to emphasise that without the Imāmah (of Imam Ali (A)), the mission of the prophet (S) is to no avail, and thus the above hadith by Imam Riḍā (A).

In the following section, a brief biography of them is presented starting with that of the gracious daughter of the holy Prophet and the wife of the *waṣī*, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' (A).

The Prophet's Daughter, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā'

She is Fāṭimah al-Zahrā', her father was the Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah, her mother was the great Lady Khadijah – the Mother of the Believers. Sayyidah Fāṭimah's husband was the

¹³⁵ On instructions from Almighty Allah, the prophet exclusively awarded Imam Ali (A) the title of *Amir-ul-Mu'mineen*, meaning the "Commander of the Believers".

master of the *Awṣiyā'* Commander of the Believers [Amir-ul-Mo'mineen¹³⁶] Ali *ibn* Abi-Ṭālib peace be upon them, and all the pure Imams are her sons and grandsons and great grandsons, peace be upon them all.

She was born on 20th of Jamādi-II forty-five years after the birth of the holy Prophet (S). She died a martyr and oppressed on Tuesday the 3rd of Jamādi-II¹³⁷ in the year 11 Hijrah, when she was only eighteen years. Imam Ali (A) prepared her body for burial and buried her in the holy city of Medinah, and concealed her grave and kept its location secret in accordance with her specific will [to her husband Imam Ali] as a protest against those who wronged her and usurped her right.

She was like her father in worship and asceticism, moral excellence and piety, and Almighty Allah has revealed many verses of the holy Qur'an in her praise and about her station.¹³⁸

Allah's Messenger gave her the title *Sayyidatu Nisā' al-Ālameen* [meaning "Master of the ladies of the worlds"], and gave her the agnomen *Ommo_Abeehā* [meaning "mother of her father" out of his sheer love for her]. He loved her immensely and he used to greatly glorify and respect her. When she used go to him, the Prophet would stand up, out of respect for her, lovingly greet her and would give her his place to sit, and kiss her hands, and he used to say,

"Whatever pleases Fāṭimah, pleases Allah, and whatever angers Fatimah, angers Allah".¹³⁹

¹³⁶ On instructions from Almighty Allah, the prophet exclusively awarded Imam Ali (A) the title of *Amir-ul-Mu'mineen*, meaning the "Commander of the Believers".

¹³⁷ There are also reports that state that her death was 75 or 95 days after the prophet's death.

¹³⁸ See "*Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' in the holy Qur'an*" by the author Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Sādiq Shirazi.

Lady Fāṭimah and Imam Ali had two sons; Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn, and also a third son, Moḥsen, who was miscarried because of the horrific injuries his mother sustained.¹⁴⁰ They also had two daughters; Lady Zaynab and Lady Omm-Kulthoum (A).

Anyone who follows the *sirah* or way of life of Sayyidah Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' would find that this lady is a perfect paradigm, and a school in the various domains of life ... and therefore an ideal exemplar for every woman, and every man.

She was the one who supported her father in his call to Islam, and she, together with a few other faithful believers in the valley of Abu Ṭālib, sustained severe hardship perpetrated by the idolaters of Quraysh . . . she was the one who supported Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (A), who strengthened the foundation of Islam, after the death of the Prophet (S).

She suffered the severe pains and cruelty of the difficult circumstances that surrounded her when she chose the path that leads to the hereafter instead of that leading to this world. She married her cousin Amir-ul-Mu'minin, Ali (A) and joined him along with her father Prophet Muhammad (S), in the support and strengthening of both the Mission (*Risalah*) and the Leadership (Imāmah), as well as forming the foundation of an Islamic society

¹³⁹ al-Iḥtijāj, Ahmad ibn Ali al-Ṭabarsi, vol. 2, p 354. In another narration the Prophet addresses Sayyidah Fatimah herself saying, “O Fatimah! Indeed Almighty Allah, angers to your anger, and contents to your contentment.”

¹⁴⁰ When the house of Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' (A) was stormed by a group of the “companions” of the Prophet Muhammad, she sustained horrific injuries, which led to the immediate death of her unborn baby son Moḥsen, and her death later on. The attack on the family of the prophet Muhammad (S) took place almost immediately after the burial of the body of the prophet Muhammad. The attack on the house of Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' (A) was in aid of dragging Imam Ali (A) out of the house to force him to pay homage to the newly imposed ruler under the pretext that he is the Prophet's successor contrary to the Prophet's specific instructions during his lifetime. The prophet Muhammad, on specific instructions from the Almighty, appointed Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib as his immediate successor to lead the Ommah after the prophet. Translator.

and conveying the Message of Allah . . . and this is the best model and example Muslim women could possibly follow.

Lady Fāṭimah (A) divided the duties of their married life with Imam Ali (A). Her responsibility was the duties within the house and his was those without.

Imam Bāqir (A), said that:

“Fāṭimah (A) guaranteed Ali (A) the duties inside the house, (preparing) the dough, (baking) the bread and house keeping. Ali (A) guaranteed Fatimah all that is needed from outside the house, such as providing the firewood and food.

One day he said to her: O Fatimah do you have something (to eat in the house)? She replied: By He who glorified you we do not have anything to give you since three days.

He said: Why did you not inform me?

She said: Rasulollah (S) always advised me against asking you for anything. He said to me ‘Do not ask your cousin for anything. If he brought you something, fine! and if not then do not ask him for anything.’

Then Imam Ali (A) left the house (seeking to provide something for the home). He met someone and borrowed one Dinār from him. On his way back, and it was night time, he met Miqdād al-Aswad. He said to Miqdād; What brings you out at this hour? Miqdād replied: By He who has glorified you, it is hunger O Amir-ul-Mu’minin!

The narrator interrupted Imam Bāqir (A) and asked ‘and Rasulollah was alive (at that time)?’ Imam Bāqir (A) replied ‘Yes Rasulollah was alive.’

Imam Ali (A) said to Miqdād: ‘It is what brought me out too. I have borrowed one Dinār which I shall give to you.’ And he gave it to him.

Imam Ali (A) returned home and found Rasulollah (S) sitting and Fatimah (A) praying and something covered with a cloth between them. When she finished her prayers, she brought that thing which was some bread and meat. He (A) said: O Fatimah! From where this comes to you? She (A) replied: From Allah! Verily Allah provides sustenance to whom He pleases without measure.

Rasulollah (S) said to Imam Ali (A): Shall I tell you of the like of you and her? Imam Ali (A) replied: Yes.

Rasulollah (S) said: Your example like Zacharias when he came to see Mary in the chamber he found her supplied with sustenance, he asked: ﴿O Mary! From where this comes to you? She (A) replied: From Allah! Verily Allah provides sustenance to whom He pleases without measure﴾¹⁴¹.

Some of the other attributes that Lady Fāṭimah decorated herself with, which should be the model for every society and nation who wants to progress forward, are *Zuhd* or non-attachment to material things, kindness and graciousness, altruism and selflessness, perseverance in the face of severe hardship, and many other highly noble characters.

The story of feeding the needy referred to in the holy Qur'an in the *Surah* of Mankind (76) is the best evidence for it. They gave their food, which were only a few pieces of bread to three needy people on three consecutive days. This is after they had vowed to fast three days for Allah for the recovery of their two sons Hasan and Husayn from illness. On the first day, when they wanted to break their fast, a destitute person knocked on the door asking for some food. They all gave all their food, leaving themselves nothing to eat that night. They did the same thing on the next day when an orphan came to their door asking for food, and on the third day in row they gave all their food to a captive who came to them for

¹⁴¹ The holy Qur'an: The Family of 'Emran (3): 37

help. Almighty Allah revealed an entire *Surah*, Mankind (76) in this regard praising their conduct. Verse eight of the *Surah* reads:

﴿And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive﴾.

Hadith from Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' (AS)

‘He (Allah) invented all things not from a thing which existed before, and designed them not by emulating other samples. He created them by His might, and gave them life by His will; not because of a need He had for their creation, or a benefit He had for their design, except for the establishment of His wisdom, awareness (of His creation) about His obedience, appearance of His might, (to invite) His creation to servitude and worship, and to glorify His invitation.

‘ . . . So my father (Muhammad (S)) rose amongst the people to guide them. He saved them from perversion and aberration, and turned their blindness into enlightenment, and guided them towards the right religion, and invited them to the straight path.’

‘The holy Qur’an . . . following it leads to the pleasure of Allah, listening to it (implementing its teachings) results in salvation. Through it can be achieved the clear and enlightening proofs and evidences of Allah, His forewarned prohibitions, His conspicuous arguments, His comprehensive reasoning, His desired virtues, His bestowed permissions, and His written divine laws.’

‘Therefore Allah set faith as the purifier, for you, from polytheism,

And (He set) the daily prayers to distance you from arrogance and egoism,

And the (giving of) Zakāh as the purity of your soul and the growth of your sustenance,

And rendered fasting for the firm establishment of sincerity,
 And the Hajj pilgrimage for the consolidation of the religion,
 And rendered justice for the harmonisation of the hearts,
 And (He set) the obedience of us (the Ahl-ul-Bayt) as the order
 (organising factor) for the religion, and our leadership (the
 Imāmah) as the guarantor against disunity and division,
 And Jihād as the honour for Islam, and humiliating for the
 infidels and hypocrites,
 And perseverance as an aid for obtaining reward,
 And the ‘Enjoining good and forbidding evil’ for the interest
 and correction of the society and the public,
 And He rendered kindness to the parents as a shield from
 displeasure,
 And (He set) keeping bond with the kinship the cause for
 lengthening of life span,
 ‘O Allah! Belittle myself in my eyes, and glorify and magnify
 Your Station to me. Inspire me Your obedience, and the
 practice which brings about Your pleasure, and (inspire me) the
 avoidance of anything which may bring about Your wrath, O
 most merciful of all.’

The First Imam: Imam Ali

Imam Ali (A) is the son of Abi-Ṭālib (A) and Fāṭimah daughter of
 Asad (A). He is the cousin and the son-in-law of the Prophet (S),
 his *waṣi*, and the first successor of the Prophet as leader of
 mankind after the prophet, and father of all the *ma‘ṣoom* Imams
 (A).

Imam Ali was born – uniquely – inside the holy Ka‘bah¹⁴² on Friday the thirteenth of *Rajab*, thirty years after the birth of the holy Prophet (S) and he was fatally wounded by the sword of Ibn Muljim al-Murādi (curses of Allah be upon him) – one of the Khāridjites – on Friday, the nineteenth of the holy month of *Ramaḍān* in the Mosque of Kufah, and joined the company of the Almighty three days later at the age of sixty three.

His body was prepared for burial by his sons Imam Hasan (A) and Imam Husayn (A) and he was buried in Najaf where his shrine stands today. They kept the location of his burial site secret as he instructed, in order to be safe from transgressions and desecration by the *Khāridjites*, and al-Ḥajjāj, which subsequently proved valid.¹⁴³ Later on, [some one hundred years later] Imam Ṣādiq and Imam Kādim made it known to the people.

He has virtues and excellent attributes that are not countable. He was the first person to believe in the Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his pure family, and he never attributed any partner to Allah not even for a blink of the eye, nor did he ever prostrate before an idol, such that it became the norm to say, after the mention of his name, *karram Allah wajhah*, meaning “Allah has protected and purified his face”. In all battles victory depended on his participation and contribution. He was a relentless and repetitive attacker, and not a deserter [*karrār* and not *farrār*], he never gave his back to fighting, and never run away, not even once. He was immaculate as a judge, such that the Prophet said about him, “*Ali is the best judge among you*”.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² This is a measure by the Almighty to point to the station of Imam Ali in the sight of Allah, for no other individual has ever been allowed to be born inside the holy Ka‘bah.

¹⁴³ History records that al-Ḥajjāj exhumed more than one hundred thousand graves in search of Imam Ali’s grave/coffin. *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, vol.2, p54.

¹⁴⁴ *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 1, p 263. *al-Iḥtijāj*, vol. 2, p 391.

About his vast knowledge the Prophet (S) said, “I am the city of knowledge and Ali is the gate of this city”.¹⁴⁵

In relation to his adherence to the Truth the Prophet (S) said,

“Ali is with the Truth and Truth is with Ali”.¹⁴⁶

He was just in his dealings with people. He treated people equally. He never indulged himself in the worldly matters. He would go to the public treasury and would look at the gold and silver and say, “O yellow (meaning gold) and O white (meaning silver), deceive and delude other than me”.¹⁴⁷ He would then distribute them among the people until none remains. He would treat the destitute with mercy and would accompany the poor and spend time with them and would help people in need. He would speak the truth out loud and make judgement fairly and justly. He would rule according to the laws Almighty Allah has revealed, implement Allah’s rules, and follow the way the Prophet followed, until goodness, blessing, welfare and comfort became widespread and covered all the people throughout the land.

In short, Imam Ali was like the Prophet Muhammad (S) in virtuous traits and attributes – except for revelation and prophethood – such that Allah, the Most High, considered Imam Ali (A) – in the verse of *mubāhalah* in the Qur’an – as the Prophet himself (S).¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ al-Amāli, by al-Ṣaduq, p 343

¹⁴⁶ Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 29, p 343.

¹⁴⁷ Biḥār al-Anwār, vol.39, p69, vol.40, p333.

¹⁴⁸ The āyah of *mubāhalah* is as follows: ﴿If anyone disputes with you after the knowledge has come to you (O Muhammad) say: ‘Come! Let us summon our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, and then let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of Allah on those who lie’﴾ - The Qur’an: The Family of Emran (3): 61. This verse refers to the dispute between the Nazarenes of Najrān and Allah’s messenger about the truth of his mission, and after the Prophet presented all evidence to them and they stubbornly refused to accept all proof of reason, Almighty Allah instructed His Messenger through this verse to hold *ibtihāl* with the other party, i.e. the two parties come

Hadith from Amir-ul-Mu'minin (AS)

On the Almighty's attributes Imam Ali peace be upon him states:

“He cannot be conceived of by the imagination and He cannot be determined by comprehension. He cannot be perceived by the senses and He cannot be compared with any person. He is One but not numerable and He is Eternal without end. He is the One who supports without being supported.”

Imam Ali (AS) also said:

‘He is Allah, the Clear Truth, truer and clearer than the eyes perceive. The intellects cannot reach Him by any definition, since that would be to compare Him; and the imagination cannot reach Him by any evaluation; since that would be to give Him a likeness. There is no beginning to His primacy and there is no end to His eternity. He is the First and the Eternal, and He is the Everlasting without end. Foreheads bow down before Him and lips declare His Oneness. He gave all things limitations when He created them, so as to make it clear that He is not like them.’

Amir-ul-Mu'minin (AS) also said:

together bringing along with them their most pious people as support, invoking Allah's curse against those who lie. According to this instruction from the Almighty, Prophet Muhammad summoned the most pious individuals he could possibly get for this cause; they were Imam Hasan and Imam Hussain, Sayyidah Fatimah, and Imam Ali (representing ‘our sons’, ‘our women’, and ‘our selves’ referred to in the verse). It can be seen from this act of Allah's messenger, who was complying with the orders of the Almighty that Allah refers to Imam Ali in the holy Qur'an as the ‘self of the Prophet Muhammad’. This goes to show the position and status of Imam Ali in the sight of Almighty Allah. Needless to say when Allah's messenger arrived with these four individuals (known collectively as *Ahl-ul-Bayt*) for the *ibtihāl*, and the Nazarenes saw this array of most pious and holy personalities, their chief priest said to his fellow Nazarenes, “I see persons that the Almighty Allah would answer any prayer or call they make! If you go ahead with this *ibtihāl*, all the Nazarenes would be annihilated from the face of this earth.” It is reported that the Nazarenes decided therefore to surrender to Allah's messenger without going through the *ibtihāl*.

‘Time never changes for Him so as to cause a change in His state, and He is never in any particular place so as to entail His moving to another place. He knows of the secrets in the minds of the secretive, and the intimate meetings of those who meet behind closed doors, and the thoughts and opinions of those who speculate.’

Amir-ul-Mu’minin, Imam Ali (AS) also said:

‘The eyes cannot perceive Him with the sense of sight, but the heart can perceive Him through the realities of trust. He is close to all things without being associated with them. He is remote from them without being distanced from them. He speaks yet without speech. He wills yet without wanting. He creates yet without physical means. He is Subtle yet obscurity cannot be attributed to Him. He is Great yet aloofness cannot be attributed to Him. He is Seeing yet sensory perception cannot be attributed to Him. He is Compassionate but sentimentality cannot be attributed to Him.’

Imam Ali (AS) also said:

‘The first part of the deen is knowledge of Him. The perfection of knowledge of Him is affirmation of Him. The perfection of affirmation of Him is affirming His Oneness. The perfection of affirming His Oneness is being sincere towards Him. He who makes a comparison to Him has set up a second with Him. He who sets a second with Him has divided Him. He who divides Him is ignorant of Him. Whoever tries to indicate to Him has given Him limitations, and whoever gives Him limitations has rendered Him finite.’ [On another occasion Imam Ali (A) says ‘The perfection of sincerity is avoiding disobedience’.]

‘No one accompanies the Qur’an except that when he departs from it he does so with a gain and a loss. (He leaves with) a gain of guidance (to the truth) and a loss of ignorance. Rest assured that there is no destitution for anyone after (knowing)

the Qur'an, and no one has any riches before (knowing) the Qur'an.'

'Do not enslave yourself to another person, for Allah has made you a free person.'

'Make your own self as a judge between yourself and others.

Therefore, love for others whatever you love for yourself, and dislike for others whatever you hate for yourself.

Do not transgress just as you do not like to be transgressed upon, and be kind to others just as you like to see kindness from others.

What you regard as bad and ugly to come from others also regard it bad and ugly (if it were) to come from yourself.

If it pleases you what you do to others, then be pleased with that if they do it to you.

Do not talk about what you do not know, still do not say all that you know.

Do not say (to others) what you do not like to be told.'

'Do not look at who is talking but look at what is said.'

'He who corrects his covert affairs, Allah would correct his overt (aspects of life). He who worked for his religious affairs, Allah would take care of his material life. He who enhances what is between him and Allah, Allah would improve what is between him and other people.'

'The example of the world is that of a snake; it is soft to touch but inside it carries a deadly poison. The ignorant one may be charmed by it, but the sage and the sane person would avoid.'

'How plenty are the lessons to learn from and how few are those who would learn from them.'

'Get rid of your wrong actions before they get rid of you.'

‘Being thankful for every blessing is being careful to avoid what Allah has forbidden.’

‘The least of what Allah demands of you is that you do not use His blessings to disobey Him.’

‘Be in awe of Allah in your dealings with His servants and His lands, for surely you are responsible, even if it is for a small piece of land and a few animals. Obey Allah and do not disobey Him. if you see good then take hold of it, and if you see evil then turn away from it.’

‘Beware of being disobedient to Allah when you are alone, for surely the One who witnesses is also the One who judges.’

‘Well-being consists of ten parts; nine of them are in being silent – except in the remembrance of Allah – and one of them is in leaving the company of the foolish.’

‘Supplication is the key to divine mercy.’

‘Deflect the waves of misfortune by supplication.’

‘Fortunate is he who remembers the promised Day of Judgement, and who acts with the Reckoning in mind, and who is content with what is just enough, and who is pleased with Allah.’

‘Perfect happiness comes with knowledge, and partial happiness comes with abstinence. Worship without knowledge and without abstinence merely exhausts the body.’

‘The most excellent worship is refraining from disobedience...’

‘Wherever there is wisdom, there is fear of Allah, and wherever there is fear of Allah, there is His mercy.’

‘The most glorious thing to come down from the heavens is divine succour, and the most glorious thing to rise up from the earth is sincerity.’

‘There are three things that set you free:

Fear of Allah in secret and in public,
Moderation in times of poverty and wealth, and
Being just in times of anger and contentment.’

‘He who takes his self into account will profit, and he who is heedless of it will loose. He who is fearful will be secure, and he who reflects will discern, and whoever discerns will comprehend, and whoever comprehends will have knowledge.’

‘The best way of life is the one that does not make you do wrong or make you distracted.’

‘Always observe your appearance in the mirror, and if it looks good consider it repulsive to associate an ugly action with it and so spoil it, and if it looks ugly consider it even more repulsive by combining the two forms of ugliness!’

‘Train yourself in good behaviour with regard to what you dislike in others.’

‘The devil of everyone is his own self.’

‘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-pity 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 over-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.’

‘Ask your hearts about friendship, for surely it is a witness that cannot be bribed.’

‘Kindle your heart with courteous behaviour just as you kindle a fire with fuel.’

‘Surely hearts grow tired just as bodies grow tired, so seek out the novelties of wisdom for them.’

‘The most self-sustaining wealth is the intellect.’

‘The intellect is a king and the characteristics are its subjects, so if it is weak in governing them, disorder overtakes it.’

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

‘Bodies are sustained by food, and intellects are sustained by wisdom, and whenever either of them is deprived of its sustenance then it perishes and disintegrates.’

‘Keep company with the people of intellect, whether they are your enemies or your friends; for surely one intellect is only confirmed by another intellect.’

‘If the intellect is given a free reign, and if it is not imprisoned by the desires of the self or by religious customs or by partisanship, then it will lead the one who possesses it to salvation.’

‘When Allah wishes to remove a favour from His servant, the first thing He changes in him is his intellect.’

‘The spirit gives life to the body, and the intellect gives life to the spirit.’

‘Knowledge is the most precious of treasures, and the most beautiful. It is easy to carry, tremendously useful, beautiful in its completeness, and delightful in its uniqueness.’

‘Life is too short for you to learn all the knowledge that find attractive, so learn what inspires you, only what inspires.’

‘Knowledge is accompanied by action, for whoever has knowledge (should) act (accordingly). Knowledge calls out for action: if it responds to the call then it lives on . . . otherwise it perishes.’

‘Nobility of characters consists of ten qualities: generosity, modesty, sincerity, and fulfilment of trust, humility, self-esteem, courage, forbearance, patience, and gratitude.’

The Second Imam: Imam Hasan

Imam Hasan (A) is the elder son of Imam Ali (A) and Fatimah al-Zahra (A) daughter of the holy Prophet (S). He is the Prophet’s elder grandson and his second successor and leader of the people after his father Imam Ali.

He was born in the holy city of Medina on Tuesday the fifteenth of the holy month of Ramaḍān in the third year of Hijrah. He died a martyr by the poison administered by Mo‘āwiyah ibn Abi Sufyān through his wife Jo‘dah *bint* al-Ash‘ath on Thursday the seventh of the month of Ṣafar¹⁴⁹ in the year fifty after Hijrah. His brother, Imam Husayn prepared his body for burial and buried him in the Baqi’ cemetery in the holy city of Medinah where his shrine stood until recently when, unfortunately, the [Saudi] Wahnābīes destroyed it along with its courtyard.

He excelled all others of his time in worshipping Allah, in knowledge and in spiritual perfections. He was more like the Prophet than all other people. He was seen as the most noble and

¹⁴⁹ or the 28th day of Safar, according to some other reports.

kind-hearted person in his family at his time and the most forbearing amongst the people.

Prophet Muhammad (S) said, while hugging his grandson Imam Hasan (A) ‘O Allah love him for I dearly love him.’¹⁵⁰

The Messenger of Allah (S) used to say about Imam Hasan and his brother Imam Husayn (A):

‘they are my sweet basil of this world, whoever loves me should love them, and whoever angers them, he angers me and whoever anger me Allah’s anger will be upon him and He enter him in Hell, For they are the masters of the youth of Paradise.’

On many occasions Imam Hasan divided all of his wealth and possession in two; giving one half of it to (the cause of) Allah. He did so to the extent that if he had just one pair of sandals, he gave one of the sandals away and kept the other.

On one occasion Imam Hasan (A) was passing by when he saw a group of destitute people sitting on the ground and eating bread. They invited the Imam to join them and he duly did, saying ﴿Verily Allah does not like the arrogant﴾¹⁵¹. When they finished, the Imam (A) then invited them to his hospitality and fed them and gave them clothing.

A man approached Imam Hasan (A) hinting at seeking help from him. In order to save the man the embarrassment of going through his request, the Imam asked him to write down his wishes. On receiving the request letter, the Imam gave him double the amount the man had requested. The people sitting in the vicinity of the Imam said ‘what a blissful letter this was for him, O son of *Rasulollah!*’ Imam Hasan (A) said ‘its bliss is greater for us, for He has made us the people of nobility. Did you not know that

¹⁵⁰ This hadith has been reported in many *ṣiḥāḥ* and hadith reference books such as *ṣaḥiḥ* Bukhāri, Tirmidhi, and Muslim, and in the book *al-Bedāyah wal Nahāyah* by Ibn Kotheyr.

¹⁵¹ The holy Qur’an, The Bees (16): 23.

nobility is to give to someone and fulfil his needs while protecting his honour and dignity by sparing him the embarrassment of making his request in detail?’

On another occasion a Bedouin man approached Imam Hasan (A) wishing to seek assistance from him . . . the Imam told his assistants to give to the man whatever there was in coffer. There were twenty thousand Dirhams, which they gave to the Bedouin man. The man said lord give me a chance to state my request and praise you . . . replied the Imam (A):

We are a people whose grace and grant is spattered,

In which hope and wish revel.

We wish to give abundantly before the request (is made),

Anxious about the honour and dignity of the seeker.

On one occasion a servant gave him a bunch of followers, so in return the imam said to her, “You are free for the sake of Allah”, and then the imam said, “this is how Almighty Allah has taught us” ﴿and if you were greeted, greet with that that is better than it, or return it likewise﴾.¹⁵²

On another occasion a man from the province of Shām¹⁵³ came across Imam Hasan (A). He started to verbally assault and curse the Imam. Imam Hasan (A) remained silent and did not respond to him. After the man finished his assault and name calling, Imam Hasan smiled to him and, said:

‘May peace be with you. O Sheikh! I guess you are a stranger in this territory, and you might have mistaken me. If you seek

¹⁵² The holy Qur’an, Women (4):86.

¹⁵³ The province of Shām in today’s geography covers Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and parts of Jordan. The province was ruled by Mo‘āwiyah ibn Abi Sufyān, one of the archenemies of Imam Ali. In a massive disinformation campaign by Mo‘āwiyah during his reign, the people of the Shām had systematically been fed with hatred towards Imam Ali and his descendants.

contentment we would gratify you, if you ask us anything we shall give it to you, if you seek any guidance from us we shall guide you, if you seek any help from us we shall help you, and if you are hungry we shall feed you, if you need any clothing we shall give you them, if you are deprived we shall give you money, if you have been expelled (from your home town) we shall accommodate you, if you had any need we shall fulfil your need . . .’

When the man from Shām heard the response of the Imam, he broke in tears saying: “I now truly believe that you are Allah’s caliph and vicegerent on earth, ﴿indeed Allah knows best as to whom He entrust His Message﴾¹⁵⁴ .

Hadith from Imam Hasan (AS)

‘He who claims he does not like wealth is, to me, a liar, and if his truth is established in this respect, then, to me, he is stupid.’

‘Have you seen an oppressor who is more like an oppressed one? The Imam was asked: ‘How is that O son of Rasulollah?’ The Imam (A) replied: ‘He is the jealous person who is in perpetual anguish whereas the envied is in comfort.’

Imam Hasan (A) used to encourage the people to gain more and more knowledge, and used to say:

‘Teach others and learn from others’ knowledge, in this way you would have perfected your knowledge and learnt things you did not know . . . and to ask a question is half of the knowledge.’

‘He who does not have intellect, does not have etiquette, and he who does not have determination, does not have goodwill, and he who does not have a belief does not have morality. The peak of intellect is to socialise with, and treat the people nicely

¹⁵⁴ The holy Qur’an, The Cattle (6): 124.

and kindly. Through intellect you can achieve the prosperity of both worlds and without it you would lose all.’

Someone asked Imam Hasan (A) about politics, the Imam replied

‘Politics is to attend to the rights and duties of Allah and to protect the rights of the people; dead or alive. As for the rights of Allah, it is to fulfil what He ordered and abstain from what forbade. And as for the rights of the living it is to discharge your duties towards your Muslim brethren and not to hesitate serving your community, to be sincere towards leader as long as he is sincere to the Ommah, and to raise your objection to him if he deviated from the straight path. As for the rights of the dead, it is to commemorate their good deeds and conceal their bad deeds, for they have their Lord to deal with them.’

‘There is no poverty like ignorance.’

‘The peak of wit and intelligence is the good conduct with the people.’

‘The distance between right and falsehood is (the width of) four fingers (i.e. the distance between the eye and the ear). What you see with your eyes is the truth, whereas you could hear many false things.’

‘The people who practice consultation are guided (towards perfection).’

‘(The beneficences of) both worlds are achieved through reasoning.’

‘Do not hasten punishment for offence, and allow room for reason for the offence.’

‘I am surprised at one who takes care at what he eats, but does not do so about what he believes in. He avoids that which hurts him from entering his stomach, but allows that which makes him inferior to enter his heart (and mind).’

The Third Imam: Imam Husayn

Imam Husayn (A) is the son of Imam Ali (A) and Fatimah (A) daughter of the holy Prophet (S), and the grandson of Allah's messenger (S) and the third of his successors, and the father of the nine *ma'ṣoom* imams who come after him, and the leader of the people after his brother Imam Hasan peace be upon them.

He was born in the holy city of Medina on the third of Sha'bān of the fourth year of Hijrah, and he was brutally killed while suffering extreme thirst at the hands of the Omayyads on the orders of Yazeed ibn Mo'āwiyah on the Day of Ashura on Saturday the tenth day of the holy month of Muharram, in year 61 after Hijrah in the desert now known as Karbala'.

His son Imam Zayn al-Ābidin (A) prepared his decapitated and mutilated pure body, and of those who were martyred along with him, after being left on the battlefield for three days. He performed the prayer of the deceased, and buried him where his mausoleum stands today in the holy city of Karbala, Iraq.

His virtues are beyond mention, for he is the *rayḥānah*¹⁵⁵ of Allah's messenger about whom he said, "Husayn is from me and I am from Husayn"¹⁵⁶.

The prophet also said about him and his brother Imam Hasan peace be upon them:

"They are my two *rayḥānah* of this world"¹⁵⁷

"Hasan and Husayn are the masters of the youth of the people of Paradise"¹⁵⁸

"Hasan and Husayn are both Imams whether they rise up (to publicly assume the position of leadership) or not"¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ *rayḥānah* is any sweet smelling flower.

¹⁵⁶ Al-Irshād, vol. 2, p127

¹⁵⁷ Kashf al-Ghummah, vol. 2, p 11

¹⁵⁸ Al-Amāli, by al-Ṣdoq, p57

He was the most knowledgeable and the best worshipper among the people of his time. He would pray one thousand Rak'ahs every night like his father Amir al-Mo'mineen peace be upon him, and on many nights he would carry sacks of food to the needy, to the extent that the marks of carrying heavy sacks were visible on his back after his death. He was very kind, had a great and forbearing personality, and was severe on those who disobeyed Allah.

When a Bedouin Arab came to Imam Husayn seeking help he recited the following poem for the Imam:

*Disappointed will not be he who makes a request from you,
For you are generous and trustworthy and your father was the killer of
the profligate and the corrupt,
were it not for the former (family members) of yours¹⁶⁰, we would still
have been in hell.*

Then Imam Husayn (A) while avoiding eye contact with the man, gave him four thousand gold coins (Dinars) and apologized to him saying:

*Take this for I apologise to you, and rest assure that you have my
sympathy
Were I in a different position and I had more to offer you, I would have
given you far more.*

Throughout his life the Muslims used to revere and adore Imam Husayn (A), and used to see in him what they had seen in his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (S). Their adoration for Imam Husayn was not just because he was the grandson of the prophet (S), but also because he was the manifestation of the teachings of Islam and the conducts of the Messenger of Allah (S),

¹⁵⁹ Elal al-Sharā'e, vol. 1, p211

¹⁶⁰ i.e. the Prophet Muhammad, Imam Ali, Lady Fatimah al-Zahra, and Imam Hasan.

no one could fail to see examples of the highest moral qualities in his behaviour.

The holy Prophet has said in the praise of Imam Husayn (A):

“Husayn is from me and I am from Husayn.”

Chroniclers and historians have individually remarked that Imam Husayn was the manifestation of the best examples of noble manners and conduct, as well as his vast knowledge, which he inherited from the Messenger of Allah (S). His actions spoke before his words. Imam Husayn (A) was humbly gracious and generous to the poor and those in need. He used to support what is right and fight what was wrong. People always noticed such attributes in his conduct and behaviour as perseverance, forbearance, and magnanimity. He was the most pious and God-fearing of all people of his time.

Through his courageous uprising, the like of which there has been none in the world, he revived the Islamic teachings and law, and the religion of his grandfather Allah’s Messenger peace be upon him and his pure progeny. In fact he revived the whole world until the Day of Judgment. He is the Master of the Martyrs and the best among the people after his elder brother.

Hadith from Imam Husayn (AS)

‘I do not see death except prosperity and life along with the oppressors except anguish.’

‘O Allah! You know that all there was from us was not in competition to seek power, nor to gain refuse of the world (i.e. wealth), but it was nothing other than to present the signs and essence of Your religion, and to promote reform in Your land, (so that) oppressed members of your servants find safety and security, and Your laws, orders and obligations are acted upon.’

‘I have not arisen for the purpose of exuberance, arrogance, corruption, or oppression, but I have done so in order to seek reform in the nation of my Grandfather, Muhammad (S). I want to enjoin Good and forbid Evil, and I want to go down the path and tradition of my Grandfather, Muhammad (S), and the path of my father Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (A).

‘There are people who worship Allah out of desire (for reward), and this is the worship of traders, and there are people who worship Allah out of fear (of punishment), and this is the worship of slaves. Whereas certain people worship Allah out of gratitude, and this is the worship of the free, and this is the best of the worships.’

‘There are seventy benefactions for saluting, sixty nine for the one who initiates it and one for the replier.’

‘Do not say about your brother in his absence other than that which you would like him to say about you in your absence.’

‘(O Allah) . . . How can You be reasoned about with that that is in need of You in its existence?

‘(O Allah) . . . What did he find he who lost You? And what did he lose he who found You? Truly he has failed who is contented with other than You.’

The Fourth Imam: Imam Zayn al-Ābidin

Imam Ali Zayn al-Ābidin (A) is the son of Imam Husayn (A) and princess Shahr Banu the daughter of Yazdgerd, king of Persia.

He used to be called the son of the best two, on the basis of the words of Allah’s messenger peace be upon him and his pure progeny who said, “From amongst his servants, Allah has made

two choices; his choice from the Arabs is the Quraysh, and from amongst the non-Arabs the Persians”.¹⁶¹

He was born in Medina on Thursday the fifth of Sha‘bān in the year thirty-eight after Hijrah. He died a martyr after being poisoned on Saturday the twenty fifth of Muharram,¹⁶² in the year ninety five after Hijrah, at the age of fifty seven. His son Imam Bāqir prepared his body for burial and buried him next to his uncle Imam Hasan in Baqi’ cemetery in the holy city of Medina.

He excelled all others of his time in knowledge, worshipping Allah, spiritual perfections, piety, and helping the needy, and all other virtues. Jurists and scholars have narrated from him extensively such that it cannot be counted, and there are many aspects of words-of-wisdom, spiritual guidance, prayers, and invocations that have been recorded as his legacy. Because of his extensive prayers and invocations he became known as Zayn al-Ābidin, meaning the best of the worshipers. He is also known as al-Sajjād, meaning the *prostrater*, for his frequent and prolonged prostrations.

Very often he would carry on his back, at night, money and sacks of food or fire log, to the needy, and knock on the door one by one and give it to the person answers the call, with his face covered so that the person would not recognise him. When he left this world, then people of Medina realised that the person who used to deliver to them food etc. with his face covered, was none other than Imam Zayn al-Ābidin. He loved to see the orphans and destitute join him for food, and eat his food sitting next to them.

¹⁶¹ Biḥār al- Anwār, vol. 46, p8.

¹⁶² Other reports put the date of his martyrdom on 12th or 18th of Muharram.

Every month he would call upon his servants and would offer them help if any of them needed to get married or if anyone wanted to be set free.¹⁶³

Whenever a needy person would come to him asking for help he would say this, “welcome to he who carries my supplies to the hereafter.”

It is said that he would pray a thousand *rak'ahs* of prayer in every twenty-four hours. At the time of prayer his face would change, and he would shiver like a leaf out of realisation of the greatness of Allah, the Most High. Due to his extensive and prolonged prostrating before the Almighty his forehead and knees were clearly marked.

Once a person spoke rudely to him using offending words that were hurting, the Imam remained silent not uttering a word. After a while the Imam went to the person, and recited this verse from the holy Qur'an, ﴿... and those who control their anger and forgive people, Allah loves those who do good.﴾¹⁶⁴ The Imam then said to that person, “Brother, I heard all that you said to me. If all that you said about me is true, then I ask Allah to forgive me and if all that you said about me is not true, then may Allah forgive you”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ At the time of the prophet (S) and the Imams (A) slavery was common in society. One of the most important values in Islam is freedom and therefore it always aimed to gradually eliminate slavery from society. Islam encouraged people to set their slaves free, and many rewards are prescribed for setting a slave free. The Prophet and the Imams lead the way in this process in two ways. One was to set examples for the Muslims by buying slaves from their masters and setting them free at the first possible opportunity. The second policy of the Imams was to buy as many slaves as they could, educate them and then free them into society as free, well mannered, and well-educated responsible adults. In this way, this policy gave a good chance to a slave to attain his/her freedom, set an example for others to practice, and give less chance to those who wanted to see the concept of slavery continue in society.

¹⁶⁴ The Family of Emran (3): 134

¹⁶⁵ Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 46, p54. al-Irshād, vol. 2, p145.

In the course of his supplications which he became best known for, Zayn al-Ābidin (A) left behind a magnificent intellectual and doctrinal masterpiece known as the *Sahifah al-Sajjaddeyyah*. Of course the *Sahifah* does not include all of his supplications, as many others are found in other reference books.

The supplications of Imam Zayn al-Ābidin (A) are well known for their immense influence on the soul of the reader, and that of the listener. The choice of words and meaning of the supplications move the reader in such a way that change one's life and give his life purpose and direction.

The collection of the supplications of Zayn al-Ābidin (A) is a great school for he who seeks the truth. It is a school, which points to the love, wisdom and power of Almighty Allah. It points man to the values and the qualities of the teachings of Islam. It teaches him how to repent and how to talk to Allah.

Imam Zayn al-Ābidin (A) is also responsible for the creation of the book of rights, which includes fifty fundamental rights one has, or is responsible for. This book of rights served as a guide to the Muslims as well as a challenge to the society and the ruling circumstances.

In his book *Manāqib*, ibn Shahr Ashub reports that Imam Zayn al-Ābidin (A) received some guests, and the servant was rushing to serve the guests when some of the hot cooking cutlery fell on the Imam's child, killing him. The servant was extremely disturbed and frightened. When the Imam saw him in that state said to him 'You did not intend this! Go for you are free for the sake of Allah.'

Zayn al-Ābidin (A) used to buy a thousand slaves at a time and then he used to educate them with the teachings of Islam and within a year free them into the society as well mannered, educated, and honourable members of the society. It is reported

that he directly bought, educated and freed some fifteen thousands slave during his lifetime.

Hadith from Imam Zayn al-Ābidin (A)

Imam Zayn al-Ābidin (A) said to his son, al-Bāqir (A):

‘Do good to whoever seeks it from you. For if he deserved it then you have achieved your goal, and if he did not deserve it, you are the kind to do so. If someone swore at you, and he is on your right hand side, and he then turns to your left and apologised to you, accept his apologies.’

On the subject of trustworthiness and honesty, Imam Zayn al-Ābidin (A) says:

‘By He who sent Muhammad (S), with the Truth (I swear that) if the killer of my father al-Husayn (A) entrusts me with the sword which he killed him (A) with, I would return it back to him.’

‘Contemplate and strife for what you have been created for, for Allah did not create you in vain.’

‘Do not have animosity towards anyone even if you thought he would not harm you, and do not fail to befriend anyone even if you thought he would not benefit you.’

‘Indeed the ultimate knowledge and the perfection of the religion (and way of life) of a Muslim is to avoid talking about things which do not concern him, lack of his boasting, his forbearance, perseverance, and well-manners.’

‘Do not stop from refraining from evil even if you have been known to commit it.’

‘The best keys to (one’s) affairs is truthfulness, and the best endings is faithfulness and loyalty.’

The Fifth Imam: Imam al-Bāqir

Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (A) is the son of Ali ibn al-Husayn (A) and his mother is Fatimah daughter of Imam Hasan (A).

He was born in the holy city of Medina on Friday the first day of Rajab in the year fifty seven after Hijrah. He is the first Alawite of Alawite parents, and Hashemite of Hashemite parents, and Fatimid of Fatimid parents, for he is the first to born to parents who were descendants of Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn, peace be upon them.

He died a martyr by poisoning on Monday the seventh day of the month of Dhil-Hijjah in the year one hundred fourteen after Hijrah, at the age of fifty seven. His son Imam Ṣādiq prepared his body for burial and buried him next to his father's grave, and that of his grandfather Imam Hasan Mujtabā in the Baqi' cemetery in the holy city of Medina.

Imam Muhammad Al-Bāqir (A) was a man of great virtue and leadership, a man of vast knowledge, great forbearance, great moral discipline, worship, generosity, humility and kindness.

A Christian man, [deliberately mispronouncing Imam's name], once said to him, "Are you *baqar*? (meaning, a 'cow')." The Imam said, "No, I am Bāqir." The man then said, "Are you the son of a female cook?" The Imam said, "That is her profession." The man then said, "Are you the son of the bad Negro woman?" The Imam said, "If what you say is true, then may Allah forgive her, and if what you say is not true then may Allah forgive you." This transformed the Christian man, and became a Muslim.

Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (A) had profound knowledge and he would answer every question when asked without delay. Ibn 'Atā al-Makki said about the Imam, "I never saw the scholars look so small as they did in the presence of Imam Muhammad Bāqir. I saw al-Ḥakam ibn 'Otaybah, with all his prestige and majesty

amongst the people, looked just like a child in the presence of his teacher.”

Muhammad ibn Muslim said, “I asked Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir all the questions that would come to my mind, until I had asked him about thirty thousand matter.”

Imam al-Bāqir used to practice remembrance (*dhikr*) of Allah constantly, such that his son Imam Ja’far al-Şādiq said, “My father used to practiced remembrance of Allah very often; I used to walk with him and he would practice *dhikr* of Allah, I would eat with him and he used to practice *dhikr* of Allah, and if he talked to people that would not distract him from the *dhikr* of Allah”.

He used to pray for long hours at night and his tears would flow tremendously during his worshipping.

Imam al-Bāqir (A) may be credited to have established the first Islamic university in the history of Islam. Given the turmoil in political situation of the time, the Omayyad rulers had less time to suppress Imam al-Bāqir (A) and therefore he had more breathing space to teach those who sought the teachings of Islam in the sciences of the Qur’an, *Fiqh*, doctrine, etc.

Hadith from Imam Bāqir (A)

‘The practice of Islam is founded on five matters: upholding of the daily prayers, purification of the wealth (giving the Khums and Zakāh), performing the Hajj pilgrimage, Fasting during the holy month of Ramaḍān, and allegiance to the authority (walāyah) of the us the Ahl-ul-Bayt. Exceptions are given in four of them but none is given for the walāyah. He who does not possess sufficient wealth, does not give Khums/Zakāh. He who does not possess sufficient wealth, is not obliged to go to Hajj. He who is ill can perform the daily prayers in sitting mode, and does not fast during the month of Ramaḍān.

However the walāyah is obliged upon him regardless of his health and wealth.’

‘Three are amongst the noble values of this world and the hereafter: To forgive he who transgresses against you, To bond ties with he who severs ties with you, To forbear he who insults you.’

‘The most regretting individual on the Day of Judgement is he who preaches to others to do good but does not practices it himself.’

‘He who says the truth, his acts would be purified, and he whose intention is good, his sustenance will be increased, and he who is kind to his family his lifespan would increase.’

‘He who teaches guidance, will have a reward similar to the rewards of all of those who act upon it without reducing anything from their reward. He who teaches misguidance, will have a punishment similar to the punishments of all of those who act upon it without reducing anything from their punishment.’

The Sixth Imam: Imam Ṣādiq

Imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq (A) is the son of Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (A) and his mother is Fatimah, agnomen Omm Farwah.

He was born in Medina on Friday the seventeenth of the month of *Rabi’-I* – which is the birthday of the prophet – in the year eighty-three after Hijrah. He died a martyr after being poisoned on Monday twenty-fifth day of the month of Shawwal in the year one hundred forty eight after Hijrah at the age of sixty-five. His son Imam Kādim prepared his body for burial and buried him in the Baqi’ cemetery next to the graves of his father Imam Bāqir and his grandfathers Imam Sajjād and Imam Hasan Mujtabā peace be upon them all.

Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (A) possessed unquestionably vast knowledge, wisdom, and piety. He lived abstinely and piously, and his qualities and traits such as truthfulness, justice, graciousness, generosity and bravery were beyond reach.

Sheikh al-Mofid¹⁶⁶ said, “scholars have reported from no one of his household as much they have reported from him, and people of hadith and narrators of reports have not known any one like Muhammad ibn Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him. Indeed researchers have gathered together and collated the names of the reliable narrators [of hadith] from him, notwithstanding their differing views and opinions, whose numbers have been at four thousands¹⁶⁷” . .

Abu Ḥanifah, the founder and leader of the Ḥanafī sect, [one of the four Sunni sects nowadays] was one of Imam Ṣādiq's students, who attended his lessons.¹⁶⁸ While Abu Ḥanifah studied directly at the hands of Imam Ṣādiq, the founders and leaders of the other sects learned of Imam Ṣādiq's teachings via those who had attended Imam Ṣādiq at first hand.

Many of the new sciences such as chemistry, physics, astronomy, mineralogy and deposit-exploration, and other sciences which is

¹⁶⁶ Abu Abdullah Muhammad al-Harithi al-Baghdadi, known as sheikh al-Mofid, and also ibn al-Mo'allim, 336-413H, 948-1022 CE. He is one of the foremost figures of Shi'a history. A student of ibn Babuyah al-Quommi, the great teacher of theology in the 4th/10th century, sheikh al-Muffid was in turn the teacher of such celebrated Shi'a theologians as sheikh al-Murtadha. The author of some 170 treatises concerned almost entirely with theology, jurisprudence, hadith, and the sacred history, sheikh al-Mofid soon became one of the main figures of Shi'a scholars.

¹⁶⁷ There are also reports that put the number at twenty thousands.

¹⁶⁸ Having studied for more than two years at the hands of Imam Ṣādiq peace be upon him, Abu Ḥanifah, whose [Arabic] name was al-Nu'mān ibn Thābit al-Kufī al-Taymi, the *mawla* (adopted member) of the Bani Taym clan, is famous for saying “If it were not for the two years, al-Nu'mān would have perished.” [al-Khilāf, by Sheikh al-Ṭousi, vol. 1, p33; Jame' al-Maqāsid, by al-Karaki, vol. 1, p21 of the researcher's introduction, al-Morāj'āt, by Sharaf al-Deen, p 15.]

too long to mention, were founded or guided to by Imam Ṣādiq peace be upon him.

The Imam used the ensuing conflict within the Abbasids, who were spearheading a revolt against the ruling Omayyads, and the ongoing power struggle within the Omayyad dynasty, who were on the verge of collapse, to establish his mammoth scholarly school. He engaged in teaching and educating his students and seekers of truth, elucidating the teachings and essence of Islam the traits of the *shari‘ah* – the Islamic Law. He clarified the falseness of the imported thoughts and the invalidity of the spurious and sinister doubts raised, until the foundations of the *shari‘ah* were fortified and the structure of Islam erected. He became known as the leader and chief of the Ja’fari *madh-hab* or school, just as his followers became known as the Ja’fari Shi‘a.

Imam Ja’far Ṣādiq lived a simple life. He used to eat bread with vinegar or oil¹⁶⁹, used to wear a coarse shirt, which often used to be with patches, and he used to work in his orchard himself.

He would pray extensively and with great deal of attention and concentration to the extent that he would loose consciousness during prayer.

One night al-Manṣoor al-Dawāneeqi, the tyrant ruler of the time, wanted to meet him and he sent for him. The servant who sent to call the imam said that when he arrived at the imam’s house, he found the Imam in his private room in the state of prostration before Allah with his hands and face on the ground and his forehead and the sides of his face having dust on them.

Imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq (A) had generous nature, excellent moral perfections and of very polite manners in his social dealings.

¹⁶⁹ Imam Ṣādiq said, “Oil and vinegar is the diet of the prophets”, al-Kāfi, vol 6, p328.

Like his father, Imam Ṣādiq (A) lived during a period when the political situation was going through turbulence stages and therefore the rulers did not have the time to target the Imam to the extent of preventing him from any activity. This gave Imam al-Ṣādiq (A), just like his father, the opportunity to continue the task Imam al-Bāqir (A) started, which was the managing of the Islamic university and the teaching of Islamic sciences such as Qur'an, jurisprudence (Fiqh), etc. It is reported that more than four thousand scholars graduated from the school of Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (A), and between them, up to ninety thousand hadith have been reported from Imam Ṣādiq (A).

Hadith from Imam Ṣādiq (A)

‘Nothing other than three matters continue to bring an individual rewards after death. A charity that Allah helped him establish during his life and this (charity) continues after his death, a good practice acted upon (by others), and an offspring who prays for him.’

‘The right of a Muslim upon another is that he is not full when his brother goes hungry, and he does not quench his thirst when his brother is thirsty, and he is not clothed when his brother is naked; it is most great the right of a Muslim upon his brother.’

‘Love for your Muslim brother what you love for yourself.’

‘Amongst the manners of the ignorant is to answer before he hears (the argument), to oppose before he understands, and to give a judgement upon what he does not know.’

‘He who acts not in accordance with a vision, is like he who is going down the wrong way, and then speeding does not give him anything other than distancing him further from the truth.’

‘The most beloved of my brothers to me is he who presents me my mistakes.’

‘Seventy sins of the ignorant are forgiven before one is forgiven for the scholar.’

‘Make bonds with he who sever ties with you, give to he who denies you, be kind to he who was bad to you, salute he who swore at you, be fair and just to he who fought you, forgive he who oppressed you just as you would like to be forgiven, learn from Allah when He forgives you; do you not see the sun shines upon the believers and the non-believers, and the rain comes down upon the good and the bad?’

The Seventh Imam: Imam Kādīm

Imam Mossā al-Kādīm (A) is the son of Imam Ja’far al-Şādiq (A) and his mother was Ḥamidah al-Muşaffāh.

He was born in Abwā’, a place between Mecca and Medina on Sunday the seventh of *Şafar*, in the year one hundred twenty eight after Hijrah. He died at the age of fifty-five after being poisoned while imprisoned in the jail of the Abbasid ruler Haroon, after fourteen years of unjust and hostile confinement therein, on Friday the twenty-fifth day of the month of *Rajab*, in the year one hundred eighty three Hijrah. His son Imam Ali al-Riḍā prepared his body for burial and was buried where his shrine stands today in Kādīmiyyah, Iraq.

He was the most knowledgeable person of his time and the best of them. He was very generous and brave, apparent and evident in his virtue and learning, of great station and magnificent standing. He was of excellent spiritual perfections, worship extensively and prolonged prostrations before Allah. His immense control over his anger was as such that he became known as *al-Kādīm*, which means one who curbs or contains one’s anger, and for his good deeds and putting things right he used to become known *al-‘Abd al-Şaleḥ*, the Righteous Servant.

The extent of the Imam's knowledge and learning became obvious and apparent in the various fields of learning such that people were astonished and amazed of. One case is that of the famous Christian scholar Borayha, and at the end of the debate the Imam overwhelmed Borayha, and as a result he embraced Islam and became a devout Muslim.¹⁷⁰

Once a poor person asked him for one hundred and the Imam, in order to test the man's knowledge and understanding, asked him a question. When the man answered them, the Imam gave him two thousand Dirhams (gold coins).

He had the most beautiful voice in reciting the holy Qur'an, and he was most of the people in reciting the Qur'an, worshiping, and in his prolonged bowing and prostration before Allah, and more than anyone else in weeping out of fear of the Almighty Allah; so much so that he attained martyrdom while prostrating before Allah.

Hadith from Imam Kāḍim (A)

‘Allah has given the people two proofs, an apparent one and a hidden one. The apparent one is His messengers, prophets and Imams, and the hidden one is the intellect.’

‘Learn thoroughly the teachings of Islam for this learning is the key to the (correct) vision, perfect worship, the means to elevated stations, and honourable ranks in this world and the hereafter. For the merit of the learned scholar (Faḡeeh) over the lifelong worshiper (Ābid) is that of the sun over the planets. And he who does not seek knowledge about his religion, none of his achievements would be accepted by Allah.’

‘Endeavour to divide your time into four categories: one for the supplication with Allah, another to make a living, the third for socialising with the brethren and those trustworthy individuals who are honest to you and point out to you your mistakes in

¹⁷⁰ Al-Tawḡeed, by al-Şadooq, p270.

confidence, and the fourth to seek in seclusion non-forbidden pleasures, and with this you gain strength and vigour for the other three.’

‘. . . and the believer is the brother of the believer even if not born by the same parents. Cursed is he who accuses his brother, cursed is he who cheats his brother, cursed is he who does not admonish and advise his brother, cursed is he who backbites his brother.’

‘He whose two days are equal is a looser, and he whose second day is worse than his first is cursed. He who does not observe progress in himself is in retreat and he who is in retreat, death is better for him than life.’

Addressing one of his disciples:

‘O Hishām! If you had a nut in your hand and the people said you have a pearl, it would be of no benefit to you and you know it is a nut. And if you had a pearl in your hand and the people said you have a nut in your hand, it would be of no detriment to you and you know that it is a pearl.’

‘Any word of wisdom is sought after by the faithful Muslim, so always seek knowledge . . .’

The Eighth Imam: Imam Ridā

He is Imam Ali al-Ridā (A), son of Imam Mossa al-Kādim (A) and his mother was Lady Najmah.

He was born on Thursday the eleventh day of the month of *Dhilqa’dah*, in the year one hundred forty eight in the holy city of Medina, and he died a martyr after being poisoned on Friday on the last day of *Safar* in the year two hundred and three. His body was prepared for burial by his son Imam Muhammad al-Jawād and buried him in Khurāsān, Iran where his shrine stands today.

His knowledge, virtue, nobility, generosity, moral perfections, humility, and worship of Allah are too well known to require mentioning.

Ma'mun, the Abbasid ruler of the time, as part of his devious plot, requested Imam Riḍā leave the holy city of Medina and go to Khurāsān and called upon him to take charge of the administration of the Muslim government instead of Ma'mun, but Imam Riḍā refused the offer, because he was aware of the intrigue and devious intention behind it, just as his great grandfather Amir-ul-Mo'mineen refused the offer of *khilāfah* [i.e. leadership of the Muslim nation] – in the case of the *shawrā*¹⁷¹ – when it was offered to him by Ibn 'Awf on the condition that he runs the government according to the policies of the *sheikhayn*.¹⁷² Imam Ali could see that acceptance of the offer of *khilāfah* hinges on one of two scenarios both of which necessitate lying and are contrary to Allah's contentment.

The first is that for him to accept the condition and not act upon it – just as Othman did – and this is verbal lying, and loathed by the Almighty, and as for the second possibility, that the imam accepts

¹⁷¹ The *shawrā* here is in reference to the so called consultation committee that was set up by the second ruler Omar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb to choose the leader after him, with some pre conditions.

¹⁷² *Sheikhayn* literally means the 'two sheikhs', which is in reference to the two rulers – Abu Bakr and Omar. In turn they took over the reign of the Muslim nation after the martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his progeny. This was contrary to the specific instructions of Allah's Messenger when the prophet – on instructions from the Almighty – appointed Imam Ali to lead the Muslim nation after him, and subsequently he instructed those present – at the Ghadir Khumm who were more than 120,000 – to swear oath of allegiance to Imam Ali as the Commander of the Believers before Allah and His messenger. Once they had a firm grip on power each one of them continued to devise policies and govern contrary to the teachings of the prophet of Islam throughout their reign. Their followers wanted this to continue. Hence the precondition that the new ruler is to abide by and continue with the policies of the *sheikhayn*, as prescribed by ibn 'Awf. Imam Ali wanted to govern according to the Book of Allah and the teachings of His messenger only, and thus he was refused the opportunity to govern accordingly. [While on his deathbed, Omar appointed a seven-man *shawrā* committee to appoint the new leader after him, and dictated that the final say is with Ibn 'Awf.] Translator.

the condition and acts accordingly, which means accepting the policies of the *sheikhayn* while he opposed them, which is practical lying and condemned by the Almighty. So the imam had no option to please Allah other than rejecting the offer and not accepting the precondition.¹⁷³

When Imam Ali al-Riḍā (A) did not accept the offer of heading the government, Ma'mun could see his plot disintegrating and his whole plot failing; the very plot he had called the imam upon to go to Khurāsān. As a last resort, he offered the imam to be his successor, and he forced the imam to accept the offer. The imam accepted on the precondition that he would never be asked to partake in any aspect or business of the government.

Imam Ali al-Riḍā, peace be upon him, inherited his knowledge from his noble fathers and his grandfather Allah's messenger peace be upon him and his pure family. Some of his vast knowledge with respect to religions, beliefs, and principles came to light in debate sessions when Ma'mun invited him and scholars from various religions and different schools of thought to attend a seminar of debate over the theological issues and matters of the doctrines of faith. This particular event became known as al-Rukbān seminar. History books report the details of the debates that took place between the Imam and the other scholars and how Imam Ali al-Riḍā (A) provided convincing and irrefutable proofs and evidence to their questions and arguments.

For his worship he would stay many nights awake keeping vigil in prayers and worship and would complete reading the holy Qur'an in three days. Very often he would pray one thousand rak'ahs in twenty-four hours, with prolonged prostrations lasting many hours and he would fast very often.

¹⁷³ See for example the commentary of Ibn Abi al-Ḥadeed on Nahj al-Balāghah, vol. 1, p188, on the issue of the *shawrā*.

He was very generous and he would help people particularly during the night.

He never did any injustice to anyone in words or deeds. He would never speak harshly. He would never sit back leaning in the presence of someone sitting.¹⁷⁴ He would never laugh loudly. He would call upon all the members of his family and servants to have food together.

Hadith from Imam Ridā (A)

‘Socialise with one another, so that you get friendlier.’

‘He who repents is as he who has no sin.’

‘Cleanliness and hygiene is one of the traits and manners of the prophets.’

‘The most superior knowledge is the knowledge of the self.’

‘(In the Qur’an) Allah has commanded (us to do) three things which are linked to another three. He ordered (us to perform) the daily prayers and Zakāh, and he who performs the prayers but not the Zakāh, his prayers would not be accepted. He ordered (us) to be thankful to Him and to the parents, and he who is not thankful to his parents is not thankful to Allah. He ordered (us) to be pious and have fear of him, and keep close ties with the relatives, and he who does not keep close ties with his relatives is not pious.’

‘He who likens Allah to His creations is a Mushrik (polytheist), and he who attributes to Him something which He has forbidden is a Kāfir (infidel).’

‘The merit of Emān (faith) is a grade higher than that of Islam (Submission to Allah’s will), and the merit of Taqwa (Fear-of-Allah) is a grade higher than that of Emān, and the merit of Yaqeen (conviction) is a grade higher than that of Taqwa, and

the sons of Adam (or human beings) are not given anything better than Yaqeen.’

‘Emān has four pillars: Trusting and relying on Allah, Contentment and pleasure with the will of Allah, Submitting to the ordinance of Allah, and Delegation and turning over (the affairs) to Allah.’

‘Emān is to discharge the obligatory duties and to refrain from committing forbidden acts. Emān is recognition by heart, admission by tongue, and practicing, by all limbs, everything that has been ordered.’

‘The Qur’an is the sturdy rope of Allah and His firm grip, and His perfect road that leads to paradise, and delivers from the fire. It does not pall despite the passing of aeons, and does not dissipate despite being oft repeated, because it was not created for one time rather than another but it is the argument and proof for all humanity. Falsehood does not approach it from before or from behind, a revelation from The All Wise, The All Praised.’

A narrator reports, I asked Imam al-Riḍā (A) ‘What do you say about the Qur’an?’ Imam Riḍā (A) replied:

‘It is the word of Allah, and so do not surpass it, and do not seek guidance in anything else, for you will be deviated and go astray.’

The Ninth Imam: Imam al-Jawād

Imam Muhammad al-Jawād (A) is the son of Imam Ali al-Riḍā (A) and his mother is lady Sabikah.

He was born on Friday the tenth of *Rajab* in the year one hundred and ninety-five after the Hijrah in the holy city of Medina. He died a martyr in Baghdad after being poisoned at the end of *Dhi-*

¹⁷⁴ i.e. he would always sit upright in their presence out of respect. Ed..

Qqa'dah in the year two hundred and twenty after Hijrah. His son Imam Ali al-Hādi prepared his body for burial and he was buried in the Quraysh cemetery – as it was then known – next to the grave of his grandfather Imam Mosa al-Kādim where his shrine stands now, currently in the Kādimiyyah district of Baghdad, Iraq.

Imam Muhammad al-Jawād excelled all others of his time in knowledge, spiritual perfection, generosity, social and moral manners, and in the art of eloquent communications. He would carry gold and silver with him to give to the needy. If he was asked for assistance by any of his uncles Imam al-Jawād (A) would give them no less than 50 gold coins, and if any of his aunts asked him for assistance, he would give them no less than 25 gold coins.

More people became aware of the vast knowledge of Imam al-Jawād when some eighty scholars from different places met with him on his way back from Hajj and asked him various questions, to all of which the Imam provided convincing and irrefutable answers. On one occasion an amazing event is reported that many people gathered around him to ask him various questions, which numbered around thirty thousand, and he answered all of them correctly, and at that time he was only nine years old. Age factor, however, is not an issue in the case of the members of the Family Revelation [of the Prophet], in particular when the holy Qur'an speaks of giving the Book and Prophethood to Jesus son of Mary while he was a toddler in the cradle.¹⁷⁵

In appreciation to the Imam's station, Ma'mun, the ruler of the time, gave to him his daughter in marriage after the Imam answered all the questions that the ruler had asked him for trial purposes.

¹⁷⁵ The holy Qur'an, Mary (19):30. And similarly the case of John the Baptist (Yaḥyā) who was given the book and prophethood while he was a young boy, as mentioned in the Qur'an, Mary (19): 12.

Hadith from Imam Jawād (A)

‘He who trusts upon Allah, He guides him to felicity and happiness.

He who depends upon Allah, He suffices him the matters of his life.

The trust in Allah is a fortress where no one other than the trustworthy believer is housed.

Reliance on Allah is salvation from all evil and protection from all enemies.

Islam is a source of honour.

Knowledge is treasure.

Silence is light.

The utmost degree of Zuhd (abstinence) is avoiding sin.

There is no destruction for Islam like innovations (heresy).

Nothing is more decadent for man than greed.

Through (the pious) ruler the people are guided.

Through supplication calamities are repelled. . . .’

‘If the ignorant keeps silent, people would not differ.’

‘As the beneficences of Allah upon a person increase, the needs of the people towards him enhance. Thus he who does not meet those needs, exposes those beneficences to annihilation.’

‘You should know that you never go out of sight of Allah, so watch in what state you are.’

‘The one who commits aggression and tyranny, and the one who helps him to it, and the one who condones it, they are all partners in crime.’

‘Forbearance is the garment of the scholar, make sure you clothe yourself with it.’

‘The believer needs three qualities; facility from Allah, self-admonishing, and acceptance of constructive criticism.’

‘Three practices enable an individual to reach the pleasure and approval of Almighty Allah: frequent repentance, leniency, and giving to charity regularly.

And (there are) three qualities which if one possesses, he would never regret: avoiding hastiness, consulting (with others), and to rely on Allah once a decision is made.’

The Tenth Imam: Imam Hādi

Imam Ali al-Hādi (A) is the son of Imam Muhammad al-Jawād (A) and his mother was Samānah.

He was born in the holy city of Medina on the second of Rajab in the year two hundred and twelve after Hijrah. He died martyr after being poisoned on Monday the third of Rajab in the year two hundred fifty four after the Hijrah in Samara, Iraq, and his son Imam Hasan al-Askari prepared his body for burial and buried him in his house in Samara where his shrine stands today.

Imam al-Hādi remarkably excelled all others of his time in the fields of human perfections, knowledge, generosity, politeness of manners, worshipping Allah, moral qualities, way of life, and discipline.

One example of his generosity is the case when the Abbasid ruler of his time sent him thirty thousand Dirhams, the imam gave the lot to an Arab from Kufah, saying, “*pay your debts out of this and spend the rest on your family and relatives, and accept our apologies.*” The man, thanking the Imam, said, “Sir, the debts on

me are less than one third of it but ﴿Allah best knows to whom He entrusts His message﴾¹⁷⁶ and took the money and left.

Hadith from Imam Hādi (A)

‘Better than the good-deed is he who performs it.

More striking than the beautiful words is he who says them.

More worthy than knowledge is he who conveys it.

More evil than evil is he who causes it.

More frightening than fear is he who brings it.’

‘Allah cannot be defined except with what he has defined himself. How can He be defined when wits are unable to perceive Him, imaginations fail to reach Him, minds cannot explain Him, and the visions cannot encompass Him?’

‘When justice is dominant, one may not suspect another unless he is sure of his suspicion about him, and when injustice is dominant, one should not assume good thing about another unless he is sure of it.’

‘Jealousy erodes the good deeds and brings about the bad fortunes.’

‘Beware of jealousy for it will work against you and will have no effect on your foe.’

‘Indeed, both the scholar and the student share in prosperity.’

‘Allah has made the world a place of calamity and the hereafter a place of outcome. He has set the calamities of the world to be the cause of the reward of the hereafter, and has made the reward of the hereafter a substitute for the calamities of the world.’

‘Self-conceit restrains (one) from seeking knowledge and brings about scorn and ignorance.’

¹⁷⁶ This is in reference to Qur’anic verse [6:124].

The Eleventh Imam: Imam Askari

Imam Hasan al-Askari is the son of Imam Ali al-Hādi and his mother is lady Ḥudayth.

He was born in the holy city of Medina on Friday the tenth¹⁷⁷ of Rabi'-II in the year two hundred thirty two after the Hijrah. He died a martyr after being poisoned on Friday the eighth of Rabi'-I in the year two hundred and sixty Hijrah. His son Imam al-Mahdi prepared his body for burial and buried him next to the grave of his father Imam al-Hādi in Samara where his shrine stands today.

His noble qualities such as his knowledge, generosity, perfect manners, servitude to Allah and excellent personality are well known and are ideal examples for others to follow. In physical terms, he was beautifully tall, had a handsome face, and was perfectly shaped. He generated great awe in the hearts and electrifying station in the souls. In his manners, way of life, and the beautiful treatment with people he used to resemble his great grand father Allah's messenger peace be upon them.

On the matter of his generosity Ismael narrates:

“Once I sat on the way waiting for the Imam to pass by and when he did I complained about my difficulties and asked him for financial help. The Imam said, “You swear by Allah falsely while you have buried 200 Dinars as a saving! What I say is not to deny you financial help.” Then the Imam asked his servant to give him all he had. So his servant gave me 100 Dinars.”¹⁷⁸

Having heard about his grace and generosity, a man, who needed 500 Dirhams, approached Imam al-Askari (A) and the Imam gave him 500 Dirhams, and another 300 Dirhams on top of that.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Some reports state the eighth.

¹⁷⁸ Al-Irshād, vol. 2, p 332

¹⁷⁹ ibid

Everyone testified to his beautiful and righteous attributes magnanimous traits, such that the Christians testified that he resembled Jesus Christ in his knowledge, noble virtues, and miracles.

The Imam was known for his extensive worship to Allah, continuous night prayers, his good deeds as well as his nobility and awe.

Hadith from Imam Askari (A)

‘No respectful individual abandons the truth unless he becomes debased, and no abject individual pursues the truth unless he becomes honourable.’

‘He who advices and criticises his brother covertly, has decorated him. He who does so in public has rebuked him.’

‘The best of your brothers is the one who forgets your sins and remembers your favour to him.’

‘The heart of the fool is in his mouth, and the mouth of the wise is in his heart.’

‘He who uses false means to achieve his ends would regret his policy.’

‘Rage is the key to every evil.’

‘It is sufficient politeness and courtesy for you to refrain from what you dislike to see from others.’

‘Be cautious about seeking fame and power for they lead to annihilation.’

Twelfth Imam: Imam Mahdi

Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi, al-Hujjah – the Proof or Authority (of Allah over mankind) – is the son of Imam Hasan al-Askari peace be upon him and may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, and his mother is Lady Nargis peace be upon her.

He was born in Samarrā', Iraq, on the eve of the fifteenth of Sha'bān, in the year two hundred fifty five after Hijrah.

He is the last of the authorities (Ḥujjah) of Allah on earth and the seal of the caliphs or successors of Allah's messenger peace be upon him and his progeny. He is the last of the twelve Imams or leaders of the Muslims. By His will, Almighty Allah has prolonged his honourable life span in this world so that the earth is not left without an authority (Ḥujjah), for if it were not for the *ḥujjah*, "the earth would have subsided and swallowed its people"¹⁸⁰. He is hidden from views, and Almighty Allah shall permit him to reappear when the earth has been filled with wrong and oppression, in order to fill it with justice and righteousness¹⁸¹.

The holy Prophet peace be upon him and his pure family, and the *ma'ṣoom* Imams peace be upon them, have stated that Imam Mahdi will have a long occultation, when no one remain steadfast and adhere to his *walāyah* except those whom Allah has tested their hearts. His benefit to the people of the earth during his occultation will be like that of the sun from behind the clouds. Almighty Allah will keep him alive, but hidden from views, until the time of his reappearance, when he will reappear by the leave of Almighty Allah and have total sovereignty over the entire world and spreads justice and righteousness throughout, and extends Islam through its every corner, and implements the Qur'an over all and in every aspect of life; thus goodness, happiness, and prosperity will cover all lands, all creatures, and then will be realised the Almighty's word, ﴿to proclaim it over all religions, though the polytheists may resent﴾¹⁸².

¹⁸⁰ Al-Iḥtijāj, vol. 2, p317

¹⁸¹ This is in reference to the Prophetic hadith that Imam Mahdi will certainly appear to fill the earth with justice and righteousness, after it has been filled with wrong and oppression. Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 26, p262.

¹⁸² The holy Qur'an, [9:33], and [61:9]

O Allah! Hasten his reappearance, ease his immergence, make us amongst his supporters and helpers.

When Imam Mahdi came to prepare his father body for burial and performed the deceased-prayer for him, the tyrants of the time learned of there being a successor to Imam al-Askari, and thus they feared for their throne, plotted to detained him and eliminate him – just as they did to his pure forefathers – in a bid to rid themselves of what is awaiting them, according to the prophecies made by Allah’s messenger about the news of the 12th imam who will terminate the reigns of the tyrants and overcome them. However, Imam Mahdi was commanded by Allah Almighty to go into occultation and hide from the views of the people. So when Abbasid spies located his whereabouts, and they stormed his house, he hid from their views, through exiting from the other door, of the basement of his house, to outside the house, without any one of them seeing him. And since the place of his disappearance from views was his house, the Muslims took the place attributed to him – in the holy city of Sāmarrā’ – which is known as “*sirdāb al-ghaybah*” as a shrine and a mosque.

Abu Sa’id al-Khidri reports that when Rasulollah (S) was ill, which led to his death, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’ (A) entered the room he was laying in to nurse him (S) and I was sitting on the right of Rasulollah (S). Noticing his weakness Fatimah (A) was upset by his state she started to cry. Rasulollah (S) said to her (A):

‘Why do you cry O Fatimah? Do you not know that Allah sought for the best on earth and chose your father as His Messenger, and then sought again He chose your husband and advised me to marry him to you and instructed me to appoint him as my successor. Do you not know that by the grace of Allah upon you, Allah married you to the most knowledgeable of all, and the most forbearing of all, and the foremost of all having the faith of Islam? Fatimah (A) smiled and Rasulollah

(S) went on to inform her about what Allah has given to the Ahl-ul-Bayt (A) by saying:

Allah has given us we the Ahl-ul-Bayt six qualities which have not been given to anyone before us and or to anyone after us the Ahl-ul-Bayt.

1. Our prophet is the best of the prophets and he is your father,
2. and our waṣī, or caliph, is the best waṣī and he is your husband,
3. and our martyr is the best martyr and he is your father's uncle Ḥamzah,
4. and from us is al-Hasan the Sibṭ (grandson of the prophet) of this Ommah , and he is your son,
5. and from us is al-Husayn the Sibṭ (grandson of the prophet) of this Ommah , and he is your son,
6. and from us is the Mahdi, Saviour, of this Ommah, behind whom Jesus will pray.

Then the prophet patted the shoulder of al-Husayn (A) and said 'and from him is the Mahdi of this Ommah''

Ibn Abbas reports that Rasulollah (S) said:

'Indeed Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib is the Imam of my Ommah and my caliph and successor upon this Ommah after me, from his sons is the Qā'im (al-Mahdi) the Awaited, who would fill the world with justice after it had been overcome by tyranny and injustice. By He who sent me with Truth as a Bearer of glad tidings and a Warner, those who remain steadfast and believe in him are dearer than red sulphur.

Then Jābir ibn Abdullah al-Anṣārī stood up and asked: 'O Rasulollah! Will the Qā'im from your descendants go into an occultation?' Rasulollah (S) replied,

‘Yes by my Lord. For Allah shall test and purify the believers and wipe out the non-believers. O Jābir! This matter is one of the secrets of Allah, hidden from the servants of Allah. Thus I warn you about doubting about this for doubting the wish of Allah is Kufr (disbelief).’

Hadith from Imam Mahdi (A):

‘Almighty Allah sent Muhammad peace be upon him as a Mercy to the worlds, and with him He perfected His beneficence, and sealed His prophets, and He sent him (with His message) to all people (to come).’

‘And as for the reason of the occultation, Almighty Allah says, ﴿O ye who believe! ask not questions about things which, if made plain to you, may cause you trouble﴾¹⁸³

‘My benefit (to the people) during my occultation is similar to that of the sun when it disappears from sight behind the clouds.’

‘I am the Mahdi, and I am the leader of the time, I am the one who would fill it (the earth) with justice after it has been overcome with injustice and aggression. Indeed the earth never remains without a Proof and Authority (of Allah).’

‘I am the seal of the awṣiyā’ (successors) and through me Allah would remove the hardship from my people and my followers (Shi’a).’

‘We have not ignored your consideration, and have not forgotten your mention; otherwise hardship would have descended upon you and your enemies would have exterminated you.’

‘. . . and if Allah give us the permission of speech, then truth will manifest and falsehood would disappear.’

¹⁸³ The holy Qur’an: The Table Spread (5): 101.

‘As for the ongoing events, refer to the narrators of our hadith (i.e. the Fuqahā’), for they are my claim and proof upon you and I am the claim and proof of Allah upon them.’

‘Let every one of you do what brings closer to our love, and abstain from what brings about our displeasure and anger.’

‘Increase and maintain the Du’a for the Faraj (the reappearance of the Imam) for that is the relief for you too.’

‘Allah insists that eventually Truth must hold and Falsehood must decline.’

‘Nothing like the daily prayers forces the nose of the Satan to the ground, so perform the daily prayers and force his nose to the ground.’

‘If our Shi’a (followers), may Allah help and succeed them to His obedience, were united in wholeheartedly honouring the promise and obligation that is upon them, there would have been no delay in meeting us (i.e. in our reappearance), and bliss and felicity for them would have hastened by seeing us with full knowledge and certainty of testifying to our (leadership)’

‘As for the Dawn of the Relief (i.e. the reappearance of the Imam), this is for Allah to say, and those foretellers (about the time of the dawn) say lies.’

‘None of my fathers, peace be upon them, but each of them had (enforced) upon him an allegiance to the tyrant of his time. However when I arise there will be no allegiance upon me for any of the tyrants.’

‘O My Master! You are the One who bestowed upon me this position and station, and with it favoured me over many of Your creatures. I ask You to send your mercy and bliss upon Muhammad and his household, and to fulfil what You promised, for You are truthful and You do not break Your promise, and You are able upon everything.’

5. Resurrection

Resurrection means that Almighty Allah will bring human beings back to life in the hereafter after having caused them to die in the world, to reward those who did good for their good deed, and punish those who did evil for their evil acts.

One who has faith, and does the good deeds, praying, fasting, speaking the truth, maintaining sincerity, giving shelters to the orphans and feeding the destitute and suchlike, the Almighty will admit him/her into Paradise wherein rivers flow; in vast mercy, magnificent palaces, devoted spouses, and the *Riḍwān* (contentment) from Allah is the greatest bliss¹⁸⁴.

But those who disbelieved, committed evil deeds, spoke lies, broke promises, committed murders, stole others' properties, committed adultery or consumed intoxicants, and suchlike, the Almighty will reward them a Hell filled with fire and torment, its food is bitter, its drink boiling, [they are] in permanent suffering, and eternal and demeaning torture, we seek refuge to Almighty Allah from all that.

Of course, before Paradise and Hell there are two stations:

1. **The Grave**, which is the first of the many stages of the *Barzakh* world to which 'death' is the gateway. In the grave every one will be questioned about his or her deeds, and the person will be rewarded for his good deeds, and punished for his bad. For this, Allah's messenger, peace be upon him and his pure family, said "The grave is either a pit of Hell's pits, or a garden of the gardens of Paradise."¹⁸⁵ As an elucidating example, one's condition in the grave is similar to one's state when dreaming during sleep; one would either have a pleasant dream that makes him happy, or have a bad dream causing him stress and torment, while a person who might be in the vicinity of the sleeping one and sees him does not realize whether the

¹⁸⁴ In reference to the Qur'anic verse [9:72].

¹⁸⁵ *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 6, p275.

sleeping person is in comfort or in torment. In the same way the living do not see from the dead other than the lifeless bodies; and they do not realize whether a dead person is in torment or in bliss. This is because the criteria of the world of Barzakh are governed by new equations, and they do not resemble any of the equations of the world that we have come to know and get used to.

2. **The Resurrection** takes place after these bodies are brought back to life and resurrected from their graves, when Almighty Allah will bring together all the people in a vast desert for requital and reward. Therein the great court of justice will be assembled and the balances [of measuring or weighing up deeds] established, and the judges – who are Allah’s messengers and their appointed successors – will come, and the *ṣuḥuf* or the books of deeds will be disseminated. The witnesses will come to give witness, and the limbs and the body parts of the individual will admit to what they did and commit, thus the believers who did good in the world will prosper by gaining the Paradise, and the criminals who used to do evil deeds in the world will suffer the Fire.

Thus it is imperative for one to strive with all one’s ability to do good deeds, and to refrain from any bad deed, so that one would not suffer in the hereafter eternal suffering from which there is no refuge and nowhere to run; where the criminals will remain in permanent imprisonment and perpetual torment. Almighty Allah states, ﴿So whoso does a speck’s weight of good will see it, and so whoso does a speck’s weight of evil will see it﴾¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸⁶ The holy Qur’an, the Quake (99): 7-8

PART TWO

Foroo‘ al-Deen

or

The Essential Principles and Practices of Islam

Before beginning with the presentation of the second part of Islam’s outstanding teachings, it is worth mentioning that the first part of Islam’s splendid teachings; namely *Oṣool al-Deen*; the fundamental principles or beliefs of Islam, which were covered earlier – must be the belief of the individual out of reason and conviction by investigation, for they are issues related to thought and belief, and it is not sufficient for one to rely on and follow others on these matters.

However, in the case of *Foroo‘ al-Deen* or the essential rulings and practices of Islam that we are to discuss here, involve all aspects of life, covering one’s every acts, deeds, and movements from before one’s birth to after his death. Since one is generally not able to readily attain expert knowledge in every aspect of all these acts, deeds, and movements, and acquire their rulings from their detailed sources that are mentioned in the four sources; namely the Noble Qur’an, the honourable *sunnah* – i.e. the hadith of the prophet and the narrations of his Ahl al-Bayt peace be upon them all – consensus, and reason, therefore Islam has allowed one to follow a *mujtahid* (learned expert) who is fully qualified for *taqleed* on these matters, and to refer to him in order to make things easy for the individual concerned.

Of course *Foroo‘ al-Deen* are many, and so we shall mention the most important of them which are the famous ten, and then we will elucidate some of those that require clarification by the will of Allah. The ten famous *Foroo‘ al-Deen* are as follows:

1. *Ṣalā* or the daily obligatory prayers,
2. *Ṣawm* or fasting,
3. *Khums* or the one-fifth religious duty,
4. *Zakāh* or the duty applicable to certain commodity,
5. *Hajj* or pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca,
6. *Jihād* or striving,
7. *Amr bil-Ma'roof* – promoting virtue or enjoining good,
8. *Nahy anil-Munkar* – prohibiting evil,
9. *Tawalli* – aligning with Allah's disciples,
10. *Tabarri* – dissociating from the enemies of Allah.

Needless to say, these ten principles, as well as other principles such as buying, selling, marriage, divorce, punishment, compensation are discussed in detail in our book *The Manual of Islamic Law*. However, some of the important principles, which are of particular significance in the modern times, such as human community, social order, politics, economy, the army, the armed forces, the justice system, culture, mass media, health, medical issues, individual and social freedoms, and suchlike are the ones we shall discuss in this section by the will of Almighty Allah.

Society and the System of Islam

There is no doubt that Islam has its own particular system for governance and for managing the affair of society, just as there is also no doubt that this particular Islamic system was working, whether when fully or partially implemented, for thirteen centuries until Islamic government fell more than half a century ago.

One also hears that the Islamic civilization was an exemplary one to the greatest extent, and that through its just divine laws Islam guarantees to solve the world's problems, and if it is brought back to governance the world will become Paradise and the people will live therein in utopia, comfort, happy, and bliss.

So what is that system?

Is it possible for the Islamic system to come back to life during the space and nuclear age, and during the internet and communication revolution?

And how would Islam solve the problems if it took charge?

These are pressing questions that are worth answering.

The answers that we will give to such questions here may astonish the reader and he might think we are talking of some utopian city. We are of course ready to eliminate his astonishment by presenting the Islamic the proofs and evidences for the answers given, and presenting clear examples of the history of the pure Islamic governance, which proves the ability of the Islamic system to come back to life, and take charge – with total competence and excellence – for it is the only system from amongst the systems of the world – whether in the old times, currently, or in the future – that is able, through its divine laws, to manage developed and progressive world with a management that will realise its hopes and wishes, solve its problems, eliminate its crises, eradicate what hardship it has, as well as diseases and ignorance, delivering it to the shore of safety and security, peace and tranquillity. This system contains all the bases for development and progress, and all that mankind needs in this respect; politics, economics, freedom and suchlike, outlining some of them as follows:¹⁸⁷

Islam and Politics

Question: Is there politics in Islam?

¹⁸⁷ For more details in this particular field, see from amongst the *al-Fiqh* Series, the books of “The Islamic Government”, (volumes 101-102), “Politics” (volumes 105-106), “Economics” (volumes 107-108), “Society” (vol. 109-110), “Management” (vol. 103-104), “Governance in Islam” (vol. 99), “Freedoms” (vol. 139), and also “The New Order for the World of Faith, Freedom, Welfare, and Peace”, “If Islam Were To Be Established”, “Islamic System of Government”, “The Means to Awaken the Muslims”, “The Dynamics of Change for the Salvation of the Muslims”, and suchlike by the late Ayatollah al-U \bar{d} ma Sayyid Muhammad Shirazi.

Answer: Yes, Islam has the best kind of politics, and the finest kind of management for the country and the people.

Q. Is the Islamic system of government a republic or a monarchist system?

A. It is neither a republic nor a monarchist in the conventional sense, as found in the political dictionary of the western world today. It is a form of consultative system, and given the consensus nature of the system it would be correct to call it a republican, for the system of governance in Islam is neither monarchy nor hereditary.

Q. What are the qualities of the head of the Islamic government?

A. He is a Muslim believer who has thorough understanding and expertise in Islam. He is proficient about the worldly affairs and is empowered with the ability not to deviate from the standards of justice in all matters. So, whoever possesses these qualities and the majority of people accept him, he can be the head of the government. Whenever he loses any of these qualities he is removed from his position immediately. However, if the people would not agree with his leadership they have the right to change him and choose another individual who meets the criteria.

Q. Who chooses the Islamic head of government?

A. The majority of the people do, this is of course if he is not a *ma'soom* who has been appointed by Almighty Allah such as the prophet or one of the *ma'soom* Imams peace be upon them all.

Governance

Q. Are there elections, referendum, voting, parliament, and municipalities, and suchlike in the Islamic system?

A. Yes, it has all of these – and that is with respect to our time, the time of occultation of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance – but in the Islamic format. So for example, the

national assembly or parliament is to apply and implement the general laws to whatever they are applicable but it is not for legislation and law-making [outside the framework of Islamic laws], since legislation and law-making is the right of Almighty Allah, firstly, and secondly because there is no deficiency in the laws of Islam nor is there any shortage that we need to legislate. Islam has elucidated for us the law of everything, “even the compensation of a scratch”, as the hadith goes¹⁸⁸, and in another hadith, “the ḥalāl of Muhammad is ḥalāl until the day of judgement, and his ḥarām is ḥarām until the day of judgement”¹⁸⁹.

Therefore, it is not permissible for anyone to prescribe anything as ḥalāl or ḥarām, and the only right there is the freedom in implementation, for example Islam has decreed that trading is the right of the people to engage in, thus it is not permissible for the parliament to change or modify this right by making it exclusive or the right of the government only. On the other hand, as Islam has not prescribed the flow of traffic to be on the right or left, therefore it is for the parliament to decide on which side it should be, for Islam has in general enjoined to order and prevention of disorder and anarchy, and thus to decide for the traffic to be on the right, say, is in accordance with the order which Islam has promoted and legislated, and the same goes with the rest of the issues.

Q: Why do we then see shortfalls and deficiencies, problems, and man-made legislation in Islamic countries?

A: These countries are Islamic by name and slogan only and nothing more than that. Almighty Allah has said,

¹⁸⁸ al-Kāfi, vol. 1, p238.

¹⁸⁹ al-Kāfi, vol. 2, p17.

﴿And whoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down and wretched and on the Day of Judgment We shall raise him blind﴾.¹⁹⁰

So he who begins to legislate and makes laws himself, and turns away from the laws of Allah, he shall narrow down and straiten his life and his sustenance – just as life is narrowed down and straitened for the Islamic countries today – and he shall have humiliation and hell fire in the hereafter.

Duties of the Islamic Government

Q. What are the duties and tasks of Islamic Government towards the nation?

A. Its duty is to uphold justice amongst the people, inside and outside the country, and to push life forward towards progress, the provision of sustenance and wealth, to educate and bring about awareness, and to protect their security and stability.

Q. What laws does the Islamic government adhere to?

A. The laws that are derived from the Qur'an, the *sunnah*¹⁹¹, consensus, and reason.

Q. Who gives these laws the final shape for practical purposes?

A. The just *fuqahā'* – i.e. the learned scholars of Islamic law and jurisprudence who do not deviate from the standards of justice – from amongst the *marāje'* who are expert in both religious and current affairs, to whom the people refer in *taqleed*.

Q. Are political parties recognised in Islam?

A. There is no objection to [political] parties that [operate] under the supervision of the scholar *marāje'* if this is in aid of forming a

¹⁹⁰ The Holy Qur'an, Ṭāhā (20): 124.

¹⁹¹ Needless to say the *sunnah* is the hadith of the prophet and the narrations of his Ahl al-Bayt peace be upon them all, as mentioned at the outset of Part Two.

parliament that implements and enforces the laws. However, as for parties that aim to form a legislative parliament [passing man-made laws contrary to the Islamic law], then there is no room for them in Islam, for legislation is specific only to Almighty Allah.¹⁹²

The Islamic Economy

Q. Is there a system of economy in Islam?

A. Yes and it is the best system the world has ever known.

Q. Is the system of economy of Islam capitalist, socialist, communist or distributive?

A. It is none of the above in the conventional sense.

Q. What is then the Islamic economy?

A. The Islamic economy respects private ownership and sanctions it provided that earnings are not obtained through unlawful means and that all income liabilities are paid.

Q. What are the government's sources of income?

A. They are the obligatory duties that Islam has sanctioned.

Q. What are the obligatory duties?

A. There are four: *Khums*, *Zakāh*, *Khiraāj*, and *Jizyah*.

Sources of income in Islam

Q. Can you explain these duties that are the sources of income in Islam as you have mentioned?

A.

Khums The *Khums* is the 20% rate the just ruler levies on all

¹⁹² In Islam a parliament may address new issues and developments and devise rules and regulations that are based on Islamic principles, and provided that they do not breach the framework of Islamic law. There are texts and principles in Islam that form the basis of those new rules. There is also no objection to the political parties that strive for the reconstruction and development of the country, if there is no deviation from the *shari'ah*.

permissible profits, minerals, found treasures, pearls and other artefacts from the sea, the earnings that are mixed with doubtful ones, the spoils of the battlefield and some categories of land.

Zakāh *Zakāh* is the sum the just ruler takes with rates ranging from 1% to 2.5% levied on sheep, cows, camels, gold, silver, raisins, date, barley, and wheat when each one of these items are over certain threshold, as detailed in fiqh texts.

Khiraāj *Khiraāj* is the sum the just ruler acquires from farmers [working on] conquered land.

Jizyah *Jizyah* is the sum the just ruler obtains from non-Muslims [the Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and other non-believers] living in the Islamic State for their *dhimmi*¹⁹³ status and the protection they attain.

Q. Is there a banking system in Islam?

A. Yes but without usury – for usury in Islam constitutes a declaration of war against Allah and His Messenger – and provided that all the banking laws comply with the laws of Islam. The expenses of its employees are met from various incomes of the bank and if they were insufficient then Bayt-ul-Māl (the Treasury) would pay.¹⁹⁴

Q. Would the Islamic government take other monies from the people, like the various categories of taxes there are today?

A. No. The Islamic government has – absolutely – no right to collect any taxes other than the four mentioned. In the hadith we have, “he who takes money from another without his consent, on the day of Judgement the Almighty Allah will take, for every dirham, seven hundred prayers from amongst his accepted ṣalāh and gives them to the owner of the money”.

¹⁹³ *dhimmi* means ‘being the responsibility of’ the Islamic State.

¹⁹⁴ This is of course after careful study of the bank’s management is conducted.

Bayt-ul-Māl of the Muslims

Q. What would the Islamic government do with the money it receives from the public?

A. In the structure of the Islamic government there is the department called the *Bayt-ul-Māl* (which is the equivalent of the Treasury Department) where all the collected funds are managed, and it is formed to meet the needs of the Muslims. The government uses the *Bayt-ul-Māl* to pay for the expenses of all the construction, development, reforms, projects, etc. in the country. It also uses the *Bayt-ul-Māl* to help the needy run their affairs so that there no destitute left in the society, like helping people to get married, start a business, buy a house, treat an illness, travelling for necessity or if one is left without money while on a journey, or for education that needs money, and suchlike, if he could prove - in a simple way, like providing evidence or witness, or even swearing on oath - his needs, then the treasury would provide him assistance according to his need and status. In this way there will be absolutely no destitute left without help under the Islamic system of government.

Q. Will those four categories of taxes be enough for all such expenses?

A. Yes, they will be enough in addition to the government's other income from its tenements and possessions known as *al-Anfāl*¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ *al-Anfāl*, literally meaning “the extras”, refers to any gains obtained by the prophet without any contribution from the Muslims, or given to him [as gift], as well as ‘estates’ or natural lands and resources such as the mountain peaks and valley beds. They belong to Allah and the prophet, and the 12 appointed imams after him. The Prophet – and the imams – deal with these as appropriate, for the benefits of the Muslims. *Al-Tahdheeb*, by Sheikh al-Tousi, vol. 4, p 132. The holy Qur’an, *al-Anfāl* (8): 1.

or ‘Estates’, and the hadith states, “if they [the Anfāl] were not enough then Almighty Allah would increase their amount”.¹⁹⁶

Minimisation in departments and civil servants

Q. How will the said sources of income be enough, given their relatively small amount, when we see the massive taxes today are still not enough to meet the needs?

A. They will be enough given the government’s low overheads and trustworthiness of those in charge, and relegating the tasks and affairs to the people. For example the number of government employees in the Islamic government is very small, as there is no need for many of the government departments [and their associated army of civil servants] in the Islamic government. Under an Islamic system of government, the public will undertake many of the tasks executed by today’s governments, and what remains in responsibility of the government will be minimal and this will be discharge of in the shortest time and in the simplest way. Needless to say, when the number of civil servants is reduced to a minimum, bureaucracy is eradicated, the affairs of the people are left to the people, and those in charge are trustworthy, then expenses will be reduced and more money will available.¹⁹⁷

Q. Is there any pension scheme in Islam?

¹⁹⁶ Provided of course there is no injustice to the right of others, as well as the future generations.

¹⁹⁷ It was reported in the mass media that one of the prominent western countries suffered from huge budget deficit of millions of dollars, but it managed to reverse the tide through reducing the number of its civil servants in a few of years. In the process it managed to have a budget surplus of millions of dollars; using it for the interest of its people and its economy. Needless to say, minimal number of civil servants is what Islam has instructed to and Allah has enjoined upon the Islamic government, but it is rather unfortunate that the Muslims abandon the teachings of their Islam while the non-Muslims uphold them, thus benefiting from them and achieving progress, prosperity, and leadership, and instead we go backwards and attain humiliation.

A. If one is needy and not able to earn he receives help for what he needs, not a fixed amount, as it is the norm in governments today.

Social Security in Islam¹⁹⁸

Q: Is there social security in Islam?

A: Yes, the best kind of social security and its most supreme.

Q: Can you outline some aspects of the social security in Islam?

A: Social security in Islam is in the best form there is, and since Islam's stance is humanitarian, this security is in harmony with the human nature in its most graceful sense. Indeed history does not record prior to Islam, nor do the civilisations that came after Islam until today a social security system as thorough as the social security in Islam.

Examples of the Islamic Social Security

The social security in Islam declares the following:

1. Whoever dies and leaves debts behind, or if he leave a family behind with no one taking care of them, it is the responsibility of the leader of the Muslims to pay his debt, just as it is his responsibility to take care of his family,¹⁹⁹
2. Whoever dies and leaves wealth behind, all of the wealth goes to his heirs,²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ This section of "Social Security in Islam" is taken from the book "Politics from Islamic Standpoint" by Ayatollah Udmā Sayyid Şādiq Shirazi, which was first published in 1970.

¹⁹⁹ This is on the basis of the Prophet Muhammad's teaching who said, "Whoever dies and leaves debts behind, or if he leaves a family behind [who cannot fend for themselves, then they should come to me and this is my responsibility".

²⁰⁰ This is based on a prophetic hadith that states the above.

3. This is in addition to the monetary services that are provided – from Bayt al-Māl – to all members of the community to meet their basic needs and facilitate a happy life for them.

Now, with all that, is there a social security like the one in Islam in the most civilised states? Certainly not. Rather, the *jāhili* systems before Islam, and also the modern civilised systems today impose heavy taxes on inheritance, just as they do not pay the debt of anyone, nor take care of his family. As an example the following are mentioned.

Example One

In Islamic texts there are great amount that emphasises on the aforementioned system of Islamic social security, and if this points to anything it points to the extent of Islam’s care and concern on emphasising on this great social and humanitarian issue. This matter is repeatedly narrated from the prophet of Islam and imams of the purified progeny, peace be upon them.

It is reported from Imam Ja’far ibn Muhammad al-Ṣādiq – the sixth imam of the Ahl al-Bayt, the purified progeny – that Allah’s messenger said, “I have more authority over every believer than he has over himself²⁰¹, and Ali has more authority over him after me.” It was said to him, “What does that mean?” the imam said, “in relation to the speech of the prophet who said, “he who [dies and] leaves behind a debt, or a family, then it is my responsibility, and he who leaves behind inheritance then it is his heirs””²⁰².

Example Two

Ali ibn Ibrahim in his *tafseer*, or commentary on the Qur’an, reports, through his chain of narrators, from Allah’s messenger

²⁰¹ This is in reference to declaration by the Almighty who states ﴿The Prophet has more authority over the believers than they have over themselves﴾. The holy Qur’an (33): 6.

²⁰² Al-Kāfi, vol.1, p406, Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah, vol.18, p337, Mostadrak al-Wasā’el, vol.13, p400, etc.

who used to say, “A debtor would not go with his debt to one of the Muslim governors, explaining to the governor his difficulty [in repaying his debt], except that the debtor will be released from the burden of his debt, and his debt will be that of the governor of the Muslims in whose hands are the funds of the Muslims”²⁰³.

After narrating this hadith from Allah’s messenger, Imam Ṣādiq said, “And the reason for the majority of the Jews converting to Islam was none other than this speech of Allah’s messenger, for they felt secure about their selves and their families”²⁰⁴.

Example Three

Shaykh al-Mofid narrated in his lectures from Imam Ṣādiq peace be upon him who used to say, “The Prophet ascended the pulpit, and the colour of his cheeks changed, then he turned to the people and said, “O gathering of the Muslims! Indeed [the time] I was sent and [that of] the Hour are like these two²⁰⁵ . . . until he said, O people! Whoever leaves wealth behind, it is for his family and for his heirs, and he who leaves a progeny or a family [who cannot fend for themselves], then it is my responsibility, and [they should come] to me”²⁰⁶.

He also narrated from Imam Ṣādiq peace be upon him who said, “he who demanded money from a man who had borrowed it [from him], who had not used it in extravagance, or in sinning, and it has become difficult for him to pay it back, the claimant of the money should give him the chance until Allah provides him with the money so that he could repay it, and if there were a just governing imam (i.e. leader), then it is imperative for him to pay the debt of the debtor, on the basis of the speech of Allah’s messenger; “he

²⁰³ Mostadrak al-Wasā’el, vol.13, p400, and *Tafseer* al-Qummi, vol.1, p94

²⁰⁴ Al-Kāfi, vol.1, p406.

²⁰⁵ . . . pointing his middle and forefinger, i.e. just as the lengths of the two fingers are close, the times of the mission of the prophet and the day of resurrection are relatively close.

²⁰⁶ Mostadrak al-Wasā’el, vol.13, p399

who leaves a wealth behind it is for his heirs, and he who leaves debt or a progeny behind, then it is my responsibility and [they should come] to me”, and it is the responsibility of the imam (i.e. the leader) whatever the Prophet, peace be upon him and his purified progeny, had guaranteed”.²⁰⁷

Example Four

By virtue of its system in the Bayt al-Māl of the Muslims, and the Islamic social security, Islam made out of the Islamic State, which was of distant horizons, and expansive lands - covering over three-quarters of the planet – and of great populous, a rich nation where poverty was made history.

Shaykh Ḥurr al-‘Āmeli reports in his famous book *Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah* the following incident:

Amir al-Mo’mineen Imam Ali peace be upon him was walking in the streets of Kufah – his capital city – when he noticed a man begging the people. He was greatly shocked to see that and he turned to those around him and said “What is this?!”

They replied, “He is an old Christian man, he is unable to work, he does not have the money to make ends meet, and so he is begging”.

Imam Ali angrily said, “You used him in his youth until he grew old, and now that he is old you have abandoned him?!”

So Imam Ali ordered that a wage be assigned from the Bayt al-Māl of the Muslims for that Christian man to live on so long as he alive.²⁰⁸

This case indicates that poverty has no place in the Islamic State, such that if Amir al-Mo’mineen Imam Ali see one destitute is shocked, and he considers this phenomenon as unnatural, which

²⁰⁷ Mostadrak al-Wasā’el, vol.13, p400

²⁰⁸ Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah, vol.15, p66

has no harmony with the Muslim society and the Islamic system, and then he orders for a salary to be assigned for him to live in comfort, even though he is Christian and does not practice Islam, so that in the Islamic State there is not even one case of poverty and destitution, and so that the world, including the Muslims, realise that the Islamic government eradicates poverty, and improves the state of the poor – not for the Muslims only, but it eliminates poverty even for the non-Muslims so long as they are under the care of the Islamic government.

Example Five

Shaykh al-Kulayni narrates that “When Imam Ali defeated Ṭalḥah and Zubair – in the battle of Camel and his battle with the *Nāketheen* (The Renegades) – the defeated soldiers fled the scene in various directions and they passed by a pregnant woman, who was terrified by their presence, such she miscarried, and the foetus suffered distress and died shortly afterwards, and after a while the woman also died. Imam Ali and his companions passed by the road where the woman and her child laid dead, and he enquired about the matter. They said that she was pregnant and she was terrified and distressed when she saw the fleeing [of the soldiers]. He asked who died first. He was told that the child died before the mother.

So Imam Ali called for her husband, the father of the dead child. He gave him as the heir of his son one-third of the blood money, and he also gave his mother as the heir one-third of the blood money. Then he gave the husband as the heir of his wife half of the blood money that she gained from her son, and gave the rest to the relatives of the dead woman. Then he gave the husband from his dead wife’s blood money one-half, which is 2,500 dirham, and he gave the other half to the relatives of the dead woman, for she had no other offspring other than the one she miscarried when she

was distressed. Imam Ali gave all that from the Treasury (Bayt al-Māl) of the city of Baṣrah.²⁰⁹

This is how Islam made the Bayt al-Māl of the Muslims for the benefit of the Muslims and to meet their needs, and give their rights, for – as given in the honourable hadith – “the right of a Muslim person is not wasted” and “the blood of a Muslim person does not go in vain”²¹⁰, and in this way it facilitates welfare and happiness for the nation under its just social security.

Islam and the Army

Q. Does the Islamic system of government have an organised army?

A. Yes, it has an organised army in the best form.

Q. Is there compulsory draft system?

A. No. Serving in the Islamic army is voluntary.²¹¹

Q. How would that work?

A. The Islamic government would arrange for training opportunities in the various weapons and devices for members of the public so that everyone, young and old, and during their free time such as the weekends and suchlike, receive all the necessary training.

In this way the majority of the nation would receive the training and readiness, and through this it would reduce the expenses for the army. In this way members of the army would remain with their families and at their jobs. Everyone will attend training every day for some hours and then go to their jobs, and stay with their families. When there is an attack on the country it would be mandatory upon everyone to defend the Islamic State. Those who

²⁰⁹ Al-Kāfi, vol.7, p138, Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah, vol.26, p36, etc.

²¹⁰ “Man La Yaḥḍuruḥu al-Faqih”, vol. 4, p100.

would like to serve in the military may do so if they wish to stay in the military permanently and they would receive salary on that basis.

Military Weaponry

Q. What is Islam's opinion about the modern tools of warfare?

A. Islam considers it necessary for the Islamic State to manufacture and possess whatever is required to defend itself and to protect the sanctities of Islam and the security and safety of the Muslims²¹², as the Almighty has said, ﴿and prepare for them whatever you can of power﴾²¹³.

Q. What the Islamic government would do for the relatives of those killed in the battlefield?

A. If they are needy and not able to make their living the government will help them with whatever they may need and according to their status and dignity, and if they are not needy they will not be given anything, unless there is a certain interest in helping them.

Q. What is the position of Islam on the issue of peace and war?

A. Islam is the religion of peace and tranquillity, as the Almighty says; ﴿O ye who believe enter into peace all together﴾²¹⁴. Islam works towards proliferating and disseminating security, safety, peace and tranquillity throughout the world, and equally endeavours to extinguish the hostility of war, put out its flames, root out its cause from amongst the people through uprooting and

²¹¹ The determination of this is in the hands of the Council of the Jurist Authorities – *Shawra al-Fuqahā' al-Marāje'*.

²¹² In parallel, and as a long term policy, it is also mandatory to prevent the manufacture and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons that harm all of humanity, for “there is neither harm nor being harmed in Islam”. [Wasā'el al-Shi'ah, vol.26, p14]

²¹³ The Qur'an, Public Estate (8): 60

²¹⁴ The Qur'an, The Heifer (2): 208

destroying the factors that cause wars, and instead seed the elements that encourage love, harmony, peace and good will. Islam pushes for abandoning war and promotes truce even if the enemy calls for them out of trickery, for the Almighty instructs, ﴿and if they [the enemy] incline towards peace, then you incline towards it [too]﴾²¹⁵. At the same time, Islam prohibits violence, terrorism, treachery, and assassination, and fights anything that leads to fear and apprehension, terror and trepidation in the people.

Freedoms in Islam

Q. Is there freedom in Islam?

A. Yes. Islam provides the best form of freedom. A freedom that the world has not dreamt of even in the best of civilisations it has come across.

Q. What are the Islamic freedoms?

A. They are many and we shall only mention a few in the following:

Freedom of Earning and Trade

1. Freedom in career and trade, in which every member of the nation can choose for himself any career, profession or job he wishes in order to earn his living; so he can earn through hunting, mining for any ore or precious stone or product, procurement of any of the permissible and suchlike. For example, one can import or export any goods he wishes, and buy or sell without restrictions at all. There are no custom charges or tariffs, and no conditions, in Islam. Of course, there is the condition that the goods must be lawful for buying and selling and not prohibited like liquor, and that there is no usury involved, or that the transaction is unlawful.

²¹⁵ The Qur'an, Public Estate (8): 61

The trader may not monopolise, or that it does not constitute harm to the people and their economy.

Freedom in Manufacture and Agriculture

2. Freedom in manufacture and agriculture. One would be entitled to farm any amount of land and in any manner that he wants, and there is no “land reform” in Islam – in the ‘imported’ sense. However, if the land were “conquered by force” by the government then the farmer has to pay a small amount of rent to the government, this rent is called *Khiraāj*. If the farmer is poor the government must see to his need according to his status and dignity. One is allowed to farm as much land as he can, provided one does not deny others the opportunity, and any crop one wants, with the exception of the harmful ones such as opium. The government may not demand any taxes other than *Khums* and *Zakāh* with all their preconditions as mentioned before.

The same is applicable to all manufacturing; they are all free – in the full meaning of the word – with the exception of those prohibited in Islam such as the manufacture of liquors and narcotics.

Freedom of Construction and Development

3. Freedom in construction and development. One is allowed to develop the land in any way one wants. Under the Islamic government an individual may take any piece of free²¹⁶ land and build anything one wants whether a house, shop, factory, mosque, religious centre, school, clinic, hospital, and suchlike, with all freedom [from any restriction or condition] and there are absolutely no charges on any development. The government has no right to make him pay even a single penny for the land or other things. Islam has decreed that “Whoever develops a barren land it

²¹⁶ By free it is meant the land that is not owned, developed or assigned for development by others. Ed.

is his”²¹⁷, except if the land has been taken forcibly by the government from the enemy in which case the developer would pay rent to the government.

[As an example of implementing the teachings of Islam] if this one law [of the Islamic laws] were applied to land development, that alone would have been sufficient to meet the needs of the people in housing, eradicating the housing crisis that is prevailing in many countries, not to mention all the Muslim countries.

Freedom of Residence and Travelling

4. Freedom of residence and travelling. One may reside wherever one wants or travel to wherever one wants, without any restriction or condition. There are no geographical borders (between Muslim countries) in Islam, no racial conditions, no discriminations due to colour or language, etc. With this freedom there will be no identity cards, or nationalising certificate, permits, passports and all other related things – just as the European Union has done and has eradicated this loathed innovation from its peoples and countries.

Freedom of Social and Political Activities

5. The total freedom of all forms of social services and political movements with the exception of those prohibited in Islam, which are very few. Thus there are absolutely no spying agencies, for spying upon an individual is prohibited, and there is nothing in Islam called spying agency and suchlike, with the exception of an agency or a department for collecting information for the benefits of the nation, and for the protection of its security and its benefit. Thus in the Islamic government everyone is free to speak, write, express his view and opinion, and to form societies and

²¹⁷ For “the land belongs to Allah and to whoever develops it” as taught by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his pure progeny. See Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah, vol.25, p412

associations, groups and political parties, to raise fund and support, to publish magazines and newspapers, setting up radio and television broadcasting stations, etc.²¹⁸

Freedom of all activities

6. Freedom of all forms of personal and social activities. For example, anyone who is qualified to drive is free to drive without having to pay any fees or charges and suchlike. Similarly, a deceased is not required a permission to be prepared for burial and to be buried, but rather his relatives may prepare him for burial and bury him in any place they want or that which the deceased instructed, without having to pay any taxes, charges, or fees and suchlike. The same is applicable for all other matters.

Q. The issues mentioned here would require dismantling many of the government departments we see today.

A. That is correct. This is how the Islamic government used to be. There were very few government departments, and as we mentioned previously the number of civil servants in the Islamic government is very small indeed, an absolute minimum, and because of the small number of the civil servants the government's burden is light and its shoulders are not loaded by large sums of money.

The Islamic Justice System

Q. Is there a judicial system in Islam?

A. Yes. In Islam there is best form of judicial system, and the judges are the most just men.

Q. How are the judge and the Islamic system of Justice?

²¹⁸ See for example "If Islam were to be Established" by the late Imam Muhammad Shirazi.

A. In Islam the judge must be a believer and a just man, learned in Islamic judicial law, and expert (*mujtahid*) in its rules and cases. Judgement must be based on evidences and oath, without complication and bureaucracy and without fees, charges, or costs at all. There are no formal protocols and bureaucracies in the Islamic judicial system, no requirement for formal applications for the hearing, or creating special files for the claimant, and all such bureaucracies that is prevalent today in the courts of law and the judiciary.

So because of this simplicity in the Islamic system of justice, and the required justness and fairness of the judge in Islam, one judge is able to deal with all categories of claims and cases, and judge between them and issue their verdicts in the quickest time possible. And all that is on the basis of [laws of] Islam, and the testimony of just witnesses²¹⁹, and thus one judge used to make judgments for a city of millions such that there was no case unresolved.²²⁰

Q. Where from does the judge receive his salary?

²¹⁹ The criterion for just witnesses is that they must be a practicing Muslim.

²²⁰ This might be surprising, but given the simplicity of Islamic rules and regulations, and their non-bureaucratic and uncomplicated nature, a single judge could see to all the cases of the time. Today, with more elaborate cases, a single judge – together with his specialist advisors – could also perform a similar task thanks to the ‘crystal clear’ nature of the Islamic laws and rulings. For more details see *al-Qadā’*, volumes 84-85 of *al-Fiqh* series, by the late Imam Muhammad Shirazi, and *Politics from the Islamic Perspective*, by the author Grand Ayatollah Ṣādiq Shirazi. In Islam the degree of one’s freedom in every aspect of life is far greater than what we have today in any modern ‘free and democratic’ society, and therefore many of the actions or ‘inactions’ that are considered as ‘crime’ and require ‘legal considerations’, ‘appearing before a judge’, and issuing a ‘verdict’ are not considered as a crime at all, and therefore there is no need for any of that (i.e. to appear before a judge, etc.) in the first place. For example the various taxes we have today in modern societies are not called for in Islam and therefore not giving taxes does not constitute a crime. Acquiring licences for import/export activities, or for setting up businesses is not required and thus not acquiring them is not a crime, and thus this does not force one to appear before a judge etc. and thus a judge has far less to do; as the saying goes ‘why complicate matters when they are so simple?’ - Editor.

A. He will be paid from *Bayt al-Māl*, or the treasury department.

Q. What is the duty of a judge?

A. With the help of his assistants he would perform what many government departments perform in present day governments. He would supervise the affairs of charitable properties, religious endowments and their staff, manage the properties and affairs of underage individuals and returning them to them when the right conditions are met, perform marriage and divorce as required, supervises transactions, leases, rents, etc. He would also be involved in settling disputes among individuals, and executing the penalties and punishments to be carried out.

Attorney in Islam

Q. Is there in Islam a system of attorneys like we have it today?

A. In Islam there is not a system of attorneys like we have it today, and in the Islamic system there is no need for such a massive body of attorneys, since under the Islamic government matters in general and those of the judiciary in particular run with ease, simplicity, and soundness.²²¹

²²¹ Islam encourages faith, conscientiousness, and individual responsibility in society. Islam relies on people's natural disposition; their faith, and their honesty, and thus oath and evidence is sufficient. In a legal case brought before a judge, the claimant brings forth witnesses to prove his case, otherwise – if he has no witnesses – the defendant swears an oath to counter the claimant's claim, and the case is concluded in favour of the defendant. There is no need for lawyers and attorneys. For more details see *al-Qaḍā'*, volumes 84-85 of *al-Fiqh* series, by the late Imam Muhammad Shirazi. In today's societies, if one is required by the authorities to pay taxes, and he cannot, he would end up having to go through the process of seeking an attorney, and spending time and money, and he may or may not win his case, whereas in Islam the case is concluded when he declares his inability to pay. Similarly if one owes money, for example, and cannot repay it, he needs to hire a lawyer and appear before a judge, etc. whereas in Islam the case is concluded by his inability to pay. If there were cause for concern on the truth of the claim, then a judge would require him to produce two witnesses to confirm the truth of his claim. When the author states that "there is no need for

Q. What will [the government of] Islam do with the attorneys and the civil servants that are not required if took charge?

A. Islam does not surprise the nation with its reforms, but rather it implements them gradually and in stages at their pace. So it will facilitate for those whose jobs it does not recognise with alternative appropriate jobs, and it will provide them from the treasury to help them start another career.

And after this will one whose job is not required by Islam allow himself to rebel against Islamic government after Islam had facilitated for him with a useful job that suits his status, and provided for him until his new career with all dignity and comfort?

Similarly Islam will dissolve and annul all places and activities involving production and consumption of liquor and prostitution and suchlike while paying great attention to their living matters and expenses, and facilitating job opportunities appropriate to their status and traits to enable them to make decent and lawful living and to make them needless to the vice and the illegal.

Health in Islam

Q. Is there a health service program in Islam?

A. Yes. It has the best of preventive and treatment systems, and the most precise programs in broadness and comprehensiveness, for it covers the health of the body and the soul, the wellbeing of the individual and the society, and the fitness of the climate and the environment.

Q. How does this system work?

A. Islam bases the general guidelines for health care program on three policies:

such a massive body of attorneys”, it does not mean that there is a need for a small body of lawyers, it is meant there is a need for none. - Editor.

1. Prevention; for this protects the individual, the society, and the environment against the spread of disease and infections to anyone of them, and that is through the following:
 - (a) through the prohibition of the causes of diseases and infections such as liquor, narcotics, adultery, homosexuality, and other harmful things; music and practices that bring about anxieties; liquor shops, brothels, and suchlike.
 - (b) through encouraging the etiquettes and traditions of the individual and social way of life such as cleanliness, bathing, *ḥijāmah* which is blood-letting by cupping, *faṣd*²²² which is the piercing and removing of blood from the veins, fasting, marriage, use of body creams and oils, use of herbal treatment such as *so‘uṭ*²²³, wearing kohl, removal of unwanted body hair, particular manners of eating, drinking, wearing of clothes, housing, sleeping, and while being awake, and suchlike.
2. Treatment; and that is by referring to herbal medicine and dietary procedures beneficial for treating diseases, all of which are simple and easy. Such measures although may not be comprehensive but they would stop diseases especially at the outset of the disease. Detailed health care and dietary programs are given in the books such as “Medicine of the Prophet” and “Medicine of the Imams” peace be upon them.
3. Supervision: Islam supervises the welfare and cleanliness of the environment and pursues its protection against pollution, and also monitors the health of the individual and protects

²²² *ḥijāmah* and *faṣd* are procedures for removing blood from the body in aid of medical benefits. The procedure of *ḥijāmah* is to remove and dispense of ‘old’ blood from the body by cutting the skin in specific parts of the body. The procedure *faṣd* is remove ‘fresh’ or ‘old’ blood from the veins. *ḥijāmah* is encouraged by the prophet and is normally done twice a year.

²²³ Herbal drug used for sniffing.

him against infection. Furthermore it carefully monitors the physicians, and fires in them the restraint of the conscience, and the fear of Allah and His retribution. The Islamic law holds a physician responsible for any misconduct, even if he is an expert. This creates a strong sense of responsibility in the physician such that he would not allow himself to be complacent in the diagnosis and treatment, and in turn that makes the physician more observant when diagnosing and treating the disease, and prescribing the medicine.

Modern Medicine

Q. Has modern medical science not made a significant progress?

A. There is no doubt about progress in the modern medical science, however, the basic foundations that we have mentioned, which are the principle pillars of general health and wellbeing, have been destroyed, and thus we see mankind is afflicted with all sorts of diseases at an astonishing level to the degree that the huge numbers of physicians, hospitals, and health care facilities are not enough to maintain the health of the general public.

We still remember our fathers who used to enjoy – because of the observing the Islamic teachings on general health – excellent health, total wellbeing, and complete fitness until the last days of their lives, whereas today we see that every household has one or more people suffering from a certain illness and many people suffer from one or several medical complications.

Q. What is the remedy then?

A. The remedy is to seriously strive to bring back to existence the general guidelines and the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings on health, and to implement them in our societies, as well as using all the useful facilities of modern medicine and new discoveries, while abandoning the Islamically unlawful issues and the harmful ones amongst them. Furthermore the way for the

tried-and-tested herbal medicine should be opened up so that both traditional and modern medicine could complement one another, and in this way mankind will be saved from the grip of diseases and ailments, and that humanity will not suffer under the yoke of destructive diseases.

Islamic Culture

Q. Does Islam have any a cultural/educational program?

A. Yes, in fact it has the best of programs.

Q. What are those programs?

A. Islam has made it compulsory for every Muslim, male and female, to acquire knowledge²²⁴, and it identified the [categories of] knowledge the seeking and acquisition of which is mandatory upon the people as being in three categories;

The knowledge of *Oṣool al-Deen*; the fundamental principles or beliefs of Islam,

The knowledge of *Foroo' al-Deen*; the essential rulings and practices of Islam,

The knowledge of *Akhlāq & Ādāb* or the Islamic ethics and etiquettes.

Furthermore Islam encourages the seeking of the rest of the sciences, considers it a virtue and an honour for the individual, promotes the implementation of knowledge in practice, provides the means for it, and it has made it compulsory for the government to support the educational program in all aspects.

²²⁴ This stems from the teaching of Prophet Muhammad, *peace be upon him and his family* who said, “The seeking and acquisition of knowledge is an obligation upon every male Muslim and female Muslim”. Mostadrak al-Wasā’el, vol.17, p249, Biḥār al-Anwār, vol.1, p177.

Q. What you have mentioned should bring about the development and excellence of the Muslims, but why are they instead backwards and underdeveloped?

A. They remained behind when they did not adhere to the teachings of Islam on knowledge, and from the day they abandoned the policy of Islam on education. At the time when the Muslims were adhering to its teachings and acting according to Islam, their culture exceeded that of the West today, and there is no better proof for this than the West and westerners own acknowledgements of this fact.²²⁵ The relative number of their books, libraries, schools, and educated people – given the facilities of those days – were much more than the relative number of books, libraries, schools and educated people they have today despite all the progress in the means and facilities available.²²⁶

Modern Means of Education

Q. What is Islam's stance in relation to modern educational means? In other words, does Islam prohibit schools and colleges,

²²⁵ The Islamic culture revived Muslim societies where everyone benefited. The Islamic culture came in various realms and domains of the human life. An example of Islam's economic culture is "land belongs to Allah and whoever develops it", as taught by Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him and his family, al-Kāfi, vol. 5, p 279. This is the kind of culture that is not seen even in today's so-called civilised worlds. An example of Islam's social culture is ﴿If ye do good, ye do good for your own souls﴾ [17:7] which encourages people to do good. On Islam's culture on the family, we have the encouragement of keeping strong bond between members of the family, and in particular the bond of parents and the off spring; ﴿And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "Ugh" nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word.﴾ [17:23] or the Prophetic hadith "Paradise is beneath the feet of the mothers" Wasā'el al-Shi'ah, vol. 15, p180, and the Prophetic hadith "he who has three daughters and raises them a fine upbringing, paradise would be obligatory for him." al-Kāfi, vol. 6, p6. Editor.

²²⁶ For example one of the libraries that was established in Cairo by the Fatimid dynasty, who reigned North Africa 909-1171 CE, contained more than one millions books.

newspapers and magazines, radio and television, cinemas and theatres, satellite channels or the internet?

A. Islam encourages everything that helps disseminate understanding and bring about awakening amongst the people, and globalise, publicise, and make widespread humanist culture amongst the nation.²²⁷ Of course it prohibits any kind of corruption, decadence, and evil temptation in these mediums, if they are free of those; Islam is amongst the strongest supporters of these media.

Q. What is the major difference between Islam's educational program and the Western educational program today?

A. The general difference is: Islam combines knowledge with faith, education with morality and virtue, whereas Western education today lacks faith, morality and virtue, and as a consequence knowledge, which is the best means for progress and advancement, and education is the strongest tool for achieving understanding and coexistence, peace and security within the nation – or rather throughout the entire world, has become the means of degradation and ignorance, and the tool of disseminating fear, terror, anarchy, distress, war and destruction in the community – but rather in the entire world.

Peace in Islam

Q. Is Islam a religion of war or a religion of peace?

A. Islam is the religion of peace, as the Almighty says, ﴿O ye who believe enter into peace all together﴾²²⁸. However, if any one would commit an act of aggression against the people, or wages war against the Muslims, then Islam would not stand by like

²²⁷ The values of humanist culture of respecting and dealing with other human beings, are those such as “the people are one of two; they are either your brethren in religion, or your equal in creation”, as taught by Imam Ali, peace be upon him, the prophet's first appointed successor. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 75, p 251.

²²⁸ The Qur'an, The Heifer (2): 208

someone whose hands tied behind him, but rather it would rise in defence to protect justice and the truth, and to repel the aggression and alleviate oppression.

Q. How does Islam support peace?

A. Islam considers it necessary to let complete peace prevail – both internally and externally. Inside the country it abolishes crimes, outside the country it does not commit any act of aggression against any one, and it confronts the aggressors.

Q. How would Islam abolish crimes?

A. Islam abolishes crime at its roots, and treats its causes. The causes of crime are: poverty, evil temptations, ignorance, animosity, problems, and suchlike. Islam fights against all of such elements until they are eliminated, and when they are eliminated, crimes will subsequently be abolished.

For example, a destitute person steals to see to his needs, lewdness and liquor lead to adultery, and drunkenness leads to crime. Ignorance causes transgression, and animosity causes fighting and war, and family problems cause tribulation and crime.

Islam, because of its correct ways and appropriate programs, abolishes poverty and enriches the destitute, teaches the people about the harms of lewdness and the decadence of liquors and thus they would refrain from lewdness and liquors with conviction. Islam publicises knowledge and education, eradicates the causes of animosity and hatred, and settles disputes and problems with easy judgments and quick decisions. In this way Islam is able to uproot the causes of crime, and plant the seeds of love and affection, unity and peace between the nation, and throughout the entire world.

Prosecution and Punishment of the Criminals

Q. How are the criminals punished in Islam?

A. After abolishing the causes of crime from society and providing a tranquil environment, Islam lays down the punishment for the criminal, and that is because he has committed crime due to his evil and deviation, and for his departure and transgression against his society and innocent members of his nation. The criminal mars the purity and sparkle of his society, and destroys the security of his fellow citizens and denies them their safety and tranquillity. Through a stern punishment, which is swiftly executed, Islam sterilises the environment so that the crime is not repeated.

Needless to say, Islam does not allow for the penal codes alone to be upheld and implement without all other law – as it is commonly seen in some Islamic countries today – for Islam considers that in itself a crime in its own right, for this entails distortion to its reputation and gives the excuse to some to accuse it of violence and cruelty.

The Punishment of Imprisonment

Q. What would Islam do with prisons?

A. Islam does not recognise any of the statute, man-made laws at all. The only laws are the divine laws only. Therefore, many of the crimes today, as per the statute law, are not crimes according to Islam for their perpetrators to be jailed for them. As for what Islam considers a crime, like theft or fornication, it has set stern swift punishments for them, and that is not imprisonment. However, for very few crimes Islam has prescribed imprisonment – such as the well off who refuses or delays to pay his debt. Jail in Islam is when a judge asks an individual to keep a criminal, who must be jailed, in a room in his house for example. Therefore, there is no prison in the conventional sense in Islam at all, if there were exceptional requirement for prison, the building will be nothing more than a simple building, which is in fact a school for the rehabilitation of the criminal, and educating him the correct human culture.

Peace for All

Q. How will Islam keep peace outside the country and with everyone?

A. Islam does not commit aggression against anyone at all. Any country that inclines to peace, [the government of] Islam inclines to that too, Almighty Allah states, ﴿and if they incline towards peace, then you incline towards it [too]﴾²²⁹, and if aggression is waged against it, Islam would defend itself and the nation in the most decent manner the like of which history has never witnessed. If a country commits aggression against it, Islam will repel its aggression, with the minimum that is required to stop the aggression.

Q. How will Islam keep peace between the government and the nation?

A. The government in Islam is the government of the people in the true sense of the word. What would people want other than the right to vote, self-sufficiency, education, freedom, security, health and virtue that Islam provides for them in the best form? That is why we see the correct governments of the Muslims had reigned for so long. This was because of the mutual love between the nation and the government, and the leader did not need “secret police”, “security services” and “bodyguards” and suchlike to protect him against the people.

Islam and the Family

Q. How does Islam view the family?

A. Islam views the family – after the individual – the primary building block for building a righteous society, and thus it is eager to see the family to be a righteous in order for the society to be so too, and for this reason Islam obligates the ḥijāb for women, as the

²²⁹ The Qur’an, Public Estate (8): 61

Almighty states, ﴿and when you ask of them (women) of any goods, ask of them from behind a screen (ḥijāb)﴾²³⁰ and in this way potential sins and problems are reduced, which in turn strengthens the relations between the husband and wife, and the family gains stability and clam, and settles in a happy and auspicious environment, filled with love, serenity, harmony, and conformity. Needless to say women's ḥijāb means that women must not reveal their hair and beauties.

Q. Does Islam prohibit women from learning and working?

A. No, Islam does not prohibit women from any science or job, but rather it has on certain occasions made it obligatory for her to learn or work, while on other occasions encouraged her to do them. Islam has only prohibited indecency and lewd conducts, adorning and showing themselves off in public. Islam also prohibits women from the kind of works that contrary to their chastity and status.

Islam's view of women

Q. What is Islam's view of women?

A. Islam is the kindest religion and principle to women that history has ever known and experienced. It observes that family life is not complete without striving and hard work outside the home, and tranquillity and endeavour inside; and it has divided the tasks between the husband and wife in order to strengthen the bonds of love and cooperation between them, so it made the tasks outside the home for the man and the those inside for the woman.

Islam assigns the tasks of inside the home and settling there for women because women are more suited to managing the affairs of the home than men, especially in relation to the raising of children and educating them the correct education. She is the best guardian for children's growth and development – physically, intellectually,

²³⁰ The Qur'an, The Confederates (33): 53

and emotionally. Islamic wisdom views this that if women would start to undertake men's jobs outside the home, this would ultimately put the burden of her home work on the men and this would constitute the waste of both capabilities, the virtue of women's noble emotions, and the capability of men's practical endeavour. In the latter case, the job is the same job, except with swapped roles, and consequently giving the undesirable results. Therefore, it is best for women to do the home work, and for men to do the hard jobs outside.

Marriage from Islam's viewpoint

Q. What is Islam's view of marriage?

A. Islam considers marriage permissible, emphasises upon it, commands to it, and encourages early marriages, and that [it is permissible] for the female after the completion of the age of nine with maturity, and after the male's adulthood, which comes at the age of fifteen, as well as maturity. Islam encourages marriage at that so that they would not fall in indecency.

Q. What is the view of Islam about boys and girl's mixing during different phases of life?

A. Mixing, in the view of Islam – that is eager about the health of society and its happiness – is not permissible at all, whether it is during recreational times, at swimming pools, at school, at cinemas, factories, social gatherings, clubs, and suchlike. Islam considers that such mixing leads to immorality and corruption, something that the society must be protected against, unless the mixing is with total observance of *ḥijāb*, protection and chastity, just as their mixing during the pilgrimage of Hajj or other honourable sites.

Q. What are the duties of both spouses in family life, in the view of Islam?

A. The husband must provide for all expenses and satisfy her bodily desire – as prescribed by Islam – and it is the duty of the

wife to obey the husband about going out of the house²³¹ and on sexual pleasures²³². It is not of the duties of women to work around the house, but she is encouraged to do so, in a bid to keep the cooperation and love between them. Islam considers marriage not valid except with the consent of both of them, and made divorce – for social interests – is in the hands of man alone, unless specified otherwise in the marriage contract at the outset, when it will be in the hands of the woman too.

Q. What is the view of Islam about polygamy?

A. It is permissible in Islam to have up to four wives, but on the condition of maintaining justice and/or equality between them. And by this decree Islam solves the problems of unmarried women and widows, for it is known that in societies the number of women is greater than that of men, and if there is no solution for the difference in their number, this means many of the women remain unmarried.²³³

²³¹ Except for . . . visiting parents or other routine things that have been agreed upon before hand such as going to work. . .

²³² Unless . . . if she is ill, or it constitutes harm to her, or when she is going through the monthly menstruation period.

²³³ This issue becomes particularly acute when there is a war when normally many men are killed.

PART THREE

Islamic Ethics and Etiquettes

Islam emphasises exceedingly on human ethics, and attaches significant importance to social etiquettes, to the extent that Allah’s messenger, peace be upon him and his pure family, identified the aim of his mission as the completion, perfection and globalisation of noble morality saying, “Indeed I have been sent to complete the noble morals”²³⁴.

And when Allah Almighty wants to praise His beloved Prophet, peace be upon him and his pure family, He praises him by pointing to his noble morals saying, ﴿and surely you are of a mighty morality﴾²³⁵.

And when He wishes to remind the Muslim Ommah of the great mercy that have been gifted to them, He reminds them of the most significant attributes of this mercy, which is the Prophet’s lenient manners and morals saying, [addressing the Prophet Muhammad] ﴿it is by Allah’ mercy that you are gentle to them﴾²³⁶.

These, and many other texts in this respect, point to the importance of ethics and etiquettes – *akhlāq & ādāb* – in Islam, and the extent of their requirement in a Muslim individual, such that when the Wise Qur’an mentions some of the rulings of punishment, the sacred book follows them with the mention of forgiveness, and accompanies them with moral/ethical rulings, and considers forgiveness in them as being “closer to piety”²³⁷.

²³⁴ Mostadrak al-Wasā’el, vol.11, p187

²³⁵ The Qur’an, The Pen, (68):4

²³⁶ The Qur’an, The House of Emran (3):159

²³⁷ In reference to such verses as 2:237.

The Pillars of Morals and Etiquettes

Islam made religion and piety the axis of ethics and etiquettes, and identified four pillars for ethics and two for etiquettes, and invited the Muslims to them and instructed them to adorn themselves with them.

Ethics and their four Pillars

The four pillars of ethics are:

1. Purity of the heart and the honesty of intention;

On the significance and vitality of the purity of the heart and its wellbeing, and the honesty of intention and its sincerity Allah Almighty declares; ﴿the day when neither wealth nor sons shall profit, except for him who comes to Allah with a sound heart﴾²³⁸ that is pure from polytheism, disbelief, and from the unethical manners.

2. Beaming and smiling face;

In the hadith it is reported,

“The believer has his happiness and contentment upon his face and his sorrow in his heart”²³⁹.

“The one who is beaming and smiling gains [Allah’s] love and enters Paradise, and the frown-faced is distanced from Allah and enters the Fire”²⁴⁰.

3. Beautiful and nice speech;

²³⁸ The Qur’an, The Poets (26): 88-89

²³⁹ Nahj al-Balāghah, p533, hadith #333; al-Kāfi, vol.2, p226, Mostadrak al-Wasā’el, vol.8, p452

²⁴⁰ al-Kāfi, vol.2, p103, Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah, vol.12, p160, Mostadrak al-Wasā’el, vol.8, p453

Almighty Allah says, ﴿and ye speak kindly to people﴾²⁴¹, and Amir al-Mo'mineen peace be upon him said, "I dislike it for ye to utter profanities"²⁴².

4. Good dealing and beautiful living with the people;

Almighty Allah says; ﴿keep to forgiveness, bid to what is honourable, turn away from the ignorant﴾²⁴³, and the Almighty says; ﴿and when the ignorant address them they say 'Peace'﴾²⁴⁴.

The Two Pillars of Etiquettes

As to the two pillars of etiquettes, they are:

1. Personal etiquettes, which are related to one's personal life such as the etiquettes of eating, drinking, while asleep and awake, of wearing and housing, while travelling and at home, of sickness and health, and suchlike that Islam has taught the best of. Adhering to these etiquettes brings one closer to every good and health, and distances one from every evil and undesirable, rendering one happy and praiseworthy.

2. Social etiquettes, which are related to one's social life such as the etiquettes of living with the parents, the spouse and the offspring, relative, friends and neighbours, the student and the teacher, and with all the people – but rather with all beings, of which Islam has brought the best teachings in these respects, the implementing of which guarantees safety and peace, security and stability, harmony and understanding, affection and kindness between all people, and all mankind.

²⁴¹ The Qur'an, The Heifer (2): 83

²⁴² Nahj al-Balāghah, p323, hadith #206, Biḥār al-Anwār, vol.32, p561

²⁴³ The Qur'an, The Heights (7): 199

²⁴⁴ The Qur'an, The Criterion (25): 63

Distinctions of the Islamic Society

The Islamic society is the society that adheres to the human ethics and social etiquettes that Islam has brought forward, and so it is distinguished from other societies by the following issues:

1. The Islamic society has a characteristic other than that of the society we see today. For it enjoys – after the faith in Allah and the Day of Resurrection – from the Islamic ethics and etiquettes, which regulate the behaviour [of the individual] to the extent that no other earthly system can. And thus the very lofty and sublime human values will become widespread throughout the society, whereas today's world speaks of mankind in terms of a mechanical tool, robbing him of all values of good and goodness. Furthermore, in an Islamic society psychological complexities and many of current problems will be extinct, while on the other hand confidence and sociability will prevail, and love and affection will reign in both individual and social terms.

2. Life, in all its aspects and dimensions, will blossom and prosper under the just Islamic system, and thus the country will be revitalised, houses built, the land farmed, the industries developed, trades expand, the wealth grows, and the people will be enriched in an environment wherein there is no wronging or oppression, no terror or violence, no restrictions or conditions, no prison or torture, no suffering or poverty. It was for this reason that development, progress, love, and confidence were commonplace when Islam was practically implemented, something that the world today cannot find despite the substantial increase in the means and facilities.

3. Every member of the Islamic society is a manifestation of Islam and its teachings through his words and actions, caring for every member of his community and his nation and being responsible for them, promotes virtue and prohibits vice, invites to Islam and

calls for a single universal Islamic government ﴿with wisdom and good advice, and reason﴾ for that ﴿in the best manner﴾²⁴⁵.

Islam and Ethics are Twins

The essence of Islam and the reality of the Islamic religion is the essence of the human moral ethics, and the reality of the lofty and sublime social etiquettes. They are twins that may not separate, rather they are one truth for one reality, since there is nothing that morality encourages that Islam does not enjoin to, and nothing that the etiquettes promote that Islam does not encourage and invite to. So all laws and tenets of Islam and its lofty teachings, ranging from acts of worship to transactions and suchlike are founded on lofty ethical bases, and firm pillars of etiquettes, and as an outline we shall mention briefly some of those that Islam has commanded as obligatory, prohibited as forbidden, or warned as ethically undesirable, or encouraged and called for amongst the etiquettes and morally ethical. We will see that all of them are in harmony with the human nature, concords with his soul and his spiritual values, but even with his body and materialism . . . while being in the loftiest moral level, and highest peak of human etiquettes.

The Obligatory

Almighty Allah states, ﴿Surely Allah bids to justice and good doing and giving to kinsmen﴾²⁴⁶, therefore it is mandatory for the Muslim individual to learn the obligatory duties and to act upon them, and we shall mention some of them here:

Believe in Allah, His messenger and the Authorities

- To have faith in Allah and the Day of Resurrection
- To have certainty in Allah and the Day of Resurrection

²⁴⁵ The Qur'an, The Bee (16): 125

²⁴⁶ The Qur'an, The Bee (16): 90

- To devote entirely to Almighty Allah
- To worship Allah
- To rely on and entrust Allah in [all] affairs
- Seeking the means to attain closeness to Allah²⁴⁷
- Seeking the favour of Allah²⁴⁸
- Remembrance of Allah under every circumstance
- Humility of the heart and fear from Allah
- To abstain from Allah's prohibition
- To be content by Allah's decree
- To speak of Allah's bounty
- To think about Allah's bounties and His benefits
- To submit to Allah, and to exalt and glorify Him (i.e. to consider Him free from any false attributes)
- To race to Allah's forgiveness
- To have good opinion of Allah
- To rule by what Allah has revealed
- To return to Allah through repentance
- Supplication
- To call to the way of Allah
- To heed to Allah's call and His messenger's
- To consider prohibited that that Allah and His messenger have prohibited
- To refrain from what Allah and His messenger have prohibited
- To obey Allah, His messenger and the *awliya'* peace be upon them
- To adhere to what the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt have brought forth

²⁴⁷ In reference to the Qur'anic verse 5:35.

²⁴⁸ In reference to the Qur'anic verse 62:10.

- To visit [the shrines of] the prophet and the imams from his Ahl al-Bayt
- To love Allah and His devotees
- To disassociate from the enemies of Allah and the enemies of His devotees

Acts of worship and related issues

- To keep the prayers, acts of worship, covenants, and the things deposited in trust
- Night prayers, reciting the Qur'an, worship at night time (after midnight)
- To be in sequence with the imam of the congregational prayers
- To wear beautiful apparel at places of prayer²⁴⁹
- Fasting the month of Ramaḍān
- To perform Hajj
- To pay Khums
- To give Zakāh
- To give the due of the crop

To be kind to the parents and relatives

- To thank Allah and the parents
- To be kind and gentle to the parents
- To keep company with the parents and relatives in goodness
- To be kind to kinsfolk
- To love the kinsfolk

²⁴⁹ In reference to the Qur'anic verse 7:31.

Seeking knowledge

- To learn the principles and practices of religion, *oşool* and *furoo* ‘ [issues one is required to know in order to be able act according to Islam in all circumstances, and fulfil his duties accordingly], as well as ethics and etiquettes
- Thorough learning in religion
- Seeking knowledge in general
- To learn from admonitions, and other’s fates and experiences
- Listening to the wise Qur’an²⁵⁰

Avoiding evil

- To avoid signing and music
- To avoid worshiping other than Allah
- To avoid thinking bad of others
- To destroy matters of corruption
- To prohibit evil
- To repel evil
- To destroy deviation

Family life

- To marry
- To give the wife her dues and her *mahr*
- To stay with the wife overnight
- To live with the wife cordially
- To care for the children
- To educate and raise the children
- To protect one’s chastity
- To lower one’ gaze

²⁵⁰ In reference to the Qur’anic verse 7:204

- To have a fervour or a sense of honour [with respect to one's wife, etc.]
- For a woman to wear hijab in the presence of non-*mahram* men

Trustworthiness

- Giving the wealth/property of the orphan [back to them when appropriate]
- To give back the things deposited in trust
- To bear witness [sincerely]
- To give back the right of the people, and the right of Allah
- To seek forgiveness from the person whose been wronged
- To compensate what one has damaged/destroyed

Resilience and perseverance

- To uphold the religion and to practice it
- To remain steadfast in [all] matters
- To keep to the truth
- To keep striving

Virtues

- To regret [committing] a sin
- To repent
- To seek forgiveness
- To persevere
- To be with the truthful
- To advise the believer and support
- To have good and true intention
- To be truthful in speech
- To have beautiful speech
- To disseminate the truth
- To judge by the truth

- To guide the people to the truth
- To facilitate reconciliation between people
- Justice
- Faithfulness
- Cooperation
- Feeding the hungry
- To make room [for others] in assemblies²⁵¹
- To give in the way of Allah
- Seeking sustenance
- Halal earning
- Weighing with correct measure^{٢٠٢}
- To protect oneself and the family from [the punishment of] hellfire²⁵³
- To take precaution [in one's behaviour in every aspect]²⁵⁴
- To seek permission when entering [others'] house²⁵⁵
- To give greeting
- To reply back to a greeting or a letter
- To incline to peace²⁵⁶
- To enjoin good and virtue
- To adhere and be enjoined to good and virtue
- To denounce innovators
- To defend the religion and the self
- To show one's despise to those who commit sin
- To give the wage of the breast-feeder
- Migration²⁵⁷

²⁵¹ In reference to the Qur'anic verse 58:11.

²⁵² in all aspects of life, i.e. not having double standards.

²⁵³ In reference to the Qur'anic verse 66:6.

²⁵⁴ In reference to the Qur'anic verse 4:71, 102.

²⁵⁵ i.e. to respect others' privacy, as referred to in the Qur'anic verse 24:27-28.

²⁵⁶ In reference to the Qur'anic verse 8:61.

The Prohibited Conducts

Almighty Allah states, ﴿Say: “Come, I will recite to ye what your Lord has forbidden to ye”﴾²⁵⁸

Just as it is compulsory for the Muslim individual to learn his or her obligatory duties and act upon them, it is also mandatory to learn the prohibited matters and refrain from them, and henceforth we list here most of the prohibited matters that are of common cause for concern:

Beliefs

- Not to believe in Allah.
- To consider individuals or things as partners of Allah.
- To believe that Allah has children.
- Praying, prostrating or kneeling for something other than Allah.
- To consider oneself above the worship of Allah.
- To become unconcerned about the wrath of Allah.
- To abandon the practice of remembrance of Allah.
- To protest against Allah on fate and destination.
- Disputing with Allah, Allah’s messenger, the Ahl al-Bayt peace be up on them, and the *marāḓe*’ who follow their teachings, on the decrees of the shari’ah rulings.
- To cause difficulties for the Prophet, (S).
- Swearing to disassociate oneself from Allah, the prophets, the Imams and Islam.
- Lying against Allah, the Prophet, or Imams.
- To deny one of the principles of religion
- To deny any aspect of the holy Qur’an or the laws of *Shari’ah*.

²⁵⁷ e.g. to leave one’s country when one’s life or religion is in danger.

²⁵⁸ The Qur’an: The Cattle (6): 151

- Blasphemy, especially, in the house of Allah.
- To become hopeless of the mercy of Allah.
- To deny the hereafter
- To deny miracles.

Shari'ah & Religion

- Not to comply with the laws of the Shari'ah.
- Not learning the basic principles of beliefs and the details of the rules of the religion.
- Not teaching the principles and rules of religion to those who are ignorant of them, when they are seen acting or practicing something, which is wrong.
- Innovating in (the laws and practices of) religion.
- Declaring the lawful as unlawful.
- Declaring the unlawful as lawful.
- Giving judgement not in accordance with Allah's orders.
- To rebel against the Imam (leader) who is just and qualified²⁵⁹.
- Denying what is due to Allah (e.g. *Khums*, *Zakāh*).
- Refusing to pay religious taxes such as *Khums*, *Zakāh*, or other obligatory dues.
- Delaying one's dues.
- Not exercising *taqiyyah* when in danger.²⁶⁰
- Migrating to places where one's religion would be endangered.

²⁵⁹ By qualified, it is meant he who meets all the criteria prescribed by Islam for a fit leader. It is only in the case of such a leader or imam that rebelling against is ḥarām or prohibited.

²⁶⁰ *Taqiyyah* literally means to 'guard' or 'protect'. A Muslim must exercise all means within his disposal to protect his life when threatened. One example of *taqiyyah* is not to disclose one's belief under certain dangerous circumstances in order to protect one's life.

- Friendship with the enemies of religion in the absence of an urgent necessity.
- Swearing in general, especially towards Allah, the prophets, the Imams, Islam, Qur'an, and other sacred things.
- To mislead people away from the path of Allah.

Obligations

- Not practicing the principle of "*Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil*".
- To break an obligatory fast such as that due to a vow or fast during Ramaḍān, without good reason.
- Not fasting for that missed during the month of Ramaḍān before the commencement of the next month of Ramaḍān.
- To delay a prayer until its time is over.
- To discontinue an (ongoing) obligatory prayer.
- To abandon obligatory prayers.
- To abandon any other obligation.
- To delay performing Hajj from the year it becomes obligatory.
- Rejecting the orders of the scholars in their Shari'ah verdicts.
- Accepting payment for religious obligations that have to be carried out.

Jihad

- Not taking part in Jihad.
- Fleeing from battlefield.
- Selling arms to the disbelievers who wage war against the Muslims.

Qur'an

- Touching the holy Qur'an without formal purification, *Wudu*.
- Selling the holy Qur'an.

Mosques

- Making the mosque unclean.
- Working to destroy mosques.
- Preventing people from going to mosques.
- Going to or staying in mosques while in a state of *Jonob*.²⁶¹
- The above individuals passing through the two grand mosques in Makkah and Medina.
- To violate the sanctity of the holy Ka'bah or any other one of the holy sites.

The Believer

- Animosity towards believers.
- To defame a believer.
- To disgrace a believer.
- To hurt or abuse a believer.
- To threaten or terrorise a believer.
- To make fun of the believers.
- To ridicule or demean the Muslims.
- To defame a believer in poetry etc.
- Abandoning the believers.

²⁶¹ An individual is said to be in a state of *jonob* after sexual intercourse (or ejaculation), and therefore an obligatory *Ghusl* bathing is required to attain a spiritual purity as well as personal hygiene. Similarly a *Ghusl* bathing is also mandatory after the occurrence of menses or childbirth.

Others' Rights

- To publicise someone's secrets without his consent.
- Hoarding goods needed by the public.
- To falsely suspect others and act up on it.
- To falsely accuse people.
- Not to answer the salām greeting.
- Looking for others' shortcomings.
- Swearing at, beating, wounding or amputating someone's limb(s).
- Detaining someone for no reason.
- Unlawful killing.
- Denying the rights of people that are due to them.
- Usurping the wealth or property of an orphan.
- Seizing and confiscating others' property, possession, or wealth.
- Reporting about individuals to oppressors.
- Confining a woman or young people for indecent acts.
- Obstructing the road of Muslims.

Male/Female Interaction

- Muslim woman not wearing Hijāb in public.
- For Muslim women to wear anything, in terms of cosmetics, perfume, clothing, etc. which would attract the attention of 'non-*maḥram*' men. [A 'non-*maḥram*' man is any adult male whom a woman must wear hijāb from, and this includes all adult male cousins, brothers-in-law, etc. as well all non-relative male. Editor]
- 'Non-*maḥram*' man and woman kissing one another.
- Kissing a person with lust, except for spouses.
- Touching the body of non-*maḥrams*, male or female respectively.

- Touching others with lust, except one's spouse.
- Women shaking hands with 'non-*maḥram*' men (and vice versa).
- Looking at a non-*maḥram* woman (or man respectively) with lust.²⁶²
- Looking at boys (or girls) or *maḥram* relatives with lust.
- Going to mixed swimming pools, schools, clubs.
- Going to schools that would lead one to corruption.
- Looking at the private parts of others, (except for the spouses).
- To reveal one's private parts in the presence of others.
- Adultery.
- Homosexuality.
- Lesbianism.
- Paedophilia
- Accusing someone of adultery or homosexuality.

Marriage

- Proposing marriage to a married woman or to a woman during the *Eddah* period (of four months after divorce or after becoming a widow).
- False marriage (e.g. forcing either of the two parties to marry, or the marriage of a Muslim and an atheist, *Kāfir*, (excluding People of the Book, i.e. Jews and Christian.))
- To marry one's *maḥram* relatives, or relatives by marriage, or by breast-feeding.²⁶³

²⁶² It is ḥarām for a man to look at a Muslim woman who does not wear ḥijāb, even if without lust.

²⁶³ *maḥram* relatives, in the case of the male, are those such as his mother, sisters, nieces, and aunts. [In the case of the female, the *maḥram* relatives are her father, brothers, nephews, and uncles.] Marriage is not allowed between *maḥram* relatives and therefore a woman does not wear ḥijāb from her *maḥram* relatives. Non-*maḥram* relatives are those such as cousins, brothers- or sisters-in-law, etc.

Marital issues

- For a husband not to have sex with his wife for more than four months.
- Masturbation, which is to cause ejaculation by hand or any other means – it is allowed if it is done by the spouse, for example in foreplay.
- For a husband to have sex with his wife when she is going through her monthly menstruation period.
- For a woman to go out of the house without the knowledge or permission of her husband. (This excludes cases that are considered necessary.)
- For spouses to publicise each other's secrets.

Children

- Not disciplining one's children such that it would lead them astray.
- For children to disobey their parents.
- Relating a child to someone other than his natural father.

Personal Conducts

- Lying.
- Fraud.
- Cheating.
- Cheating in weighing and measuring.
- Deception.
- Treachery.
- Hypocrisy.
- Forging a will.
- Stealing and robbery.

and a woman must wear ḥijāb from her non-*mahram* relatives. Marriage is allowed between cousins. – Editor's note.

- Going against one's vow.
- Breaking one's covenant.
- Backbiting or listening to it.
- Slander and defamation or listening to it.
- To be jealous and to act up on it.
- To be haughty.
- To be extravagant.
- To wear gold or silk (applicable to men only).
- To use gold and silver utensils even for decorating reasons.
- Not keeping oneself clean from urine and other unclean substances.
- Endangering one's own life.

Food & Drink

- Drinking intoxicating liquors.
- Eating animal flesh not slaughtered according to Islamic law, also consuming forbidden animals' flesh such as pork, etc.
- Eating forbidden parts of the animals such as testicles.
- Eating and drinking of the unclean or that which has become unclean.
- Eating mud or other prohibited things.

Social issues

- To hurt neighbours.
- Looking into the houses of neighbours without permission.
- Sitting at a table where alcohol is served.
- Prevention of good deeds and charitable works.
- Sitting with people who make innovations in religion.

- Justifying or excusing the oppressor and the people who make innovations and supporting them.
- Reaching power by unlawful means (in accordance to Islamic law).
- Extracting confessions through torture.
- Playing chess, backgammon, card games, even if no gambling is involved.
- To work as a pimp.
- Spreading corruption on earth.
- To create commotion by setting individuals against one another.
- To praise one in his presence and abuse him in his absence.
- Exhumation of graves.
- Sitting with those who indulge in meaningless talks about the signs of Allah.
- Frolic and frivolity - to engage in useless activities, which are wasteful and distract from the remembrance and the path of Allah.
- To practice astrology or seek the help of astrologers. (to believe in and take action accordingly.)
- To subdue ghosts, *Jinns* and angles, etc. or seek the help of those who practice them (to harm others).
- Practicing black magic, witchcraft, or seek the help of those who practice them.
- Using magic to cause separation between husband and wife, or to cause one love the other without their control.
- Hypnotism (except for necessary medical requirements)
- Altering the will of the deceased.
- Issuing decree (fatwā) without being qualified to do so.
- Acquiring people's money through falsehood.
- Going to a country where one's religion may be harmed.

- Staying in a country where one cannot protect and keep one's religion, and practice the Islamic rites.
- To be haughty and arrogant.

Sin

- To consent in sin.
- To publicise one's sins.
- To publicise indecency.
- To help others commit sin.
- To persist in committing minor sins.
- To order or encourage others to commit evil or sin.
- Considering one's sins not serious such that this would lead to disregard repentance.
- Promoting indecent acts.

Oppression

- Oppression and transgression.
- Helping an oppressor and condoning his actions.
- To become employees of the oppressors.
- Asking for judgment from an oppressor unnecessarily.

Gambling

- Betting or any form of gambling.
- Manufacturing tools of gambling instruments.
- Betting in ways other than those mentioned in the section of Islamic laws about archery and horseracing.
- Participating in horseracing competitions.

Music, etc.

- Dancing.
- Singing and listening to it.

- Visiting nightclubs, discos, etc.
- Manufacturing, buying, selling, possession, or playing musical or instruments.
- Playing drums, flutes and suchlike.

Truth

- To accept or give bribe to hide a truth or make something false prevail.
- Presenting false testimony.
- Destruction of the truth.
- Swearing a false oath.
- Hiding a testimony.
- Hiding the truth.

Falsehood

- Accepting false religions, like Sufism, Baha'i, etc.
- To become a member of parties of falsehood like communism etc.
- Keeping, buying, selling, teaching and publicising false and misleading literature.
- The learning of corrupting subjects, or teaching them to other than those who want to refute them.

Miscellaneous

- Making statues, as well as buying, selling, and promoting them for the purpose of worship.
- Buying and selling swine and fighting dogs.
- Taking and giving usury, managing or dealing with any aspect of preparing or finalising the process of a contract involving usury, and the brokerage about it.
- Shaving one's or others' beards.
- To be self-praising about one's own worships.

- A fury that leads to Ḥarām.
- To break one's bond with relatives.
- Earning by unlawful things and means.
- To write erotic poetry about a chaste woman or a boy, etc.
- The use of intoxicants, whether drinking, serving, selling, buying, farming the plants [of their fruits] for this purpose, making, using their proceeds, taking them to others, renting a property, a vehicle, or anything else for their purpose, and also all uses of them such as treating injuries unnecessarily, and suchlike.

Needless to say, some of the conducts above may be related to others in the list, but they have been included for the seriousness of the conduct, as this has been indicated by various Qur'anic verses or Prophetic Ḥadith or traditions.

Furthermore, it should be noted that some of the conducts mentioned above constitute *kufr* (disbelief), some are *shirk* (polytheism or association), some are *kabā'er* (major sins), and some are subject to *kaffārah* (payment of fine or compensation), or subject to *ḥadd* (punishment predefined in the Qur'an or the hadith) or *ta'zeer* (punishment as prescribed by the Islamic judge), all of which are detailed in relevant jurisprudence texts.

The Unethical Conducts

There are the habits and traits that are morally abominable and therefore it is imperative for the Muslim individual to avoid them and refrain from them, and they are many. The scholars of ethics have mentioned them in their books and here we shall mention most of them, some of which, according to *shari'ah*, are even prohibited.

- To seek revenge.
- To boast about oneself.

- To be very optimistic or overconfident about oneself²⁶⁴.
 - To consider one's own good deeds as great.
 - To belittle other's good deeds.
 - To consider other's bad deeds as great.
 - To belittle one's own bad deeds.
 - Not to care about one's own bad conduct and ignore other's protests against it.
-
- To look down on people.
 - To cause inconvenience to others.
 - To transgress, even by sitting comfortably²⁶⁵ in a packed place.
 - Hurting others even though an act causing it may not be unlawful, such as building one's house such that it blocks sunlight or air from reaching the neighbour's.
 - Insulting others even if not up to the unlawful limits.
 - Frightening people even if not to the unlawful degrees.
 - Hostility even if less than the unlawful limits.
 - The use of swear words even if not unlawful.
-
- Jealousy that is less than the prohibited.
 - Wanting.
 - To be rancorous and vindictive.
 - To be stingy.
 - To be malevolent.
 - To be greedy.
 - To be hasty.

²⁶⁴ Such that one would forget or abandon the need to refrain from evil and repent.

²⁶⁵ i.e. having no consideration for others.

- To cause commotion.
- To be hardhearted.
- To be awkward and not to get on with others.
- To be bad mannered.
- To be proud
- To be haughty.
- To show off even in non-worship matters.
- To suspect people.
- To be afraid of people.
- Going back on one's promise.
- To be excessive in sexual lust.
- To have no self-respect.
- To have a low self-esteem and enthusiasm.
- To have no sense of honour.
- To have eager and fervour unnecessarily.

- To publicise matters that are best kept private.
- To cover up the truth, even if it were not mandatory to reveal it, even by keeping quiet.
- To say lies when joking.
- To accuse someone of something in a joke, like "he eats too much".
- To make fun of others.
- To joke a lot.
- To laugh too much.

- To rely on [or take advantage of] others.
- To burden others.
- To do useless things.
- To talk about things that are not one's concern.

- To spy on things that is not one's business.
 - Taking good deeds lightly.
 - Not caring about desirable acts.
 - Persisting on detestable matters.
 - To get involved with indecent things.
 - Involving one self in undesirable matters, even if they are not unlawful.
-
- To be materialistic; caring too much for material issues, e.g. clothing and housing, etc. in a similar way to those who lead an extravagant life.
 - To express grief in hardship.
 - To complain about life.
 - To grieve about worldly things.
 - To have long worldly hopes.
 - Not to be content about one's sustenance in life.
 - To be unconcerned about issues of the hereafter.
 - Love of being praised.
 - Love of leadership or high position.
 - Love of this world.
 - Love of wealth.
 - To be too busy with earning.
 - To be too wealthy that would lead to arrogance.
-
- To be pessimist about Allah.
 - Not to have trust in Allah.
 - To ignore Allah's guidance, and warnings, etc.
 - Not to care about the rules of shari'ah.

- Discrimination, fanaticism, and racism.
- To get angry without justifiable reasons.
- Not to be respectful to the elders.
- To be unkind to children.
- To be unfair.
- To be ungrateful.
- To be unthankful.
- For one's outer and inner [approach] to be contradictory even in worldly matters.
- To be insolent.
- To neglect the believers.
- To sleep a lot.
- To have no work or skills.
- Not to observe cleanliness.
- Scrupulosity and obsession (*waswasah*), even in worldly matters.
- To be either extremist in one's affairs or indifferent.
- To frown one's face for no reason.
- To associating with sinners.
- Keeping company of contemptible individuals.

The Ethical Conducts

There are virtuous ethics and praiseworthy traits that Islam encourages to them and has commanded the Muslims to be described by them. It is imperative that a Muslim individual adorns oneself by them and seek decoration by them. They are many, some of which are as follows:

- To have confidence in the promises of Allah.
- To belittle oneself before Allah.
- To spend for the cause of Allah.

- To take comfort with Allah.
- To repent from unlawful things that Allah dislikes.
- To submit oneself to the orders of Allah in all matters.
- To have trust in Allah.
- To love Allah and those whom He has ordered to love.
- To love because of Allah.
- To dislike because of Allah.
- To have fear of Allah.
- To have hope in Allah.
- To be deliberate in one's affairs.
- To have fairness.
- To be independent of people.
- Altruism or selflessness.
- To help people.
- To train oneself in good matters.
- To encourage others to do good deeds.
- To stop others from doing abominable things.
- To bring reform among people.
- To be sincere in one's deeds.
- To be good to one's parents.
- To be humble.
- To visit friends.
- To be friendly.
- To be steadfast in good deeds.
- To be forbearing.
- To be good mannered.
- To protect the rights of the neighbours.
- To be concerned about one's sins.
- Not to have all hopes in deeds.

- To be considerate with people.
- Not to do or practice anything (spiritually or materially) to the extent that it results in extreme pressure on oneself.
- To be nice with the family and children.
- To be content with destiny.
- To forsake worldly pleasures.
- To be respectful.
- To be protective of people.
- To correct one's mistakes.
- To be pleasant in one's speech with others.
- To be thankful of the bounties.
- To reform people ﴿with wisdom and good advice﴾²⁶⁶.
- To spent much in charity and help the weak.
- To maintain good relations with one's relatives.
- To spread peace and harmony.
- To reach-out for the weak, sick and the orphans.
- To be clean.
- To conceal people's faults and shortcomings.
- To be the same in out side and in side in all matters.
- To be truthful and stay away from lies even when joking.
- To have patience.
- To be hospitable to guests.
- To accept invitations.
- To give and accept gifts on traditional occasions.
- To forgive people.
- To be chaste.
- To have justice in all matters.
- To have reverence for religious people.

²⁶⁶ The Qur'an, The Bee (16): 125

- To stay away from despicable individuals.
- To have courage.
- To love the poor.
- To strife against one's desires.
- To give loans.
- To help the believers in need.
- To prevent any harm from reaching the believers.
- To keep a secret and not to publicise it.
- To mention people with good names.
- To hurry in doing good deeds.
- To bring one's self into account.
- To give good advise to believers.
- To intend to do good things.
- To cleanse one's soul and remove the abominable traits from it.
- To be pious.
- To be God fearing.
- To avoid matters that are doubtful.
- To persevere with avoiding sin.
- To persevere on worship and prayers.
- Remembrance of death and the hereafter.
- To be content.
- To be bashful.
- To have a happy face.

On Repentance and Returning to Allah

The prophet is reported as saying,

“There is not a day whose dawn break is risen and not a night whose dusk is set except that two angels converse a quartet between themselves, with the first saying:

If only these creature were not created,

The other says, now that they are created if only they would do what they were created for,

The other says, or if they do not know what they were created for, if only they act according what they know,

The other says, or if they do not act according to what they know, if only they would repent for what they did”.²⁶⁷

When someone in his presence sought Allah’s forgiveness and said *astaghfirullah*, Amir al-Mo’mineen responded saying, “may your mother mourn you! Do you know what it means to seek forgiveness from Allah? Seeking forgiveness is a rank of the elite, and it is a name underlying six meanings:

The first is regret over what has occurred,

The second is the determination not to ever go back to it,

The third is to recompense the right of others so that you meet Allah while being plain without any liability upon you.

Fourth is to fulfil any obligatory duty you have missed.

Fifth is to eliminate any flesh that may have nourished and grown through a forbidden [thing] through sorrow feelings until the skin touches the bone, and a new flesh grows in between.

²⁶⁷ Jāmi‘ al-Sa‘adāt, by M. M. Narāqi, vol.3, p37.

The sixth is to make the body taste the pain of obedience just as you made it taste delight of disobedience, and it is then that you may say *astaghfirullah*.²⁶⁸

In another hadith, it is stated, “he who intends to commit a sin but does not do it [the Lord will not reprimand him] but it may be that the servant commits a sin and the Lord – the Blessed and the Mighty – sees him and says, “By my Might and by my Majesty I shall never forgive you after this”.²⁶⁹

Imam Ṣādiq said, “fear the trivial (the dismissed or scoffed at) sins, for they will not be forgiven.” He was asked what are the trivial ones? The Imam said, “That one commits a sin and say, good for me that I do not have [a sin] other than that.”²⁷⁰

Amir al-Mo’mineen peace be upon him, said, “the most severe sin is that that one takes lightly”.²⁷¹

Imam Ṣādiq said, “No by Allah, Allah will not accept anything of His obedience while [one] persists on anything of His disobediences.”²⁷²

On the Night Prayer and its Virtues

There is ardent emphasis on Night Prayer in the narrations reported from the *ma’ṣoom* imams, peace be upon them.

The Night prayer is eleven rak‘ah, eight rak‘ah are the Night prayers, two are al-shaf‘ prayer, and one rak‘ah is al-witr prayer. Every two rak‘ah is performed with one salām with the exception of the witr which is one rak‘ah, with one salām. The time of the night prayer is between midnight and the break of Fajr.

²⁶⁸ Nahj al-Balaghah, p549, hadith #417

²⁶⁹ Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah, vol.15, p303, Thawāb al-‘Amāl, by al-Ṣadooq, p242.

²⁷⁰ Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah, vol.15, p310

²⁷¹ Nahj al-Balaghah, p 559, hadith #477

²⁷² Al-Kāfi, vol.2, p288, Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah, vol.15, p337

It is recommended that in each of the two rak‘ah of the first prayer the surah of Tawḥeed is recited thirty times [after al-Ḥamd], and in the rest of the two rak‘ah prayers, the long surahs are recited such as the Cattle (#6), the Cave (#18), the Prophets (#21), if there is enough time. It is recommended to recite the long surah in the first rak‘ah and a short in the second [in the latter three prayers].

It is recommended to recite [the surahs of] al-Falaq, al-Nās, and al-Tawḥeed in the al-shaf‘ and al-witr²⁷³.

Otherwise one may read al-Tawḥeed in all²⁷⁴.

In the Qunut of al-witr prayer one should pray for forty believers, saying *Allāhumma ighfir le ‘so & so’*, and instead of ‘so & so’ the name of the individual should be mentioned, [and if one wished to pray for a minor, s/he] should not be counted amongst the forty²⁷⁵. [after that] it is recommended in the Qunut to say *istighfār* seventy times, better still to say it one hundred times. During the saying of the *istighfār* one may keep one’s left hand raised and keep count with the right hand. This *istighfār* is recommended to be as follows:

Astaghfirullāha min jamee‘a dulmi wa jurmi wa isrāfi fi amri wa atoobo ilayh.

However, it would be sufficient to say *Astaghfirullāha wa atoobo ilayh.*

It is recommended to say seven times *hādha maqām-ul-‘ā’edhi bika min an-nār.*

²⁷³ In *al-shaf‘* prayer it is recommended to recite al-Nās [after al-Ḥamd] in the first rak‘ah, and al-Falaq in the second. In the *al-witr* prayer, which is one rak‘ah, it is recommended to recite [after al-Ḥamd] al-Tawḥeed three times and then al-Nās and al-Falaq, and then go for Qunut.

²⁷⁴ i.e. one may read al-Tawḥeed [once after al-Ḥamd] in all [eleven rak‘ah of the night prayer].

²⁷⁵ The minors should be prayed for on top of the forty adult individuals. Ed.

It is recommended to say three hundred times *al-‘Afw*, and if one wanted to say them conjointly then it should be pronounced *al-‘Afw al-‘Afw* . . .

The virtues and merit of the night prayer

Allah Almighty revealed to Moses, “Rise up in the darkness of the night, and make your grave a garden of the gardens of Paradise”²⁷⁶.

Amir al-Mo’mineen said, “The rising of the night gives health to the body”²⁷⁷.

Imam Ṣādiq said, “the prayer of the night beautifies the face, beautifies manners, freshens up the breath, increases sustenance, pays the debt, repels sorrows, and strengthens the sight”²⁷⁸.

Imam Ṣādiq also said, “he says lies who claims he performs the night prayers while he goes hungry [during the day], for the prayer of night guarantees the sustenance of the day”²⁷⁹.

On Childbirth and Childbearing

The first matter

It is recommended to wash the newborn when it is born, and to recite the *adhān* in its right ear and the *iqāmah* in its left, to do *tahnik*, which is to apply water of the *Furāt* (the Euphrates) to the upper inside of its mouth²⁸⁰, and to name him on the seventh day. It is recommended to shave the infant’s head on this day and to give to charity the hair’s weight in gold or silver. If he is not

²⁷⁶ Mostadrak al-Wasā’el, vol.6, p331

²⁷⁷ Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah, vol.8, p150, Mostadrak al-Wasā’el, vol.3, p281

²⁷⁸ Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah, vol.8, p152

²⁷⁹ Wasā’el al-Shi‘ah, vol.8, p158

²⁸⁰ Or with the turbah of Imam Hussain peace be upon him. Tahdheeb al-Aḥkām, vol.6, p74.

shaved on the seventh day it is no longer *mustahab*. It is also recommended on the seventh day to do *aqeeqah* using a sheep or a camel – the bigger the better. It is recommended that the midwife is given the entire leg, and if no midwife was involved, the mother is given the share of the midwife and she gives them to whomever she wishes. If the midwife was a Jewess who does not eat the Muslim meat, she is given one-quarter of the price of the sheep. It is recommended to give some of the meat to charity and cook the rest, and to invite ten of the believer over it, the more the better.

It is recommended to circumcise the male infant on the seventh day, and if the father or guardian does not perform the circumcision for him, it becomes mandatory for the boy when he reaches the age of puberty.

It is recommended to recite the following du'a when the circumcision is being performed:

O Allah this is Your Sunnah and the sunnah of your prophet, blessings and peace be upon him and his pure progeny, and [this is] our obedience to You and Your prophet, thorough Your will and Your decree, for a matter that You wanted, a command You have made certain, and a matter that You have executed, so You have made him taste the heat of iron in his circumcision and his *hijamah* for a reason You know better than me. O Allah purify him from the sins, increase in his lifespan, repel the ills from his physique and the pains from his body, and enhance him in richness and prosperity, and repel poverty from him, for You know and we know not.

It is narrated from Imam Şādiq that it is recommended for the boy to recite this *du'a* before his adolescence if it were not recited at the time of circumcision, for Allah would repel from the boy the 'iron heat' such as being killed.

And if *aqeeqah* is not performed on the seventh day, it is recommended to perform it as long as he is alive, and even after

he dies. It is preferred that the *aqeeqah* is male for a male and a female for a female, failing that, the male *aqeeqah* should be used, or just the *aqeeqah* without any specification. The criteria of the sacrifice [sheep for the hajj] are not required for the *aqeeqah* [sheep]. And if one cannot find one, should wait [until one finds one], and it is not sufficient to give the price of the *aqeeqah* to charity.

It is permissible for the parents and other [relatives] to eat from the *aqeeqah* but it is *makrooh*, and its severity is greater for the mother, and it is also *makrooh* for any dependent of the father.

It is preferred that the *aqeeqah* is cut part by part and no bone of is broken. As for burying the bones, there is no evidence for it. It is permissible for the *aqeeqah* to be cut and gifted to the neighbours and others, but it is preferred to cook it and invite a group of the believers.

The *aqeeqah* is not specified for the poor, and it may be given to the well off and the Sayyid, even if the *aqeeqah* is for a non-Sayyid.

If the father does not perform *aqeeqah* for the child, it is recommended for the child to perform *aqeeqah* for himself, and the sacrifice [that one performs in the hajj] suffices for the *aqeeqah*.

If the son lives until after noon of the seventh day, it is recommended to perform the *aqeeqah* for him, and if he dies before noon of the seventh day, *aqeeqah* is waived.

The second matter

The best food for the infant is milk, and the best milk for the infant is his mother's milk, but it is not mandatory – [from religious obligation viewpoint] – for the mother to feed the baby without a wage, and her wage must be met by the father. It is permissible

for the mother to accept a wage for feeding the infant, even though it is preferred for her not to. Of course if the father was dead, or was not able to meet the cost, then it is mandatory for the mother to feed the infant. If the child had money, it is permissible for the father to pay the wage from that money, and in that case it is not mandatory for the father to pay the wage.

It is recommended for the mother to feed the child from both breasts every time, and the duration of complete breastfeeding is two years, and it is permissible to reduce it by three months, but it is not permissible to reduce it by more than that except for an exceptional condition. As a precaution, breastfeeding should not exceed the two-year period.

Needless to say, the mother has priority to breastfeed the child during this period, if she willingly opts for that or seeks a wage similar to other [breast-feeders], and it will not be permissible for the father to remove the child from her. If the mother sought a wage higher than others, the father may give the child to others [for breastfeeding].

It is the mother's right to raise the child during the first two years, if it were male, and seven years in the case of a female, if she was a free, sane, trustworthy Muslim and did not have a husband other than him²⁸¹. During this period the father may not take the child from her, but after the said period, the right of raising the child is the father's, and if the father dies, the right goes back to the mother as a precaution, and the guardian may not challenge her. Allah Almighty is the knower.

This is the last of what we wished to briefly mention here about the acclaimed teachings of Islam, namely; the science of *Oşool al-Deen*, the science of *Foroo' al-Deen*, and the science of Islamic

²⁸¹ i.e. through remarriage after divorcing from the first husband (who is the father of the child).

Akhlāq and *Ādāb*, the learning of which is ‘*ayniy*’²⁸² obligatory for every male and female Muslim, as well as implementing them, and acting upon them, so that we may attain a happy and prosperous life in this world, and win an eternal and everlasting paradise, InSha’Allah [by the will of Allah Almighty] and Allah is the succeeding, the helper.

o-o-o-o-O-o-o-o-o

²⁸² ‘*ayniy* – or individually – obligatory as opposed to *kifā’i* – or collectively – obligatory.

Transliteration

In the Arabic language, there are a number of letters that do not have a corresponding equivalent in the English language. As a result the sound or pronunciation of those letters would be unfamiliar to the English reader who has not come across them before. Some of them may easily be pronounced by the English reader, whereas s/he would find others difficult to pronounce, unless he has already been exposed to the sounds of the Arabic alphabet.

The Arabic consonant characters are given below along with their equivalent English characters or sounds.

b = ب	z = ز	f = ف
t = ت	s = س	q = ق
th = ث	sh = ش	k = ك
j = ج	ṣ = ص	l = ل
ḥ = ح	ḍ = ض	m = م
kh = خ	ṭ = ط	n = ن
d = د	ḏ = ظ	h = ه
dh = ذ	ʿ = ع	w = و
r = ر	gh = غ	y = ي

This presentation is an effort to describe the sounds of these letters, and endeavour to explain how their sounds are generated, so that the reader may obtain some idea about these particular characters, when they appear in some Arabic terms used in this work.

To distinguish these letters, either a combination of two letters is used or, in the case of the majority of the difficult letters, a normal Latin letter is used in association with a diacritic – dot or a line above or below the letter as shown in the table above. Furthermore there are also a couple of letters in the Arabic alphabet which are represented using the symbols: ' and ʿ.

There is the letter that is symbolized as:

th, which sounds like the ‘th’ in the word ‘three’. The other letter is:

dh, which sounds like the ‘th’ in the word ‘there’.

As for the more difficult ones, they are as follows:

Gh or **gh**, the nearest sound for this is that of the French ‘r’.

H or **ḥ**

The sound of this letter resembles the sound of ‘strong, breathy’ H. The sound for ḥ is generated from the proximity of the throat that the normal h is, but from an area slightly further up the throat, with more tension in the local throat muscle, with the back end of the tongue closing in against the roof of the throat immediately before the uvula.

Kh or **kh**

The sound for this is perhaps somewhere between of that of ‘h’ and ‘k’, as far as the location of mouth where it is generated is concerned. It is generated at the back of the mouth, by pressing the back end of the tongue against the soft palate whilst forcing the air through in the outward direction, causing the uvula to vibrate.

The example of the sound of ‘kh’ found in English or that the English reader may be familiar with is *Loch*, the Scottish for lake, where the ‘ch’ in loch is pronounced as the designated ‘kh’ in Arabic.

Ṣ or **ṣ**

The sound of this letter resembles the sound of ‘strong’ S. It is generated by involving the main trunk of the tongue, by slightly curving the centre of the front half of the tongue in the downward direction. In aid of pronouncing the sound of the ‘strong’ S, it would be helpful if you consider saying the normal letter ‘S’, when the front upper and lower teeth are brought closer together reducing the airflow, thus producing the sound of the letter ‘S’.

The opposite process is used to generate the sound of the ‘strong’ S, i.e. the sound is produced when slightly moving apart the upper and lower teeth, thus pronouncing the ‘strong’ S.

D or d

The sound of this letter is somewhere near the sound of the normal D. Whereas the sound of a normal D is generated by placing the front end of the tongue at the front end of the hard palate or the roof of the mouth adjoining the top teeth, the sound of d is generated by touching, to the same location, more of the front trunk of the tongue while caving in the middle part of the tongue.

D or d

The best description of this sound is that it could be the strong version of the sound of ‘dh’ as in the word ‘*there*’. Whereas ‘dh’ is generated by placing the tip of the tongue between the upper and lower front teeth, whilst pressing against the upper front teeth, the sound for d is generated by pressing more of the front end of the tongue between the upper and lower front teeth, whilst pressing against the upper front teeth, and the centre of the tongue is curved downwards.

T or t

The sound of this letter resembles a ‘strong’ T. Whereas a normal T is generated by involving the front end of the tongue, the ‘strong’ T is generated by pressing the front end of the trunk of the tongue against the front end of the hard palate or the roof of the mouth. Also when the normal T is pronounced, the lower jaw does not move, whereas in the case of pronouncing the strong T, or T, the lower jaw moves outwards.

Q or q

The sound for this letter is a short and sharp version of the letter ‘gh’ or the French R. Whereas in the process of generating the sound of ‘gh’ the back end of the tongue is pressed slightly against the uvula, allowing some air to flow, in the case of the sound of the Arabic alphabet represented by Q, the same process takes place with the difference that the passage is completely blocked,

and the sound is actually generated by the sudden release of the passage.

’ or the hamzah is the character representing the glottal stop.

ˆ also shown as ‘

This symbol is used to characterize an Arabic alphabet that represents the sound of a strong ‘throaty’ A. Just as the sound for A is generated at the back of the throat, in the same proximity, the sound for ˆ or ‘ is also generated with the difference that the entire throat back is engaged in the process by a stroke of contraction in the muscle there. In this process more of the throat is blocked, which also involves the back end of the tongue, than when pronouncing the normal A. Just in the case of the normal A, the sound is actually generated at the time of the release of the contraction of the muscles involved.

‘Long’ a

There are also cases when there is a diacritic or a small horizontal line above the letter, like ā: this is to represent ‘long’ a, an alternative to writing aa. The nearest example for the long a, or ā, in English words is the case of “far” as opposed to the word “fat”. In the case of “far”, the ‘a’ is elongated in the pronunciation, whereas in the case of “fat”, the ‘a’ is short.

‘Double’ consonant letters

In the Arabic language, there are many instances where a letter in a word has double pronunciations with a very slight pause between the two. The first pronunciation is always the sound of the letter itself, and the second is the sound of the letter together with that of the following letter. For correct pronunciation of the word, it is important that there is a very slight pause between the sounds of the double letters. Some examples are as follows:

Allāh, where the presence of ‘ll’ indicates the requirement of the double pronunciation of the letter ‘l’. It may help if the word is considered as Al-lāh, with the pause due to the hyphen being very slight. Another example is Muhammad.

N.B.

To emphasise the correct pronunciation of some Arabic words, the transliteration characters are normally used for words like Allāh, Qur'ān, Muḥammad, sūrah, āyah, etc. On the other hand, to adhere to simplicity it has been decided that diacritics and other transliteration characters are to be avoided where possible – in common words – where it is assumed that reader is or would be familiar with the pronunciation of those words, and that such characters are only used for less common and unfamiliar words only. So for such words as the above-mentioned, they would be written simply as Allah, Qur'an, Muhammad, surah, ayah, etc.

Along similar lines, names of prophets and messengers are generally presented in the Latin form in this work, although on the initial occasion for each case, the equivalent of the Arabic pronunciation is also given. e.g. in the case of the name of prophet Abraham, its Arabic equivalent of Ibrāhīm is also given for the first time, and subsequently only the Latin form is used for the sake of ease and simplicity for the English reader. End.



The Author

A brief biography of the eminent Islamic authority Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Şādiq Shirazi:

He was born on the 20th Dhil-Ḥijjah 1360 H, January 1942 CE, in the holy city of Karbala, Iraq. He was raised and cultured in a family that is renowned for its history of learning, strive, sacrifice, and morals.

He received his specialist education of Islamic sciences at the hands of eminent scholars of the ḥawzah until he acquired a distinguished degree of ijtihād.

Through his relentless endeavours he developed in himself the quality of continually seeking knowledge along with unremitting observance of piety; tirelessly promoting the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, disseminating their culture, and defending their sacred laws and shari'ah.

He has written numerous works in various fields and on different levels, ranging from politics, economics, history and ethics to specialist works for ḥawzah studies on such topics as Fiqh and Oṣool (jurisprudence) that total more than eighty.

Sayyid Şādiq has been teaching at the ḥawzah for more than 40 years.

He is distinguished for being accessible to the people; directly dealing and meeting with various sectors of members of society, listening to diverse views from different spectrum of the community.

Equally, he is distinguished for his humility; respecting the young and old, and also for his tolerance in responding to insult or evil with kindness and courteousness.

He is renowned for his independence and for his policy of boycotting despotic governments.

He oversees hundreds of organisations and institutions throughout the globe; for example those that address social issues such as marriage services and social reforms, those that address humanitarian matters such as clinics, orphanages, financial organisations giving interest-free loans (*Qard al-Ḥasanah*), intellectual institutions such as centres for research and studies, universities, ḥawzahs, libraries, as well as religious centres such as mosques and hussainiahs.

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Other Publications by *fountain books*

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1. *Islam: Fundamental Principles and Teachings*

In the first part of this brief discourse the author outlines and briefly discusses *Oṣool al-Deen* (the fundamental principles or beliefs of Islam), which are *Tawḥeed* (the indivisible Oneness of Allah), *‘Adl* (the Divine Justice of Allah), *Nobowwah*, (the belief in Prophethood), *Imāmah* (leadership of mankind) and *Mi‘ād* (resurrection or belief in the hereafter). The author also addresses the subject of the Prophet’s eternal miracle – the glorious Qur’an.

In the second part of this publication author goes on to address *Foroo‘ al-Deen* (the essential rulings and practices of Islam), which are not only the well-known ten acts of worship such as prayers, fasting and hajj but also other aspects of the teachings of Islam that are significantly relevant in modern times; issues such as the human community, social order, politics, the economy, the armed forces, the justice system, culture, media, education, health, and social freedoms. Through this discussion the author establishes that a government based on the teachings of Islam would provide the most favourable system of government for mankind.

In the third and final part of this work, the author discusses the third component that a Muslim is required to adhere to, namely the Islamic morals and etiquettes (*Akhlaq*) and (*Ādāb*). Here, the author briefly outlines and discusses the ‘four pillars’ of Islamic ethics and the ‘two pillars’ of its etiquettes. The author then lists conducts and behaviours that Islam prescribes as one of obligatory, forbidden, unethical, or the recommended moral conduct. This basic yet concise book serves as a good introduction to Islamic beliefs and principles.

2. *Islamic Beliefs for All*

In this book the author discusses the five fundamental principles of Islam. These principles are *Tawḥeed* (the indivisible Oneness of Allah), *‘Adl* (the Divine Justice of Allah), *Nobowwah*, (the belief in Prophethood), *Imāmah* (leadership of mankind) and *Mi‘ād* (Resurrection). The unique aspect of this book is the author’s subtle approach in addressing the issues concerned and the simple examples given to illustrate the discussion. This authoritative work is not only important to Muslims, but it would also be of interest to those non-Muslims who seek to explore Islam and its doctrine. The simplicity of this book makes it a valuable resource for Religious Education.

3. *What is Islam? An introduction to principles and beliefs*

To attempt to summarize the Islamic faith in a book of this size is a tremendous challenge. This was the aim of the late Grand Ayatollah Muhammad al-Shirazi, one of the most eminent Islamic authorities of modern times. Through the use of clear and concise language within a “question and answer” format, the author has sought to convey the richness and profound spirituality of the Islamic message in all its aspects to the widest possible audience. The late Sayyid Shirazi covers all the main aspects of Islam, from the fundamental beliefs such as the Oneness of God and His justice and Prophethood to topics such as ablutions, praying, fasting, and performing the Ḥajj pilgrimage. In addition, the text also discusses a selection of diverse subjects such as Islamic law, economics, politics, the Islamic view of society, the issue of freedom in Islam, and so forth. This work serves as a useful resource for Muslims who want to learn more about their religion, and also for non-Muslims who seek a concise introduction as to what Islam is all about.

4. *The Family*

In this book the author highlights the problems he sees primarily in Islamic societies and particularly in the West today from the phenomenon of unmarried young men and women through to birth control and contraception. He surveys the idea of marriage in various religions, cultures and schools of thought while also discussing the issue of polygamy from the Islamic perspective. In his endeavours to provide practical solutions to today's social problems, the author calls for simplicity in the process of marriage and draws our attention to the Islamic teachings and laws in this pivotal aspect of life.

As well as being a call to the Muslim world to revert to the true teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, this book also serves as a preamble to others who seek answers to the some of the social problems of today. Islam promises success in every area of human life from individual to social levels, the practicality of which has been historically proven.

5. *The Qur'an: When was it compiled?*

In this book the author addresses the issues concerning the timing of the compilation of the Holy Qur'an, on what and whose instructions and authority this task was carried out, and ultimately who accomplished its compilation in the form that it is available today. In this work the author presents undisputable evidence to address these crucial questions. Through historical, methodical and logical analyses, the author establishes how and when the compilation of the Holy Qur'an was achieved. In Part two of the book the author presents Prophetic traditions (*hadith*) on the virtues of reciting and learning the Holy Qur'an.

6. *War, Peace and Non-violence: An Islamic perspective*

In this work the author addresses three significant issues, which have come to be associated with Islam. Through his extensive knowledge of the teachings of Islam, the author presents the Islamic stand on war, peace and non-violence, as found in the traditions and teachings of the Prophet of Islam, which could serve as exemplary models for mankind. Detailed accounts of the traditions of Prophet in his dealings with his foes during times of war or peace are presented in this book, giving the reader a clear insight into the way and basis upon which the Prophet of Islam conducted his socio-political affairs.

7. *Islamic System of Government*

In this introductory book the author outlines the basic principles of government based on the teachings of Islam. The author begins with the aim and objectives of the government according to Islam and the extent of its authority in that framework. He then addresses, from the Islamic viewpoint, the significance and fundamental nature of issues such as the consultative system of government, judicial system, freedoms, party political pluralism, social justice, human rights and foreign policy. The author concludes by outlining the socio-political policies of a government such as education, welfare, health, and crime, as well as matters such as the government's system of income distribution, and authority.

8. *If Islam Were To Be Established*

This book may serve as the Muslim's guide to the Islamic government. If an Islamist opposition group has a plan for an Islamic government, this book would help to check various aspects of the plan. In the absence of such a plan, this book serves as a useful outline. To the non-Muslim, the book presents a glimpse of the typical Islamic system of government while also

...serving as a yardstick for all who wish to check the practices of any government that asserts to have implemented an Islamic system of government.

9. The Bible and Christianity: an Islamic view

Part one of this book presents some of the encounters there have been between Muslims and Christians. In the second part of this work the author presents some of his discussions with fellow Christian scholars in gatherings at his residence in Karbala, Iraq. The debates concerned their understanding of Islam and its doctrine as well as their own religious beliefs. In this presentation the author demonstrates how he invited non-Muslims to Islam through a calm yet rational and intellectual medium through the use of simple arguments.

Presented in part three of this book is the author's brief research and analysis into the Bible. Through his findings he states his contention with various biblical stories, particularly those in relation to past Prophets. In his discussion, the author uses reason and sound evidence to validate his arguments. Part Four of this work presents some of the Qur'anic verses about Jesus Christ and his noble mother Mary (peace be upon them).

This book makes an interesting read, particularly given simple yet through provoking arguments, which are put forth at various stages.

10. The Rights of Prisoners according to Islamic teachings

In general, Islam considers imprisonment as a case of last resort. According to Islamic teachings there are only a few offences that would lead to imprisonment. Any chastisement prescribed by Islamic teachings may only be implemented if the relevant criteria and the preconditions are met. If the criteria are not met, then the prescribed punishment may not be executed.

In this book the author addresses issues such as the fundamental nature of freedom, the rights of a prisoner, and the harmful effects of imprisonment on the individual as well as on society in general. The book goes on to discuss the kind of offences that would lead to imprisonment under an Islamic system. The author also cites a few cases from Islamic History in order to demonstrate the attitude an Islamic ruler should take towards an offence, which may have been committed, and identify possibilities of waiving relevant punishments. This work also discusses the issue of torture and mental and physical ill treatment that is often carried out under the guise of interrogation or for the purpose of extracting confession from a detainee or a suspect.

This brief work presents the teachings of Islam with respect to the rights of those when imprisoned, and shows that the teachings of Islam are designed, by the designer and maker of mankind, for the benefit of mankind wherever he may be.

11. Husayn - The Sacrifice for Mankind

This is a collection of articles about a unique individual who, through his remarkable sacrifices, managed to change the course of history and the direction that mankind was heading toward. He is none other than Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family. Imam Husayn stood up to tyranny and oppression and gave everything he had, including his life and the lives of his most beloved sons and brothers as well as those of his closest allies, in order to awaken the masses, reform society, and rectify the distortion that had been inflicted on Islam.

The articles in this work cover some aspects of the aims and objectives of Imam Husayn's movement, the difference between his strategy and that of his brother Imam Hasan in facing tyranny and despotism, the examples he set, and the lessons that are learnt from the events that lead up to the tragedy of Karbala fourteen

centuries ago. Above and beyond the benefits of his movement, the personality of Imam Ḥusayn peace be upon him as reflected by the many narrations and teachings of Prophet Muhammad is also discussed. Included in this work are a number of questions and answers about the commemoration ceremonies observed by the Muslims around the world on the occasion of Ashurā.

12. The Guide to Ḥajj Rites

This handbook is a comprehensive but easy to follow companion that guides the reader through all the stages of the Ḥajj pilgrimage. It addresses all aspects of the Ḥajj programme and the rites that must be observed during the pilgrimage. It is a must for anyone who intends to go to the Ḥajj pilgrimage.

13. Aspects of the Political Theory of Imam Shirazi

The author, Muhammad G. Ayyub is a well-known Islamist political activist within the Iraqi circle who has established a long history of political struggle over the past four decades. He was attracted by the views of the Imam Muhammad Shirazi in the fields of social and political science. Prompted by the endeavours and views of Imam Shirazi, the author chose to write this book in order to introduce the reader to views that have remained relatively unknown amongst Muslim activists and reformists. This work covers aspects of Imam Shirazi's views on politics such as freedom of expression, party-political pluralism, social justice, peace and non-violence, human rights, the concept of consultative system of government, as well as the issue of the concordance of the various sects of the Muslim community.

14. The Qur'an Made Simple

The Noble Qur'an is the final and greatest of the books of God. It is not merely a compilation of chronicles of an ancient people, nor a group of Prophets. Nor is it solely a book of morals. It is

certainly not a simply a book of science, and it is not solely a book of rules and laws. Rather, The Noble Qur'an it is a set of arguments in the Divine dialect setting out exactly why the reader should recognise Allah, glorified be He, submit to Him, and follow the Divine religion. These arguments are rational and spiritual, addressed to the mind and the heart.

In the Divine words the Noble Qur'an is a book 'of guidance', guiding man from darkness to light, from evil to good, from ignorance to knowledge, from uncertainty about the origin and the end, and about man's role in the world, to certainty and conviction.

This volume that has been published is the translation of the last three parts or *juz'* of the Noble Qur'an, and the associated commentary by the late Imam Muhammad Shirazi, elucidating the Qur'anic text to produce a clear, succinct, and easy to follow explanation of the divine scripture.

15. The Prophet Muhammad, a mercy to the world

This book offers an easy introduction to the life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. It endeavours to convey a glimpse of those illuminating moments in the life of the Prophet that helped bring about one of the greatest transformations in the history of mankind. The book highlights what kind of person the Prophet was, and how his conduct with friends and foes, in peace and war, provided an impeccable example for generations to come.

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Teachings of Islam

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A site dedicated to the cause of Islam, Muslims and Mankind

Islam aims to bring about prosperity to all mankind. One of the leading authorities on Islam today, Imam Shirazi, calls upon all Muslims to adhere to the teachings of Islam in all domains in order to regain their former glory and the salvation of mankind. These teachings include:

- PEACE in every aspect.
- NON-VIOLENCE in all conducts.
- FREEDOM of expression, belief, etc.
- PLURALISM of political parties.
- CONSULTATIVE System of Leadership.
- The RE-CREATION of the single Muslim nation - without geographical borders, etc. between them, as stated by Allah:

“This, your community is a single community and I am your Lord; so worship Me.”

- The REVIVAL of Islamic brotherhood throughout this nation:

“ The believers are brothers.”

- FREEDOM from all the man-made laws, and restrictions as the Qur'an states:

“... and (Prophet Muhammad) releases them from their heavy burdens and from the shackles that were upon them.”

You can email your queries to the website of Imam Shirazi at: www.imashirazi.com