

مَا كَانَ
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*In the Name of God
the Compassionate, the Merciful*





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1. To provide a forum for scholars to make analytical studies of Islamic topics and themes.
2. To advance the cause of better understanding of the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt's ('a) contribution to Islam.
3. To publish English translations of Arabic and Persian works of Muslim scholars.
4. To endeavor to find Islamic answers to questions relating to the social, political, and moral problems of today.

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Scholars and writers from all over the world are invited to contribute to this journal.

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Mostafa Izaddoust

"Say: Are those who know
and those who do not know
alike? Only the men of
understanding are mindful."
(The Holy Qur'an, 39:9).

An Introduction to Exegesis of the Qur'an

Allamah Muhammad Husayn al-Tabataba'i

This article is extracted from the first volume of Al-Mizan, compiled by Allamah Tabataba'i, rendered into English by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi. Allamah Tabataba'i is recognized as one of the great contemporary scholars. His specialized fields are exegesis of the Qur'an, mysticism and philosophy.

Allamah Tabataba'i was born in Tabriz in 1903 and received his education in the great Shi'i seminary of Najaf. He mastered in both branches of the traditional sciences: the transmitted science and the intellectual. Allamah returned to Iran in 1934 and began his teaching in Qum. Gradually his magnetic personality and mystical characteristics attracted the most intelligent students such as Muahhari. Meanwhile, he started compiling his magnum opus, Al-Mizan in twenty volumes concerning the exegesis of the Qur'an. In Al-Mizan, Allamah, unlike his predecessors, adopted a new approach in interpreting the Qur'an, i.e., Tafsir al-Qur'an bi al-Qur'an (Exegesis of the Qur'an by Qur'an).

In the Preface, Allamah Tabataba'i traces the origin and development of Islamic studies and Qur'anic exegesis. He sheds light on various methods of interpretation of the Qur'an and their demerits. Allamah is of the view that all of them suffer from a most serious defect, that is, they impose the result of academic or philosophical arguments on the Qur'anic meanings. They make the Qur'an conform with an extraneous idea. Accordingly, explanation turns into adaptation.

We hope that by introducing Allamah's Al-Mizan that our readers will take it upon themselves to study his worthy work more carefully. His use of Qur'an to explain Qur'an is one of the unique characteristics of this great, wise, and knowledgeable man who spent many years compiling this great work.

This, of course, is not his only work, he was a prolific writer and wrote on many subjects including the anthology of Shi'i Islam, mysticism, and others. He says in an article on the stages of spiritual journey, "A materialist passes his life in the dark valley of materialism, He is plunged in the sea

of evil desires and alyays is tossed from this side to that side by the waves of material relation of wealth, wife and children. He cries for help, but in vain and in the end gets nothing but disappointment."

He advises us, "In your life you get some pleasant breaths from your Lord. Make a point of being benefited by them and do not turn away from them."

He describes the twelve worlds that a devotee must pass through on his spiritual journey. He says, "The names of these worlds are: minor Islam, major Islam, greater Islam, minor faith, major faith, greater faith, minor emigration, major emigration, greater emigration, minor jihad, major jihad and greater jihad."

In seeking Allah's guidance he says, "The first thing that a spiritual traveller has to do is to inquire into various religions as far as possible so that he may become conversant with the unity and guidance of Allah. He should try to acquire at least as much knowledge as would be enough for practical purposes."

We begin to transfer some of his knowledge by presenting his greatest work, Al-Mizan. We begin with the Preface of the first volume.

* * * * *

The science of *tafsir* (exegesis of the Qur'an), that is, explaining the meanings of Qur'anic verses, clarifying their import and revealing their significance, is one of the earliest academic pursuits in Islamic civilization. The interpretation of the Qur'an began with its revelation, as is clear from the words of Allah: "*Even as We have sent among you an Apostle from among you who recites to you Our communications and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know*" (2:151).

The first exegeses were made by certain companions of the Prophet (s), like Ibn 'Abbas, 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, Ubayy (ibn Ka'b) and others. (We use the word, 'companion', for other than Imam 'Ali (a)'; because he and the Imams from his progeny have an unequalled distinction—an unparalleled status, which we shall explain somewhere else. Exegesis, in those days, was confined to the explanation of literary aspects of the verse, the occasion of its revelation and, sometimes interpretation of one verse with the

help of another. If the verse was about a historical event or contained the realities of genesis or resurrection, etc., then sometimes a few traditions of the Holy Prophet (s) were narrated to make its meaning clear.

The same was the style of the *Ṭabi'in* (disciples of the companions), like Mujahid, Qatadah, Ibn Abi Layla, ash-Sha'bi, as-Suddi and others who lived in the first two centuries of *hijrah*. They followed the same method with more emphasis on traditions. They were not saved from forgery and interpolation by the Jews and others. They quoted traditions to explain the verses which contained the stories of the previous nations, or which described the realities of genesis, for example, creation of the heavens and the earth, beginning of the rivers and mountains, the *Iram* (the city of the tribe of 'Ad), of *Shaddad* (the so-called *mistakes* of the prophets), the alterations of the books and things like that. Some such matters could be found even in the exegesis ascribed to the companions.

During the reign of the caliphs, when the neighboring countries were conquered, the Muslims came in contact with the vanquished people and were involved in religious discussions with the scholars of various other religions and sects. This gave rise to theological debates, known in Islam as *kalam*. Also, Greek philosophy was translated into Arabic. The process began towards the end of the first century *hijrah* (Umayyad's period) and continued well into the third century ('Abbasid's reign). This created a taste for intellectual and philosophical arguments among the Muslim intelligentsia.

At the same time, *tasawwuf* (Sufism, mysticism) raised its head in society; and people were attracted towards it as it held out a promise of revealing to them the realities of religion through severe self-discipline and ascetic rigors—instead of entangling them into verbal polemics and intellectual arguments.

Thereafter emerged a group who called themselves *Muhaddith* (people of tradition), who contended that salvation depended on believing in the apparent meanings of the Qur'an and the traditions, without any drifting into academic research. The utmost they allowed was looking into literary value of the words.

Thus, before the second century had proceeded very far, Muslim society had broadly split into four groups: *Mulakalimin* (theologians), the philosophers, the Sufis and the *Akhbaris* (people of tradition). There was an intellectual chaos in the *ummah* and the Muslims, generally speaking, had

lost their bearing. The only thing to which all were committed was: *There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad (s) is the Messenger of Allah*. They differed with each other in everything else. There was dispute on the meanings of the Names and Attributes of Allah, as well as about His actions; there was conflict about the reality of the heavens and earth and what is in and on them; opinions differed whether man is a helpless tool in divine hands, or is a free agent. There were wranglings over various aspects of reward and punishment. Arguments were kicked about like a ball, from one side to the other concerning the realities of death, *barzakh* (intervening period between death and the Day of Resurrection); resurrection, paradise and hell. In short, not a single subject, having any relevance to religion, was left without a discord of one type or the other. This divergence, not unexpectedly, showed itself in exegesis of the Qur'an. Every group wanted to support his views and opinions from the Qur'an; and the exegesis had to serve this purpose.

1. *Akhbaris* (the people of tradition) explained the Qur'an in the light of the traditions ascribed to the companions and their disciples. They went ahead with some method so long as there was a tradition to lead them on, and stopped when they could not find any such tradition (provided the meaning was not self-evident). They thought it to be the only safe method, as Allah says: *...and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: "We believe in it, it is all from our Lord..."* (3:7).

But, they were mistaken. Allah has not said in His Book that rational proof had no validity. How could He say so when the authenticity of the Book itself is justified on rational proof. On the other hand, He has never said that the words of the companions or their disciples are the only religious proof. How could He say so when there were such glaring discrepancies in their opinions? In short, Allah has not called us to the sophistry which accepting and following contradictory opinions and views would entail. He has called us, instead, to meditate on the Qur'anic verses in order to remove any apparent discrepancy in them. Allah has revealed the Qur'an as a guidance, and has made it a light and an explanation of everything. Why should a light seek brightness from others' light? Why should a guidance be led by others' guidance? Why should "an explanation of everything" be explained by others' words?

2. *Mulakalimin* (the theologians) deal with religious doctrine. They also tend to interpolate the Qur'an in terms of their own principles. They cling to the verse that seemed to support their beliefs and tried to explain away what was apparently against it.

The seed of sectarian differences was sown in academic works or, more often than not, in blind following and national or tribal prejudice; but this is not the place to describe it even briefly. However, such exegesis should be called adaptation, rather than explanation. There are two ways of explaining a verse. One may say: "What does the Qur'an say?" Or one may say: "How can this verse be explained, so as to fit my belief?" The difference between the two approaches is quite clear. The former forgets every preconceived idea and goes where the Qur'an leads him. The latter has already decided what to believe and cuts the Qur'anic verses to fit that body. Such an exegesis is no exegesis at all.

3. The philosophers also suffered from the same syndrome. They tried to fit the verses on the principles of Greek philosophy (that was divided into four branches: Mathematics, natural science, theology and practical wisdom). If a verse was clearly against those principles it was explained away. In this way the verses describing metaphysical subjects, those explaining the genesis and creation of the heavens and the earth, those concerned with life after death and those about resurrection, paradise and hell were distorted to conform with the said philosophy. That philosophy was admittedly only a set of conjectures—unencumbered with any test or proof; but the Muslim philosophers felt no remorse in treating its views on the system of skies, orbits, natural elements and other related subjects as the absolute truth with which the exegesis of the Qur'an had to conform.

4. The Sufis kept their eyes fixed on esoteric aspects of creation; they were too occupied with their inner world to look at the outer one. Their tunnelliike vision prevented them from looking at things in their true perspective. Their love of the esoteric made them look for inner interpretations of the verses; without any regard to their manifest and clear meanings. It encouraged the people to base their explanations on poetic expressions and to use anything to prove anything. The condition became so bad that the verses were explained in the basis of the numerical values of their words, letters were divided into bright and dark ones and the explanations were based on that division. Building castles in the air, wasn't it? Obviously, the Qur'an

was not revealed to guide the Sufis only; nor had it addressed itself to only those who knew the numerical values of the letters (with all its ramifications); nor were its realities based on astrological calculations.

Of course, there are traditions narrated from the Prophet (s) and the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (a) saying for example: *"Verify the Qur'an has an exterior and an interior being, and its interior being has an interior being up to seven (or according to another version, seventy) interiors.."*. But the Prophet (s) and the Imams (a) gave importance to its exterior as much as to its interior; they were as much concerned with its revelation as they were with its interpretation. We shall explain in the beginning of the third chapter, "The Family of Imran", (appearing in future issues of Thaqaalayn, inshallah), that "interpretation" is not a meaning against the manifest meaning of the verse. Such an interpretation should more correctly be called "misinterpretation". This meaning of the word, "interpretation", came in vogue in the Muslim circles long after the revelation of the Qur'an and the spread of Islam. What the Qur'an means by the word, "interpretation", is something other than the meaning and the significance.

New Development

In recent times, a new method of exegesis has become fashionable. Some people, supposedly Muslims, who were deeply influenced by the natural sciences (which are based on observations and tests) and the social ones (that rely on induction), followed the materialists of Europe or the pragmatists. Under the influence of those anti-Islamic theories, they declared that the religion's realities cannot go against scientific knowledge (one should not believe anything except that which is perceived by any one of the five senses), nothing exists except matter and its properties. What the religion claims to exist, but which the sciences reject—such as The Throne, The Chair, The Tablet and The Pen—should be interpreted in a way that comforts with science. As for those things which science is silent about, like the resurrection, etc., they should be brought within the purview of the laws of matter; the pillars upon which the divine religious laws are based—like revelation, angels, Satan, prophethood, apostleship, imamah (Imamate), etc.—are spiritual things, and the spirit is material in essence, or let us say, a property of matter. Prophethood is the manifestation of a social genius, who or-

claims laws after healthy and fruitful contemplations, in order to establish a good and progressive society.

They have further said: "*One cannot have confidence in the traditions, because many are spurious; only those traditions may be relied upon which are in conformity with the Book.*" As for the Book itself, one should not explain it in the light of old philosophy and theories, because they were not based on observations and experiments—they were just a sort of mental exercise which has been totally discredited now by modern science. The best, rather the only way is to explain the Qur'an with the help of other Qur'anic verses—except where science has asserted something which is relevant to it.

This, in short, is what they have written, or what necessarily follows from their total reliance on tests and observations. We are not concerned here with the question of whether their scientific principles and philosophic dicta can be accepted as the foundation of the Qur'an's exegesis. But the matter is that the objection which they have levelled against the ancient exegetes—that theirs was only an adaptation and not the explanation—is equally true about their own method. They also say that the Qur'an and its realities must be made to conform to the scientific theories. If not so, then why do they insist that the academic theories should be treated as true foundations of exegesis from which no deviation could be allowed?

This method improves nothing on the discredited method of the ancients.

If you look at all the above-mentioned methods of exegesis, you will find that all of them suffer from a most serious defect: They impose the results of academic or philosophic arguments on the Qur'anic meanings; they make the Qur'an conform to an extraneous idea. In this way, explanation turns into adaptation, realities of the Qur'an are explained away as allegories and its manifest meanings are sacrificed for so-called "interpretations."

As we mentioned in the beginning, the Qur'an introduces itself as *the guidance for the worlds* (3:96); *the manifest light* (4:174), and *the explanation of every thing* (16:89). But these people, contrary to those Qur'anic declarations, make it to be guided by extraneous factors, to be illuminated by some outside theories, and to be explained by something other than itself! What is that "something else"? What authority has it got? And if there is any difference in various explanations of a verse—and indeed there are most

serious differences—which mediator should the Qur'an refer to?

What is the root-cause of the differences in the Qur'an's explanations? It could not happen because of any difference in the meaning of a word, phrase or sentence. The Qur'an has been sent down in plain Arabic; and no Arab (or Arabic-knowing non-Arab) can experience any difficulty in understanding it. Also, there is not a single verse (out of more than six thousand) which is enigmatic, obscure or abstruse in its import; nor is there a single sentence that keeps the mind wandering in search of its meaning. After all, the Qur'an is admittedly the most eloquent speech, and it is one of the essential ingredients of eloquence that the talk should be free from obscurity and abstruseness.

Even those verses that are counted among the "ambiguous" ones, have no ambiguity in their meanings. Whatever the ambiguity, it is in identification of the particular thing or individual from among the group to which that meaning refers. This statement needs some elaborations.

In this life we are surrounded by matter; even our senses and faculties are closely related to it. This familiarity with matter and material things has influenced our mode of thinking. When we hear a word or a sentence, our mind races to its material meaning. When we hear, for example, the words life, knowledge, power, hearing, sight, speech, will, pleasure, anger, creation and order, we at once think of the material manifestations of their meanings. Likewise, when we hear the words heaven, earth, tablet, pen, throne, chair, angel and his wings, and Satan and his tribe and army, the first things that come into our minds are their material manifestations.

Likewise, when we hear the sentences "Allah created the universe", "Allah did this", "Allah knew it", "Allah willed it" or "wills it", we look at these actions in frame of "time", because we are used to connecting every verb with a tense.

In the same way, when we hear the verses: "...and with Us is more yet" (50:35), "...We would have made it from before Ourselves" (21:17), "...and that which is with Allah is best..." (62:11), "...and to Him you shall be brought back" (2:28), etc., we attach with the divine presence the concept of "place", because in our minds the two ideas are inseparable.

Also, on reading the verses: "And when We intend to destroy a town..." (17:16), "And We intend to bestow a favor..." (28:5), "and Allah intends ease for you" (2:185), we think that the "will" has the same meaning in every sentence, as is the case with our own action.

In this way, we jump to the familiar (which most often is material) meaning of every word. And it is but natural. Man had made words to fulfill his social need of mutual intercourse; and society, in turn, was established to fulfill man's material needs. Not unexpectedly, the words became symbols of the things which men were connected with and which helped them in their material progress.

But we should not forget that the material things are constantly changing and developing with the development of expertise. Man gave the name, lamp, to a certain receptacle in which he put a wick and a little fat that fed the lighted wick which illuminated the place in darkness. That apparatus kept changing until now it has become the electric bulb of various types; and except for the name "lamp", not a single component of the original lamp can be found in it.

Likewise, there is no resemblance in the balance of old times and the modern scales—especially if we compare the old apparatus with modern equipment for weighing and measuring heat, electric current flow and blood pressure.

The armaments of old days have nothing in common with the ones invented within our own times except the name.

The named things have changed so much that not a single component of the original can be found in them; yet the name has not changed. It shows that the basic element that allows the use of a name for a thing is not the shape of that thing, but its purpose and benefit.

Man, imprisoned as he is within his habitat and habit, often fails to see this reality. That is why al-Hashawiyah and those who believe that God has a body, interpret the Qur'anic verses and phrases within the framework of matter and nature. But, in fact, they are stuck with their habit and usage, and not to the exterior of the Qur'an and the traditions. Even in the literal meanings of the Qur'an we find ample evidence that relying on the habit and usage in explanation of divine speech would cause confusion and anomaly. For example, Allah says: *"nothing is like a likeness of Him"* (42:11); *"Visions comprehended Him not, and He comprehends (all) visions; and He is the Knower of subtleties, the Aware"* (6:73); *"glory be to Him above what they ascribe (to Him)"* (23:91; 37:159). These verses manifestly show that what we are accustomed to cannot be ascribed to Allah.

It was this reality that convinced many scholars that they should not explain Qur'anic words in terms of their usual and common meanings. Going a step further, they sought the help of logical and philosophical arguments to avoid wrong deductions. This gave a foothold to academic reasoning in explaining the Qur'an and identifying the individual person or thing meant by a word. Such discussions can be of two kinds:

1. The exegete takes a problem, looks at it from academic and philosophical points of view, weighs the pros and cons and, with the help of philosophy, science and logic, decides what the true answer should be. Thereafter, he takes the verse and fits it anyhow on that answer which he thinks is correct.

The philosophers and theologians may approve of this method; but, as mentioned earlier, the Qur'an does not approve of it.

2. The exegete explains the verse in the light of other relevant verses, meditating on them together—and meditation has been forcefully urged by the Qur'an itself—and identifies the particulars and attributes mentioned in the verse.

No doubt this is the only correct method of exegesis.

Allah has said: *"and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly every thing"* (16:89). Is it possible for such a book not to explain its own self? Also, He has described the Qur'an in these words: *"a guidance for mankind and clear evidence of guidance and discrimination (between right and wrong)"* (2:185); and He has also said: *"and We have sent down to you a manifest light"* (4:174). The Qur'an is, accordingly, a guidance, an evidence, a discrimination between right and wrong and a manifest light for the people to guide them aright and help them in all their needs. Is it imaginable that it would not guide them aright in its own matter, while it is their most important need? Again Allah says: *"And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them onto Our ways"* (29:69). Which striving is greater than the endeavor to understand His Book? And which way is more straight than the Qur'an?

Verses of this meaning are quite numerous, and we shall discuss them in detail in the beginning of the third chapter, The Family of 'Imran.

Allah taught the Qur'an to His Prophet (s) and appointed him as the teacher of the Book: *"The Faithful Spirit has descended with it upon your*

heart that you may be of the warners, in plain Arabic language" (26:193-194); *"and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that happily they may reflect"* (16:44); *"...an Apostle...who recites to them His communications and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom"* (62:2).

And the Prophet (s) appointed his household to carry on this work after him. It is clear from his unanimously accepted tradition:

"I am leaving behind among you two precious things; as long as you hold fast to them you will never go astray after me: The Book of Allah and my household, my family members; and these two shall never separate from each other until they reach me (on) the reservoir."

Allah has confirmed, in the following two verses, this declaration of the Prophet (s) that his household had the real knowledge of the Book: *"Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying"* (33:33); *"Most surely it is an honored Qur'an, in a Book that is hidden; None do touch it save the purified ones"* (56:77-79).

Furthermore, the Prophet (s) and the Imams ('a) from his progeny always used this second method for explaining the Qur'an, as may be seen in the traditions that have been narrated from them on exegesis. One cannot find a single instance in their traditions where they might have taken help of an academic theory or philosophical postulate for explaining a verse.

The Prophet (s) has said in a sermon:

"Therefore, when mischiefs come to confuse you like the segments of darkened night, then hold fast to the Qur'an; as it is the intercessor whose intercession shall be granted; and a credible advocate; and whoever keeps it before him, it will lead him to the Garden; and whoever keeps it behind, it will drive him to the Fire; and it is the guide that guides to the best path; and it is a book in which there is explanation, particularization and recapitulation; and it is a decisive (word), and not a joke; and there is for it a manifest (meaning) and an esoteric (one); thus its apparent (meaning) is firm, and its esoteric (one) is knowledge; its exterior is elegant and its interior deep; it has (many) boundaries, and its boundaries have (many)

boundaries; its wonders shall not cease, and its (unexpected) marvels shall not be old. There are in it the lamps of guidance and the beacon of wisdom, and guide to knowledge for him who knows the attributes. Therefore, one should extend his sight; and should let his eyes reach the attribute; so that one who is in perdition may get deliverance, and one who is entangled may get free; because meditation is the life of the heart of the one who sees, as the one having a light (easily) walks in darkness. Therefore, you must seek good deliverance and (that) with little waiting."

Imam 'Ali (a) said, *inter alia*, speaking about the Qur'an in a sermon:

"Its one part speaks with the other, and one portion testifies about the other."

This is the straight path and the right way which was used by the true teachers of the Qur'an and its guides, may Allah's blessings be on them all

Endnotes

1. (a.) is the abbreviation of the Arabic phrase *'alay-hi/hu/himu s-salam* (may peace be upon him/her/them)

Shi'i Approach to Qiraah (Reading) of the Qur'an

Abdal-Hadi Fazli

Translated by Dr. S. S. Moosavi

Definitions of Qiraah

1. According to Zarkashi, "*Qiraahs indicate the differences in dialects and/or pronunciations of the revealed words. Qiraahs mainly refer to differences in stress, syllabifying, etc., as narrated by Qurra (the readers of Qur'an).*"¹

This definition implies that *qiraahs* are confined and limited to the words of the Holy Qur'an about whose pronunciations there are differences of opinion among the reciters (*Qurra*), whereas one can see that the *qiraah* experts have included other words—about the pronunciation of which there is no controversy—within the sphere of *qiraah*.

2. Ibn Aljazri has defined *Qiraah* as follows: "*Qiraah is a discipline which deals with the way of pronouncing Qur'anic terms and the differences in pronouncing them as stated by their narrators.*"² [In fact, the controversy over the manner of pronouncing a term is ascribed to its narrator.]

3. *Qiraah* has been defined by Demyaty Bana as follows: "*Qiraah deals with the consensus or differences among the narrators of Qur'an regarding the pronunciation of Qur'anic terms. It concentrates on such grammatical aspects as vowels, semi-vowels, consonants, stress, propositions, etc. By observing these grammatical points, every Qur'anic concept shall be comprehensible through listening only.*"³

These definitions clearly indicate that "narration" and "listening" are two conditions for reciting Qur'anic words with an accurate *qiraah* and pronunciation. According to Zaid ibn Thabet Ansari, a companion of the Holy Prophet (s), *qiraah* is a tradition which should be strictly followed in recitation of the Holy Qur'an. 'It was on the basis of this principle that Ibn Aljazri said: "A qari of the Holy Qur'an should refrain from using a *qiraah*, the

authenticity of which is not confirmed."⁵

4. In the definition stated by Zakariya Ansari, we come across another condition which he stipulates in the definition of *qiraah*. He is of the opinion that the narrated *qiraahs* and the reported *qiraahs* (the heard ones) should be matched and tallied with the Qur'an itself. In this regard Zakariya Ansari says: "*Qiraah means reading of the Holy Qur'an whether it is a continuous reading or reading of each syllable as directed by the teachers.*"⁶

Based on these definitions, we come to know that *qiraah* is a discipline which imparts to us the most accurate pronunciation of Qur'anic words, i.e., the manner in which the Holy Prophet (s) used to pronounce them and/or the way these words were pronounced in his presence and he acknowledged the *qiraah*. Hence, a *qiraah* of Qur'anic words will be correct if such a *qiraah* tallies with those of the Prophet, himself (s), or those acknowledged by him.

Thus, precise *qiraah* of the Qur'anic words is acquired through two methods: (1) listening to the *qiraah* of each word as pronounced by the Prophet, himself (s); (2) following a *qiraah* acknowledged by the Prophet (s).

Therefore, we can classify the *qiraahs* of the Qur'anic words into two categories:

- The "consensus *qiraah*", which refers to the *qiraah* of words about which there is a consensus among the *Qaris*.
- The "controversial *qiraah*" which refers to the *qiraah* of words about which there is a controversy among the *Qaris*.

Kinds of *Qiraahs*

There are certain criteria for correct and accurate reading of the Holy Qur'an. The most important of them are authenticity of the sources; conformity with Arabic grammar and tallying with the Uthman script. We can classify the *qiraahs* into two broad categories.

a) Widely Transmitted *Qiraahs*

Ibn Aljazari defines the widely transmitted *qiraahs* as follows: "*Any qiraah which is in accordance with the Arabic grammar and is in confor-*

mity with any Uthman script with successive occurrence in the narrations should be considered as widely transmitted qiraah."⁷

b) Accurate Qiraahs

This category of *qiraahs* are further divided into two classes:

i) **Comprehensive qiraah**-This *qiraah* refers to the one which is in conformity with the three above mentioned criteria.

The comprehensive *qiraahs* have been defined by Alyazri as follows: "*This qiraah has been quoted by a just and reliable narrator from another just and authentic source tracing the source of reference up to the Prophet, himself (s), through just and reliable informants. Moreover, this kind of qiraah is in conformity with Arabic grammar and the Uthman script.*"⁸

ii) **Rare qiraahs.**

Kinds of Comprehensive Qiraahs

The comprehensive *qiraahs* are further divided into two classes: frequently transmitted (*mostafizah*) and scantily transmitted.

According to Ibn Aljazri, the frequently transmitted *qiraah* is a *qiraah* which has been quoted frequently and the Muslim *Ummah* has accepted it as an accurate *qiraah*. In another place, by citing some examples of such *qiraahs*, he defines them as "*Qiraahs which have been narrated only by a few authentic books or narrators and could not be found in others.*"⁹ Though this kind of *qiraah* is not equal to the widely transmitted *qiraahs*, nevertheless, they are considered to be a subcategory of them. Hence, they are as authentic as the widely transmitted *qiraahs* since the source of these *qiraahs* are traced back to the Prophet (s) or the infallible members of his household ('a). Therefore, they are considered to be accurate.

Scantily transmitted *qiraahs* do not have the characteristics of frequently transmitted *qiraahs* and, therefore, the *Ummah* does not consider them authentic.

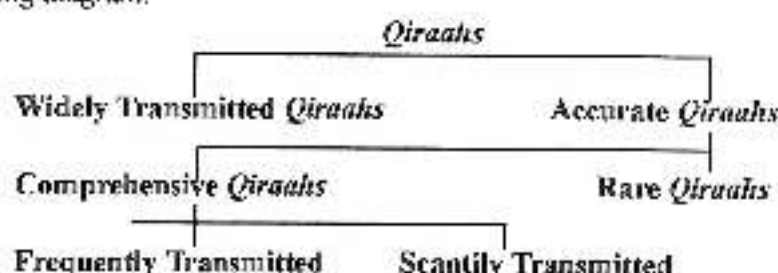
Although there is a controversy over the acceptance of this kind of *qiraah*, some believe that these *qiraahs* are also acceptable.

According to Ibn Aljazri, the scantily transmitted *qiraahs* are those which "*are in conformity with Arabic grammar, have correct references,*

but are not in conformity with the Uthman script."¹²

Ibn Aljazri mentions some of the *qiraahs* which are considered to be in this category. For instance, when there is a question of, "addition or omission of a word (of course, based on authentic documents); conversion of words into other words, and so on, the *Qiraah* is scantily transmitted."¹³

Thus, the *qiraahs* may be divided and subdivided as shown in the following diagram.



However, *qiraahs* may also be divided into three categories as follows:

1. Widely Transmitted *Qiraahs*

These *qiraahs* are definitely traced back to the Prophet (s) or the members of his household ('a). Since they have been attested by the Prophet (s) or his Ahl al-Bayt ('a), therefore, they are considered to be authentic—whether they are frequently transmitted or scantily transmitted.

2. Scantily Transmitted *Qiraahs*

These *qiraahs* have the three characteristics of the comprehensive *qiraahs*. However, they cannot be traced back to the Prophet (s) or a member of his family ('a). Hence, they are not as authentic as the widely transmitted *qiraahs*.

3. Rare *Qiraahs*

These *qiraahs* are not in conformity with the Uthman script.

Differences Between the *Qiraahs* and the Qur'an

It is important here to see if there are any differences between the *qiraahs* and the Qur'an itself. Various Muslim scholars have different ideas in this regard, some of which are discussed below.

1. *Qiraahs* are Different from Qur'an

Badrudin Mohammad Zarkashi believes that Qur'an and *qiraahs* are two distinct realities. He says: "*By Qur'an we mean what was revealed to the Prophet (s). The Qur'an was revealed to express the divine laws and miracle. But qiraah refers to the method of pronouncing words, stress, merging, omitting and combining the sounds in pronouncing the Qur'anic words.*"¹²

Qastalani has followed Zarkashi's definition and has quoted him in his own book.¹³

Some of the contemporary Muslim scholars follow Zarkashi and believe that the *qiraahs* are distinct from the Holy Qur'an. Among them are Grand Ayatullah Seyed Abu al-Qasem al-Khoie,¹⁴ Dr. Sobhi Saleh,¹⁵ and Ibrahim Ayyari.¹⁶

2. Tallying *Qiraahs* with Accurate *Qiraah*

According to this view, if a *qiraah* is in conformity with the three conditions of the accurate *qiraahs* (i.e., conformity with Arabic grammar, the Uthman script and supported by accurate documents), one can say that it is synonymous with Qur'an itself.

However, if a *qiraah* lacks even one of these conditions, it cannot be considered as synonymous with Qur'an. Therefore, such a *qiraah* is different from the Holy Qur'an. This idea is maintained by the majority of the Muslim scholars and *Qaris* of the Holy Qur'an.

3. All *Qiraahs* are Synonymous with Qur'an

Ibn Daqiq is of the opinion that any *qiraah*—even the rare *qiraahs*—can be synonymous with Qur'an.

Elaboration of Some of the Views About *Qiraahs*

Ayatullah Seyed Abu al-Qasem al-Khoie believes that *qiraahs* are different from the Holy Qur'an itself. He gives the following reasons to support his ideas:

There might be some mistakes in any one of the seven famous *qiraahs* of Qur'an. Therefore, according to reason and *Shari'a*, we are not bound to follow any particular *qiraah* while reciting the Holy Qur'an. In fact, reason and *Shari'a* forbid us from following an uncertain method.¹⁷

Ayatullah Khoie believes that *qiraahs* should be considered as subjective opinion of *Qaris*. He enumerates four reasons for his viewpoint in this regard.

i.) In support of his approach, Ayatullah Khoie refers to Ibn Abu Hashim as saying: *"The main reason behind the difference between the seven styles of qiraah and other qiraahs is that, when copies of the Uthman manuscripts were sent to different parts, a companion of the Prophet (s) was present at the site. Since the scripts did not have any punctuation and diacritical marks to distinguish similar letters, people did try to learn the pronunciation, qiraahs and signs from the Prophet's companion."*

Ibn Abu Hashim adds that: *"Therefore, in every area the natives used to learn the qiraah of Qur'anic words through 'listening' to the Prophet's companions though they did accept only the qiraahs which were in conformity with the Uthman script. Hence, we come across different kinds of qiraahs of the Qur'anic concept."*

ii.) Ayatullah Khoie also quotes Zarqani in support of his ideas. According to Zarqani, at the preliminary stages of the emergence of Islam, the Arabs considered using punctuation and diacritical marks in Qur'anic scripts as impermissible. This was because they were very strict in retaining the Uthman writing style. Indeed, they feared that using punctuation and diacritical marks might cause alteration in the Qur'an and, therefore, tried to keep it intact. But later on, for the same reason, i.e., safeguarding the Qur'an from alteration, Muslims themselves decided to use punctuation and diacritical marks. At this stage they were of the opinion that using punctuation and diacritical marks would result in reading the Qur'an as it was recorded in the Uthman script. They also feared that lack of punctuation and diacritical marks might lead to changes in the Qur'anic words.¹⁸

iii.) Some Muslim scholars believe that some of the informants of

the seven *qiraah* styles may not be reliable. They doubt the authenticity of some of the informants of the seven *qiraahs*. For instance, some people state that Hafis Douri (informant of Asem) and Nafea were not reliable.

iv.) Partial knowledge over the fact that some of the *qiraahs* were not stated by the Prophet (s).

Finally, Ayatullah Khoie stresses that it is known for certain that some of the *qiraahs* have not been uttered by the Prophet (s) though we do not know them particularly. Therefore, we come across differences among various *qiraahs*. The variations, in turn, have led to the uncertainty of Muslim scholars about the authenticity of some of the *qiraahs*. Hence, we have to tally such *qiraahs* with Arabic grammar.²⁰

Shaykh Tusi

Shaykh Tusi is of the opinion that: *"According to the prevailing belief of the Imamia school of thought and on the basis of their traditions, the Holy Qur'an was revealed to one prophet with one qiraah. However, the Shi'i scholars have unanimously allowed the recitation of Qur'an with any one of the authentic qiraahs. Hence, we should not forbid them from using different qiraahs by confining them to one qiraah only. They opine that it is undesirable to prevent the Muslims from selecting a permissible qiraah for reciting Qur'an. Therefore, it is permissible to recite Qur'an with any recognized Qiraah."*²¹

Shaykh Tabarsi

Abu Ali Fazl-ibn Hassan Tabarsi's viewpoint on *qiraahs* is: *"The Shi'i alims unanimously allow the qiraahs which are popularly known as authentic ones among the Muslims. However, qiraahs confirmed by Quris as authentic are allowed to be used, but we cannot ask the Muslims to confine themselves to a particular qiraah and discard others."*²²

Mohammad Baqir Khunsari

He says that there is no controversy over the permissibility of the seven well known *qiraahs*. He further argues that there is even no diversity of opinion among the Shi'i 'alims regarding another three *qiraahs* which have been added to the original seven, or the ten *qiraahs*.²³

Shaheed Awwal (Shaykh Mohammad ibn Makki)

He believes that the ten *qiraahs* are widely transmitted *qiraahs* and, therefore, all can be used in reciting the Holy Qur'an. He further says that there is a consensus (among the Muslim 'alims) in this regard.²⁴

We come across the issue of the *qiraahs* in *Rouzat al-Janat* also. Regarding the *qiraahs* it says: "The authentic *qiraahs* are those which have been revealed to the Prophet (s) through Gabriel. All of these seven *qiraahs* have been confirmed by the Prophet (s) and have been widely quoted by the *Qaris*. They have also been confirmed by the informants of traditions (*hadith*). For instance, the tradition narrated by Shaykh al-Sadduq in his well known book, *al-Khisal*, reads as follows:

"The Prophet (s) said: 'Gabriel was sent by God to me and told me, 'God has ordained that you recite Qur'an in one *qiraah* only.'

"I said: Oh God, do not be so strict with the *ummah* with regard to *qiraahs* and let them use more *qiraahs*.

"Gabriel said: 'God has ordained that you recite Qur'an in seven *qiraahs*.'"²⁵

Elsewhere in *Rouzat al-Janat* it has been emphasized that "we are duty bound to recite Qur'an in accordance with the popularly known *qiraahs*. The most well known *qiraahs* are, indeed, the well established seven *qiraahs*, and people mainly rely on them."²⁶

Mohammad Javad al-Ameli

Mohammad Javad al-Ameli says. "There is a consensus among the Shi'i scholars about the authenticity of the seven *qiraahs*. The late al-Karkhi, in his book, *Jame al-Maqased*, writes that there is a consensus among the Shi'i scholars that the seven *qiraahs* have been frequently quoted. In other books like *al-Ezyah* and *al-Rauz*, we notice the consensus of the scholars about this issue. Again in *Majma al-Borhan* we can observe the same issue."

Al-Ameli further states that in the following books, written by Shi'i authors, the seven *qiraahs* have been termed as widely transmitted *qiraahs*:

Muntaha al-Wasool Ela Elm ul-Kalam wa al-Usool, Tahrir al-Ahkam al-Shariya ala Mazhab al-Emamiyah, and Tazkerat al-Fuqaha, written by Allamah Hilli (648-726 A.H.).

Zeker al-Shi'a fi Ahkam al-Sharia, Al-Moojez al-Ilavi, and *Kashf al-Estehsas*, written by Shaheed Awwal Mohammad ibn Makki.

Al-Muqased al-Elliah fi Sharh al-Resalat ul-Alfieh, written by Shaheed Thani.

Since some of the scholars quoting other scholars have confirmed the authenticity of certain *qiraahs* (in fact, frequently quoting them), such *qiraahs* are certainly authentic ones. In *Majma al-Borhan*, this issue has also been taken up.²⁷

Mirza Abu al-Hassan She'arani

She'arani is one of the contemporary Muslim scholars who says: "*The Muslims unanimously believe that the Qaris, in their qiraahs, rely on hearing and authentic traditions which constitute the main sources of reference for them. The Qaris never rely on subjective opinions or personal attitude nor do they even rely on Arabic grammar. Therefore, the qiraahs are not the outcome of subjective opinion or the product of Arabic grammar.*"

She'arani further states: "*Now the seven qiraahs, along with the name of their Qaris, have been recorded in certain exegesis books. Even today we observe that the Qaris use these qiraahs while reading the Holy Qur'an. It is interesting to note that the Muslim 'alims who have recorded these seven qiraahs belonged to various geographical places and followed different sects of Islam, but they spared no effort to record the authentic qiraahs. For instance, the al-Taiseer is one of the most important qiraah books written by Abu Amr Uthman ibn Saeed Dami which is considered by the majority of Muslim scholars as an authentic document.*"

The Objection of al-Abyari

There is an objection to the above consensus raised by al-Abyari. He is of the opinion that most of the *qiraahs* are the outcome of subjective opinion of the *Qaris*. He argues that sometimes a word can be pronounced (according to the *Qaris*) with twenty or thirty *qiraahs*. Even the ten *qiraahs* can be pronounced in 980 different ways. He concludes that such immense diver-

sity of opinion about the way of pronouncing a word is itself an indication that different *qiraahs* are the result of subjective opinion of the *Qaris*.

Even Zuhakshari rejected several versions of the *qiraahs* and termed them unreliable.

Ibn Qutaybah undertook an extensive study on the authenticity of *qiraahs*. While rejecting several *qiraahs* as unreliable, he says, "There are a few persons among the *Qaris* who have not committed a mistake in their *qiraahs*."²⁸

He concludes that when we allow such dictions to prevail in the society, indeed, we are violating the objectives of the compilers of Qur'an during the Uthman rule and the objectives of Imam Ali ('a) in compiling the Holy Qur'an. Indeed, the main objective of Uthman, Imam Ali ('a) and the Prophet's companions was to bring about a unified method—a unified *qiraah*—of reciting or pronouncing Qur'anic words, whereby imparting to the people a unified *qiraah* of the Qur'anic words.

Such an approach to the issue of *qiraah* sprouts from the assumption that *qiraahs* are the outcome of the *Qaris*' subjective opinion. In turn, the subjective opinion of the *Qaris* was itself a result of the absence of punctuation and diacritical marks in the early manuscripts of the Holy Quran.²⁹

Criticism of al-Abyari's Approach

First of all, it is not clear whether al-Abyari refers to the ways of pronouncing *qiraahs* as the *qiraahs* themselves or if he means the ascription of *qiraahs* to the informants. The Muslim scholars have classified the *qiraahs* into four categories depending on the nature of the ascription of a *qiraah* to its informant.

1. **Qira'ah:** The authenticity of a *qiraah* may be assessed from the viewpoint of its ascription to one of the well known original *Qaris*. For example, if a *qiraah* is ascribed to Nafea, it is considered as *Qiraat al-Nafea* (the way of recitation by Nafea).

2. **Informant:** A *qiraah* can also be assessed from the viewpoint of its informant, i.e. the person who quotes it from the original *Qari*. For instance, Qalnon is an informant of Nafea *qiraah* and we have to assess him before any judgement about Nafea.

3. **Tareeq (method):** This is another category of ascertaining the authenticity of a *qiraah*. In this category the assessment is about an informant who has quoted a *qiraah* from the informants who have had a direct access to the original *Qari* himself. For instance, Abi Nashoet has quoted a *tareeq* from Qaloon who has directly quoted from Nafea.

4. **Vajh (aspect):** This kind of *qiraah* is said to have been selected by a *Qari*.¹⁰

We should keep in mind that any of the above categories can be considered as authentic only when it is widely transmitted or it is at least frequently transmitted.

Maki ibn Abi Talib's Idea About the *Qiraahs*

In reply to a question as to why there are differences of opinion about the *qiraahs* among the *Qaris*, Maki says: *"Indeed, each Qari used to recite Qur'an for some of the teachers of qiraah in accordance with the qiraah that he himself had learned from other prominent Qaris. The teachers, in turn, used to teach to others these qiraahs as authentic ones. Under the circumstances, no qiraah was rejected, hence, the prevalence of several qiraahs."*

Nafea himself says: *"I recited Qur'an to seventy experts of qiraah in order to check the authenticity of the qiraahs with them. Then I considered only those qiraahs as authentic that were confirmed by at least two experts. In case a qiraah was confirmed by one expert only, I did not consider it as authentic."*¹¹

Dr. Abdul Saboor Shaheen has also studied the multiplicity of *qiraahs* and forwarded the following observations:

1. The multiplicity of the *qiraahs* predominantly involves the rare *qiraahs*.
2. The diversity of opinion among the *Qaris* about the *qiraahs* is mainly confined to certain aspects of punctuation and diacritical marks.
3. Differences in *qiraahs* are not the result of subjective opinion, rather they have been narrated by the informants.

Zumakhshari and Ibn Qutaibah prefer to assess the authenticity of the *qiraahs* from the viewpoint of grammar. However, there are differences of opinion among the Muslim scholars regarding this kind of assessment.

1. Most of the grammarians of Basra and some of their followers, including Zumakhshari and Ibn Qutaibah, believe that some of the *qiraahs*, due to their conflict with grammatical rules, are not authentic and, therefore, rejected.

2. Recent grammarians do not agree with the ideas of Basra grammarians and their followers. The former consider some of the rejected *qiraahs* of the latter as authentic.

They, therefore, do not consider grammatical rules as a criterion for the assessment of the authenticity of *qiraahs*.¹²

Conclusion

When a *qiraah* is ascribed, with certainty, to the Holy Prophet (s), or it is ascribed to the Prophet (s) by the informants, it should be considered as synonymous to Qur'an itself. However, one should not recite Qur'an in accordance with the rare *qiraahs*. Indeed, the rare *qiraahs* are rejected, hence, by abandoning them, we can protect the letter and spirit of the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, the rare *qiraahs* are used very scantily. Since the widely transmitted *qiraahs* are available, therefore, it is better to stop using the rare *qiraahs*.

In summary, according to Zarkashi, we should use those *qiraahs* which are in conformity with the widely transmitted *qiraahs* and also are authentic and well documented.

Quoting Abu Mohammad Ismail ibn Haravi's book, *Al-Kafi*, Zarkashi wrote in his own book, *Al-Borhan*, that if someone asked us as to why we had included the *qiraahs* of Abu Ja'afar Madani and Yaqub Hazrati in the seven *qiraahs*, our answer is: "*Since these two qiraahs are in conformity with the qiraahs of later Qaris, are authentic, well documented and without any mistake, therefore, we included them in the seven qiraahs.*"

Moreover, there is no tradition or quotation from Muslim scholars that *qiraahs* other than the seven should be abandoned. In other words, there is no tradition or decree regarding an exclusive confinement to the seven *qiraahs*.

Hence, we may consider a *qiraah* as authentic if it has the following characteristics: 1) reliable informant, 2) authenticity; 3) well documented; and, 4) homogenous from the viewpoint of grammatical rules.

Thus, the seven *qiraahs* are considered to be the most reliable *qiraahs* along with the *qiraahs* of Abu Ja'afar Madani and Yaqub Hazrami.

Endnotes

1. *Al-Borhan fi Ulum al-Qur'an*, vol. 1, p. 38.
2. *Manjad al-Muqrim*, p. 3.
3. *Ithaf al-Fazala al-Bashar*, p. 5.
4. *Al-Etgan*, vol. 1, p. 57.
5. *Manjad al-Muqrim*, p. 3.
6. *Kashaf Estelihat al-Fannan*, vol. 5, p. 1158.
7. *Manjad al-Muqrim*, p. 15.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
9. Such *qiraahs* are confined to a few books only.
10. *Manjad al-Muqrim*, p. 16.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Al-Borhan fi Ulum al-Qur'an*, vol. 1, p. 318.
13. *Lata'if al-Tisharat*.
14. *Mahabith fi Ulum al-Qur'an*.
15. *Al-Bayan fi Tafseer al-Qur'an*, vol. 1, p. 171.
16. *Al-Mazawat al-Qur'aniyah*, vol. 1.
17. *Al-Bayan*, vol. 1, p. 180.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
21. *Al-Tahyan*, vol. 1, p. 8.
22. *Majma al-Bayan*, vol. 25, p. 1.
23. *Rauzat al-Jannat*.
24. Ibn Al-Jazri in *Uhayat al-Nahayah*, writes that Shaheed Arwal is a master in *fiqh*, Arabic grammar and *qiraah*.
25. *Al-Khetat*, pp. 327-328.
26. *Rauzat al-Jannat*, p. 263.
27. *Al-Fatah al-Kerami*, vol. 2, p. 290.
28. *Tawil Mushkei al-Qur'an*, p. 42.
29. *Al-Mazawat al-Qur'aniyah*.
30. *Ithaf Fazala al-Bashar*, pp. 17-18.
31. *Al-Abarah*, p. 45.
32. *Al-Qiraat al-Qur'aniyah*, p. 219.

The Event of Ghadir

Talib Hasan Tamjil

The caravan of the returning pilgrims reached Ghadir Khum near Juhfa. This place was near the point where three routes branched and from here the caravan dispersed in three directions. One route led to Egypt, the second to Iraq and the third to Medina. At this point when the caravan had not yet dispersed and all the people were still with the Holy Prophet (s), this divine verse was revealed to him.

"Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people. Surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people." (Holy Qur'an 5:67)¹

Naturally, the message to be conveyed must have been very important as Allah, the Almighty, emphasized it by saying that in the event of this not being conveyed, it would amount to not conveying the message of Allah at all. Thus His commandments would not be conveyed to the people.

From the context of the above verse, it is obvious that this message was more important than all other messages that the Holy Prophet (s) had preached so far, because in this Qur'anic verse the Almighty is assuring His Prophet that in the event of His conveying this message the believers were safe from harm by the enemies.

Thus, at the time when the sun was at the meridian and its scorching rays were falling directly over the heads of the people, and a part of the caravan had reached Juhfa, the Holy Prophet (s) commanded the caravan to stop. He ordered those who had already gone ahead to come back and those who were coming from behind to hurry forward.

It was an extremely hot day. Under the heat, the *Dhuh* (afternoon) *Azan* (call to prayer) was recited and the people offered prayers in congregation. The heat was so intense that the people had covered their heads with one end of their cloaks, the other end under their feet. After the prayers, the Holy Prophet (s) mounted the pulpit made from the camel litters by putting them one atop the other, and delivered his historic sermon to the largest

gathering ever. He said:

*"All praise be to Allah, the One, the only Lord, and no one is like Him. We only seek His help in all our affairs and we believe in Him who is All-powerful and Absolute and in Him we have put our faith and belief without seeing Him. We depend only on Him in all matters. We seek His protection from the mischief of our temptations. He is the Lord. If He leaves anybody alone to himself and withdraws His beneficence from him, he cannot get any guidance, as nobody can put him on the right path. And if He bestows His blessings and the light of His guidance upon somebody nobody can misguide him and distract him from the right path. I reaffirm and testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. It has come to me that I am soon going to depart from this mortal world, and I will be answering the call of Allah and leaving you behind. The important point worth noting is that you and I shall be answerable to Allah. What do you say about it?"*²

The people looked around and said:

*"O Holy Prophet of Allah! We testify that you have conveyed to us all the commandments of Allah. You accomplished your mission of preaching to the people and inviting them towards Allah so that they may follow the right path. May Almighty Allah shower on you all His blessings."*³

The Holy Prophet (s.) continued:

*"Do you not testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His servant and messenger and that Paradise and Hell, death and the Day of Judgment are real and further that the Almighty Allah will bring all His servants back to life on the Day of Judgment to let them account for their deeds?"*⁴

The people replied:

*"We do testify to all these realities."*⁵

The Holy Prophet (s) then said:

"O people! On the Day of Judgment you all will come before me and you now realize as to what you will do with the two most precious things."

One of them asked:

*"What are those two most precious things, O Holy Prophet of Allah?"*⁶⁶

The Holy Prophet (s) answered:

*"One of the two great trusts is the Holy Qur'an, the Divine Book of Allah (revelations), a connecting point or link between you and the Almighty Allah. Protect and safeguard this holy trust and obtain the right guidance from it so that you may never go astray. The other trust is my family (the Holy Ahl al-Bayt ('a)). The Almighty Allah has revealed to me that both of these two things are undetachable and inseparable. Hold on to them and safeguard your attachment to both of them so that you may not fall on the misguided path."*⁶⁷

After this, Prophet Muhammad (s), extended his hands and held Imam Ali's ('a) arm high so that all those present could see him clearly. He asked:

*"O people! Who is that one who is superior to all the believing Muslims?"*⁶⁸

The people said:

*"Only Allah and His Prophet know better."*⁶⁹

The Holy Prophet (s) continued:

*"No doubt the Almighty Allah is my Master and Guardian, and I am the master and guardian of the believing Muslims, and I am superior to the believing Muslims."*⁷⁰

The Holy Prophet (s) then repeated this three times, or four times according to Shaykh Harbal's narration:

*"To whom I am his master, Ali is his master too."*⁷¹

Thereafter, the Holy Prophet (s) prayed:

"O Lord! keep him Your friend who considers Ali his friend; and keep him Your enemy who considers Ali his enemy. Help him who helps Ali, and withdraw help from him who withdraws help from Ali and put him to disgrace. Make truth always anywhere and everywhere with the companions of Ali."

The Holy Prophet then addressed the crowd:

"O people! All of you who have heard me about this declaration should convey it to all those who are not present."

"O people! Surely the Almighty Allah has appointed Ali as your guardian and Imam, and has made it obligatory on every Muslim to obey Ali."

"Anyone who disobeys this command shall be subjected to Allah's curse and condemnation. Listen to Ali and follow him. The Almighty Allah is your Master and Ali is your Imam (leader) and guide. And after him the Imamate will pass on to my progeny who will be descendants of Ali up to the Day of Judgment. After me Ali is superior to all of you and this I am saying from what Archangel Gabriel (a) has brought to me from the Almighty Allah. Try to understand the commandments of the Holy Qur'an and do not follow doubtful interpretations and accept this man whose hand is in my hand as no person can be competent enough to give you the correct interpretations of the Holy Qur'an but him. Without doubt Ali is the master of that person whose master I am. Beware! I have conveyed the Divine Message to you all. I have justified my prophetic mission by bringing it to its completion and final accomplishment. I have, with finest perfection, elaborated to you the meaning of all that I have said. After me no one except Ali has the ability to guide the believers to the right path."¹²

In the meantime, the Archangel Gabriel (a) came to the Prophet (s) with the following revelation:

"This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed

My favor on you and have chosen Islam as the religion for you." (Holy Qur'un 5:3)¹⁴

All the Shi'i commentators concur on this point. Also some Sunni scholars have explicitly said that this verse was revealed on the day of Ghadir and that Almighty Allah had perfected the religion after the declaration of the successor to the Holy Prophet (s) and did not leave any ambiguity in it.

Hassan bin Thabit, who was a great poet, rose from his seat and said:

"O Prophet of Allah! Do you permit me to say a few poetic verses about Imam Ali on this great epoch-making day?"¹⁵

The Holy Prophet (s) gave him permission and Hassan bin Thabit extemporaneously recited a poem highlighting the event of Ghadir. In his poem, Hassan bin Thabit has given the details of the whole event of Ghadir including the nomination of Imam Ali (a) to be the Imam and the Caliph after the Holy Prophet (s).

Besides Hassan bin Thabit, other distinguished companions of the Holy Prophet (s) and the Tabi'in (the followers of the Holy Prophet's companions) and other Muslims belonging to other groups have condensed the event of Ghadir in poetic form. Thus they have left behind their immortal works about this event.

From this point of view the day of Ghadir, on the 18th of Zulkajjah, is an Eid day which has been celebrated as a day of rejoicing by the believers from the time of the Holy Prophet (s) to this day. Many groups of Sunnis also believe in and celebrate the greatness of this day.

Bayruni, in his book, *Al-Athar al-Baqiyah* writes:

"Eid al-Ghadir (Festival of Ghadir) is a day which is generally considered by the Muslims as a day of rejoicing."

Ibn Idha Shafi'i, in his book, *Matalibus Su'ul*, writes:

"The day of Ghadir has become a formal Eid day as on that day the Holy Prophet (s) selected Imam Ali (a) from among all the Muslims and conferred on him a distinguished position."

The *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet (s), regarding the *Inamate* of Imam Ali (a) has been quoted by several historians and scholars like Tirmizi, Nasai and Ahmad bin Hanbal from sixteen distinguished companions of the Holy

Prophet (s)

In Ali Ibn Khalwiya's book, it is reported from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that the Holy Prophet (s) said to Imam Ali ('a):

*"Your friendship is faith and your enmity is infidelity and hypocrisy; the first man who will be admitted to Paradise will be your friend and the first man who will be thrown into Hell will be your enemy."*¹⁵

The traditionalists believe that the Holy Prophet (s) looked at Imam Ali ('a) several times and said:

*"He is my brother."*¹⁶

And according to a tradition which has reached us from Abu Huraya, the Holy Prophet (s), in a gathering of his companions spoke out:

"If you want to know the knowledge of Prophet Adam, the determination of Prophet Noah, the behavior of Prophet Abraham, the supplication of Prophet Moses, the piety of Prophet Jesus, and the teachings of Muhammad all together in one man, then look at that man who is just coming to you."

When the companions raised their heads they saw Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) coming towards them.¹⁷

Once a man came to the Holy Prophet (s) and complained about Imam Ali ('a). The Holy Prophet (s) simply said:

*"What do you want from Ali? What do you want from Ali? What do you want from Ali? Ali is from me and I am from Ali. He will be the Imam and the guide of all believing Muslims after me."*¹⁸

Once the Holy Prophet (s) sent Imam Ali ('a) to Yemen. Some of his companions asked for the camels of the public treasury to ride to Yemen so that their own could rest. But Imam Ali ('a) refused their request. After returning to Medina, they complained to the Holy Prophet (s) through Sa'id bin Malik who said:

"O Prophet of Allah! Ali treated us harshly..."

When he started giving the details about the matter, the Holy Prophet

(s) tapped him on his thigh and said:

*"O Sa'ad bin Malik! Stop talking about Ali in that way. By Lord! You should know that his whole life is dedication in the way of Allah."*¹⁹

From these traditions and many others, it is proven that the Holy Prophet (s) considered Imam Ali (‘a) as his brother. Imam Ali (‘a) was also immensely pleased with this relationship. Besides, the Holy Prophet (s) used to tell his followers the noble attributes of a perfect man which existed in the person of Imam Ali (‘a). So the companions and followers should have known that after the Holy Prophet (s), Imam Ali (‘a) was the only person who could fulfill all the conditions of the Imamate and Caliphate.

According to authentic narrations there were certain incidents which proved that conditions were favorable for the mutual harmony between the Holy Prophet (s) and Imam Ali (‘a) and they helped in showing the distinctive qualities of Imam Ali (‘a).

First of all, Imam Ali (‘a) was born inside the Holy Ka’abah, which is the sanctuary of all the Muslims, and this birth took place at a time when the soul of the Holy Prophet (s) was fully imbued with Islam and he had not yet announced it.

Second, when the Holy Prophet (s) was living in the house of Abu Talib bin Abdul Muttalib; Imam Ali (‘a) opened his eyes to see the Holy Prophet (s) and his devoted wife, Lady Khadijah, offering their prayers.

Third, Imam Ali (‘a) was the first male to embrace Islam and faith in the Holy Prophet (s). When the people censured him for his embracing a new faith without obtaining the consent of his father, Imam Ali (‘a) promptly replied to them:

*"When the Almighty Lord created me without obtaining the consent of my father, Abu Talib bin Abdul Muttalib, how could I obtain his consent for the worship of my Lord?"*²⁰

Fourthly, Islam remained confined to the home of the Holy Prophet (s) for quite some time. During this period the Holy Prophet (s), his revered wife, Lady Khadijah, his cousin, the son of his uncle, Imam Ali (‘a), and his slave, Zayd bin Haritha were the only Muslims.

On the day when the Holy Prophet (s) invited his near relations to a feast at his home to call them to embrace Islam, his uncle, Abu Lahab, inter-

ferred, disrupted the gathering, and instigated those present to return to their homes. The Holy Prophet (s) again invited his kin to a feast and when all had taken their meal he said to them:

"I do not know of any Arab who could bring for his relations a better gift than that which I have brought for them. Who among you is prepared to side with me and support me in this?"²¹

All of them refused to accept this offer. When they started dispersing, Imam Ali ('a), who had not yet reached the age of maturity, got up and said to the Holy Prophet (s):

"O Prophet of Allah! I am the one who will support you in your mission. If someone fights with you I will fight with him."²²

At this the people laughed the proposal down, glanced at Abu Talib and Imam Ali ('a) and went away making fun of them.

The standard of the Holy Prophet (s) was always in the hands of Imam Ali ('a) in the battles fought in the early days of the religion. He dedicated his valor, bravery, soul, heart and mind to the success of the Holy Prophet's mission. He had frustrated all attempts of his enemy and at the same time stuck to his spirit of sacrifice and valor.

In Mecca, the persecution of the Quraysh was at its peak and they resolved to kill the Holy Prophet (s) and banish Islam from the surface of the earth, the Prophet (s) decided to migrate from Mecca.

The Holy Prophet (s) made up his mind to migrate. He knew that the Quraysh would follow him. Therefore, he decided to take a route they could not easily trace and also to leave his house at a time when the enemies could not anticipate his departure.

On the night the Holy Prophet (s) planned to leave, the Quraysh elected some men to surround his house so that he could not escape in the darkness. The Holy Prophet (s) asked his cousin, Imam Ali ('a), to sleep in his bed and cover himself with the Prophet's green mantle.

The Holy Prophet (s) also asked Imam Ali ('a) to stay in Mecca to discharge the trusts that the people had kept with him.

Imam Ali ('a) cheerfully accepted the plan and was prepared to endanger his own life for the sake of saving the precious life of the Holy Prophet (s).

Imam Ali ('a), by staking his own life, dutifully obeyed the command of the Holy Prophet (s) with a spirit of sacrifice and strength of faith which he had acquired from the Holy Prophet of Islam (s). Imam Ali's ('a) submission and acceptance to sleep in the Prophet's bed—knowing that he was risking his life—was one instance showing his willingness to see the mission of the Holy Prophet (s) succeed.

There was a complete unity of views and feeling of trust between the Holy Prophet (s) and Imam Ali ('a). Both worked for the success of the divine mission of Islam. This mutuality started when the Holy Prophet (s), Abu Talib, and Imam Ali ('a) lived in one house. The house of Abu Talib was a foundation of piety and virtue. It was the merit of this house that there both Abu Talib and his son, Imam Ali ('a), got the opportunity to know the exalted position of Muhammad (s) and they became fully aware of his attributes. This very awareness led Abu Talib to treat his nephew with utmost love and affection and caused Imam Ali ('a) to recognize his high qualities.

Endnotes

1. A large number of narrators of traditions, including Shaykh Walidi, in his *Ashab al-Nuzul*, have related from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and others that this verse was revealed at Ghadir Khum regarding Imam Ali ('a). Tha'alibi, in his *Tafsir*, has related it through two sources and 'Allamah Hamayuni, the Shafi'i, has related it in his book, *al-Fawa'idah*, through many sources from Abu Hurayrah. Abu Na'im, in his *Nuzul al-Qur'an*, relates it through two sources from Abu Rafi' and Al-A'mush and they from 'Atiyah. *Ghayat al-Maram* contains nine traditions from Sunni sources and eight from Shi'i sources, all dealing with the same subject (ch. 37 and 38).

2. Amiri, *Ghadir II*, p. 32. Also see 'Amili, *A'yan ash-Shi'a*, III, pp. 524-532.

3. The Hadith of Ghadir, in its different versions, is one of the definitely established hadiths among Sunnis and Shias. More than a hundred of the companions have recounted it with different chains of transmission and expressions, and it has been recorded in books of Sunnis and Shias alike. Concerning details refer to *Ghayat al-Maram*, p. 79; *Abagat* of al-Anwar Musawi, vol. on Ghadir, India, 1317 and *al-Ghadir* of Amiri. (Najaf:1372). *Tarikh al-Ya'qubi*, vol. II, pp. 137 and 140, (Najaf:1358); *Tarikh Abil-Fida*, vol. I, p. 156; *Sahih* of Bukhari, vol. IV, p. 207, (Cairo:1315); *Muruj ad-Dzahab* of Mas'udi, vol. II, p. 437 and vol. III, pp. 21 and 61, (Cairo:1367). *Sahih* of Muslim, vol. XV, p. 176; *Sahih* of Bukhari, vol. IV, p. 207; *Muruj ad-Dzahab*, vol. III, p. 23 and vol. II, p. 437; *Tarikh Abil-Fida*, vol. I, pp. 127 and 181.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. The Hadith Thaqalayn has been transmitted through more than a hundred channels by over thirty-five of the companions of the Holy Prophet (s). *Abagat*, vol. on

hadith-Thaqaalayn, *Ghayat al-Maram*, p. 221. Reported by Tirmidhi and Nasai through jabir and copied from them by al-Muttaqi of India at the beginning of his chapter on "Adherence" in his book *Kanz al-ummal*, pt. 1, p. 44. Tradition no. 874 in *Sahih al-Tirmidhi* is related by Zayd ibn al-Arqam among the traditions taken from *Kanz al-ummal*, pt. 1, p. 44. According to Shaykh Ahmad ibn al-Hanbal, from two authentic sources, viz. in his *Musnad*, vol. 5, pp. 182 and 189 at the end. Also according to al-Ibrani in his *Mu'jam al-Kabir* from Zayd ibn Thabit and in *Kanz al-ummal*, vol. 4, p. 44. Also according to al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak*, pt. 3, p. 148, with the comment that this tradition is authentic according to tests followed by the two Shaykhs (i.e. Muslim and Bukhari) though they have not included it in their collections. Dzahabi has included it in his selections from *Mustadrak* due to its authenticity according to the tests followed by the two Shaykhs. It is also recorded by Shaykh Ahmad ibn al-Hanbal from the tradition related by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri in two ways, in his *Musnad*, pt. 3, firstly at the end of p. 17 and secondly at the end of p. 26. Also recorded by Ibn Abi Shaybah, Abul Ya'li and Ibn al-Said from Abu Sa'id being tradition no. 945 in *Kanz al-ummal*, pt. 1, p. 47. *Sawatiq al-Muhriqah* by 'Allamah ibn Hajar, ch. 11, subheading 1, p. 89.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. Related by al-Hakim from Zayd ibn al-Arqam in his *Mustadrak*, pt. 3, p. 109, with the comment that this tradition is authentic according to tests approved by the Shaykhs although they have not recorded it in full. It has also been related through another source from Zayd ibn al-Arqam and recorded in *Mustadrak*, pt. 3, p. 533, with the comment that it is authentic although the two Shaykhs have not recorded it. Dzahabi has also recorded it in his *Talkhis* as authentic.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Sawatiq al-Muhriqah* by 'Allamah ibn Hajar, the last few lines of ch. 9 subheading. *Kanz al-ummal*, pt. 6, p. 217, tradition no. 3819, and has been included in the abridged edition; see the abridged *Kanz al-ummal* in the margin of *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, pt. 5, p. 94. Hafiz Abu Na'im has also included this tradition in his *Haliyah* and Ibn al-Hadid, the Mu'tazilah, has taken it from him in his commentary of *Nahjul al-Balaghah* (see Cairo Ed., vol. 2, p. 450). Ahmad ibn Hanbal has also recorded a similar tradition in his *Musnad* and his *Manaqib Ali ibn Abi Talib*.

Kanz al-ummal, pt. 6, p. 155, tradition no. 2578; also abridged *Kanz al-ummal* in the *Abaqat* of Anwar of *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol. 5, p. 32. 'Allamah ibn Hajar al-Asqalani has also briefly recorded this tradition in his *Irshad* in connection with the biography of Ziyad ibn Ma'raf, with the comment that, "This tradition comes through Yahya ibn Ya'li al-Muharibi and is therefore weak." But in my opinion, Ibn Hajar's comment is most surprising because Yahya ibn Ya'li has been unanimously accepted as a reliable reporter of traditions. Shaykh Bukhari himself has recorded several traditions from him in connection with the campaign of Hudaybiyah. Shaykh Muslim has taken traditions from him in the chapter on "Punishments" in his *Sahih*. 'Allamah Dzahabi has said in his *Al-Mizani* that his reliability is an established fact and 'Allamah Qayerani and others count him among those reporters whom Muslim and Bukhari have taken as authentic.

The *Mustadrak* of Shaykh Hakim, pt. 3, p. 128 contains this tradition with the note

that it is authentic but the two Shaykhs have not recorded it. Also, it was brought out in *al-Kabir* by Tabarani, Abu Na'im in *Fadail al-Sahabah* and in the abridged *Kanz al-ummal* on the margin of *Musnad*, pt. 5, p. 32.

Recorded by Tabarani in his *al-Kabir*, and Ibn Askir in his *History*, and is also to be found in *Kanz al-ummal*, pt. 6, as tradition no. 2571 at the end of p. 154. Al-Tabarani, in his *al-Kabir*, records this tradition through Muhammad ibn Abu Ubaydah ibn Muhammad ibn Ammar ibn Yasin as having been handed down from father to son to grandson to great-grandson, and it is tradition no. 2576 in pt. 6, p. 155 of *Kanz al-ummal* and is also included in the abridged edition of that book.

13. Abridged commentary of *Qur'an-e Majid* by S.V. Mir Ahmad Ali published by Peermohamed Ebrahim Trust, 1975, Karachi on verse 3, pp. 238-241 and verse 67, pp. 268-273 of Surah Al-Maidah as contained in the following books: *Sirratul 'Alamin-Ghazali*, *Usul-ul-Ghaya*, *Kitabat Mas'ul*, Muhammad Jawad, *Mawaqib-e Ibn Maghariri*, *Faqeeh Shafayi*, *Tafsir Tha'labi*, *Tafsir Abu-Saud*, *Tafsir-e Durre Manthur*, *Ma'addahul Qurba* of Syed Ali Hamdani, *Kitab ul-Rasool wal Mulook*, Jahuri, *Sawaeq Mohariri*, *Ibn Hajar Meezi*, *Nuzul ul-Abrar*, Mirza Muhammad Mo'tamad Khan, *Hisa-e Haseen ul-Mawaleh*, Shamsuddin Muhammad bin Muhammad Ja'fari, *Arbayeen*, Hafiz Jamaluddin, *Tazkiratul Huffaz*, Unfuz Zahadi, *Sharh-e Mishqat*, Mullah Ali, *Abogatul Mandooh*, 'Allamah Ziauddin Salah bin Mahdi Muqim, *Isamat Oyon*, Hafiz Nuruddin Halbi, *Za'imat Fata*, Hafiz Ahmed bin Mohammad Asadi, *Siratus Sawa*, Hafiz Mahmood bin Mohammad bin Ali Shaikhani Qadri, *Lamote Sharh-e Mishqat*, Shaykh Abdul Haq Muhaddis Dehlawi, *Nawazir Rawafiz*, Mir Maqdoom bin Mir Abdul Baqi, *Rawzatun Nadiyah*, Mohammad Ismail ibn Salahut, *Ma'arat al*, 'Allamah Mohammad Saiful 'Alam, *Saiful Masfool*, Qazi Samul Panipatti, *Do'atul Hadat ila Adul Haqqul Ma'alot*, 'Allamah Abdul Qasim Ubaidullah ibn Abdul Alhaskri, *Dirya-e Hadithul Wilaya*, 'Allamah Abu Syed Musbin Nasir Assanjari, *Miftahul Kanz ul-Da'iq*, Hafiz Shamsuddin Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Nasir Assanjari, *Miftahul Kanz ul-Da'iq*, Hafiz Shamsuddin Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Nasir Assanjari, *Musnad*, Shaykh Ahmad (Irbil), *Shawahidat Nubawwah*, Mullah Jure, *Tanzilul Dalail*, Syed Shahabuddin, *Yanubiat Ma'addah*, Shaykh Sulaiman Qandozi Hanafi, *Rauzatul Sofa*, *Tarikh-e Kamil*, *Tarikh-e Ibn Al-Kushfi*, *Firdausul Akhbar-e Dailami*, *Tarikh-e Abul Fida*, *Tarikh Khulafa*, Shaykh Suyuti, *Khasarat Aimmah*, Sibti ibn Jawzi and *Isti'ab*, Abdul Baz.

14. It is significant that the same word, 'blessing', has been repeated here. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.) and Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.) have told us plainly about the circumstances in which this verse was revealed, and Sunni authorities have recorded six traditions from the Holy Prophet (s.) himself about the same facts (*Ghayat al-Mara'at*, ch. 39 and 40).

15. *Musnad*, vol. 2, pp. 442, 483, Shaykh Hakim in *Mustadrak*, vol. 3, p. 123, *Kanz al-ummal*, vol. 6, pp. 398, 400.

16. *Kanz al-ummal*, vol. 6, pp. 155, 404.

17. *Al-Ghadir*, Amin.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Al-Ghadir* and *Wasail as-Sha'a*

21. According to this hadith, Imam Ali (a.) said: "I was the youngest of all to have submitted that I am your vizier. The Prophet (s.) put his hand around my neck and

said, 'This person is my brother, inheritor and vicegerent. You must obey him.' People laughed and told Abu Talib, 'He has ordered you to obey your son.'" Tabari, *al-Tarikh*, vol. II, p. 63, (Cairo:1357); Abul Fida, *Al-Tarikh*, vol. I, p. 116, (Cairo:1325); Al-Athir, *al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah*, vol. III, p. 39, (Cairo:1358); Bahrani, *Uhiyat al-Mawam*, p. 320, (Tehran:1272).

22. *Ibid*.

Background Reading:

1. *Then I was Guided*, Muhammad al-Tijan as-Sumawi, pub. WSBIL, (London), pp. 163, 164-174, 176-177.
2. *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*, S.H.M. Jafri, ch. 2, pp. 27-57, ch. 3, pp. 58-79 and ch. 4, pp.80-100.
3. *Ali (a.): An Illustrious Personality of Islam*, Ibn Abi Hadid Muqazzak, (Tehran:Islamic Propagation Organization), pp. 3-29.
4. *Al-Muraja'at* (The Right Path).
5. *Ahl al-Bayt* (n.)
6. *Ali, The Magnificent*, compiled by Yousuf N. Lalljee, (First published by New York/Turkhi-e-Tursil-e-Qur'an), Ansariyan Publications (Qum:1991), ch. II (Successor), pp. 9-11, ch. IV (Sleeping in the Bed), pp. 13-21, ch. V (Marriage to Fatima), pp. 22-25, ch. VI, pp. 26-70, ch. VII, pp. 71-74, ch. IX (Ghadir), pp. 77-88, ch. X, pp. 89-95, ch. XII, pp. 101-110, ch. XIII, pp. 111-113, ch. XIV, pp. 114-117, ch. XVI, pp. 126-161, ch. XIX, pp. 192-254.
7. *Nahjul Balagh* (English translation by Sayed Ali Reza, (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services). Selected and compiled by Syed Abul Hasan Ali bin Al-Husayn Al-Hadi Al-Musawi. Selected reading from first to third parts.
8. *Kitab al-Irshad* (The Book of Guidance), Shaykh Al-Mufid, trans. by I.K.A. Howard, pt. I, ch. I, pp. 1-17, ch. II, pp. 18-41, ch. III, pp. 44-113, ch. IV, pp. 115-127 and ch. V, pp. 138-154.
9. *Fatima (a.), The Gracious*, comp. Odeh A. Muhawesh, Ansariyan Publications (Qum:March 1990), ch. 45, pp. 151-153, ch. 46, pp. 154-157, ch. 47, pp. 158-160.
10. *Polarization of Imam Ali (a.)*
11. *The Voice of Human Justice*, George Jordac, (Lebanon), trans. M. Fazal Haq, (First published by Islamic Seminary of Karachi), Ansariyan Publications (Qum), pp. 41-107, 212, 235-243, 244, 418.

Special Articles on Imam Khomeini

Introduction

Saturday, June 4, 1994, marked the sixth anniversary of the sad departure of the founder of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Imam Ruhullah al-Musavi al-Khomeini. To commemorate this solemn occasion we have published some thoughtful articles to decipher Imam's thought. Indeed, political aspects of Imam Khomeini's overshadowed his other facets. As a consequence, his scholarship in other fields of humanity remained in obscurity. It is time to deal with his thought in an academic manner and shed light on his works in order to grasp his thoughts and ideas. Imam Khomeini was an authority in *fiqh*, Islamic philosophy, mysticism, as well as, poetry. Thus, a thorough research on his works and thoughts are a worthy endeavor.

We have selected four articles for this issue. The first article is a speech made by Professor Hamid Algar in New York on June 4, 1994. With reference to certain verses from the Qur'an, Hamid Algar offers the view that Imam Khomeini was among those who were very firm against the unbelievers and merciful in dealing with the believers. In this speech he pointed to Imam Khomeini's greater political *jihad* and his prediction of the disappearance of communism. He holds that Imam exemplified all the dimensions of Islam simultaneously.

Indeed, the more we study Imam's thoughts and works, his advice and declarations, the more we realize the great thinker and leader that he was.

The second article is entitled *Anatomy of Moral Maladies*. This is a selection of some of Imam Khomeini's book entitled *Chihil Hadith* (Forty Hadiths). In this book, Imam Khomeini selected forty *ahadith* from the Prophet (s) and the infallible Imams (a) and explained them in detail. We have selected certain *hadith* which deal with moral maladies and how they affect man's personality and the most likely way to cure them by recognizing their signs.

The third article is a mystical letter from Imam Khomeini addressed to his son, Ahmad Khomeini. In this letter Imam advises his son to render service to people, remember God, and follow Islam. This letter shows the very sensitive and human side of Imam Khomeini as he tells his son to take care of his mother after his father's death.

The fourth article deals with Imam Khomeini's approach to religion and politics. The author argues that religion and politics are inextricable from the viewpoint of Imam Khomeini. He refers to some political stands of Imam Khomeini, and tries to show that Imam's political stands sprouted from his religious ideas, i.e., Islamic teachings and sciences.

Certainly it has never been the ideology of Islam to separate religion from politics and this is a purely Western idea which came about because of the Catholic Church, in particular, which at one time rivaled the thrones of England, France, and Spain; and as new ideologies, such as democracy established its roots, all religion was placed under the control of politics so that instances like the Spanish Inquisition, the witch hunts of Salem, and other related religious oriented power struggles would not recur. This idea of separation of church and state became a tool for the colonialists and imperialists as they swept across the world in their fruitful attempts of domination.

Islam, on the contrary, has always presented a complete ideology and method of behavior and procedure for every aspect of human activity including social, family, business, ownership and government. This is one of the truly unique qualities of Islam that no other religion or ideology can claim. We might say that it is for this very reason that Muslim countries were the most difficult ones to dominate culturally.

It was this uniqueness which Imam Khomeini spent his entire life trying to convey to the masses. The future will show the great impact this humble servant of God had on history.

In Memory of Imam Khumayni

Hamid Algar'

When we speak of the greatness of a human being there is always a danger. Firstly, we know that greatness belongs to Allah alone. Secondly, if we call Imam Khumayni "great" this simply inserts him into a long list of figures who have exercised an important role in development of humanity. Speaking of the greatness of Imam Khumayni, I wish to avoid both of these dangers: the danger of attributing greatness to other than Allah and assuming Imam Khumayni to be simply one more influential personality among others in recent history.

When searching for an *ayat* from the Qur'an with which to open the presentation, entirely by chance I opened the Qur'an at the following:

O you who believe! If there are those among you who should turn away from their religion then Allah will bring forth a people whom He loves and who love Him, and they are humble to the believers and powerful and harsh towards the unbelievers. They struggle on the path of Allah and they fear not the censure of any censurer. This is the super abundance of Allah that He grants to whom He wills, and Allah is all encompassing, all knowing. (5:54)

It seems to me that this *ayat* is, indeed, the most appropriate of all possible *ayat* of the Holy Qur'an with which to begin an evocation of the specific greatness of Imam Khumayni. It is true that the verse refers to the plural (people), but Imam Khumayni may be regarded as a supreme example of the category mentioned in our present age.

It immediately struck me, upon seeing the *ayat*, that we have here an enumeration of many of the characteristics of the Imam. The first and foremost one is that his whole being was permeated by love for Allah. A love which enabled him to dispense with the illusions, the fears and the deficiencies that halt many of us in this world. The same love which is mentioned in the *ayat*. Next, the Imam was indeed among those who was gentle and humble towards the believers. The Imam, on one hand, was a manifestation of the power of Allah, one who brought about, by Allah's permission, a tremen-

dous transformation, which was none other than a manifestation of the Divine Power. Yes, at the same time he was a man who, in his behavior, in his comportment, was indeed humble before the believers, and at the same time he was among those who were firm, powerful and unafraid with respect to the unbelievers. In fact, we may say that Imam Khumayni also manifested the quality expressed in the *ayat* where Allah says:

Muhammad, the Messenger, and those who are with him are extremely firm against the unbelievers, kind and merciful among themselves. (48:29)

Imam Khumayni was among those who were very firm against the unbelievers and merciful in dealing with the believers.

The first *ayat*, we mentioned, speaks of *jihad*. The word *jihad* has had numerous misuses in the present age. We see recently, for example, the traitor, Yasser Arafat, speaking in a mosque in Johannesburg of a *jihad* to recover Jerusalem at the same time he himself was signing a treaty of surrender to the Zionists who are continuing to kill our young men right now as we speak. The reality of *jihad*, in the present age, is extremely rare. Its reality is, of course, a multifaceted reality. Its reality begins with an inner dimension. The inner *jihad*, the *jihad* Imam spoke of in the celebrated lecture delivered in Najaf, was clearly exemplified by him in his own person. Beyond that he declared *jihad* against the outward enemy and not necessarily a *jihad* that involves recourse to weapons; but a *jihad* definitely on occasion if necessary includes that. Thus we find in the person of Imam Khumayni one who practised *jihad* in all its comprehensive forms.

The description of those people whom Allah shall bring forth continues: *"And they fear not the censure of any censurer."* (5:54) This is another necessary corollary of that first attribute that Allah has mentioned. *"He loves them and they love Him"*, in other words there is a firm primary relationship of love between Allah and those of His chosen servants that are mentioned here. Once that a firm relationship of love is in existence, it follows that the believer should not fear the censure of any censurer. Out of fearlessness of any man comes a total disregard for reproaches of any kind from the enemies of Allah. This is, of course, another very clear and outstanding attribute of Imam Khumayni.

"And that is none other than the super abundance, the generosity of Allah." This combination of unique attributes is none other than the generosity of Allah, and it is, moreover, given by Him. He gives it, He bestows it, upon whomever He wills. It is not something to be acquired by efforts, which brings me to what I call, hesitantly and with reservations, the greatness of Imam Khumayni.

If we speak of the greatness of Imam, it is precisely because we see manifested in him qualities which were indeed the result of a divine gift. It is not a question of exertion on his part, although without doubt he was one whose whole life was devoted to conscientious effort and struggle. But in a certain sense we may say that the greatness of Imam Khumayni was precisely a reflection of the greatness of Allah Himself.

I hope this does not sound like an exaggerated form of expression to you. Let me clarify what I mean by examining two further *ayahs*:

First, Allah says: *"To Allah belongs power and glory and to His Messenger and to the believers. However, the hypocrites do not know."* (63:8) And in another *ayah*, also referring to the hypocrites, Allah says: *"Those who take the unbelievers as friends and protectors in preference to the believers do they expect to find power and glory?"* (4:139) Certainly, power and glory is to be found with Allah exclusively. How do you reconcile these two *ayahs*? The second one concludes by saying *al-'izzah* belongs exclusively to Allah while the first says it belongs to Allah and to His Messenger and to the believers. Clearly what is meant here, is that power and glory as a matter of principal and in essence do indeed belong to Allah. However, insofar as the Messenger (s) is the instrument of Allah, then the power and glory is reflected in him and as the believers guard their duty of obedience to Allah and the Messenger (s), then in them too is a reflection of the Divine Power.

Taking this into account, I think when one speaks of the greatness of Imam Khumayni, it is the greatness of Allah reflected in him in a certain fashion. But it is not his greatness, it is the greatness of Allah manifested in the form of a choice human being. It struck me often, when studying the history of the *'ulama* of the Shi'a, how, in the twentieth century, titles have become extremely common. For example, the title *Ayatullah* and the title *Hujjatul Islam*. As these titles became more common and easily applied, their value and meaning has not necessarily tended to decline. But, if one thinks of the true underlying meanings of these terms, I think we have a key

که بزرگوار است و بزرگوار است و بزرگوار است

to understanding what the role of Imam Khomeini was, what the true nature of his personality was, and how we should understand his historical impact.

Of course we refer to him as the Imam because he transcended, by far, what is implied conventionally in terms of *Ayatullah* or still more *Hujjatul Islam*. Nonetheless, if one looks at the true sense of these two terms, one may say that the Imam is among those few people to whom the literal sense of these words applies.

Ayatullah means a sign of Allah. It may be said that, potentially, all human beings are signs of Allah, in that Allah manifested His attributes most comprehensively in man, but few human beings actually and practically are in the state of being a sign of Allah. Allah manifested His attributes in man in the mode of his functioning, his acting as a vicegerent on earth bearing the responsibility of free will, and knowledge of right and wrong; all of these qualities make each man or woman a potential sign of Allah.

However, that state remains, for the majority, merely potential and when one looks at such people (including most of us), one sees a falling away from perfection, a failure to realize this potential. There are those individuals in whom the divinely accorded function of vicegerency and instrument of the Divine Will is realized, and it seems that Imam Khomeini was one of those persons. He was a sign of Allah, who was emptied and purified of any individual volition, who was motivated and determined by the love of Allah. By his desire to serve Allah, by his wish to submerge himself in obedience to Allah, he achieved this high status.

There is an experience which many had who had the honor to meet with Imam Khomeini. What I relate to you here is not only a personal experience which, *Alhamdulillah*, I was fortunate to have more than once, but it is also confirmed by many others who had similar experiences. When coming into the presence of Imam Khomeini, even before he uttered a single word, one in whom there is any degree, any atom of faith felt simultaneously humble and exalted. Humble because one realizes how far the distance is that he himself has to travel towards any degree of complete obedience to Allah when one gazes upon he in whom the divine attributes are indeed manifest. Yet, at the same time, one feels exalted precisely because before him is one in whom nobility, dignity, compassion, love, and justice are apparent. These qualities of Imam Khomeini are an effect which many have experienced upon meeting him.

This brings us to another dimension of the Imam in his having a very wide appeal to numerous senses. It is obvious that within Iranian society, more than any other figure in modern times or even pre-modern times, he was able to address a wide section of the people. He had the unique ability to express himself in accordance with the need of any given audience. It was as if he had the instinctive ability to follow the injunction which is sometimes attributed to the Holy Prophet (s) and sometimes to Imam Ali (‘a), that is, “*speak to the people in accordance with their intelligence*”. This was a gift manifested in Imam Khomeini.

More importantly, I think it was the fact that Imam Khomeini was an *Ayatullah*, and the first person, for an extremely long time in Islamic history, to touch a resonant chord in the heart of Muslims throughout the world. In other words, he was a person who was able, without effort or conscious decision, (but simply by being what he was), to transcend the differences between Sunni and Shi‘i, and to present himself also as *Hujjatul Islam*, (a proof of Islam).

If we look at the origin of the term, *Hujjatul Islam*, and its essential meaning, it is an extremely high rank and not one to be applied easily to any scholar. It is the rank of one whose very being is a proof of Islam, that in all of these respects, he is a living proof of the reality and the veracity of the message of Islam. This, of course, was recognized by Muslim across the world in the Imam.

In the years immediately following the revolution in Iran, I had the opportunity to travel to a wide variety of Muslim countries in Asia and Africa. Places as far apart as Manila and Mombasa, Istanbul and Singapore. I would see, on the walls of Muslim quarters, pictures of Imam Khomeini and encounter great excitement on the part of everyone who heard that I had met with him and been to Iran. This is extremely important to understand. Imam Khomeini should not be regarded simply as a figure who inaugurated a turning point in Iranian history. He is a figure who belongs to the collective memory of the entire *ummah*, and who contributed to the ongoing awakening despite the very harsh conditions we now face. This contribution toward awakening was considerable.

We come now to another extremely important dimension of Imam Khomeini, that is, that we see in him one who exemplified all the dimensions of Islam simultaneously. We have had, both in Iran and in other Islamic coun-

tries in recent history, prominent *fugaha*. We have also had political strugglers and those who are devoted to the study of *tasawwuf* and mysticism. We have had those who have been eloquent speakers and preachers. However, very few, if any, are the individuals who united all these qualities within their person. In this respect it seems to me that Imam Khumayni is unique. He was able to do all of this and, at the same time, he was a *faqih* and an *arif*. He was an implementor of the *shari'ah*, and one who walked upon the *tariqat*. He was, at the same time, one who was submerged in contemplation of the divine reality at all times. He also struggled on the political plane. We cannot assign these qualities and attributes to a simple versatility or a high degree of personal accomplishment. It seems to me that the matter must be sought beyond this. It is, rather, that the Imam had penetrated the inner core of Islam and having come to the heart of it, having internalized it and settled himself in it, he necessarily automatically participated in all the dimensions we have mentioned. These are purely analytical distinctions which appear to us who have not realized that degree of integration in the totality of Islam. For Imam Khumayni, however, these distinctions clearly did not exist: the one implied the other.

Particularly important is that we try to examine the connection between Imam's political *jihad* and activity and his contribution to what is called *irfan* or mysticism. Mysticism has been defined as turning away from this world; and of course, in many cases, it has been that. But in the case of Imam Khumayni we see it correlated with a high degree of practical activity in the world. In fact, a degree of practical activity in the world, yielding a success far greater than that which has yet been obtained by any other Muslim movement. How do we explain this? The following points occur to me:

Firstly, that the one who has not attained the station of understanding that Imam had obviously attained tends to see the existing circumstances of the world as real, as unchangeable reality, or if they are changeable then they can be changed only with difficulty. We may accept the reality of historical change. We may accept that all things ultimately are dependent on the will of Allah. But, as a matter of common perception we tend to accept the circumstances that surround us as being, in a sense, concrete, fixed, unchangeable. However, when the illusory view of the permanence of our material condition is overcome, then the circumstance no longer appear so fixed, so intimidating. It then becomes possible to understand that these circumstance are variable, they are changeable, and they are bound to disappear.

I think if we wish to understand the remarkable political insight that Imam Khomeini demonstrated on a large number of occasions we will be doing ourselves an injustice if we rationalize to be simply some kind of political perspicacity. We should regard this, on the contrary, as an instance of *shohud*, a certain particular kind of vision that he attained. For example, his insistence, from the Fall of 1978 onwards, that the movement in Iran should continue until the point of overthrow of the monarchy and expulsion of American influence from Iran. This was at a time when the Iranian army still appeared to be solid in support of the position of the Shah. American support also was unwavering and most significantly a large number of people from within Iran were convinced that this was an excessively ambitious goal. More than one hinted that Imam Khomeini was out of touch. Having been abroad, in exile, for so many years, they said he was overtaxing the resources of the Iranian people. Yet, Imam never hesitated. He insisted that the movement had the potential of complete overthrow of the Iranian monarchy and of course this proved true.

Another instance was Imam Khomeini's confident prediction of the disappearance of communism and the breakup of the Soviet Union. It is true, of course, that at the time Imam Khomeini made these remarks to Mr Gorbachev, the Soviet Union was already in deep crisis. But not even the most well informed experts on Soviet affairs were predicting that the Soviet Union itself would collapse and disintegrate and that Marxism, as a political ideology, would be discredited around the world. Yet, Imam Khomeini clearly and calmly made that prediction.

There are many important instances of the interrelation between *irfan* and political activity in Imam Khomeini and ultimately I think the unity of these two goes back to his penetration to what I call the innermost dimension of Islam.

The earliest public political statement that Imam made was in a declaration that he issued in 1944. He cited the following *ayat*:

Say! I enjoin upon you one thing only, that you stand up for Allah in pairs or singly. (34:46)

This *ayat* was repeated by Imam Khomeini in numerous contexts, sometimes in context of a political nature as was the case here, to stand up for Allah meaning to stand up for the interests of Islam within Iranian society,

and sometimes also in context of purely spiritual concern, that is, say standing up applies to the individual Muslim. He should raise himself from the state of lethargy and begin to walk in the path of spiritual purification towards Allah.

Among other texts Imam Khomeini recited throughout his life (and can be taken almost as a personal spiritual motto) is the following phrases from the *Munajat-e Shabanniyyah*. In fact, Imam carried out, by the permission of Allah, his successful revolution while reciting this *du'a* with its contents clearly fixed in his mind and spirit and at the same time teaching us a great deal about what true political activity in Islam is. Part of the *du'a* reads:

O Allah! Grant me total separation from other than You and brighten the vision of our hearts with the vision of looking upon You. So they may pierce the veil of light and attain the fountainhead of magnificence, and our spirits be suspended from the splendor of Your sanctity.²

Can we think of any other leader, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, whose entire action and striving was directed toward this goal?

Imam Khomeini, in his book on Islamic government, cited a *hadith* from Imam Musa Ibn Ja'far ('a) to the effect that "whenever a believer, who is a *faqih*, dies, the angels weep together with the ground where he engaged in the worship of God, and the gates of Heaven, which he enters by means of his good deeds. A crack will appear in the fortress of Islam that nothing can repair, for believers who are *fuqaha* are the fortress of Islam, like the walls protecting the city."

Now that the Imam has passed from us, a crack has appeared, a crack in the fortress of Islam. From this point of view indeed we must mourn his passing. We mourn him with a sadness and sense of loss which is not lessened by the passage of time. However, at the same time we remember him with gratitude to Allah for the gift of his life to the *ummah*.

Hopefully, we do not limit this remembrance to a ritualistic fashion on a certain date in the calendar, but we remember him actively with consciousness. Let us remember some of the important lessons he taught. Let us remember the comprehensive *jihad*, the *jihad* that starts with our own persons and should also embrace our communal and political lives and if necessary go to the point of taking weapons in our hands to defeat the enemies of Islam.

Let us also remember the insistence of Imam Khomeini on unity among

all Muslims, Let us remember the clear analysis of the West that Imam gave us. He described the West as a collection of international bandits; nothing has changed, the international bandits are still there. Let us never forget the essential nature of the system, which has consolidated itself since Imam's death. This system remains the same. Let us also remember his insistence that the abominable genocidal state of Israel completely disappear from the face of the globe.

Let us also remember the achievement of Imam Khomeini in the destruction of the *taghut* in Iran. This was regarded as something impossible but he had the vision to see that it was possible. The *New York Times* wrote in December 1978: "*The unthinkable become the inevitable.*"

It should be the aspiration and duty of all Muslims to make that which the *kafar* believes unthinkable to become inevitable. Allah says:

...you see the mountains and imagine them to be solid and fixed and yet they will pass away just as the cloud passes. (27:88)

The West looked at its position in Iran and thought it to be solid as mountains, and yet these mountains disappeared and crumbled and passed away as the clouds pass. Let us not only hope, but act and work so those mountains of tyranny, oppression, and genocide that surround the Muslims, by the will of Allah, will also crumble and pass away like the clouds.

In conclusion, let me remark that we benefit by praying for Imam Khomeini that he be resurrected in the proximity of his noble ancestor, the best of humanity, and his pure progeny, and that we shall be resurrect with those who followed him and who strove to imitate his example.

Endnotes:

1. Hamid Algar is a professor at Berkeley University. He gave this speech at a ceremony held to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the death of Imam Khomeini in early June 1994.

2. Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, *Rahar al-Ansar*, vol. 91, p. 99

Anatomy of Moral Maladies

Imam Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khameyni
Mahliqa Qara'i and A. Q. Qara'i, Translators

This article is selected text from Forty Hadith, written by Imam Khumayni and translated by Martyr Mahliqa Qara'i and A. Q. Qara'i. This book is a collection of ahadith from the authentic books of the companions of the Imams ('a) and scholars with an appropriate explanation of each of them that can be applied to the general condition of the people. The original work is in Persian.

The author made an exposition of certain ahadith dealing with moral maladies and vices such as Riya' (to make a display of one's good actions for the sake of people), 'Ujb (self-admiration); Kibr (pride); Hasad (envy); Ghadab (anger); Nifaq (hypocrisy); Ghibah (backbiting); and, Waswas (obsessions). These maladies are the main obstacles in the way of the development of one's character. Therefore, it is necessary to ponder such maladies in order to be saved from falling into traps of these vices and pave the way for spiritual wayfaring and attainment of the higher station of spirituality and human perfection.

Riya' (To Display One's Good Actions for the Sake of People):

"Riya' in any of its forms amounts to shirk (polytheism); verily, one who works for the people, his reward lies with them, and one who works for God his reward lies with God." (Imam al-Sadiq ('a.))

Riya' means to falsely make oneself appear to be virtuous, good natured or a true believer in God before the people for the sake of earning their respect and admiration, or with the purpose of gaining good reputation among them. The hypocrite feigns integrity, uprightness, virtue, honesty and piety without an authentic intention of acquiring these traits for the sake of God. It has several grades and degrees.

A. The first stage is comprised of two steps:

1. At the first step an individual makes a display of his religious beliefs, and shows off his knowledge of the religious teachings in order to project himself as an honest person in the eyes of people to gain their confidence and respect. Such a person tries to make a display of his trust in God and His Power, saying that he does not believe in any being except Him. He presents himself as a staunch believer through various means, especially by declaring that he depends on none but God. Such a person, with his gestures and utterances, poses as a staunch follower of true faith. For instance, when the trust in God or submission to His Will is discussed, he wags his head in affirmation with a sigh, and thus deceives people giving an expression that he is one of the true believers.

2. The second step on the path of *riya'* is represented by those who eradicate false belief from their hearts in order to attain power and respect among people; they sometimes articulate their belief overtly, sometimes make a covert display of their purity.

B. The second stage, too, is comprised of two steps:

1. At the first step, an individual demonstrates his piety and virtuous deeds.

2. At the second step, one pretends to have done away with the antitheses of piety and virtue, and behaves in such a manner as if he is free from all vices, the aim of all this is to win the confidence of others.

C. The third stage of *riya'*, considered to be overt by the *Fuqaha*, also consists to two steps:

1. The first step is marked by an individual's performance of the prescribed forms of piety, prayers and good deeds in front of others with the intention of demonstrating his good qualities and praiseworthy habits, or by his posture as a person who strictly adheres to the religious commands on purely rational grounds, thus wishing to win the hearts of people and attracting attention towards himself. Such acts, whether performed in total or in part, with the motive of *riya'*, are discussed in the books of *fiqh*.

2. At the second step, one abstains from evil deeds for the purpose of *riya'* only.

The First Stage of *Riya'* in Faith or Creed

Remember that hypocrisy in religion is the worst kind of hypocrisy; its retribution, also, is the severest and its bad effects are far greater and more dangerous than those of other forms of hypocrisy. One who is guilty of this sin, is counted among the *munafiqun* (hypocrites), whose place is in the Fire, and he is doomed to eternal damnation and his punishment is the severest of punishments. But, if he believes in the faith, and for the sake of winning peoples' hearts and obtaining worldly honor and dignity, he makes an ostentation of them, though his is not reckoned among the *munafiqun*, this kind of hypocrisy will cause the light of faith to fade away from his heart and make the darkness of unbelief and faithlessness take its place. In the first instance, this person commits polytheism (*shirk*) of the covert type, while his religious beliefs and acts should purely be meant for God and His Holy Essence, he is guilty of committing the sin of doing them for others and thus makes them to share what should absolutely belong to Him only. In this way he makes others partners to God and has given permission to the Devil to occupy his heart as if it does not belong to God. It has been mentioned that faith emerges from the depths of the heart, and in this matter mere abstract knowledge does not suffice. It has been stated in the traditions that any kind of *riya'* is polytheism, but this vice, this disastrous atrocity, this hidden cruelty (to one's own self), and this vicious habit results in nullifying the good deeds, and in surrendering the realm of the heart to other than God. The darkness of this vice causes man to leave this world as an unbeliever, and the feigned faith that he had assumed proves nothing more than a senseless and empty profession; it is a form without content, a body without soul and a skull without brain; and in no way is acceptable to God. This fact is confirmed by a tradition mentioned in *al-Kafi*, narrated by 'Ali ibn Salim.

The narrator of the tradition says that he heard al-Imam al-Sadiq ('a) saying that God Almighty said, "*I am the best of friends; one who makes others My partners in any matter, his deeds are not acceptable to Me. I accept only those acts that are purely done for My sake.*"

Thus spiritual acts performed for the sake of somebody else, not for God, will surpass the limits of polytheism and will enter the domain of *kufir* (infidelity). It may even be said that the performer of such adulterated acts would be treated as one of the *munafiqun*.

As his polytheism is not visible, his hypocrisy is also hidden. He, the

poor fellow, considers himself a believer, whereas in reality he is an idolater, and he is condemned to taste the chastisement prescribed for the *munafiqun*. How pitiful is the plight of one whose good deeds are to terminate in *nifaaq*.

The Second Stage of *Riya'*

At this stage, though *riya'* is of lesser intensity, it is possible that if the hypocrite does not heed the warnings, and repeatedly behaves in the same way (the *riya'* of action) it is likely to terminate in the *riya'* of the former stage—the *riya'* of faith. In the *'Alam al-malakut* (the celestial world) man may have a different form than the human form. Those forms will be according to the state of one's soul and its traits. If you possess good human qualities, in the other world those qualities will retain you in the human form, provided they are not deviated from the path of moderation. Good faculties will be considered as true merits only when the sensual self does not interfere with them, and the self does not play any role in their formation. Our respected teacher and shaykh, Ayatullah Shahabadi, used to say that the measure of the false and invalid spiritual practice and true religious spiritual struggle is to what extent selfishness is involved in such practices, whether all spiritual effort is for God or for selfish motives. If the wayfarer, on the heavenly journey, treads a selfish path and his spiritual exercises are meant for acquiring powers for worldly ends, his efforts are rendered invalid, and his *suluk* (progress on the mystic path) will lead him to calamity in the other world. The false claims of spirituality are usually made by such people. If the wayfarer treads the right path, and is genuinely in search of God, his devotion is within the bounds of the *Shari'ah*, and God will help him, as promised:

"As for those who strive for Us, We surely guide them to Our paths..." [29:69]

Hence, his actions will lead him to felicity; egoism will be eliminated and self-conceit and pride will recede. It is clear that anyone who demonstrates his good deeds before people, his aim is a selfish aim, and he will be branded as a selfish, self-conceited, egoistic and egocentric person, and his godliness will be considered as nothing but false and pretentious, which will invalidate his good deeds. As the domain of your existence is replete with the feelings of self-love, lust for wealth, power and fame, and the wish for ruling over the creatures of God, your good deeds and your excellences can-

not be adjudged as virtuous deeds, and your moral behavior is far from truly religious morality. The operating force in your realm is satanic and your inner state is not a human condition.

The Third Stage of *Riya'* in Worship

The third stage is also divided into several sections. The *riya'* of this kind is more common and manifest than those mentioned above. We ordinary human beings usually do not belong to the above-mentioned two states. For this reason, the Devil cannot get hold of us in the way he encroaches upon those who belong to the other states. But since the majority of the worshippers express their devotion to God through formal prayers, the Devil commonly intervenes at this stage more frequently. Sensual temptations are also commoner at this stage. In other words, since such types of people tend to seek the physical pleasures of heaven through their actions, and they aspire to attain higher stations by performing good deeds and abstaining from performing wicked ones, the Devil finds an access through this way; and he nurtures the roots of *riya'* and deceit with great care so that it may bear the fruits that are desired by him. He transforms their virtues into vices, and makes them enter hell through the path of ritual worship. The acts by means of which they aim to secure paradise for themselves are transformed by him into the means of their destruction and doom.

Therefore, persons who lay greater emphasis on this aspect (i.e. formalistic) and ignore other aspects, have nothing except apparently good deeds to secure salvation in the next world; they are required to be more cautious, so that this provision also may not be snatched away from their hands and they may not be consigned to the flames of hell and deprived of felicity for ever. They should watch over their acts lest the doors of heaven be closed and the doors of hell be opened to them.

How to Combat *Riya'*

Most often the sanctimonious person himself does not know that this particular vice has penetrated his deeds and his deeds have now assumed hypocritical proportions and hence become worthless. Because the temptations of the Devil and the self are so unobservably shadowy and subtle and the path of humanity is so delicate and tenuous that unless anyone is ex-

tremely discriminate, he cannot understand their adherent evil. He imagines that his actions are meant for pleasing God, whereas they are serving the interests of the Devil. Since man is naturally created self-centered, the veil of self-love and egoism covers his flaws and vices from his own eyes.

For instance, the acquisition of religious knowledge, is one of the important religious duties and a kind of worship; but a man busy attaining excellence in this field is liable to fall an easy prey to the vice of *riya'*, which seizes his heart in such a way that he himself is not aware and the same thick curtain of self-love obstructs his vision. He desires to gain an important position in the eyes of great scholars and men of distinction and honor, by solving an important problem in such a way that no other person has solved it before; he tries to project himself as a person distinguished from others by presenting the subject in a unique way, to make himself the focus of everyone's attention; with an air of self-assurance, he assumes that if anyone among the scholars and dignitaries eulogizes him in flattering terms, he will be able to receive the applause and praise of the whole gathering.

The poor fellow fails to realize that even if he earns worldly fame and honor among scholars or the elite, he will be disgraced in the eyes of the King of Kings, and these actions of his will lead him to *Sijm*. This act of *riya'* is also accompanied with some other vices, like the wish for humiliating and insulting others, or injuring the feelings of his brothers in faith, or sometimes being rude to a believer; each one of these vices is enough to land him in hell.

If your self is bent upon deceiving others and does not refrain from committing treachery and contends that the utterance of truth is a meritorious act, and possesses a spiritual reward also, and this it is in your interest to attain an elevated station in the Hereafter, you are advised to ask your self, suppose God Almighty accords you the real glory for your defeat in case you gracefully accept it, would you still desire to prevail? If you see that your self loves to dominate others in academic discussion to gain publicity among the scholars for your knowledge and scholarship, and the discussion that you undertake is aimed at winning others' respect and honor, then know that the intellectual discourse, which is the highest form of worship and prayer, is transformed into the sinful act of *riya'*. You are classified as a polytheist, and this act was performed with the motive of gaining respect in the eyes of the people. This act of yours will cause more harm to your faith than the harm done by two wolves who attack a herd of sheep from both sides.

Therefore, you who are scholars and responsible for reforming the *Ummah* and paving the way to the Hereafter, and curing spiritual infirmities, it is necessary for you first to correct yourself and maintain a sound spiritual state, so that you do not fall under the category of the scholars who do not act upon what they profess.

***Riya'* in Congregational Prayers**

Congregational prayer is an eminent form of Islamic worship, and the leader of this prayer holds a distinctive position of honor. For this reason, Satan also intrudes more in this worship. He is much more envious of the *imam* (leader) of the *jama'ah* (congregation) than anybody else. He is always busy finding the ways keeping the believers away from receiving this Divine honor, and deprive their action of the element of sincerity and truth and drives them to *Sijjin*. He tries to convert them into polytheists, and for this purpose he invades the hearts of the *imams* through various means, such as *'ujb* (self-admiration), and *riya'*. For instance, when an imam sees that a certain pious person is attending the congregational prayer, he tries to make an ostentation of his humility and devotion in order to capture his attention and win his admiration. He tries to find various ways of mentioning him in the gatherings of people not present in the congregation. In order to show his importance, he mentions that pious man again and again and tries to inform the people of his presence as a follower in the congregational prayer; thus, he tries to create a false impression of a close association with him, especially if he belongs to the business class, and expressed such a great love and friendship for him which he never expressed even for a single moment for God or His favored servants.

The Devil is not unmindful of the leader of a small congregation either. He approaches him and makes him aware that he is so unmindful of worldly gains that he is content to spend his time in a small local mosque of a poor neighborhood. This feeling is also similar to the first, or even worse than that: as the vice of jealousy spreads its tentacles in the hearts of such people, who do not enjoy the bounties of this world. The Devil deprives them of the glories of the other world too, and they are condemned to suffer in both the worlds. At the same time, the Devil, does not lose his grip on the collars of people like you and me, who have no access to the leadership of a congregation, and who lament the absence of proper means; he makes us doubt the

utility of congregations of Muslims, and makes us scorn and flout them. We may be led to look upon our failure to capture a congregation as other worldly seclusion, and ourselves as free from love of station and honor. Then we become worse than both of the groups, we neither belong to the first category of people who enjoy the good things in this life, nor do we belong to the second category whose achievements are comparatively humbler; nor do we have any claim to the next world. Nevertheless, if we get an opportunity we might prove to be more power-hungry, honor-thirsty, and greedy than either of the groups

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'Ujb (Self-admiration):

"There are several levels of 'ujb, one of them is when one's bad qualities appear to him as good; he reckons them as good ones and congratulates himself imagining that he is performing virtues. Another level of 'ujb is represented by a person who believes in God and thinks that he has done God a favor; whereas God Almighty has conferred a favor on him (by endowing him with faith)."

What is 'Ujb?

In the opinion of the 'ulama', 'ujb is magnification of one's virtues and good deeds, their over estimation, and satisfaction with them accompanied with a feeling of superiority on their account, while one exonerates himself from all failings and faults. But, to feel pleasure and delight on performing virtuous deeds accompanied with a sense of humility and modesty before God and gratitude to God for His favors, and to ask Him to increase them, is not 'ujb, but is a praiseworthy (*ma'mduh*) trait.

The great compiler of *ahadith*, al-'Allamah al-Majlisi, quotes the great scholar and thinker al-Shaykh Bah' al-Din al-'Amili as having said:

"There is no doubt that when anyone performs good deeds, like fasting, night vigils, etc., he feels some kind of joy and pleasure within him. This pleasure and joy, if it is on account of the feeling that God Almighty has conferred on him favor and grace, which caused him to perform such acts of piety,

while he is afraid of their loss and is anxious about their disappearance, and asks God Almighty for their continuity and abundance—this kind of exultation and gladness is not 'ujb. But if the exultation and pride is felt on account of the belief that he is the doer of such deeds and that it is he who possesses all such good qualities, and if he glorifies his own deeds with confidence in his goodness, considering himself to be free from all faults and vices, it reaches such a point that one believes that he is conferring some favor upon God in performing these deeds. This feeling of exultation and pride is 'ujb."

In my opinion, this definition of 'ujb is correct, but the deeds and actions referred to should be considered to include the external as well as the internal acts. At the same time to apply both to good and bad actions. While affecting the bodily or external actions, 'ujb also affects one's inner (mental and spiritual) actions as well. In the same way as a virtuous person may become conceited over his good deeds, so also the evil doer may think highly of his qualities, and feel proud of himself on their account. The tradition explicitly mentions both, as they are frequently ignored by a majority of people.

The 'Ujb of the Faithful

Among the various states of 'ujb, some of them can be clearly detected, but some others, being very subtle and concealed, cannot be detected unless one is carefully critical of oneself and minutely analyzes one's deeds and actions. Certain stages are more dangerous and fatal than the other stages.

The first and foremost state, which is the extreme and most fatal kind of 'ujb, is a state in which the person believes to have conferred a favor on his Supreme Benefactor, the King of Kings, by having faith in Him, or by performing the duties enjoined by Him. He imagines that through his belief he has caused the boundaries of the kingdom of Heaven to expand, or he has contributed to the splendor and magnificence of the Religion of Truth by having faith in Him. He thinks that by propagating and disseminating His message, preaching His *Shari'ah* or doctrine, or by enjoining good and forbidding evil or by implementing the *haddud* prescribed by Him, or by his sermons or his prayers in the niche, he is imparting a certain splendor and glory to His religion.

In the second level of 'ujb an individual is exultant in his heart taking a

coquettish air before God. This attitude is different from the one of conferring a favor on God, though many people see no difference in the two. In this state the individual considers himself as a favorite of God, and includes himself in the circle of the saintly and those nearest to God. If he hears the names of saintly persons, of those near to God or those captivated by Divine love, he associates himself with them in his heart, although, overtly he makes a simulation of humility and tries to project an opposite image of himself.

In order to make his role credible, he may act against his real belief in such a way which appears to negate it, but in fact posits it by its very negation. If any misfortune comes to him, he blows the trumpet of 'misfortune in exchange for friendship', which implies that the saintly are beset in hardships. Those people who claim being guides of others, *'urafa'*, mystics, and ascetics are susceptible to its dangers more than others.

In the next state, the individual considers himself worthy of being rewarded by God Almighty in return for his faith, good behavior, and good deeds, and considers it obligatory on God to befriend him in this world and grant him higher stations in the Hereafter. He counts himself among the true believers and considers himself to be a pure, innocent, and pious being. Whenever a pious person is praised in his absence, he believes that even if God were to judge him with justice, he also would deserve to be rewarded. And sometimes, with shamelessness and brazenness, he dares to speak in such terms emphatically. If he faces any adversities, he complains about the ways of God in his heart and questions the justness of His actions that cause suffering for the pious, sincere, and truthful, and showers His kindness and generosity upon the hypocrites. He nurses resentment against God in his heart, while apparently expressing the sense of gratification and satisfaction. He shifts the responsibility of his misfortunes to the Supreme Benefactor, and pretends to be happy and contented with His will and judgement. When he hears that God smites the believers in this world, he consoles his heart without knowing the fact that the *munaṣiqun* are also smitten, and that every individual who is smitten is not a believer.

In another stage of *'ujb* the individual considers himself as superior to others, and better than other human beings. He considers himself to be more pious and considers his own faith to be sounder than that of other believers. He considers himself to be more perfect and unfailing than others in the observance of the *wajibat* (compulsory duties) and the *'muharamat* (prohibited things). He thinks himself to be more regular than others in the observance

of *mustahabbat* (recommended religious precepts) and more regular in joining the Friday prayer congregation and other ceremonies and rites. He considers himself to be superior to others and treats others as imperfect and insignificant beings. He views them disdainfully in his heart, or treats them with contempt. He excludes every individual from Divine grace and mercy, and considers them a right belonging to himself or to some people like him. The person who has reached this stage comes to a point when he denies whatever virtue he perceives in others and is disposed to regard its presence in others as disputable. Somehow he suspects the sincerity of their virtues in his heart and considers his own deeds as free from any kind of fault. He underrates others' good deeds, but if he himself performs those deeds he magnifies them. He is sensitive to others' errors, but overlooks his own faults.

The 'Ujb of the Faithless

The bad deeds of unbelievers, hypocrites, polytheists, atheists, villains, sinners, and transgressors occasionally reach such a point where they become proud of their evil deeds and think highly of themselves. On account of their vicious beliefs and deeds, they consider themselves to be men of liberal thinking and open minds, free from all fetters and bonds and free from superstitions. They consider themselves as men of courage and valor, link the faith and belief in God with superstition, and consider the observance of religious precepts as a kind of narrowmindedness. They consider good character and moral behavior as signs of weakness. They look down on the performance of good deeds and observance of religious duties as evidence of the lack of common sense. They regard themselves as free men, who, for not believing in nonsensical superstitions and indifference to religious rules, are worthy of praise. Wicked and vicious qualities having sunk down their roots within the deep layers of their hearts, and their eyes and ears having become accustomed to those acts, and have gained great charm and grace in their eyes, they consider them as accomplishments. As pointed out in the *hadith*, at one stage bad deeds appear to be good to the evil person and he perceives them as virtues. This is an illusion to the verse of the Qur'an which says:

"And what of him, the evil of whose deeds has been decked out fair to him, so that he thinks them good?..." [35:8]

'The Evil Effects of 'Ujb

'Ujb in itself is a destructive and dangerous vice which spoils the faith and deeds. In answer to the question by the narrator of the tradition about 'ujb which corrupts human deeds, Imam Ali ('a) mentions the 'ujb in faith as one of its forms. From traditions we know that 'ujb is considered by God Almighty to be something worse than sin. The Holy Prophet (s) has reckoned 'ujb as one of the greatest of spiritual dangers. In *al-'Amali* of al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Imam Ali ('a) has said:

"No loneliness can be compared in dreadfulness to the one which is the result of 'ujb."

Moses ('a) asked Satan to tell him about the sin by means of which he infiltrates the hearts of the progeny of Adam ('a) and conquers them. Satan replied that it is the time when they feel 'ujb, overestimating their good deeds, and the gravity of their sins becomes diminutive in their eyes.

God Almighty commanded David ('a) to convey 'glad tidings to the sinners and to terrify the pious.' David ('a) asked God as to why he should convey glad tidings to sinners and frighten the pious. God Almighty replied, 'Give glad tidings to the sinners that verily I accept their repentance and forgive their sins, and frighten and warn the pious that they should refrain from 'ujb. Verily there is not a single man who does not stand condemned if I bring him to account.'

In his *al-Khisal*, al-Shaykh al-Saduq reports from al-Imam al-Sadiq ('a) that he said, "The Devil says, 'If I subdue the son of Adam in three things I do not care for whatever else he may do, as his good deeds will not be accepted: 1) when he overestimates his good deeds; 2) when he is forgetful about his sins; and, 3) when 'ujb permeates him.'"

Apart from the vices which belong to this vicious tree of 'ujb, there are a number of major sins and evil traits that are its products. When its roots permeate the human heart, they lead men to apostasy and *shirk*, and things even worse than these. One of those vices is the vice of belittling of one's sins. A person afflicted with 'ujb never cares to rectify himself; rather, he considers himself as a pious and virtuous person, and never thinks of purging himself from sins. The curtain of 'ujb and the thick veil of conceit prevents him from seeing his shortcomings. It is a great misfortune which not only precludes him from achieving all kinds of perfections, but also afflicts him

with all sorts of vices, leading him to eternal damnation. Even the doctors of the psycho are helpless in curing him. He has so much confidence in himself and in the deeds he performs that he thinks himself as independent of God Almighty, and does not care for His grace. In his limited mind, he considers God obliged to reward him. He imagines that he is worthy of being rewarded even if God were to reckon his deeds with justice.

Self-love as the Source of 'Ujb

The vice of 'ujb is the product of self-love; since the human being is plagued with the evil of self-love, it is the source of all human faults and moral vices. It is on account of this self-love that man overvalues his trivial deeds and hence includes himself in the category of the saintly and the nearest to God. Because of it, he not only considers himself applaudable and commendable on the basis of those paltry deeds, but sometimes even reckons his wicked deeds as good ones. If he perceives moral goodness and piety in others more than himself, he not only never gives any importance to them, but tries to project them in grim colors as far as possible. He scorns other creatures of God in his heart and views them cynically, while he contemplates himself with optimism, having a very high opinion of himself.

We come to the conclusion that all our deeds serve as the means for satisfying our desires and gratifying our carnal appetites. We are the worshippers of our flesh. We give up one pleasure for the sake of a bigger one. Our desired goal, our relentless hope is to widen the scope of sensual achievements. *Salat* (prayer), which is a means of acquiring nearness to Him, is performed in hope of the company of the *hurus* of Paradise. Our worship is not aimed at acquiring nearness to the Almighty. It has nothing to do with the obedience of His commands either, and is thousands of miles away from the good pleasure of God.

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Kibr (Pride)

"I asked Abu 'Abd Allah (al-Imam al-Sadiq) (a) as to the lowest degree of ilhād (apostasy). He answered, 'Verily Kibr (pride) is its lowest degree.'" (Usul al-Kafi, vol. III, pp. 421-422)

What is *Kibr*?

Kibr is the name of a psychic state in which a person feels a sense of superiority and behaves high-handedly with others. Its signs are discernible in his actions and its symptoms are clearly noticed by others by which they know that he is proud. *Kibr* is something different from *'ujb*, and, as mentioned earlier, this vice is the offspring and fruit of the tree of *'ujb*. *'Ujb* consists of self-love and conceit, and the meaning of *kibr* is to consider one-self superior to others.

When one perceives a merit in himself and is overcome by a sense of pleasure, exultation, and vanity, that state is called *'ujb*. When he considers others to be lacking in the imagined merit within himself, he perceives himself to be superior. This perception of superiority and supremacy over others causes in him a state of vanity which is *kibr* (pride). *Kibr*, in this sense, is an inner state, and when its effects are reflected in his behavior and his speech, it is called *takabbur*. In short, the self-indulgent person becomes self-seeking, and his self-seeking tendency grows into self-love, and when this self-love is filled to the brim, it manifests itself as haughty treatment of others.

Here, it is necessary to mention that the psychic traits, whether vices and infirmities or virtues and accomplishments, are extremely complicated and complex matters. It becomes difficult to discern one from the other. On account of this, there is often a great difference of opinion even among great scholars in precisely defining them and it may be impossible to give a faultless definition of inner states. Therefore, it is better for us to leave this matter to the inner conscience of individuals and not entangle ourselves in the maze of finding precise definitions, turning attention to our main purpose.

There are certain aspects and levels of *kibr* when considered in another perspective. They are: 1) *kibr* towards God; 2) *kibr* towards His prophets, messengers, and *awliya'*; 3) *kibr* in regard to the Divine Commandments, which also amounts to *kibr* towards God; 4) *kibr* towards the creatures of God, which, too, according to the *'urafa'*, amounts to *kibr* towards God.

As for *kibr* towards God, it is the most abominable, the most destructive, and the highest degree of pride. It is present in infidels, those who contest God's authority, and those who make claims to divinity. Sometimes its traces are seen among some men of faith as well. This kind of *kibr* signifies the extreme of ignorance and absence of knowledge about one's limits and the majesty of the Necessary Being.

As for *kibr* towards the prophets and *awliya'* of God, it was an attitude which was more prevalent during their own days, and the Qur'an reports about it in this verse:

"...Shall we put faith in two mortals like ourselves?..." [23:47]

And someone from his people is reported to have said (about the Prophet (s)):

"...If only this Qur'an had been revealed to some great man of the two towns." (i.e. Mecca and al-Ta'if) [43:31]

During the early days of Islam, the instances of such *kibr* towards the *awliya'* of God were very frequent, and examples are still manifested in the behavior of some scholars of Islam.

As for *kibr* towards the commands of God, it is seen among some sinners, such as those who abstain from performing *Hajj* as they do not consider the dress of *ihram* appropriate for themselves; abstain from *salat* because they consider the state of prostration as not in accordance with their position. Such pride is sometimes seen among persons of faith, devotees, and scholars who abstain from *adhan* on account of it.

Similarly, there are those who would not accept a word of truth if it came from anybody belonging to the same status as themselves, or lower. Sometimes it happens that one hears something from his colleagues or friends and vehemently rejects it and derides the speaker, but he readily agrees with it when it is uttered by someone superior to him in religious or worldly status. It is even possible that he would accept it with the same seriousness with which he had rejected it earlier. This person is not a seeker of truth, but his pride has drawn a curtain over the truth, to which his obsequiousness has blinded and deafened him. It is the same kind of *kibr* which prevents a scholar from teaching a certain subject because he considers it below his dignity, or dissuades him from teaching persons devoid of any outwardly significant position. Sometimes the traces of *kibr* are so subtle that a person who is afflicted, unless he is careful and serious about correcting himself, cannot know that his actions testify to the presence of *kibr* in his character.

As to the *kibr* towards the creatures of God, *kibr* towards men of divine knowledge and scholars is the worst form of it, and its evil effects are graver and its harms more serious than of any other type of *kibr*. Of this category of

kibr avoids the company of poor and seeks out prominence in gatherings and meetings, and displays itself on the road and in one's carriage. Yet this evil is prevalent and inflicts all the classes of society; from the elite to the class of 'ulama' and scholars of *hadith*; from the rich to the poor and deprived classes; no one can elude it, except for those whom God Almighty saves.

Sometimes it is so difficult to discern between humbleness and humility aimed at popularizing oneself, and between pride and self-containment, that one should seek refuge in God Almighty, that He may guide us on the right path. If one is eager to reform himself and tries to reach his goal, the Holy God guides him with His infinite mercy on the right path.

The Causes of *Kibr*

There are various causes of *kibr*, but all of them derive from the delusion which occurs when men imagine themselves to possess some kind of excellence. This illusion leads to *'ujb*, which, blended with self-love, conceals others' merits and virtues from their eyes. The afflicted individual believes others to be inferior to himself and begins to cherish an exaggerated feeling of self-esteem in his heart, as well as manifesting a similar demeanor.

For instance, one may find an individual among the 'ulama' and 'urafa' who considers himself to be a visionary and a man of mystic knowledge and insight, classifying himself in the category of saintly persons with a high record of good deeds. Such persons make an absurdly ostentatious show of their superiority over others, dismissing the *hukama'* and philosophers as nuts, the *fuqaha'* and *muhaddithun* as superficial hums, and all ordinary people as subhuman creatures and beasts. They scorn all the creatures of God: while claiming to follow the dictum of "nonexistent in the way of Allah" and "existent through Allah", they beat the drum of their truth-seeking, whereas the Divine teachings require of them to contemplate the creatures of God with goodwill and optimism, when the least knowledge of God demands that he should not scorn these manifestations of His Glory and Beauty. He, himself, would affirm this while speaking about Divine teachings, pronouncing something which contradicts his own inner state. Yet this happens because those teachings have not penetrated his heart. The poor fellow has not attained even the station of a true believer, yet he often speaks of *'irfan*. Although *'irfan* has not touched him, he claims to have realized the ultimate Truth.

Among philosophers, too, there are such persons who consider them-

selves to be in possession of the proofs and knowledge of certain truth. They classify themselves among men of certain knowledge of God who possess confirmed belief in angels and scriptures, yet they look down on others in disdain. They dismiss all other sciences as fiction and all human beings as defective in faith and knowledge, viewing them with haughty contempt in their hearts as well as their arrogant demeanor. The truly wise (*hukama'*) are those whose knowledge of the secrets of human origin and end makes them modest and humble. God Almighty bestowed upon Luqman the gift of wisdom; yet the Qur'an reports of him as saying to his son:

"Turn not thy cheek in scorn toward people, nor walk with pertness on the earth. Verily, God loveth not any braggart boaster." [31:18]

Sometimes such people are found among those who claim to be mystic masters and guides of consummate inner purity, yet, they treat the common people with pride and look down on *fuyaha'*, *'ulama'* and their followers, and speak disparagingly of philosophers and *hukama'*. They consider everyone except themselves and their associates as doomed creatures. Since they themselves lack knowledge and learning, they consider knowledge a thorn in the path of the spiritual journey, and those who possess it are considered by them as devils who mislead the wayfarers on their inward journey, although their own claims to high spiritual stations would tend to contradict such a viewpoint.

A spiritual guide of people must himself be free from all kinds of mortal and destructive sins and qualities; one who claims the capacity to guide those who have gone astray should have transcended the narrowness of mundane existence, being absorbed in the beatific vision of His Glory.

Also among the class of *fuyaha'*, scholars of *fiqh* and *ahadith* and the students of these sciences, sometimes view others with scorn and treat them high-handedly, considering themselves worthy of every praise. They think that everybody should obey their commands without hesitation, and apply the following criterion to themselves:

"He (i.e. God) will not be questioned as to that which He does, but they will be questioned." [21:23]

Except for themselves and a handful of persons like themselves, they do not consider anybody fit to enter Paradise. Whenever something is spu-

ken about another field of learning, they dismiss it with scorn. They unhesitatingly reject every other discipline except their own field—of which they possess very little knowledge—considering it not only unworthy of study but destructive. They denounce the scholars of other sciences due to their own ignorance. They present their own views as if their religiosity necessitates such a contempt, whereas knowledge and religion are free from such prejudices. The *Shari'ah* forbids men from speaking about anything without having proper knowledge, and considers it obligatory to respect every Muslim. This wretched fellow, without possessing enough knowledge of religion or sciences, is sinful of something which is against the scripture of God and the teachings of His Prophet (s). Yet he molds his ideas into the form of religion; though the conduct and behavior of all the great scholars of every generation was unlike this. Each one of the branches of religious sciences demands the scholars who are associated with it to be humble, and requires them to obliterate all signs of *kibr* from their hearts.

Also among the experts of other sciences, like medicine, mathematics, physics, engineering, industrial crafts, etc., the instances of *kibr* and arrogance are seen. They underestimate all other sciences however important they may be, and scorn scientists belonging to them. Each one of them believes that whatever he knows is the real knowledge. They scorn people in their hearts, as well as manifest it in their demeanor.

Some others, who do not belong to any of the branches of science, like the people devoted to prayers and other devotional rites, also tend to behave high-handedly with others. They disdain people and treat them with contempt, and do not consider even great scholars as worthy of redemption. Whenever there is a discussion about knowledge, they point out that knowledge without action is useless. They give great importance to the little knowledge they possess and view all others with *'ujb* and haughty contempt, forgetting that if their worship were true and sincere it would have reformed them. The prayer forbids one from performing indecent deeds and sins and is considered as the culmination of a Muslim's attainment (*mi'raj al-mu'min*). But such a person, even after performing *salat* for fifty years and meticulously performing all obligatory (*wajibat*) and recommended (*mustahabbat*) religious duties, is immersed in the vice of pride—which is a kind of apostasy—from head to toe, and is afflicted with *'ujb*—which is uglier than any other indecency—and comes to resemble Satan and acquires his attributes.

The *salat* that does not forbid one from indecencies and indignities, the prayer which does not protect the heart, rather whose excessive performance vitiates the heart, is not worthy of being named *salat*.

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Hasad (Envy)

"O son of 'Imran, never be envious of people concerning the favors I have conferred on them by My grace, do not glower at them, and do not succumb to your (envious) self. Indeed, the envious man is indignant at the bestowal of My favor, and contests My apportioning of gifts among My creatures. Whoso is such, he neither belongs to Me nor do I belong to Him." (Usul al-Kafi, vol. iii, p. 418.)

Definition of Hasad

Hasad is a psychic state in which a person wishes for the deprivation of a blessing, talent or merit, real or imagined, possessed by another person. It does not make any difference to the envious man whether he possesses the same thing or not, or whether he can acquire it or not.

Kinds of Hasad

There are various kinds and degrees of *hasad* according to the state and condition of the *mahsud* (the one envied), the *hasud* (the one who envies), and the nature of *hasad* itself.

According to the condition of the mahsud: Qualities like certain intellectual, spiritual, and moral merits, good and pious deeds, or outward factors like wealth, honor, and prestige can cause envy. Also their antithetical qualities, when they are imagined to be merits, can also cause *hasad*.

According to the condition of the hasud: The feeling of envy in the heart of the person who harbors it is sometimes caused by enmity, sometimes by pride, and at other times by fear and the like.

According to the condition of hasad itself: As for envy itself, the classification performed on its basis is an essential one, not those performed on the previous bases. There are several stages and grades of intensity and

weakness according to their various causes and effects.

The Causes and Motives of *Hasad*

There are numerous causes of *hasad*, the main one among them, as opposed to *kibr*, are products of a feeling of one's inferiority. In the same way a person contemplating his own merits considers others to lack them, with a sense of elation, exultation, and rebelliousness overcoming him; when someone perceives others to be more perfect, a feeling of inferiority and dejection seizes him, which, with the help of external factors and inner propensities, generate the feeling of envy in his heart. Sometimes it may happen that he feels dejected on account of someone sharing his merit, such as when a person endowed with a merit feels jealous of those on an equal or lower footing than himself. Therefore, it may be said that envy is a state of abjectness and dejection of others' merits and advantages.

Some Evil Effects of *Hasad*

Hasad is one of the deadliest diseases of the heart. The mortal diseases of the heart, like pride and other vices, though each is a mortal sin in itself, produces additional vices, each of which is fatal independently. In two *sahih* traditions, al-'Imam al-Sadiq ('a) and al-'Imam al-Baqir ('a) inform us about the evil effects of *hasad*:

"Mu'awiyah ibn Wahab reports that al-'Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said: 'Hasad, 'ujh, and vain glory are a bane of faith.'" (Usul al-Kafi, vol. iii, p. 418.)

"Muhammad ibn Muslim reports that al-'Imam al-Baqir ('a) said: 'A man may be forgiven for something done in a fit of anger; but envy devours faith as fire consumes wood.'" (Usul al-Kafi, vol. iii, p. 416.)

It is known that faith is a Divine light that illuminates the human heart with the radiance of His glory, as has been related by the *hadith qudsi*.

"Neither (the vastness of) My earth, nor (that of) My heaven can contain Me. Indeed it is the heart of the man of faith which can contain Me."

The spiritual light and the divine spark which makes the human heart greater than anything else in the world does not go along with the darkness and narrowness caused by this grievous vice. This hideous quality makes the human heart so narrow and dejected that its effects become apparent throughout the realm of one's inner and outer being. The heart becomes grieved and depressed, the chest narrow and suffocated, and the face grim and frowning. This state extinguishes the light of faith and deadens the human heart. The more it gains in strength, the more it diminishes the brightness of faith. All the inward and outward attributes of faith are negated by the effects of envy which are manifested within and without one's personality. The man of faith is optimistic and has a hopeful attitude towards God, and is satisfied with the way He has divided and apportioned His bounties among His creatures. The envious person is displeased with God and is resentful of the fate apportioned by Him. As mentioned in traditions, a believer is not malicious towards other believers; he loves them, whereas the envious man acts in the opposite manner.

Hasad destroys faith in the same way as fire burns wood. Therefore, there does not exist any doubt about the danger of this vice which wrests from man his faith, the source of his salvation in the Hereafter and the life and vigor of his heart, and reduces him into a helpless wretch.

A great evil that is an inseparable ingredient of envy is indignation with the Creator and the Beneficent Nourisher and annoyance with His ordinances. We do not understand that we are angry with the King of Kings, nor know what form our anger and resentment will acquire as the result of this vice in the next world. We hear the words of Imam al-Sadiq (‘a): *"Whoso is such, he neither belongs to Me nor do I belong to him,"* yet we do not understand the magnitude of the misfortune of God Almighty's disowning us, and what His disgust with us will bring. One who is driven out from the sphere of His *wilayah* (guardianship) and is not accepted under the standard of the Mercy of the Most Merciful, there is no hope of his salvation. He will not be able to receive any intercession of the intercessors either: *"...Who is he that intercedeth with Him save by His leave?"* (2:255). Who will act as an intercessor for one who is wrathful and resentful towards God, outside the pale of His *wilayah*, and whose bonds of love between him and his Lord have been severed? Despite all the warnings and alarms sounded by the apostles of God to awaken us from our slumber, neglect and wretchedness only grew day by day.

The Punishment of the Grave

According to the *'ulama'*, the punishment of the grave and the darkness therein is one of the evil consequences of this vice. They maintain that the bearer of this vice, with its associated spiritual tension and gloom, is oppressed by pressure and darkness in the grave and in *Barzakh*. One's condition in the grave depends upon the spaciousness of the hearts and the narrowness thereof.

Al-'Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is narrated to have said that the Prophet (s) went to attend the funeral of Sa'd. While 70,000 angels accompanied the ceremonies, the Prophet of God (s) raised his head toward the heavens and said: *"Does anyone face the squeeze (of the grave) as Sa'd faced?"* The narrator of the tradition said to the Imam: *"May I die for your sake, we have been told that Sa'd was not very particular of taharah while passing urine."* The Imam said: *"God forbid, his only fault was that he was harsh in his treatment of the people of his household..."*

The state of darkness, narrowness, tension and constriction that appears in one's heart due to this vice is not likely to occur in other moral vices. The person possessing this vicious trait suffers torments in this life, then the oppressive darkness and constriction in the grave, and will ultimately be helpless and wretched in the Hereafter. All these are the evil effects of *hasad* alone, on condition that it does not breed any other vice or induce any other evil deed. It rarely happens that it does not generate some other affliction. Rather, it often begets many other moral vices and misdeeds, such as *kibr*, and other sins like backbiting, slandering, abusing, and torturing, each one of which is a deadly and mortal sin.

Therefore, it is necessary for a wise person to make up his mind immediately and strive to get rid of this shame and indignity, saving his faith from the blaze of fire and its disaster. He should rid himself of this mental torture and narrowmindedness, which is a perpetual lifelong punishment in this world, followed by distress and darkness in the grave and Purgatory, and incurs Divine wrath. His envy does not harm the person of whom he is envious. It does not make him lose any favors and merits either. It may even give him some satisfaction, in this world as well as in the other, to see the distress of one who is jealous of him and is his enemy. While he continues to enjoy all those advantages which cause you distress and anguish, it is yet another gift for him. And if you are again jealous of him for the second one, it will multi-

ply your torment and anguish, which will again be a blessing for him, and so on. Hence you shall ever remain in grief, pain, and anguish and he in a state of bliss, joy, and exuberance. In the Hereafter, also, your envy will benefit him, especially if it culminates in backbiting, slander, and other such acts of malice; as your good deeds will be assigned to him. If you deliberate upon the matter for a while, you shall, of course, purge yourself from this vice and save your soul from its destructive effects. Don't think that psychic, moral, and spiritual vices are incurable; this is a notion that has been inspired in you by Satan and your carnal self, who want to keep you from treading the path of the Hereafter and to frustrate your efforts at rectifying your self.

The Practical Remedy for *Hasad*

Besides the theoretical cure that has been mentioned, there is a practical remedy also for this hideous vice. It consists of this: Try, forcibly, to be affectionate with the person of whom you are jealous. By making a display of your affection, your purpose should be to cure yourself of this internal malady. Your inner self will ask you to hurt him and malign him. It will demand that you treat him like an enemy and recount to you his vices and mistakes. But you act against the inclinations of your self and be friendly with him. Honor him and respect him and force yourself to speak in his praise. Try to see his virtues yourself and make them known to others too, concentrating upon his good qualities. Though your behavior will be affected and unnatural in the beginning, being artificial and feigned, but your aim is self-rectification and curing of this vice, your behavior will gradually become less artificial. Day by day this affectation will be lessened and your self will become accustomed to it and that which was affectation will become reality. You convince your self and make it understand that he is a creature of God; perhaps it is God's grace which has selected him for the advantage he enjoys. If the object of your envy is a scholar endowed with knowledge and piety, and you are jealous of him due to these merits, your envy is all the more abominable and this enmity will bring you greater harm in the Hereafter. It is for you to make your self understand that they are chosen servants of God, who, through Divine grace, have been distinguished by that great merit and favor. Such a gift ought to make one feel affectionate and kindly towards its possessors.

Hence, if one perceives that anything that should stir up love and respect in his heart is causing something that is contrary to it, he should know

that the baser emotions have overpowered him and their darkness has conquered his inner self. Now it is time for him to positively resolve to get rid of it by all theoretical and practical means. If he tries to stimulate the feelings of love and friendship in his heart, he will succeed, since the light of love will guide those who struggle and help them through His invisible grace and increase their capacities. *"Indeed He possesses the authority to grant ability and to guide."*

* * * * *

Ghadab (Anger)

"Anger is the key (that opens the door) to all kinds of vices."
(Imam al-Sadiq ('a))

Exposition

The great researcher, Ahmad ibn Muhammad, popularly known as Ibn Maskawayh, in his book *Taharat al-'a'raq*, writes something which can be summarized as follows: Anger, in fact, is an inner psychic movement due to which a state of agitation is produced in the heart's blood, arousing a desire for vengeance. When this agitation becomes more violent, it intensifies the fire of anger. A violent commotion in the blood seizes the heart, filling the arteries and the brain with a flurry of dark smoke, thus the mind and the intellect lose control and become powerless. At that time, as the *hukama'* maintain, the inner state of the person resembles a cave where fire has broken out, filling it with flames and suffocating clouds of smoke that leap out of its mouth with intense heat and a fiery howl. When that happens, it becomes extremely difficult to pacify such a person and to extinguish the fire of his wrath: whatever is thrown in it to cool it down becomes a part of it, adding to its intensity. It is for this reason that such a man becomes blinded to propriety and deaf to guidance. In such a condition, there is no hope for him.

Then Ibn Maskawayh adds: *"Hippocrates says that he is more hopeful about a ship encircled by a fierce storm and violent winds which has been knocked away from its course by the sea waves into rocky waters, than about an enraged person. Because, in such conditions, the sailors may somehow manage to save the ship by clever maneuvers, but there is*

no hope of deliverance for the soul engulfed in rage; for all such efforts as counsel, advice, and exhortation fail to appease him. The more one tries to pacify it through humble entreaties and tearful supplications, the more violent it becomes."

The Power of Ghadab

The power of anger is one of the biggest favors of God conferred upon His creatures, by which they are able to pursue activities constructive to their world and the Hereafter, and are assured the continuity of the species and the safety and survival of the individual and the family. It also plays a great role in the establishment and maintenance of social order and civic life. If this noble faculty were not ingrained in the animal's nature, it could not defend itself against natural adversities, and would be defenseless against the dangers of destruction and extinction. If it were absent in human nature, man would fail to achieve most of his accomplishments and attainments. Moreover, even its deficiency and insufficient presence is itself considered a moral weakness and flaw which gives rise to innumerable vices and defects like: fear, timidity, weakness, laxity, laziness, greed, lack of restraint, patience and tolerance, lack of constancy and perseverance, love of comfort, lethargy, submissiveness to oppression and tyranny, submitting to insults, dastardliness, spiritlessness, etc. Describing the qualities of believers God Almighty says:

"...(The believers) are hard against the unbelievers and merciful among themselves..." [48:29]

The fulfillment of *al-'Amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (to enjoin good and forbid indecency), implementation of *hudud* (punishment prescribed by Islamic penal law), *ta'zirat* (punishments adjudged by a judge), and carrying out other policies set forth by religion or guided by reason, would not be possible without the existence of the noble power of *ghadab*.

Moral Hazards of Ghadab

As to the moral hazards, it may cause malice towards creatures of God, leading sometimes even to the enmity not only of prophets and *awliya'*, but also of the Holy Essence of the Necessary Being and the Nourisher. This

shows how dangerous and disgraceful its consequences may be. It may also give rise to other vices, like *hasad*, about whose evils you read above, and many more besides it.

Its Behavioral Hazards

There is no limit to the behavioral hazards that are products of this vice. Perhaps, it may lead one to use abusive language or revile the prophets of God and *awliyah*. Or he may desecrate sanctities and utter slanders about venerable persons. He may murder a pious soul, wreck the lives of innocent creatures, wreck a family, or reveal the secrets of others tearing up the veils that cover them. There seems to be no limit to such monstrous acts that man may commit at the time of outbreak of this faith-consuming fire that also destroys many homes. As such, it can be said that this habit is the mother of all spiritual maladies and the key to each and every evil action. As opposed to this vice is the ability to restrain one's anger. This ability to extinguish the fire of anger has been considered the essence of wisdom and the focus of all virtues and noble qualities, as stated in this tradition of *al-Kafi*:

"(Al-Kulayni says:) From a number of our (i.e. al-Kulayni's) companions from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid (al-Barqi), who narrates on the authority of a chain of narrators from al-'Imam al-Sadiq ('a) that he heard his father (al-'Imam al-Baqir ('a)) as saying: 'A Bedouin came to the Prophet (s) and said: I live in the desert. Teach me the essence of wisdom.' Thereupon the Prophet (s) said to him: 'I command you not to get angry.' After repeating his question thrice (and hearing the same reply from the Prophet every time), the Bedouin said to himself: 'After this I will not ask any question, since the Apostle of God (s) does not command anything but good.'"

"Al-'Imam al-Sadiq ('a) says: 'My father used to say, Is there anything more violent than anger? Verily, a man gets angry and kills someone whose blood has been forbidden by God, or slanders a married woman.'"

Controlling Ghadab

There are also several practical and theoretical remedies for curing an-

ger when it has flared up. The theoretical remedy involves reflecting upon the matters mentioned above, which is also a kind of practical remedy in this case. Among the practical remedies the important ones involve withholding of the self in the initial stages of anger. This is because it is ignited little by little, becoming more intense until its furnace is set burning fiercely and its flame becomes violent and furious. When that happens, it gets completely out of control and shuts off the lights of one's faith and intellect. Blowing out the lamp of guidance, it reduces man to an utterly wretched state.

Therefore, one should be on one's guard so as to dissociate oneself by some means before its fierceness mounts and its fire becomes more violent. He should either leave the place where his anger may be provoked, or change his posture: that is, if seated, he should stand up, and if standing, sit down, or engage his mind in the remembrance of God (some people consider it even obligatory), or he should make himself busy in some other activity to divert his attention. In any case, it is easier to put a curb on it in the beginning. It has two results. Firstly, he will be able to pacify his self at that early stage and the flames of anger will be put out. Secondly, the experience will always remain with one as a primary cure for treating one's self. If one always pays attention to one's condition and treats one's self in this way, one will undergo a complete transformation as one's inner state moves towards the point of moderation. An allusion to this is made in the following traditions for *al-Kafi*:

"It is reported from al-'Imam al-Baqir ('a) that he said: 'Verily, anger is a spark ignited by the Devil in the human heart. Indeed, when anyone of you gets angry, his eyes become red, the veins of his neck become swollen and Satan enters them. Therefore, whosoever among you is concerned about himself on account of it, he should lie down for a while so that the filth of Satan may be removed from him at the time.'"

And:

"Maysir reports that once anger was discussed in the presence of al-'Imam al-Baqir ('a). He said: 'Verily, it happens that an angry person would not be satisfied until he enters the Fire (i.e. his anger does not subside unless it drags him into the hellfire). Therefore, whoever is angry with someone let him sit down immediately if he is standing; for, indeed, it would repel from him the uncleanness of Satan. And whoever gets angry

with his kinsman, let him approach him and put him; for the feeling of consanguinity, when stimulated by touch, induces calmness."

These traditions suggest two practical remedies of *ghadab* in its initial stage. One is general and recommends sitting down and bringing about a change in posture (according to another tradition, if somebody be seated at the time of getting angry, he should stand up). It is reported by Sunni sources that if the Apostle of God (s), ever got angry while standing, would sit down, and if seated, would recline, and his anger would subside. The other remedy which in particular is concerned with blood relations suggests that if anybody gets angry with someone related to him by blood, if he touches him with his hand, his anger will cool down.

These are the methods of curing oneself of one's anger; but if others want to treat an enraged person, if his anger is in the initial stage, any one of the methods from among the various practical and theoretical ones suggested may be useful. But, if he is in extreme anger, advice and counsel give opposite results, and it becomes difficult to treat him in this stage, except by being put in a state of alarm by someone whom he holds in high esteem; for *ghadab* vents itself on those whom one deems weaker and inferior to oneself or at least as equal in power and position. In front of those persons with whom he is impressed, his anger is never provoked. Rather his outer excitement and agitation will be transformed into an internal fury confined to his inner self. Not finding an outlet, it will change into grief within the heart. So, it is not at all an easy task to appease a person undergoing outbursts of extreme rage.

How to Eradicate the Roots of *Ghadab*

Among the fundamental remedies of *ghadab*, one is to exterminate the factors responsible for its provocation. One of them is self-love, which in turn begets the love of wealth, glory, and honor and the desire to impose one's will and expand one's domain of power. These factors are inherently responsible for exciting the fire of *ghadab*, as the individual infatuated with these things tends to hold them in high regard and they occupy a high place in his heart. He gets angry and excited if any one of these aspired goals is not achieved or when his desire faces any obstacle and loses control over himself. Greed, avarice, and such other vices that take root in his heart as a result of self-love and the love of glory, snatch the reins of reason from his hands,

leaving the self to commit deeds that deviate from the path of Divine Law and reason. If his love and interest in these things is not intense and he gives lesser importance to these matters, his inner calm and contentment, obtained by giving up the love of wealth, honor and the like, will not allow his self to act against the demands of justice. Then, he will not find it difficult to maintain his patience in hardships, and will not lose self-restraint. He would not get angry unnecessarily and abnormally. If the love of the world is eradicated from his heart and this vice is completely wiped out, then all other vices also take leave and vanish, vacating the realm of the soul for moral virtues.

Another factor that arouses *ghadab* is that sometimes *ghadab* and its evil manifestations, are imagined to be merits and accomplishments on account of ignorance and lack of understanding. Some fools reckon those vices as marks of bravery and brag about themselves on account of them. They confuse the virtue of valor, with this pernicious vice. However, it should be noted that courage and valor are different things, and its source, causes, effects and characteristics differ totally from those of that injurious vice. Courage originates in the strength of one's spirit, serenity of mind, moderateness, faith, and lack of concern for the vanities of life and indifference to its vicissitudes; whereas *ghadab* is the product of spiritual weakness and degeneration, insufficiency of faith, immoderation of character and soul, love of the world and the fear of losing the pleasures of life.

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Nifaq (Hypocrisy)

"One who meets Muslims with a double face and a double tongue, on the Day of Judgement he will come with two tongues of fire." (Usul al-Kafi, vol. ii, p. 343.)

Exposition

Double-facedness is the characteristic of the person who assumes an outward appearance and simulates a behavior which is contrary to his inner state. For instance, one may give an impression of friendship and affection and pretend to be sincere and sympathetic, while in his heart he harbors an opposite feeling. Such a person displays sympathy and friendship in front of people, but is different in their absence.

Double-tongueness is the quality of the person who praises and flatters people whenever he meets them, appearing to befriend them, but denounces them and speaks slanderously of them in their absence. Therefore, in the light of this description, the first quality may be specified as 'behavioral *nifaa*' and the second as 'verbal *nifaa*'. Perhaps the tradition refers to the evil of *nifaa*, since these two features are among the prominent and peculiar characteristics of the *munafiqun* (hypocrites).

Nifaa is one of the psychic maladies and vicious quality with its own specific signs and symptoms. It also has numerous grades and degrees.

Degrees of *Nifaa*

Like other vices and virtues, there are different degrees and stages of intensity and weakness of *nifaa*. In the case of any vice, if one does not take steps to cure it and does not persevere in the course of its treatment, it would lead him towards its extreme degrees. If man leaves his carnal self to its wishes, its innate propensity towards corruption, its instinctive appetite for worldly pleasures, the assistance of Satan and the insinuations of the *Khannas*, all together incline it towards evil, and its vices, increasing day by day in intensity, reach the stage when they become an intrinsic, essential and ultimate quality of the soul. Then the regions of one's inner being as well as outer self come under its sovereignty and rule. If the vice is characteristic of the Devil, such as *nifaa* and double-facedness, which are attributes of that cursed thing—whom the Qur'an quotes as having said to Adam and Eve:

"And he swore unto them (saying): 'Lo, I am a sincere adviser unto you.'" [7:21]

whereas in reality he was the opposite—the realm of your being will be annexed by the Devil's empire. When that happens, the ultimate form the spirit acquires will be satanic, and its inner essence and substance will also be satanic in nature. It is possible that the external appearance in the next world will be of Satan, though here you have a human form and appearance.

Thus, if man does not try to guard himself from this vice and allows his carnal self to act according to its wishes, within a short time all the means of control will be so thoroughly gone that all his labors and efforts will be put into the service of this vice. With whomever he comes in contact, he will meet and greet him with a double-face and a double-tongue. Socially, his

interaction and relations with others will become tainted with the vice of duplicity, dissemblance and hypocrisy. He will have no other objective except his own personal benefit and no goal except self-aggrandizement. Having trampled on all values of truthfulness, sincerity, magnanimity and courage, he will employ duplicity in all his deeds, not abstaining from any indecency or perversion. Such a person is away from the domain of humanity, and on the Day of Judgement will be raised as a member of Satan's legions.

All that was stated above was regarding the degrees of intensity and weakness of *nifaa* per se, but it also varies according to that which it is related. Sometimes one practises *nifaa* in relation to the religion of God, sometimes with respect to virtues, sometimes in regard to righteous deeds and holy rites, and sometimes in ordinary matters of day-to-day life and common civilities. Sometimes one may act with *nifaa* with respect to the Prophet (s) or the Imams ('a), and sometimes with regard to the *awliya'*, the scholars and the believers. Sometimes one may behave with *nifaa* with Muslims and sometimes with God's creatures belonging to other communities and creeds.

Of course, these types of *nifaa* vary in the degree of their ugliness and indecency, though all of them are similar in that they share the quality of ugliness and indecency and are the buds and leaves of the same vicious tree.

Effects of *Nifaa*

Nifaa and double-facedness, besides being abominable, ignoble and vicious qualities, which no decent person would like to adopt and whose possessor is excluded from the human category and cannot be likened to any of the beasts as well, are cause of humiliation and ignominy in this world in front of one's fellows and friends, and bring about disgrace and punishment in the Hereafter. As mentioned in the tradition, in the Hereafter such a person will be resurrected with two tongues of fire in his mouth. This will be a source of disgrace for him in front of the creatures of God and will bring about his infamy in the presence of His prophets, apostles and archangels. The severity of the punishment is also indicated by this tradition. Because, if the substance of the body becomes that of fire imagine how severely it will be felt and what a great pain and suffering it will inflict.

It is reported in another tradition that the Prophet (s) said that the double-faced person will come on the Day of Resurrection in such a condition that one of his two tongues will protrude from the back of his head and the other

from the front, and both will be aflame, making his entire body ablaze with fire. It will be announced that he was double-faced and double-tongued in the world. He will be known on that day by this vice, the following Qur'anic verse becomes applicable to him:

"...and sever that which Allah hath commanded should be joined, and make mischief in the earth; theirs is the curse and their the ill abode." [13:25]

Nifaq is the source of many an evil and destructive trait, each one of which may bring about one's doom and eternal damnation. One of them is causing discord and sedition (*fitnah*), which, according to an express text in the Qur'an, is worse than homicide. Another is slandering (*namimah*), which is denounced by al-'Imam al-Baqir ('a) in the following tradition:

"(Entry to) Paradise is prohibited to slanderers who walk on the path of calumny (i.e. are habitual slanderers)."

The sins of slandering others and backbiting are worse than the sin of adultery, according to a statement of the Prophet (s), and are equivalent to subjecting a believer to torture, reviling him, and divulging his secrets; each one of which alone is enough to bring about one's destruction.

Other bad habits which belong to the category of *nifaq* are: making gestures, allusions, winking, making signals with the eyes and so on—things that some persons do in order to mock others, whereas they pose to be friendly and sincere in front of them. One should be very cautious of his own state and be careful of his deeds and behavior, because the snares of the self and the designs of Satan are very subtle, and there are very few people who are able to save themselves from them. It is possible that one account of an inappropriate act of beckoning or an improper winking one may be branded as double-faced and double-tongued. Perchance one may possess this bad habit as long as he is alive and imagine himself to be morally healthy, sound and pure. Therefore, it is essential for an individual to take care, like a devoted and sympathetic physician, of his spiritual and moral health and constantly keep an eye on his own deeds and habits, and never fall short of his duty. He should know that none of the diseases of the heart is more concealed and elusive, and at the same time so fatal, than this disease.

Cure of the Disease of *Nifaq*

There are two ways of getting rid of this great evil vice. The first is to think about the harms that proceed from it, in the world as well as in the Hereafter. One should deliberate upon the matter that if he becomes known in this world for having this bad habit, he will be degraded in the eyes of his fellows and becomes infamous among his fellow human beings. They will avoid his company and he will be deprived of their friendliness. Moreover, he will fail to achieve any merit and to reach his higher goals. Thus, it is necessary for a man of honor and dignity endowed with conscience to purge himself of this ignominy that consumes honor, and not allow himself to be entrapped in its disgraces. In the other world, which is the realm of the unveiling of secrets, where things that remained concealed from the eyes of people shall not be hidden, there, he will be raised a deformed, ugly creature possessing two tongues of fire and punished along with the hypocrites and devils. Thus, it is incumbent upon a man of wisdom to get rid of this vice.

The other treatment, which involves action, is another method of curing the self. It requires the individual to be extremely vigilant regarding his acts and pauses, and that he should act deliberately against his base wishes, wage a war against himself and try to improve his self inwardly as well as outwardly, in deed as well as in speech. He should abstain from affectation, coquetry and dissemblance in practice and beseech the Almighty's help and assistance during this period to give him supremacy over his carnal self and its desires and to guide and accompany him in this undertaking. His mercy and grace towards His creatures are boundless, and whosoever advances towards Him wishing to reform himself, He extends His support to him.

If one perseveres in this for several days, it is hoped that the soul would become purified and the rust of hypocrisy and double-facedness will be removed. The mirror of his heart and his inner being will be cleansed of this vice, and will be ready to receive the favors and blessings of the Bestower. It has been established through rational proofs, and also confirmed by experience, that as long as man lives in this world, he is conditioned by the deeds and actions he commits, and every one of his deeds, the pious as well as the vicious ones, leave their impressions and effects on the soul. If the deeds are pious and good, they leave a luminous and sublime effect; if not, a dark and negative impression is left on the soul. As a result, the heart is either rendered bright and luminous or dark and gloomy, according to the deeds. He is

grouped with the good and virtuous, or with the vicious and corrupt. As long as we tarry in this house of action, we can freely steer our hearts in the direction of felicity or in the direction of wretchedness. We are hostages of our actions, about which the Qur'an says:

"And whoso doth good an atom's weight will see it, and whoso doth ill an atom's weight will see it." [99:7-8]

Some Forms of Nifaq

One of the forms of *nifaq*, is *nifaq* with the Almighty, the King of Kings, and the Bestower and the Nourisher, with which we are afflicted in this world but are not aware of it. Thick curtains of ignorance and dark veils of self love and the world have obstructed our vision in such a way that it is impossible for us to know our defects before the time of divulging of secrets and raising these curtains and veils and before departing from this world of nature and saying farewell to this house of illusion and this zone of neglect and stupor. Although now we have receded into a state of physical stupor and obliviousness, and are intoxicated by the attractions of physical life and sensual existence, which beautify all moral and behavioral villainies in our eyes, the moment shall come when we shall wake up and come to our senses, and realize that there is nothing left to be done, that we have lost the opportunity and have been branded as *munaḥiqun*, double-faced, and double-tongued, and resurrected with two flaring tongues or with two hideous faces. Then, even if we weep and wail, and yell out, "*Lord, send me back into the world.*" the answer will come, "*Never.*" Such will be the fate of our double-facedness.

If we are laymen, we boast of our faith in Islam, our sincerity of faith and our piety. If we belong to the class of '*ulama*' and jurisprudents, we pretend the highest degree of sincerity (*ikhlas*) and put forth claims to the *wilayah* and the *khilafah* of the Prophet (s). We imagine that the words uttered by the Prophet (s): "*O God! Have mercy upon my successors,*," and by the present Imam ('a): "*Verily they are my proofs...*," and all other statements of the Imams ('a) about '*ulama*' and '*fuqaha*', to have been spoken about ourselves.

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Ghibah (Backbiting)

"The Messenger of Allah (s) said: 'The havoc wrought by ghibah on the believer's faith is swifter than the one wrought by the disease of aklah in the side of his body.'" (Usul al-Kafi, Kitab al-Imam, Hadith No. 1.)

"He (s) also said: 'To sit in the mosque waiting for the (time of) prayer is worship, so long as one does not commit a misdeed.' He (s) was asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, what misdeed?' He (s) replied, 'Backbiting.'" (Usul al-Kafi, Kitab al-Imam, Hadith No. 1.)

The Definition of Ghibah

The *fuqaha* have offered many definitions of *ghibah*.

The blessed martyr and researcher, Shaykh (Zayn al-Din 'Ali) known as al-Shahid al-Thani in his *Kashf al-ribah 'an ahkam al-ghibah* says: "There are two definitions for it. The first one, which is famous among the *fuqaha*."

"It is the mention of a person in his absence, ascribing to him something whose ascription he finds detestable and which is generally considered as harmful (to one's reputation), with the intention of impairing (his reputation) and disparaging him."

"The second one is";

"Informing about something whose ascription to one is regarded as detestable by him."

The second definition is more general than the first, if *dhikr* (in the first definition) be taken to mean oral mention, as it is generally understood to mean, for *tanbih* has a wider meaning and includes speech, writing, narration and other forms of communication. But, if *dhikr* were taken to mean something wider than oral speech, as it does literally signify, the two definitions become similar. The traditions also suggest these two definitions, such as the one recorded in al-Shaykh al-Tusi's *Amali (Maajalis)* and narrated on the authority of Abu Basir:

"...In (the tradition about) the counsel that the Messenger of Allah (s) gave to Abu Dharr, may God be pleased with him, Abu Dharr is narrated to have said: 'I said: O Messenger of Allah, what if ghibah?' He replied: '(It is) to mention of your brother that which he detests.' I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, what if that which is mentioned of him should actually be in him?' He replied, 'Know that when you mention that which is in him, you have committed his ghibah, and when you mention that which is not in him, then you have slandered him.'"

It is narrated in *al-Majalis wa al-'alldhar* with *isnad* on the authority of Muhammad ibn al-Hasan from Abu Dharr from the Prophet (s) that in a counsel that he (s) gave to him he (s) said:

"O Abu Dharr, beware of backbiting, for backbiting is graver than adultery." (Abu Dharr says:) 'I said, Why is that so, O Messenger of Allah?' He (s) replied, 'That is because when a man commits adultery and then repents to God, God accepts his repentance. But backbiting is not forgiven until forgiven by its victim.'"

In the traditions narrated in *'Ilal al'sharayī', al-Khisal, Majma' al-hayan* and *Kitab al-'ikhran* the same or similar point has been made. If, one were to depart from the world indebted to others, his task would be very difficult. As to the rights of God, one has to deal with the Noblest and Most Merciful, Whose Sacred Being is free from hatred, enmity, and vengeance. But, if one had to deal with creatures, it is quite possible that he may get entangled with someone who will not easily forgive anyone or will not be placated at all.

Hence, it is necessary for man to be careful and pay due attention to these matters, for the danger of it is very great and the matter is of supreme difficulty.

In a sermon, the Prophet (s) spoke about usury and its great evil. Then he said:

"Verily, a single dirham earned by a man through usury is greater (in sinfulness) than thirty-six counts of adultery. And verily, more heinous than usury is (violating) the honor of a Muslim."

The traditions cited relate specifically to the subject. When the back-biter is guilty of other sins and vices—such as insult, humiliation, contempt and disparaging of a believer (*mu'min*), the revelation and counting of his failings, and his defamation, each of which is an independent cause of one's destruction—the traditions condemning them are overwhelming.

The Social Harms of *Ghibah*

This heinous vice and fatal sin is a destroyer of faith and morality, of the outward and the inward, which brings man disgrace and ignominy in the world and the Hereafter, has also social evils and in this respect its ugliness and evil are greater than those of many other sins.

One of the great objectives of the teachings of the great prophets (‘a), apart from being an independent goal in itself and a means for forwarding great goals, as well as being completely essential for the formation of a perfect society (*al-madīnat al-fāḍilah*), is unity of belief and creed and solidarity in regard to all important matters, and resistance to the unjust aggressions of oppressors, which cause the corruption of humanity and ruin the foundations of wholesome society. This great objective, on which the reform of individuals and society depend, cannot be achieved except in the shadow of unity, solidarity, mutual love and brotherhood amongst the individuals of society and the sincerity of their hearts and their inner and outward purity, so that the human race can come to constitute a single person and personality with individuals as its parts and members. All their efforts and endeavors have revolved around this one great divine objective and this momentous rational goal, wherein lies the good of individuals and society. Should such love and brotherhood be born in a race or tribe, it would dominate all other tribes and nations that do not possess this quality. The truth of this matter comes to light if we study history, especially that of the battles and great victories of Islam. At the advent of this divine faith, since there was a measure of this unity and solidarity amongst Muslims and their efforts were accompanied by sincerity of intention, they could achieve great victories in a short period. In a brief span of time they overwhelmed the great empires of that age, namely Iran and Rome. Smaller in number, they could defeat heavily armed armies with an endless number of soldiers. The Prophet of Islam (s) established the covenant of brotherhood amongst early Muslims and the relationship of brotherhood came to prevail between all Muslims on the basis

of the Qur'anic text:

"Indeed, the believers are brethren." [49:10]

Abu 'Abd Allah ('a) said: *"It is the duty of all Muslims to strive in respect of mutual relations, cooperation, kindness and charity to the needy and mutual affection amongst themselves, until you become as God, the Almighty and the Glorious, has commanded you to be (saying): 'They are merciful unto one another.'"*

Al-Imam al-Sadiq ('a) also said: *"Cultivate mutual relations, be kind and merciful to one another and be such true brethren as God, the Almighty and the Glorious, has commanded you to be."*

It is evident that that which strengthens this mutual love and brotherhood is desirable, and that which severs this tie and creates disunity is regarded as detestable by the Lawgiver and is opposite to His great objectives. It is quite clear that if this fatal sin were to become prevalent in a society, it would cause enmity, envy, hatred and hostility amongst its people and the roots of corruption will permeate it. The tree of hypocrisy and two-facedness will take roots, which shall grow and shatter the unity of society, weakening foundations of piety, which increase its corruption and repulsive character.

Hence, it is obligatory upon every pious and honorable Muslim, in order to safeguard his own person against corruption, to protect his co-religionists from hypocrisy, to preserve the Islamic society, to safeguard its unity, and to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood, to protect himself from this vice and forbid others from this repulsive act. And if, God forbid, he has been guilty of this ugly act, he must repent and—in case it is possible and there is no chance of vicious consequences—seek the propitiation of the victim and his forgiveness; otherwise, he must implore God's mercy for him. He must get rid of this vice and water the roots of sincerity, unity and solidarity in his heart, so as to be amongst one of the sound members of society and one of the vital spokes of the wheel of Islam. And God is the guide of all towards the path of righteousness.

* * * * *

Waswas (Obsession)

"I mentioned to Abu 'Abd Allah ('a), a man who was troubled by waswas in his wudu' and salat, adding that he is a man of intelligence. Thereupon Abu 'Abd Allah ('a) said: 'What kind of intelligence has he, when he obeys Satan?' I said: 'How does he obey Satan?' The Imam replied: 'Ask him regarding its cause and he will tell you that it is a work of Satan.'" (Usul al-Kafi, Kitab al-Aqi, Hadith No. 10.)

Exposition

You should know that *waswasah* (or *waswas*, pl. *waswas*); means satanic insinuations, obsessions and suggestions, doubt, lapse of faith, *shirk* and the like pertain to satanic insinuation and devilish promptings, which Satan puts into the hearts of people. So also, certainty, conviction, tranquility, steadiness and sincerity of the heart and the like are caused by divine inspiration (*ifadat-e rahmaniyyah*) and angelic suggestions (*ilqa'at-e malakiyyah*). To explain this with brevity, the human heart is a subtle reality that is adjacent to the realms of *mulk* and *malakut*, the realms of the world (*dunya*) and the Hereafter. One of the aspects faces the real of *mulk* and the (mundane) world, and it is with this aspect that it pursues the corporeal aspect of life. The other aspect faces the realm of the Hereafter, *malakut* and *ghayb*, and with that it pursues its spiritual (*malakuti*) life.

Hence the heart is like a two-faced mirror. One of its sides is turned toward the world of *ghayb*, and in it the *ghaybi* forms are reflected. The other side faces the world of *shahadah*, and in it the *mulki* and worldly (mundane) forms are reflected. The mundane forms find their reflection in the outward senses and some of the inner cognitive faculties such as *khayal* and *wahm* (imagination). The Hereafter forms find their reflection in the inward intellect and the inner core (*sirr*) of the heart. Should the worldly aspect of the heart preponderate and its attention be wholly absorbed by the pursuit of the mundane, becoming its sole concern, the hidden side of *khayal* becomes attuned to the realm of lower *malakut* (*malakut-e sifia*) which is the dark reflected image of the world of *mulk* and corporeal nature (in the realm of *malakut*)—the realm of the *jinn*, devils and evil spirits. The suggestions induced in it due to this attunement (with the realm of lower *malakut*) are satanic insinuations, which are the source of baseless thoughts and unwhole-

some imaginings. The soul develops an eagerness for these unfounded fancies due to its absorption with the mundane, and its will and faculty of decision-making also become subject to them. As a result, all one's spiritual and bodily conduct becomes satanic in character, as is the case with *waswas*, doubt, uncertainty, unfounded thoughts and hallucinations. As the will in its bodily activity becomes attuned to them, bodily actions too assume the character of the inward forms; for one's acts are the image of one's will, which in turn is the image of one's thoughts, which are a reflection of the heart's orientation.

Hence, when the heart is oriented toward the satanic realm, the suggestions it receives are of a satanic character, involving compound ignorance. As a result, *waswas*, doubt, *shirk* and ambiguities emerge from the inner core of one's being and pervade to the domain of the body.

In accordance with the same analogy, if the heart is oriented toward the pursuit of the Hereafter and the higher truths, its attention is directed towards the world of *ghayb* and it acquires an attunement with the higher *malakat*, the realm of the angels and blessed and pure spirits, which is a luminous image of the world of nature. The knowledge imparted to it, then, is of a divine and angelic character, as constituted by true doctrine, and its thoughts are induced by divine inspiration, being free from the contamination of doubt and *shirk*. As a result, a state of stability and bliss is created within the soul. Its desires and inclinations fall into conformity with that knowledge, and its will into conformity with those inclinations, and, as a result, its inward and outward, spiritual and bodily conduct takes shape in accordance with the criteria of reason and wisdom. There are certain stages and stations associated with these satanic, angelic and divine suggestions whose description is not suitable here. Some of the noble traditions, like the following one reported in *Majma' al-bayan* from al-'Ayyashi, bear out the validity of what has been said:

He (i.e. the Prophet (s)) said: "Satan lays his snout, which is like the snout of a pig, on the heart of the son of Adam, and instigates him to turn towards the world (dunya) and that which God has not made lawful. But when he remembers God, Satan slinks away."

A Simpler Explanation of the Character of *Waswas*

Having known, through the teachings of the '*urafa*' that *waswas* is the work of Satan, as mentioned in the noble tradition being expounded here, and other traditions of the kind, we are compelled to explain this matter in a way that is closer to the minds of ordinary people and more appropriate for them. Although the above description is in accordance with the rational and philosophical criteria as well as in conformity with the mystical experience of the '*urafa*', 'the people of the heart', as it is based on certain principles whose discussion lies outside the scope of these pages, we shall abstain from pursuing it any further. That *waswas* is and acts resulting from them are a handiwork of Satan, insinuated by that accursed creature, and that there is therein no religious or pious motive involved—although the person afflicted may mistakenly believe that he possesses it—is borne out by their being contrary to the laws of the *Shari'ah* and the traditions of the pure and infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

For instance, it has been mentioned in *mutawatir* traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) that the *wudu*' of the Messenger of God (s) consisted of single washings (of the face and the forearms). It is an established fact in *fiqh* that it is sufficient to wash the face, the right and the left hand each with a single *ghurfah* (handful) of water. There is, however, disagreement among the legalists concerning the permissibility of using a second *ghurfah*. It may even be inferred from the statements of the author of *al-Wasa'il* that he believed in its impermissibility or at least doubted its permissibility. Although some have held a contrary opinion, the permissibility of two washings is not open to doubt. There is a heavy preponderance of legal opinion in its favor and many traditions indicate its *istihbab*. However, it is not improbable that a single washing that thoroughly wets the parts washed is preferable. But there is no doubt that three washings—that is washing the parts each time in such a way that the parts are thoroughly moistened with water—is *haram* and a *bid'ah* that invalidates the *wudu*' when the moisture remaining from it is used for *masah*. It is mentioned in the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) that a third washing in *wudu*' is *bid'ah* and that every *bid'ah* is in the Fire.

In this case, the ignorant man afflicted with *waswas* washes the parts ten times during *wudu*', every time drawing water over the whole part washed most meticulously, or rather he first wets the whole part so well that water spreads thoroughly and a valid washing is achieved, and then repeats this

action again and again. On what criterion is his action based? To which tradition and to what *fatwa* of a jurist does it conform? Such a wretch may offer invalid *salat* with such a *wudu'* for twenty years and consider himself to have appeared to be most pious and pure in the eyes of the people. While Satan goes on playing with him and his carnal self goes on deceiving him, he finds fault with others and considers himself to be in the right.

Should something that is opposed to *mutawatur* explicit dicta (*nass*) and consensus of the '*ulama*' be considered as perfect personal purity and piety or a work of Satan? If it is something that is inspired by utmost godfearing and caution in religion, why is it that most of those obsessed by *waswas* and given to ignorant sanctimony do not exercise caution in matters where caution is necessary or preferable? Have you seen any *waswas*i who has *waswas* in dubious matter of a financial character? Has anyone ever come across someone affected with *waswas* who pays *khum*s five times instead of once, or goes to Hajj several times instead of once? Or one who refrains from food of a doubtful character? Why is it that the rule of *asalat al-hilhiyyah* applies in such cases whereas the rule of *asalat al-taharah* does not hold good even in a matter related to *taharah* itself? That, although in regard to things that are lawful there is greater reason to exercise abstinence in a doubtful matter as indicated by some noble traditions, like the *hadith-e tathluth*, whereas the case is quite the opposite in matters of *taharah*.

One of the infallible Imams ('a) used to sprinkle water with his blessed hand on his blessed thighs at the time of answering the call of nature so that any trace of splashing that might occur would not be visible. Yet this poor fellow, who considers himself a follower of this infallible Imam and follows him in the precepts of this religion, does not abstain from anything in matters involving wealth and its consumption. He eats his food (without any qualms about its lawfulness) by relying on the principle of *asalat al-taharah* and having eaten, cleanses his mouth and hands. While eating, his justification is *asalat al-taharah*, but after eating he declares that everything is ritually unclean (*najis*). Should he, in his fancy, count himself among the learned, he would say that I want to offer *salat* with real *taharah*, whereas the advantage of *salat* with real *taharah* is something that remains unknown and the *fiqaha*'—may God be pleased with them—do not know of it.

*Imam Khumayni's Will to His Son,
Sayyid Ahmad Khumayni¹*

Dr. A. N. Baqirshahi, Translator

[In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Beneficent. All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. May peace and benedictions be upon Muhammad and his pure Household, and may the curse the God be upon their enemies.

I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, He is One and there is no partner with Him. I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger, and 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, and his infallible descendents, may God's benedictions be with them, are his successors; that whatever the Messenger of God has brought is the truth: that the grave, Resurrection, Paradise and Hell are true and that God shall raise the dead from their graves.]

This is the will of an old father, who has idled away his life in vanity without making any provision for his eternal life or taking any sincere step in the way of the Beneficent Lord, unliberated from the captivity of satanic temptations and the caprices of the carnal soul. Yet, he does not despair of the favor and magnanimity of the Magnanimous Lord, and pins his hope on His pardon and grace, the sole provision of his journey. It is addressed to a son who enjoys the bounty of youth and is in a better position to purify his self and do service to the creatures of God. It is hoped that as his old father is satisfied with him, God will also be pleased with him and aid him to render service to the deprived who are the worthiest of the nation.

Ahmad Khumayni! My son! May God invest you with His guidance. Whether the world be eternal in time or not, and whether the chains of being be finite or infinite, all of them are dependent.² If you look upon the endless chains of beings with the light of intellect, you will hear the cry of essential dependence and need—in their being, as well as in their perfections—confessing dependence on the Self-Existing One whose perfections are Its own.

If, with the voice of intellect, you address the chains of essentially dependent beings and ask them: "*O needy beings, who is it that is able to fulfill your needs?*" All of them will cry out in unison with the tongue of primordial nature (*fitrah*): "*We are in need of a Being who is not needy like us, in Its existence as well as Its perfection.*" Moreover, even this *fitrah* is not their own:

*God's primordial nature whereupon He created mankind.
There is no changing in God's creation. [Holy Qur'an 30:30]*

The *fitrah* of *tawhid* is from God, and that which is dependent in itself (*faqir bi al-dhat*) cannot become self-sufficient (*ghani bi al-dhat*), such a change being impossible. Since they are essentially dependent and needy, nothing except Him, Who is Self-Sufficient, can remove their needs and poverty, for this poverty is essential to them and interminable, whether or not this chain be without a beginning in time (*abadi*) and everlasting, no other than Him can meet their needs. Anything that possesses any beauty or perfection—that is not (ontically) its own, is a manifestation of His Perfection and Beauty

*...and when you threw (the dust), it was not you that threw, but
it was God that threw. [Holy Qur'an 8:17]*

This is true of every action, utterance and deed. Anyone who perceives this and intuits this truth will not be attached to anyone except Him and will not ask of anyone except Him. Try to delve into this Divine flash in your solitude and whisper it into the ears of the infant of your heart, repeating it until it opens its tongue to speak and its radiance illuminates the corporeal (*mulki*) and immaterial (*malakuti*) domains of your being. Get attached to the Absolutely Self-Sufficient One so that you may dispense with all other than Him. See the triumph of *wisul* (communion) from Him that He may free you from everything including your own self, accept you in His presence, and permit you entry

My dear son, He, the Glorified and Exalted, "*is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden*" [Holy Qur'an 57:3].

*Is it possible for anything other than Thee to have any
manifestation that Thou lackest, so that it may manifest Thee?
When hast Thou been hidden so that Thou mayest need*

something to reveal Thee? When hast Thou been away so that it should be possible to reach Thee through Thine effects? Blind is the eye that does not behold Thee as being watchful over itself.

You were never absent, that I might want to meet You. Nor hidden, that I should have to seek You.⁴

He is the Manifest One, and everything that is manifest is His manifestation. We, ourselves, are our own *hijab*; it is our egoism which obstructs our vision.

You are your own veil, O Hafiz! Do away with yourself.⁵

I seek refuge in God, the Blessed, the Exalted, and plead with Him with entreaty and beseeching to deliver us from these veils.

My God, grant me total dedication to Thee and illumine the sight of our hearts with the light of Thy vision, until the sight of the hearts penetrates the veils of light and reaches the source of Majesty and our spirits get anchored to the threshold of Thy Holiness. My God, make me one of those who responds when Thou callest them and when Thou glancest at them they swoon before Thy glory.⁶

My son, we are still captive in the veils of gloom, and beyond them are the veils of light, and we, the blindfolded, as yet are held up in the bend of the alley.

My son, if you are not a man of spiritual pursuits try at least not to deny the spiritual and mystical stations, for one of the biggest tricks of Satan and the carnal soul, which obstructs the human being from achieving any kind of human and spiritual station, is to incite man to deny or even deride the spiritual journey toward Allah. This might lead one to regard it with hostility and antagonism, and, as a result that to develop that which was the aim of all the great prophets ('a), all the noble *awliya* ('a), and all the heavenly scriptures, especially the Noble Qur'an, the eternal book of mankind, will die before it

has any chance to grow and flourish

The Qur'an, the book of gnosis of God (ma'rifat Allah) and spiritual wayfaring toward Him has been consigned to neglect and misinterpreted by those ignorant of its path. It fell prey to misleading views and subjective opinions so emphatically prohibited by the Imam ('a). Everyone interpreted it according to his own personal caprice. This mighty book was revealed in the gloomiest of environments and in an era inhabited by the most backward of people. It was revealed to the divine heart of a man who was living in the same society. There are truths and teachings in this book that had no precedent in the world, to say nothing about the environment in which it was revealed. This is its greatest and highest miracle. It contains the great mystical issues which have no precedent in Greek philosophy or in the works of Plato and Aristotle, who were considered to be the greatest philosophers of those days. Even Muslim philosophers who were brought up in the cradle of the Holy Qur'an and who drew upon it, explained away its verses which explicitly assert the living nature of all beings, and the great mystics, who affirm such statements, also drew upon the Qur'an. No other book contains the kind of mystical issues as are found in the Qur'an. These are the miracles of the Noble Messenger who linked up with the Source of revelation that It imparted to him the mysteries of being, and who, standing at the apex of human perfection, sees the realities clearly, without any intervening hijab. At the same time, he is present in all the dimensions of humanity and stages of being, and being the highest manifestation of *"He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden."* He wants all human beings to achieve such perfection. It was painful for him to see that they failed to achieve such a station and perhaps the verse *"La Ha. We have not sent down the Qur'an to thee that thou distressest thyself"* [Holy Qur'an 20:1], makes an oblique reference to this fact, and perhaps this *hadith* also refers to it:

No prophet was made to suffer torment like me.⁷

Those who achieve such a station, or one similar, would never withdraw from the people and seek seclusion; on the contrary, they are charged to guide the misguided and to acquaint them with, and attune them to such manifestations, although they have met with little success. Those who attain certain stations and whom a sig from the cup of gnosis has put them beside themselves and made them swoon, though they achieved certain major per-

fections, they could not reach the ultimate goal. Moses ('a), went into a swoon by a vision of Divine manifestation but recovered by a special grace and was charged to do service. The Ultimate Messenger of Allah, by achieving the highest station of humanity and that which is beyond anyone's imagination, became the manifestation of the Greatest All-Inclusive Divine Name, and was charged with guidance with the order; "*Thou wrapped up (in a mantle). Arise and deliver thy warning.*" [Holy Qur'an 74:1-2]

My dear son, what I have pointed out—though I am myself nothing and less than nothing—is for the sake that in case you should fail to get anywhere, at least do not negate spiritual stations and the Divine teachings, but try to be one of those who befriend the righteous and the gnostics, though you may not be of them, and do not depart from this world with hostile feelings towards the friends of God, the Exalted.

My son, familiarize yourself with the Qur'an, this great book of knowledge, though it should be by mere recitation, and thereby establish a certain link with the Beloved. Don't think that mere recitation without understanding (*ma'rifah*) is useless. Such an impression is a satanic insinuation. After all, this is a book from the Beloved for everyone, including you. The letter from the Beloved is lovely, though the lover shouldn't comprehend its meaning. With such a motive, the love of the Beloved, which is the highest good, will visit you and, perchance, it may give you a helping hand. Even if we should prostrate all our lives as a gesture of gratitude for having Qur'an as our scripture, it would not suffice for thanksgiving.

At this stage, standing at the threshold of death and drawing the last breaths of my life, my advice to you who enjoy the bounty of youth, is that you select for friendship and company such persons as are free souls, committed to Islam and inclined to spirituality, those have no predilection for the world and its glamour and do not seek worldly possessions beyond what is ordinarily sufficient to satisfy one's needs, whose gatherings and parties are not contaminated with sin and who have high morals. The effects of company and associations are, inevitably, either beneficial or harmful. Try to keep away from gatherings which make one forgetful of God. Becoming accustomed to such parties may lead one to forfeit the capacity for spiritual

growth which is an irreparable loss.

Know that in man's nature—if not in every being—there is an innate and inalienable love of absolute perfection and love of union with absolute perfection. It is impossible for absolute perfection to be two or more in number. The absolute perfection is God, the Glorious, the Exalted, whom everyone seeks and loves passionately, though he himself may not know it due to being captive in the veils of darkness and light. Blindfolded, they imagine they seek something else; but if they attain any perfection, beauty, power, or station, they are not satisfied with their achievement and do not find in it what they were looking for. The powerful and big powers, whatever the degree of power they may achieve, seek further power that is superior to it. When the seekers of knowledge reach a certain level, they seek higher levels, not finding therein their real goal of which they are unaware. If the seekers of power were given the power to dominate the whole material world, including all the continents, solar systems, and galaxies and whatever is beyond them, and were then asked: *"There is a greater power than this and there are worlds beyond this one; would you like to possess those powers and worlds also?"* It is impossible for them not to have such a desire. Rather, with the voice of their *fitrah* they would say, *"Oh, how good it would be to conquer that too."* Similar is the case of those who seek knowledge. If they come to suspect that there is a degree of knowledge higher than what they possess, their Absolute-seeking nature will say: *"I wish there were and I had the ability to attain it or my knowledge could encompass it."* What satisfies everyone and puts off the blazing fires of the mutinous and insatiable soul is to attain to Him, the Glorious, the Exalted, and His remembrance in the real sense which brings about tranquility and satisfaction as it is His manifestation.

In the remembrance of God, do hearts find tranquility. [Holy Qur'an 13:28]

As if it were saying: *"Attention! Attention! Get immersed in His remembrance so that your wandering and perplexed heart, flying from this branch to that branch, may find peace."*

So, my dear son—may God help you to obtain peace through His remembrance—listen to the will and counsel of a bewildered and perplexed father, and don't attempt to make all sorts of efforts to gain position, fame, or

whatsoever is the object of your carnal desire, by any means. If you attain any position, you will feel sorry for not attaining a higher one. That will make you covet something that is above it and will bring grief and multiply your anguish. If you ask me, *"Why do you advise yourself?"* My reply is: *"Look at what is said, not who says it."*¹⁰⁸

These are true words, though spoken by a madman. In the Noble Qur'an, it says: *"No misfortune can happen on the earth or in your souls but it is recorded in a Book before we bring it into existence...In order that you may not grieve for what escapes you, nor rejoice in what has come to you; God loves not anyone who is proud and boastful..."* [Holy Qur'an 57: 22-23]. Man is subject to vicissitudes in this world, sometimes misfortunes afflict him and at other times the world may favor him, as a result, he may acquire wealth and social prestige, power and bounty. Neither of these states are sustainable. Let not life's shortcomings and adversities put you to grief in a way to exhaust your patience, for you should bear in mind that sometimes what is misfortune and shortcoming may contain that which is good and beneficial to you: *"But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you"* [Holy Qur'an 2:216].

Neither, let worldly success and achievement of that which is cherished by carnal desires make you lose control of yourself, prompting you to treat God's creatures with pride, for it may happen that what you consider to be good may be bad for you.

My son, that which is blameworthy and the source of all wretchedness, villainy, and destruction, and the mainspring of all error is the love of the world which is rooted in self-love. This corporeal world itself is not blameworthy, for it is a manifestation of God and His Lordship, the place of angels' descent, as well as the place where the prophets ('a) were trained and a place where the Truth was revealed to the hearts of the lovers of the real Beloved. Accordingly, if the love for the world stems from the love of God and the world is viewed as a manifestation of Him, the Glorious, the Exalted, then such a love would be something desirable and conducive to perfection. On the contrary, if self-love is the cause of loving the world, then such love would be the source of all error. Hence, the blameworthy world is within yourself. All attachment of the heart to anyone other than the Owner of the heart is detrimental. Self-love is the cause of all opposition to God and indulgence in sin, crime and treachery. All kinds of love of the world and its

glitter, including the love of social status, reputation, wealth, power, etc., arise in self-love. Although, by nature, no heart can develop attachment to anything other than its real Master, but the curtains of darkness and light, which make all of us oblivious to the real Master and make us mistake someone else for the Beloved, are *darkness over darkness*. We and our likes have not so far reached the curtains of light and are still in the captivity of the curtains of darkness. Those who have left behind the curtain of darkness chant:

My God, grant me total dedication to Thee and illumine the sight of our hearts with the light of Thy vision, until the sight of the hearts penetrates the veils of light and reaches the source of Thy Majesty and our spirits get anchored to the threshold of Thy Holiness. My God, make me one of those whom Thou callest and they respond, and when Thou glancest at them they swoon before Thy glory."

Satan, who defied God by refusing to bow before Adam ('a), was, in fact, a captive within the dark veils of his arrogance when he asserted: *"I am better than he: Thou didst create me from fire, and him from clay."*¹⁰ He was expelled from the Divine Presence. Similarly, so far as we remain veiled by self-love, egoism, and self-seeking, we are also satanic and exiled from the presence of the All-Beneficent. How difficult a task it is to break down this great idol, which is the mother of all idols.¹¹ So long as we obey Satan, we cannot obey God and submit to Him, the Glorious, the Exalted. So long as this idol is not broken down, those dark veils of *hijab* would not be lifted and removed.

First of all we have to know what is a *hijab*. If we don't know what it is, we will not be able to remove it completely or even partially. According to one *hadith*, once when a group of companions were in the presence of the Messenger of God (s), they hear a loud sound. They asked him about it. The Prophet replied: *"That was a stone that had started rolling fro the brink of hell seventy years ago and now it has reached the bottom of hell."* A short while later, they came to know that an unbeliever of seventy years had died.¹² If this *hadith* is authentic, then those of the companions who heard the sound should have enjoyed a spiritual station, or they were made to hear it through the mediation of the Messenger of God (s), for the warning of the heedless and as a lesson to the ignorant. Even if this *hadith* is not authentic—I do not

recollect its exact wording—it refers to the fact that we keep moving towards hell throughout our lives. Throughout life we perform our prayer, which is the greatest remembrance of God, the Exalted, with our backs turned towards God, the Glorious, the Exalted, and His House and face the temple of our ego. It is a matter of great regret that our prayers instead of being heavenly ascents (*mi'raj*) bringing us to Him and the paradis of communion (*liqa*) with Him, should lead us into the exile of hell.

My son, these allusions are not meant for the purpose that persons like me and you acquire the knowledge of Allah and worship Him as He deserves to be worshipped, because the most knowledgeable of creature concerning God and His right to worship and servitude has declared:

*We did not know Thee as Thou deservest to be known, and we did not worship Thee as Thou deservest to be worshipped.*¹³

This statement should make us realize our inability and perceive our insignificance. It should prompt us to regard our egoism and self-centeredness with reprobation, and make us set out to subdue this recalcitrant giant. Perchance, we may succeed in bringing it under control and getting rid of a great danger whose very thought torments the soul.

Indeed, that danger which may visit one in the last moment of life, while departing from this world for the eternal abode, is that of self-love and the love of the world with all its ramifications. Then, at the threshold of death, when certain facts are disclosed to man, he may find that God's emissary is going to separate him from his beloved, the world. Thereat, he would leave the world feeling hostility and resentment towards God, the Glorious, the Exalted. This is the consequence of self-love and the love of the world. The matter has been referred to in our traditions as well. A reliable and pious person once narrated to me an incident. He said: "*Once I was at the bedside of a man at the verge of death. The dying man said: 'No one has done me so much wrong as God is doing in separating me from my children whom I have brought up with great pains.' I got up and left and he died a short while later.*" Perhaps my wording differs slightly from that narrator's exact words. However, even if there is only a probability of what I have said being correct, the matter is of so great an importance that one should find a way out of this problem.

If we reflect for a while upon the beings that exist in the world, includ-

ing ourselves, we would come to know that no being possesses anything of its own. Whatever we possess is indeed a Divine bounty and favor which God has bestowed upon us either before coming into the world, or during the period of our lives from infancy to the end of our life-span, and even after death. Through the guides who have been charred to guide us, perhaps a spark of Divine love, of which we are bereft, may arise within us, enabling us to discover our insignificance and hollowness and find a way towards Him, the Glorious, the Exalted. Or at least that may enable us to be rescued from the infidelity of negation that makes one consider the denial of the Divine teachings and manifestations as a matter of pride and prestige, thereby remaining captive in the pit of egoism and self-love for ever. It is narrated that one day God, the Exalted, asked one of His prophets to show someone whom the prophet considered to be inferior to himself. Having found a dead ass, he drew it carcass a few steps, but soon was overcome with shame. Thereupon he was told: "*Had you brought it, you would have forfeited your station [of prophethood].*" I do not know whether this narration is authentic, but, perhaps, at the station of the prophets a sense of superiority—even to this extent—which signifies a kind of egoism and self-love, can bring about one's fall.

Truly, why did the Seal of Messengerhood (s), feel so much grief and debilitating anguish on observing the reluctance of the pagans to embrace Islam, so much so that he was told: "Yet perchance, if they believe not in this tidings, thou wilt consume thyself, following after them, of grief." [Holy Qur'an 18.6].

The reason is that he loved all beings, and the love of God entails the love of His manifestations. He was pained to observe that the dark curtains of egoism and self-love led the deviant into wretchedness and to face the painful torments of hell as a result of their own actions. He was a well-wisher of all, for he had been sent to bring felicity to all human beings. The idolators and deviants were hostile to him, though he had come to deliver them. If we succeed in producing within ourselves a spark of such love of God's manifestations, which is characteristic of the *awliya'* who are well-wishers of everyone, then we can be sure that we have achieved one of the stations of perfection. May God, with His mercy and grace and through His special blessing, who is the mercy for the two worlds, give life to our dead heart. Those who have understanding (*ma'rifah*) are well aware that one of

the characteristics of a man of faith is to fight the infidels and to be harsh with them, which is a blessing in disguise from God. With every moment of our lives, there is an increase in the punishment of the infidels and the wretched, both quantitatively and qualitatively, an increase to which there is no limit. Accordingly, anything that puts an end to the life of those who are beyond reform is a veiled mercy and a blessing in disguise. Besides, it is also beneficial for society, for a member that corrupts society is like the part of a human body which if not removed can lead the body to perish. This is exactly what Prophet Noah ('a), asked of God, the Exalted:

And Noah said: "O my Lord! Leave not of the unbelievers, a single one on earth! For, if Thou leaveth any of them, they will but mislead Thy servants, and they will not beget any but immoral ingrates." [Holy Qur'an 71:26-27]

And God says in this regard:

And fight them on until there is no idolatry. [Holy Qur'an 2:193]

With such a motive, all the punishments, namely, the *hudud*, *qisas*, and *ta'zirat*, should be viewed as a blessing from the Most Merciful for the perpetrator and society as well.

My son, with contemplation and self-suggestion try to look upon all beings in general and human beings in particular with affection. Is it not that the mercy of the Lord of the Worlds encompasses all the countless creatures? It is not that existence and life, and all the bounties associated with them, are part of Divine mercy and gifts? Hence, it is said: "*All that exists enjoys Divine mercy.*"

It is possible for a contingent being to possess anything that is its own, or acquire something from a being which is contingent like itself? Hence it is the mercy of the All-Beneficent which encompasses the whole universe. If God is the Lord (*rabb*) of the worlds and His lordship (*tarbiyyah*) is universal, isn't His lordship a manifestation of His mercy? Can mercy and lordship be universal without universal Divine grace and care? Accordingly, why shouldn't everyone and everything who enjoys Divine grace and care be

loved by us? And if we don't love him, is it not a deficiency on our part? Is it not narrow-mindedness and short-sightedness?

Indeed, I am now old and have failed to cope with these deficiencies and other countless shortcomings. But you are young and closer to the world of Divine mercy and spirituality. Try to overcome this deficiency. May God help you and help us all to remove this *hijab* and act in accordance with our God-given primordial nature (*fitrat Allah*). I have already touched this matter. Now, I would like to give a hint that may help you to remove this *hijab*.

We, owing to our divine nature, love absolute perfection. A result of this love is to love perfection in general, which in turn is the reflection of absolute perfection. One of the prerequisites of this nature is to avoid absolute imperfection, as well as lovers of His effects, which are manifestations of absolute perfection. Whatever and whoever we avoid and are hostile to is neither perfection nor absolute perfection, rather it is deficiency and absolute deficiency, which are opposed and contrary to perfection. The contradictory of perfection is its nonexistence. We cannot apprehend this fact for we are prisoners of *hijab*. If it be lifted [we shall find that] whatever is from God, the Glorious, the Exalted, is lovable, and whatever is reprehensible is not from Him and hence has no existence. You should know that there is a certain negligence involved in referring to such opposites.

Although the aforementioned issue is in accordance with metaphysical proof and mystic intuition and there are hints of it in the Noble Qur'an, but to believe it and have faith in it is not an easy task. There are many people who deny it, while there are very few who believe it. Even those who prove it through rational arguments hardly believe it. The belief in such realities is possible only through austere effort and contemplation.

The claim that it is possible not to believe certain facts based on rational proofs may seem difficult to believe or unfounded. But one should know that it is a matter of inner belief, and the Qur'an has hinted about it, as, for instance, in the noble verses of *Surat Takathur*. As to inner belief, [let us first take an example] You know that dead bodies are motionless and harmless as well. Even a single fly is more active than thousand of dead bodies. It is also certain that they will not return to life until the day of resurrection. But, few people can have a comfortable sleep if they have to spend a night alone with a dead body. That is only because your heart does not believe in your knowledge and you have no faith in it. Those whose profession is to wash

dead bodies are harmless, can remain alone with the dead without any fear.

Philosophers prove the omnipresence of God, the Exalted, with rational arguments. But as long as whatever has been proven by reason and argument does not reach the heart, it does not have faith in it and, therefore, one fails to observe the etiquette of the Divine Presence. In fact, those who imbibe their heart with the Divine Presence and have faith in it, though they may not be familiar with the philosophical arguments, but they observe the etiquette of the Divine Presence and refrain from whatever runs counter to the science of *tawhid*, are themselves a kind of *hijab*, and the greater such learning, the greater and denser is their obscurity. As we have observed and know very well, the prophets and the most sincere of the saints (*awliya-e khullas*) ('a), never employed philosophical language and arguments [in their summons], but appealed to the souls and the hearts of the people and imparted what were the conclusions of such arguments to the hearts of the people. They guided them from within their hearts and souls. One might say that philosophers and metaphysicians multiply the veils, whereas the prophets ('a), and the people of the heart, try to lift the veils. Hence, those who were trained by them are the faithful and the ardent lovers, but the disciples of the philosophers and those trained by their teachings are fond of argument and discussion, having nothing to do with the heart and the soul.

These remarks are not meant to discourage you from philosophy and the rational sciences or aimed at inducing you to abstain from rational pursuits. That would be a betrayal of reason, reasoning, and philosophy. What I mean to say is that philosophy and reasoning are a means to attaining the real goal, and they should not act as a hindrance in the way of reaching your goal and finding your Beloved. In other words, these pursuits are a channel and are not the goal in themselves. This world is just like a field of which the Hereafter is the harvest. Similarly, these academic pursuits [i.e. philosophy, etc.] are fields meant to yield a harvest, which is the ultimate goal, even as all the rites of worship are a passage to approach Him, the Glorious, the Exalted, *salat* (prayer) being the highest rite and the spiritual ascension (*mi'raj*) of the faithful.¹⁴ All these are from Him and lead up to Him. You may say that all good deeds (*ma'ruf*) are like the rungs of a ladder leading up to Him, the Glorious, The Exalted, and all the forbidden acts are impediments in the way of access to Him. The whole world, bewildered and perplexed, seeks Him and is enamored of His beauty. I would that we awake from our deep slum-

ber and move towards the first station which is that of awakening (*yaqzah*), the first stage of spiritual wayfaring. I would that He, the Glorious and the Exalted, help us by His hidden grace and lead us to Himself and His beauty. I would this vicious and rebellious mount of the [carnal] soul be subdued and leave off its rebellion. I would we could relieve ourselves of this heavy burden and ascend towards Him lightly. I would we could annihilate ourselves mutely in His beauty, like the moth that throws itself into the candle's fire. I would we could take a step at least in harmony with our *fitrah* and abstain from suppressing this *fitrah* so ruthlessly. And there are plenty of such wishes which obsess me at this age at the threshold of death, without there being any accessible means of fulfilling them.

Yet you, my son, make good use of your youth, and live in remembrance of Him, the Glorious, the Exalted One, in His love and in accordance with your God-given *fitrah*. This [constant] remembrance of God would in no way hamper your social and political activities in doing service to God's religion and His creatures. On the contrary, it will assist you on this path. Yet beware of the many tricks of the carnal soul and those of outer and inner satans who often mislead man in the name of God and in the name of service of God's creatures while they keep one from God and drive him towards their own desires.

The exercise of vigilance and self-scrutiny in distinguishing the path of God from that of self-seeking is one of the stations of spiritual wayfaring. May God help us on this course. The inner satan deceives us, old people, in one way, and you, who are young, in another way. He approaches us with the weapon of disappointment and indifference to the present, preventing us from seeking nearness to God and remembering Him, telling us that "*it is too late for you to improve yourself. The productive days of youth are past, and at this old age and in these days of weakness you have no power to improve your condition; for passions and sins have run their roots in all parts of your being. You are no longer worthy of attaining nearness to Him, the Glorious, the Exalted, and the opportunity has been lost. So it is better to enjoy the last days of your life as much as possible.*" Sometimes he uses the same ruses with us, the elderly, that he does with you, the young. That is, he may tell you that "*you are young, and this age is the age of enjoyment and rejoicing. Now you should follow your passions. There is enough time for repentance later in life. God is the Most Merciful of the compassionate. The*

more you sin now the greater will be your regret and attention to God, the Exalted, in later life and the firmer will be your attachment to Him. There have been many before you who utilized their youth and spent the last part of their lives devoting themselves to worship, prayer, and pilgrimage to the shrines of the Imams ('a), and taking recourse in their intercession (shafa'ah). Finally, they left the world in a state of felicity." Another temptation of old people like us is that [we tell ourselves]: *"It is not certain that you are going to die that soon. There is still much time. You can repent at the end of your life. Moreover, the door of the Prophet's (s) intercession is open and the Master, the Commander of the Faithful ('a), will not let his friends to be punished. He will visit you at the time of your death and help you."* These and many such other temptations suggest themselves to man.

My son, now that I speak to you, you are a young man. Bear in mind that repentance is easier for the young and inner reform and self-purification can occur rapidly, whereas in old age desires, ambition, love of wealth and self-conceit are stronger than in the youth whose spirit is finer and flexible. Egoism and the love of the world are not so strong in the youth as they are in the elderly. Young people can deliver themselves from the grip of the carnal soul more easily and incline towards spirituality. In sessions of moral advice and exhortation youths are more influenced than the elderly. The youth should beware of satanic and sensual temptations. The old and the young are alike, near to death. What young person can be certain of reaching old age? Who is immune to the vicissitudes of fate? [In fact] the young are more prone to ordinary accidents.

My son, don't lose this opportunity and reform yourself while you are young. Old people should also know that as long as they are in this world, they have the chance to compensate for their wrongdoings and sins. If they depart from this world, then there will be no chance [for any improvement]. Banking upon the intercession of the *awliya'* ('a), with the temerity to indulge in sin is the result of one of the major satanic delusions. Look at the condition of those who banked upon the intercession of the *awliya'* ('a) and dared to commit sin and became unmindful of God. Look at their cries, lamentations, and supplications and take a lesson from them. According to one tradition, Imam Sadiq ('a), called all of his relatives and family members in the last days of his life and told them something to this effect. *"Tomorrow when you go before God, go along with your works. Don't imagine that*

your kinship with me will be of any avail. " Moreover, it is possible those who benefit from such intercession are those who succeed in establishing a spiritual bond with the intercessors and their relationship with God is such as to qualify them to attain intercession. Those who fail to attain such a bond after undergoing purification as a result of severe torments in the purgatory (*barzakh*) and even in hell, and only God know how long they will last. Besides, there are some verses in the Qur'an referring to the issue of intercession that leave no room for complacency. God says: *"Who is it that can intercede with Him except with His permission?"* [Holy Qur'an 2:255]. And He also says: *"And they offer no intercession except for those with whom He is well pleased."* [Holy Qur'an 21:28]. There are other verses of this kind. Although there is intercession but the question is who is eligible to benefit from it and which group, under what conditions at what time? These are matters that leave no room for being conceited and dauntless. We do hope for intercession but such a hope should lead us to obedience of God, not into sin and wrongdoing.

My son, try not to depart from this world with people having claims against you for violating their rights, for that will land you in great difficulty. We can settle our matter with God, Who is the Most Merciful of the merciful, more easily than with the people. I take refuge in God from the trouble you, I, and all the faithful may have to face in the matter of people's rights, especially in our conduct *vis-a-vis* the destitute. That does not mean that you should be unmindful and careless regarding sin and the rights of God. If we take into view the literal meanings of certain verses of the Qur'an, the hardships of the sinful shall be great and their deliverance through intercession will take place after long and drawn out stages.

The incarnation of moral dispositions, deeds, and their characteristics and their association with man from the time of death until the Major Resurrection and thereafter until liberation from them and their dissociation from man through hardship and punishment in the purgatories and hell, and the impossibility of establishing any contact with the intercessors and benefiting from intercession — these are matters whose very possibility is sufficient to break one's back and to make the faithful think over it seriously and set out to reform themselves. None can claim with certainty that the opposite of this is true unless the devil of the carnal soul dominates him in such a way as to block the path of truth for him, by prompting him to deny the distinction between black and white. There are many such inwardly blind people. May

God protect us from the evil of our selves.

My counsel to you, my son, is not to miss the opportunity. Endeavor to improve your condition in respect of morals and character, though it may entail undergoing hardship and mortification. Try to reduce your attachment to the transitory world. Whenever you reach a crossroad, follow the path of truth and avoid falsehood, driving of the devil of the carnal soul from yourself.

Among important matters that are necessary for me to mention in this will is that assist the servants of God, especially the deprived and the needy, who are usually wronged and shelterless in all societies. Dedicate all your effort and means to the service of the oppressed and supporting them against the oppressors and wrongdoers. Such work is the best provision for the journey [of the Hereafter] and the best kind of service to God and Islam. It is a matter of duty to involve yourself in social and wholesome political affairs of this Islamic government. It is a matter of Islamic, humanitarian, and national duty to support those who are at the helm of affairs and the officials who are loyal to the Islamic Republic. I hope that the aware and noble people of the nation will not neglect this duty. In the same way as they have been, and still are, active on the political scene, they would continue to be so. It is with their support that the Islamic government and the Republic were established and have continued to survive. Henceforth also, the present and future generations should support it and remain loyal to it so that it may survive and become ever more stable. All of us should bear in mind that as long as we abide by our covenant with God, He will support us, and in the same way as He has so far foiled, in a miraculous manner, the conspiracies and plots of the criminals inside the country and abroad; henceforth, too, God willing, any further plots would also be foiled by Him.

I hope the esteemed Armed Forces, the dear Guard Corps, the Volunteer Forces, and the rest of the military, security, and popular forces have tasted the sweetness of independence and liberation from the yoke of the world's big powers, preferring freedom from the captivity of the aliens to everything and any kind of comfortable life, refusing to bear the disgrace of dependence on satanic powers and preferring the honorable death of martyrdom in the way of God and in the battlefields of valor to any shameful life, following the path of the great prophets and the venerable Imams ('a). I beseech to God to increase manifold the enthusiasm and zeal, the dedication

and love of our men and women, the young and the elderly, and make them steadfast on the path of the great Lord and help them to spread Islam and its luminous teachings throughout the world.

My son, now I would like to say a few words concerning personal and family matters and end my loquacious discourse. My most important advise to you, my dear son, is to take care of your most loyal mother. One cannot enumerate the countless rights of mothers and one can hardly ever succeed in fulfilling their rights. A mother's night spent in the care of her child has a greater worth than years of the life of a committed father. The kindness and compassion embodied in the shining eyes of a mother are a spark of the compassion and mercy of the Lord of the Worlds. God, the Blessed, the Exalted, has infused the hearts and souls of mothers with His own compassion and care in a way that is beyond description and which none can appreciate except the mothers themselves. It is owing to His eternal compassion that mothers, firm like the Divine Throne (*'arsh*) itself, possess the strength to bear the pains and troubles of motherhood from the time of conception and through the period of pregnancy, childbirth, the cares of the years of infancy and all along life—things which fathers are unable to bear even for a night. That which is stated in the *hadith* that "*paradise lies beneath the feet of the mothers*"¹⁵ is a reality, and it has been expressed in this graceful manner to emphasize its great importance and to remind the children to seek felicity and paradise in the dust beneath the feet of the mothers, to bear in mind that paying respect to the mother is like venerating God, and that one should seek God's good pleasure in the pleasure of the mother. Although all mothers are exemplary, some of them possess certain special qualities. I have some memories of your esteemed mother of the way she devoted her days and nights to bring up her children. I have seen in her these valuable qualities. I advise you and the rest of my children to try their best to serve her and seek her satisfaction after my death and keep her as pleased as I now see her pleased with all of you. Try your best to serve her while I live and take greater care of her after me.

I advise you, my son, Ahmad, to treat your relatives and family members, especially your sisters, nephews, and nieces with kindness and affec-

tion, sincerity and self-denial. My last council to all of my children is to be unanimous in all their matters, to treat each other kindly and lovingly, and to follow the path of God and service to His deprived creatures, for it will be to your good in this world and the Hereafter. I advise, Husayn, the apple of my eye, not to neglect the study of the religious sciences, not to waste the gift of talent bestowed upon him by God, to treat his mother and sister with love and kindness, to despise worldly gain, and to follow the right path of servitude in his youth.

The last advice of mine to Ahmad is to bring up and train his children properly, acquaint them with dear Islam from their childhood years, to respect their kind and revered mother, and be at the service of all his relatives. God's salute to all the righteous. I request all my relatives, in particular my children, to pardon me for my faults and shortcomings in relation to them, to forgive any injustice that I may have committed towards them, and to seek God's forgiveness and mercy for me. Indeed, He is the Most Merciful of the merciful. I implore God, the Munificent, to help my relatives on the path of felicity and steadfastness and to envelop them with His all-inclusive compassion, to give power to Islam and Muslims, and to cut the hands of the *mustakbirin* and the oppressive big powers from wrongdoing.

Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khomeyni

Wednesday, Ordibehesht 8, 1361

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Endnotes:

1. This will (*wasiyyah*) is dated 8 Ordibehesht 1361 (April 28, 1982). It was first published in the summer of 1371 (1992) by Mu'awenat-e Farhang-i Hunari-ye Bunyad-e Shahid-e Inghelab-e Islami (The Directorate of Arts and Culture of the Islamic Revolution Martyrs' Foundation). Tehran.
2. For *faqir*, lit. poor, needy, i.e., in respect of their being.
3. The Supplication of Imam Husayn ('a) on the day of 'Arafah, see Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qasbi, *Mafatih al-jawab*.
4. Faruqi Bustami, *Divan-e Faruqi Bustami*.
5. Hafiz, *Divan-e Hafiz*.
6. 'Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 91, p. 99.
7. 'Ali al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-'ummah*, vol. II, tradition no. 32161.
8. Al-'Arusi, *Chaur al-hukam*, Chapter 20, hadith no. 11.
9. See note 6.

10. Holy Qur'an, 7:12.
11. As Rumi says, "*The mother of all idols is the idol of your soul, for those idols are snakes and this one is a dragon.*"
12. 'Allamah Majlisi, *Ṭul al-waḡih*, II, 1002, maḡsud 4, baḥ 13, fasl 4.
13. 'Allamah Majlisi, *Asir 'at al-ḡayt*, "*Kitāb al-īmān wa al-kufr*", baḥ al-shakr, vii, 146.
14. 'Allamah Majlisi, *Ṭiḡāṭat*, p. 29.
15. 'Alī al-Muttaḡ al-Hindi, *Kanz al-'ummal*, tradition no. 45439.

Imam Khumayni's Views on Politics and Religion

Dr. S. S. Moosavi

Politics is the administration of the internal and external affairs of a society by a ruling party. While religion consists of a complete and comprehensive divine system which can secure the fulfillment of social and individual needs, and the needs relating to this world and the Hereafter. In its spiritual dimension, it brings to life the worship and submission before God in its followers, refining their morals and purifying their souls. Similarly, in its material dimension and social life it tries to ensure honor, might, power, justice, peace and stability and all that is required for a comprehensive prosperity for its followers. This is carried out by exterminating the workers of corruption and creating a secure social atmosphere in which all abilities are able to make their way towards growth and integration. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an states:

"Certainly We sent our apostles with clear arguments, and sent down with them the Book and the Balance that men may conduct themselves with equity; and We have made the Iron, wherein is great violence and advantages to men, and that Allah may know who helps His and His apostles in secret, surely Allah is Strong, Mighty." (57:25)

"...and to Allah belongs the might and to His Apostle and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know." (63:8)

"And when Musa said to his people: 'O my people! Remember the favor of Allah upon you when He raised prophets among you and made you kings and gave you what He had not given to any other among the nations.'" (5:20)

A look at these verses shows us that the relation between religion and politics is no less than the relationship between religion and worship. In fact, most of the Qur'anic verses deal with Islamic political issues, that is, the administrative affairs of the Islamic society under the sovereignty of a divine

government. In contrast, the verses on prayer are not more than 100, and the verses on fasting no more than 14.

Imam Khumayni believed that a non-Islamic government necessarily would not allow the implementation of Islamic laws. It is a duty of every Muslim to defy the non-Islamic governments in Muslim countries.¹

Muslims are duty bound to prepare a ground for nurturing pious and faithful individuals. The sway of corrupt governments over the Muslim societies would not allow the Muslims to do so. Therefore, it leads to the spread of corruption in the society. During the rule of Pharaoh, in ancient Egypt, corruption had enveloped the society. As a result, God, sent His messenger, Moses (Musa) to fight corruption.

When a system is corrupt, the citizens have two choices only: 1) joining the corrupt system and cooperating with it; or 2) fighting against it in order to establish an Islamic government. It is indeed a religious obligation of every Muslim to fight the corrupt political system. There is no alternative.²

Imam Khumayni was of the opinion that Islam consists of a set of laws which are meant for the administration of the state and implementation of the laws of the sacred path. The administration of state should be entrusted in a *walayat-e faqih*. He maintains that the Prophet (s) was not a mere legislator, but also an executive authority.³ Mere legislation of law would not guarantee the welfare and salvation of mankind. It is indeed, the creation and administration of the Islamic state which would facilitate the salvation of man.⁴

Belief in the formation of government is a component of *wilayah*. Hence, struggle to form a government is also a component of *wilayah*. It is the duty of every Muslim to struggle to set up an Islamic government.

God ordained the Prophet (s) to set up a government and implement Islamic laws. Thus, the Prophet set up a government, implemented Islamic laws and appointed rulers within the jurisdiction of the Islamic state.⁵

The need for creating an Islamic state was not limited to the era of the Prophet (s). It should be continued after his departure. Since the implementation of Islamic rules and regulations are an eternal necessity on the part of the Muslims, the formation of government is also its perpetual requirement.⁶

Imam Khumayni argues that the quality and nature of Islamic law (*shari'a*) indicate that they were designed for the creation of government and administration of the state. Imam Khumayni believed that Islam encompassed all aspects of human life: personal affairs, social, economic and mili-

tary and well as political aspects.

In order to depose a corrupt political system, Imam Khomeini advocates "political revolution". Although Imam Khomeini does not give a systematic description of "Islamic revolution", it is clear from his remarks and statements, that he considers Islamic revolution as a radical uprising against non-Islamic government in an Islamic country. It can be a violent or peaceful process while its final goal is the spiritual regeneration of man. To achieve this, the Islamic government should come under a *faqih* only. Imam Khomeini maintains that only the *fuqaha* can provide sound leadership for an Islamic state.

Indeed, the idea that only the *fuqaha* can provide sound leadership for an Islamic state is not exclusive to Imam Khomeini. Among contemporary Muslim thinkers, Rashid Redha of Syria also has expressed this opinion in his book on the caliphate. In his description of an Islamic state, Rashid Redha states that, the highest political position after that of the caliph is allotted to a respected elite, *ahl al-Hall wa l'aqd* (the people who loose and bind) who are the genuine representatives of the Muslims. Abulale Maududi of Pakistan also is of the opinion that such a government can only be born of a revolution.⁷ Muhammad al-Ghazzali of Egypt believes that the implementation of some of the religious injunctions is impossible without the creation of an Islamic state.⁸

However, Imam Khomeini's indication of the rule of the *fuqaha* is much more forceful, and his demands upon them much more explicit and exacting, than anything envisaged by Redha or Maududi. According to Imam Khomeini, a *faqih* is not merely a benign dispenser of advice and consent, but a real wielder of power. However, for achieving this goal, the most fundamental prerequisite is to make the *shari'a* the incontestable and unique law of the land. The main difference between Imam Khomeini's notion of *wilayat-e faqih* and other Muslim thinkers, lies here. Rashid Redha and Abulale Maududi, in effect, had a relatively more accommodative approach towards secular laws. But Imam Khomeini believes that *shari'a* must be the only law of the land, and that legislation is allowed as a means to facilitate the enforcement of the *shari'a*.⁹

The most important contribution of Imam Khomeini to the issue of the Islamic state is his insistence that the essence of such a state is not so much in its constitution, but the special quality of its leadership. He maintains that:

*"Assuming power in an Islamic state is not a position and status, per se, rather it is a means for implementing divine rules and establishing a just Islamic state. If this means is not employed for doing good and achieving divine goals, it is reduced to a worthless tool. Hence, the faqihs are duty bound to use the government system for implementing divine rules and establishing a just Islamic system in order to secure the people. Indeed, wilayat-e faqih is performance of divine duty and mission...An 'alim who intends to implement Islamic rules must, therefore, have two characteristics: 1) command over the Islamic law and ; 2) justice."*¹⁰

Wilayat-e Faqih

According to Imam Khomeini,

*"Wilayah consists of government and administration of the state and implementation of the laws of the sacred path. This is a heavy and important duty, but not something which would create a spiritual status for its holder, elevating him to a position higher than that of an ordinary human being. In other words, the wilayah, of which we are talking, means government and implementation. Contrary to what many people might think, it is not a privilege, but a grave responsibility"*¹¹

Imam Khomeini believed that the implementation of some of the most important religious injunctions, whether defending the Muslim territory, collecting alms-tax, or applying the penal system, is impossible without the creation of a state.¹²

Imam Khomeini argues that creation of a state is not time-bound or temporary, rather it is a perpetual necessity. Since the possibility of violation of Islamic laws is always present, it is a permanent necessity to create an Islamic state in order to implement Islamic laws and administer justice. Hence, it is always necessary to have a *wali-e 'amr* (jurisconsult).¹³

The holy Prophet (s) was appointed by Allah to create an Islamic state. After the Prophet's (s) death, twelve infallible Imams ('a) struggled to continue his path. In answer to a question as to what was the duty of Muslims in the occultation of the twelfth Imam (Mahdi) ('a), Imam Khomeini says:

"It is a duty of any faqih who is just and has command over Islamic texts to create an Islamic state in the absence of Imam Mahdi ('a)."

Imam Khomeini further believes that if a competent person with these two characteristics creates an Islamic state, it is the duty of all the people to follow him just as the people used to follow the holy Prophet (s).

However, Imam Khomeini is of the opinion that a *wali-e faqih* has the same authority as the Prophet (s) had, but he maintains that a *faqih* can never attain the spiritual, divine status that the Holy Prophet (s) had.¹⁴

Imam Khomeini further believed that the restoration of Muslim unity, either through recovering Muslim sovereignty from foreigners or removing internal lackeys, depends solely on the establishment of a government having the real interests of Muslims at heart.

The ultimate goal of an Islamic state is the spiritual rejuvenation of man. In Imam's worldview, monarchy was not an acceptable system because it was in conflict with the most fundamental article of faith—the belief that sovereignty belongs only to Allah.¹⁵

The most crucial aspect of Imam's ideas on the Islamic state is his attitude towards the quality of its leadership. He maintains that this special quality can be provided only by the *faqihs*.

An Islamic state can be formed only when a *faqih* assumes the leadership of the state, i.e., the system of *wilayat-e faqih*.

Prophet Muhammad (s) was the seal of the prophets. Hence, the last prophet who completely imparted the Divine Message to mankind. The Prophet (s) was followed by twelve infallible Imams ('a). With the occultation of Imam Mahdi ('a), the twelfth Imam of the Shi'i, it is the social and political duty of the *fuqaha* to administer and rule the state to implement the laws of the sacred path. However, the leading *faqih* is not superman, but he must have two major characteristics besides general qualifications such as wisdom, deliberation, etc. These two qualifications are, command over *shari'a*, and justice as we mentioned before.

According to Imam Khomeini, Islamic government is the rule of law, i.e., divine commandments. Everybody should follow divine commandments. Even the Prophet (s), in the administration of an Islamic government, followed divine commandments.¹⁶ Therefore, a *wali-e faqih* should have a command over the Islamic laws and should be a just person also. *Wali-e faqih*

should be a jurist (*mujtahid*: a person who exercises personal judgement in *shari'a*). If a *faqih* lacks this capability, he would necessarily follow the canonical reasoning of others as a result of which he becomes dependent on others and will lose his independence in judgement.¹² Hence, he cannot become a *wali-e faqih*.

Moreover, a ruler of an Islamic state should be a trustworthy person. A person who is entrusted with the authority to administer and implement the Divine Law, should himself be a pious and just person.

Taking into consideration that the quality of *wali-e faqih* is different from other rulers, Imam Khomeini's doctrine of the *wilayat-e faqih* is predicated on a belief in the Islamic state as the best form of government.¹³

As a result of Islamic Revolution in Iran, a great change swept over the previous regrettable condition of Islam. The Islamic revolution rescued Islam from an imposed deterioration and deviation, bringing it back to life. It was, indeed, a great disaster that the Muslim nations were deprived of the right of Islamic management of the society. However, after the revolution, Islam regained its proper station, at least in Iranian society, as an ideology that can provide guidelines for the management of the society. In fact, Islam had deviated from its main path and the real ideal for which the Holy Prophet (s) stood up and the Holy Qur'an was revealed. This was the most significant and apparently most intractable problem facing the revolution.

In the history of Islam there have been several religious reformists and resurgents who have risen to revive the religion and give a new credit and integrity to it. These reformists, however, never took up the banner of great revolution.

Perhaps only in the few years that followed the departure of the Holy Prophet (s), Islam was in the scene of people's daily life. Afterwards, Islam did not have a presence in Muslim societies in its true sense.

The idea of separating religion from politics, in fact, became tangible and palpable in the aftermath of the collapse of the church as a politico-religious establishment in Europe. The conjunction of state and church in Medieval times and its terrible consequences, in effect, laid the very foundation for the separation of religion and politics. Under the circumstances, Muslims too, due to mischievous propagation, acknowledged the idea. By and by, the Muslim intelligentsia, the masses, and even the clergy came to a conclusion that there could not be any conjunction between religion and politics.

The colonial period changed the historical situation for Islam and Muslims in a fundamental way. Though the Muslim civilization, before the colonial period, had been on a course of deviation and decline, it was still possible to trace its origin back to the roots of Islam. The colonial period led to the destruction of institutions as well as the men and traditions that sustained them. During the colonial era, a new breed of institution was created in the Islamic countries where a new breed of Westernized rulers governed and ruled. Neither the post-colonial institutions nor the new rulers belonged to the mainstream of Islamic history.

In Iran, alone, the Islamic movement, under the leadership of Imam Khomeini, succeeded in mobilizing the Muslims to overthrow the post-colonial regime and set up an Islamic system.

Realizing that the idea of separating religion from politics would, in the long term reduce Islam into a passive religion, Imam Khumayni, in his book, *Wilayat-e Faqih* (The Guardianship of Jurisconsult), wrote:

*"After the spread of Islam to Europe, the colonial powers realized that true Islam was a serious hindrance in the way of their plans to dominate the Orient. They, too, realized that they could not win over the genuine Muslim clergyman. Therefore, they tried to tarnish the image of the clergy and undermine the power of Islam."*¹⁸

Indeed, Imam Khumayni's approach to all political issues stemmed from his religious perceptions. He was of the opinion that the clergy must actively participate in political affairs. With regard to the idea of separating religion from politics, Imam Khumayni wrote:

*"In order to dominate the Muslim countries, the colonial powers tried to impose the idea that people needed the clergy merely to organize prayers. They also tried to spread the idea that religion had nothing to do with politics. Further, they tried to inculcate in the minds of Muslims that religion should be kept separate from politics. They argued: 'religion belongs to the clergy and politics is our concern.' Hence, they argued that centers of politics belong to them and mosques belong to the clergy."*¹⁹

Even Imam Khumayni's opposition to Zionism was not merely a political stance. He considered Zionism as an ideological threat to the very foun-

dation of Islam. He wrote about this:

*"...the Islamic movement in its embryonic stages, faced the Jewish anti-Islamic propagation. The Jews first began their intellectual conspiracy against Islam and later on launched an anti-Islamic propagation which has continued through the ages."*²¹

Regarding the genesis and formation of Israel, Imam Khomeini believed that:

*"Israel was given birth with the collusion and coalition of the Eastern and Western colonial powers in order to suppress and colonize Muslim nations."*²²

In an interview with *Middle East Magazine* in 1978, (before the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran), Imam Khomeini declared that:

*"We reject Israel and will not establish relations with it. Israel is a usurping government and is our enemy. If we come to power, it will no longer receive any oil from Iran."*²³

Shortly after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Imam Khomeini, in a meeting with the leaders of the Palestine Liberation Movement, announced:

*"The victory of the Palestinian nation is possible through the unity of word and the power of faith. We condemn Israel, Israel is a usurper and the Arab governments must unite in order to cut Israel's hand off from their countries."*²⁴

Imam Khomeini, in order to prepare the ground for the liberation of Qods, suggested that the last Friday of the month of Ramadhan be designated as the Day of Qods. Such a proposal was not only made to save Qods, but also for the liberation of all Muslims from the tyrannical policies of global arrogance.

Imam Khomeini, on the occasion of the Day of Qods, said:

"The Day of Qods belongs to Islam and the day of the revival of Qods is the birthday of Islam. The colonialist plunderers must be revealed on the Day of Qods. Revive the occasion of

the Day of Qods every year. All Muslims should be saved on this day."²²

In a message concerning the Day of Qods, he observed:

*"If the Muslims got united, and if each of them poured a bucket of water over Israel, it would be washed away; and yet they seem weak vis-a-vis Israel. The problem is that even though they know this, still they do not resort to a sure remedy, i.e., unity and solidarity among themselves. Why do they not thwart the conspiracies hatched by the colonialists to undermine and weaken them? When shall this problem be solved and who shall solve it? The Islamic governments and the Muslims themselves shall thwart these conspiracies."*²³

Imam and The Satanic Verses

After the victory of Islamic Revolution in Iran, Islam emerged as an active and dynamic ideology in the international arena. Therefore, various conspiracies were hatched to either dispossess Islam of its potentialities or to eliminate it from the international theatre. One of the most conspicuous conspiracies for reducing Islam to the level of a mere hallow entity was the Zionist-led campaign of the British academy embodied in the *Satanic Verses*.

Rushdie's book was primarily a "feeler" put out for evaluating the degree of Muslim world reaction and then embarking on further plans and plots. That several publishers in the USA and European countries and even some of the Asian countries had decided to translate and publish the book, show that it has been a well-arranged conspiracy against Islam.

The Muslims soon realized this deep-rooted conspiracy against Islam. Protests began, initially, in Pakistan and India. Soon after, the Islamic world woke up and protests flared up on all fronts. The Muslim world's protest was crowned by Imam Khomeini's historical decision on the issue. Imam Khomeini issued the decree of death for the author, Salman Rushdie, as soon as he realized the conspiracy. The decree reads as follows:

**IN THE NAME OF ALLAH
THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL**

"To God we belong and to Him we shall return."

Holy Qur'an

"I inform the brave Muslims throughout the world that (Salman Rushdie) the author of the blasphemous novel "The Satanic Verses", which is compiled and published against Islam, the Holy Prophet (s) and the Holy Qur'an and all those involved in its publication, who are aware of its contents, are sentenced to death. I request the brave Muslims to quickly kill them wherever they find them, so that no one would, ever again, dare to insult the sanctities of Muslims. Anyone killed in this path would, God willing, be a martyr. In addition, anyone who has access to the author of the book but does not have the strength to execute him should introduce him to the people, so that he receives the punishment of his actions."

Wasalaamu-alaikum wa-rahmatullahi-wa Barakatuhu

Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khumayni

The decree received a very warm welcome from the Muslims the world over. Due to the worldwide support of the Muslim *Ummah*, the world arrogance realized the strength of Muslims as a united body. Imam's decree demonstrated a long-desired stage in the history of Islam, i.e., Muslim unity. In confronting Penguin's anti-Islamic conspiracy, the whole Muslim world stood on one side and the anti-Islamic forces on the other. We may draw several inferences from this historical event:

- 1) It uncovered the inclination of different Islamic societies towards unity and solidarity.
- 2) It demonstrated the power of Islamic faith in confrontation with anti-Islamic activities.
- 3) It revealed that the world arrogance has a deep-rooted hostility towards Islam if Islam assumes the role of an active and dynamic ideology in the society. Indeed, as far as Islam is an isolated ideology or a matter of

personal affairs, the world arrogance would like to encourage and even spread it. But, if it assumes its real role in socio-political affairs, it is considered a threat to the interests of these global devourers. This is why the world arrogance tries to eliminate Islam. As Imam Khomeini had observed, by publishing *The Satanic Verses*, "the world arrogance exposed its animosity toward Islam... *The Satanic Verses* is a well-calculated attempt for uprooting Islam."²

The Muslim World must realize its proper place in the emerging agenda of world politics. Communism and Socialism are no more counted upon as an ideological force at the international level. The Western world is facing a deadlock in the realm of religion and morality. Although the world arrogance tries to project a 'new world order' in which religion does not have any role to play. Still, it is an established fact that morality and religion cannot be eliminated from the face of the globe. Imam Khomeini believed that Islam was the only alternative to the perishing ideologies of our time. This is why he believed that religion and politics were inextricable in Islam.

Endnotes:

1. Imam Khomeini, *Wilayat-e Faqih*, Tehran, Mousasas-e Tanzom wa Nashr Athar Imam Khomeini, 1994), p. 26.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
7. Sayyid Abulale Mawlahi, *The Process of Islamic Revolution*, (Lahore: Maktab Jamiat-e Islami, 1955).
8. Muhammad al-Ghazzali, *Min hama na'lam* (Cairo, n.d.), pp. 55-59; English translation, *Our Beginning in Wisdom* by Isma'il R. al-Faruqi (New York, Oorngon Books, 1975), pp. 25-28.
9. Imam Khomeini, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-36.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33, 39.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
20. *Colonialism and Superpowers*, Dar Istejooq-e Raah as Kalaam-e Imam, Daftar-e Chahardahum (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1982), pp. 98-99.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.
22. *Palestine and Zionism*, Dar Istejooq-e Raah as Kalaam-e Imam, Daftar-e Nozudahum, (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1982), p. 24.
23. *The Islam Versus Zionism*, (Tehran: Ministry of Islamic Guidance, 1984), p. 35.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
26. *Ibid.*

The Nature of Moral Values in Contemporary Shi'ite Thought

Dr. A. N. Baqirshahi

To deal with the nature of moral values is the concern of moral philosophy, while moral philosophy is, itself, philosophically controversial in a way in which the nature of other areas of philosophy is not. In his article, *The Nature of Moral Philosophy*, Richard Lindley has divided moral philosophy into two parts—meta-ethics and normative ethics.

Whereas the latter is primarily concerned with how people ought to conduct their lives, the former addresses questions such as, "*Are there any objective truths of morality?*" and "*What is it that distinguishes moral reasons for action from other justifications?*" For most of the 20th Century, until the late 1960s, the prevalent view among philosophers, in the English-speaking tradition, was that moral philosophy is, like philosophy of science, really just a second-order activity.

First-order ethics, which were referred to, disparagingly, by these purists as 'moralizing', should be left to moralizers who would include in their ranks clergy, doctors, school teachers and politicians, but certainly not philosophers in their professional capacity. According to this view, the philosophers, as such, have no views about the content of moral judgements. Since the 1960s, perhaps in large part because of the moral crisis which befell American society in the wake of the Vietnam War, there has been a resurgence of interest in normative ethics.¹

The role of moral philosophers as meta-ethicists is to give a correct logical analysis of moral concepts. In his book, *A Modern Introduction to Ethics*, Milton K. Munitz says:

"The chief interest of such logical investigation has been focused on questions such as following given characteristic ethical statements (containing the use of the word 'good', 'right', etc., there multitudinous variants and opposites, viz., 'bad', 'wrong', etc.). How shall we construe the way in which such a statement is used? How, if at all, does it differ from other types of statements, e.g., the factual ones of ordinary

discourses or of the sciences? What kind of evidence, that is, what kinds of considerations or statement of what does the agreement or disagreement on ethical matters consist? How, if at all, is it possible to overcome disagreement in ethics?"²

The common assumption that underlies almost all traditional writing was the knowledge of what is good and evil. Contemporary ethical philosophy classified every theory about value into naturalistic and non-naturalistic categories. This division of ethics was made by G. E. Moore in his *Principia Ethica* (1903). Hume's treatise is referred to as he says:

*"In every system of morality which I have hitherto met with, I have always remarked that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning and establishes the being of a god, or makes observations concerning human affairs, when all of a sudden I am surprised to find that instead of the usual copulations of proposition, is, and is not, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an 'ought' or an 'ought not'."*³

The debate on the problem of the nature of moral values is as old as philosophy itself. There has hardly been a major thinker of any era of any tradition who has not discussed this problem.

The origin of this subject, in Islamic philosophy, can be traced to the period of Ash'arite-Mu'tazilite controversies regarding ethical predicates. Later on, scholars of *usul al-fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) also took up this issue at the philosophical level. 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i (1902-1981), the most original thinker of the contemporary Muslim world, inspired by the scholars of *usul*, particularly the late Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Isfahani, shed new light on this issue of Islamic philosophy. The outcome of his philosophical contemplation is the sixth chapter of his book *Usul-e falsafeh wa rawish-e ri'yalism* (The Principles of Philosophy and the Methods of Realism).

Murtada Mutahhari, a pupil of 'Allamah Tabataba'i, wrote detailed explanatory notes in this book, adding his own views in the form of critical comments on 'Allamah's views. He appears to disagree with his teacher on certain basic points regarding certain moral issues. Let us follow up the debate first by making a distinction between speculative wisdom and practical wisdom in Islamic philosophy.

The distinction between speculations about the nature of reality and discussions about the norms of human conduct have always been recognized, the former called 'speculative wisdom' while the latter is 'practical wisdom'.

It is not possible to bring the principles of practical wisdom under the study of reality, for speculative wisdom addresses things as they are while practical wisdom addresses man's actions as they ought to be.

In the texts of Muslim thinkers too, speculative reason and practical reason are regarded as two different types of human faculties, but they did not discuss in detail their features and differences. However, they did suggest that the former faculty is inherent in the self which, by means of it, attempts to discover the external world; whereas the latter consists of a series of perceptions controlled by the self which is the administrator of the body.⁴

Early Muslim philosophers defined justice in terms of freedom. Since the self fails to attain speculative perfection without the proper use of the body, the self ought to establish a balance between those two faculties in order to utilize the body justly. The faculty which establishes such a balance between the self and body is an efficient or active force. In case the balance is attained, self is not dominated by body, contrarily body will be subordinated to self. They considered justice to be a kind of coordination between body and the self in which body is controlled by self and self is kept in check by body.⁵

Although Ibn Sina (980-1030), accepted the distinction between speculative and practical wisdom and dealt with these issues in detail, yet there exists some ambiguity in his approach to practical reason as the self's faculty of perception. One is the faculty of perception used in speculative sciences and the other is the faculty used in practical sciences. But others, like Mulla Hadi Sabzawar (1833-1910), hold that the term 'reason' is used for both theoretical and practical aspects of the perceptive or cognitive faculty. It can be maintained that it is an efficient faculty capable only of action.⁶

'Allamah Tabataba'i's Ethical Views and Mutahhari's Critique

'Allamah Tabataba'i maintained that whatever we ascribe to practical wisdom is connected with the world of norms or non-fictional ideas, which comprise commands and prohibitions and all those notions which are dealt

with in *'ilm al 'usul*. In other words, it is the domain of the 'ought'. Regarding the concept of 'ought' he says: "*Nature has in itself some ends towards which it moves.*" In the domain of inert things, plants, animals, and man, all activities so far as they fall in the domain of instinct, it is nature that moves towards its goal. There is a set of acts at the human level which takes place by the means of volition and contemplation. In such acts, man has his own objectives which are attained by voluntary acts. These ends are also the ends of nature, nature cannot achieve them directly, but only through the agency of man's will and thought. It is here that a need for 'ought' or values arises and comes into existence automatically.

For example, man's nature, like that of plants, needs food; but he should acquire it by means of volition and contemplation. Unlike plants, which acquire food directly through roots, and animals which are attracted towards food instinctively, man seeks it by conscious volition and effort. Here 'Allamah says that instinct is not defined in precise forms so far. Man is unaware that the system of nature uses him as its instrument in order to achieve its goals. Man innately possesses some systems: the system of nature as well as the system of choice and will. The latter is subject to the former. The natural end is reflected in the form of a need or desire in man's soul (e.g. inclination towards food). 'Allamah concludes that at the back of every voluntary act there is a hidden command of nature as to 'what one ought to do' or 'what one ought not to do.' It is this very 'ought to' which motivates a person to move towards his natural objective.

Mutahhari comments that 'Allamah has probably reduced all willed acts to idea or values. He also compares 'Allamah's view with the moral theory of Bertrand Russell. Surprisingly, 'Allamah Tahataba'i, without having read Russell, developed a theory similar to that of his, 40 years ago, probably at the same time when Russell was developing his moral philosophy.⁷

Russell, in *A History of Western Philosophy*, elaborates his view in the context of his analysis of Plato's view regarding ethics. He says that according to Plato, practical wisdom and speculative wisdom are identical. He holds that morality means that man should desire the good and the good is independent of the self; therefore, good is cognizable, such as the objects of the study of mathematics or medicine, which are independent of the human mind.⁸ Russell points out:

*"Plato is convinced that there is 'the good' and its nature can be ascertained; when people disagree about it, one is making an intellectual error, just as much as if the disagreement were a scientific one on some matter of fact."*⁶

Russell himself holds that 'good' or 'bad' are relative terms whose meaning is determined by man's relation to things or objects. When we have a goal to achieve, we say "it is good." Hence it is wrong to hold that 'good' is an objective quality inherent in the nature of a thing like whiteness or roundness. Mutahhari concludes from this discussion that 'goodness' and 'badness' are not concrete and objective qualities of objects that can be discovered like other natural things. In his view, if one treats moral issues like the object of scientific study, it may be asked as to whether such norms are mutable or whether there are two types of norms, one changeable and the other permanent. On this issue, Mutahhari's view is opposed to that of Western philosophers. Incidentally, 'Allamah is of the view that values are of two kinds mutable and immutable. He has given the example of justice and cruelty, and said that the goodness of justice and the badness of cruelty are self evident. There are, hence, some values which are immutable, while there are other values which change with time.¹⁰

It is, of course, indispensable that some 'oughts' are related to particular individuals. For example, if one needs a certain kind of education, he might say, "I ought to study this subject." While another who does not need that education says, "I ought to study some other subject." Accordingly, individual and particular 'oughts' are relative.¹¹

An important question in ethics is, "Is there any universal and absolute 'ought' which is generally shared by all human beings?" Mutahhari says that in case there is such an 'ought', as every 'ought' is directed towards some goal, we have to ascertain if there is such a common goal that may be the basis of the universality of values. If we could prove such universality and eternity of values, we shall have to accept that they originate in an abstract self, and that man is not confined to physical nature only.¹²

'Allamah Tabataba'i holds that animate beings and inanimate things are different in terms of their movement towards their objectives, i.e. inanimate things move towards their end in one direction alone which is predetermined. Nature, in the course of its normal movement, is equipped with the means through which it moves towards its goal. Animate beings also, in

respect of their physical being (not as mental and rational beings), in their own world move directly towards their end. But, as the laws and means of nature do not suffice to direct animate beings towards their desired goals, they employ their mental and perceptual faculties also to achieve their ends. In fact, there emerges a kind of harmony between physical nature (which is unconscious) and mental processes which enable a being, possessing consciousness, to attain the end desired by nature. Consciousness directs a being to move towards certain other ends also, which are supposed to be different from the ends of nature. Man may imagine that the harmony between the movements towards natural and willed ends is accidental, but according to 'Allamah there is a kind of 'preestablished harmony' between the physical and mental processes.

The natural mental make up of man and animals is such that as they perceive and conceive an object there arises a desire for it, and they seek pleasure in attaining it. In case they fail to do so they feel some pain. For instance, by nature man seeks pleasure and avoids pain. The past experience of pleasure in eating some food stirs his appetite for it, and he moves in the direction of satisfying his desire. This act is governed by particular mental processes, but at the same time it also serves to attain the end of nature too, for a body requires food by its own nature. Eating serves both the ends, the person takes pleasure in it and at the same time nature satisfies its need also. Hence, the questions arise, "Are these two acts unconnected with each other and accidentally occur together?" "Is it the natural urge to seek pleasure which requires certain natural means to serve it or is it the natural urge which makes a man feel pleasure in satisfying an appetite?"

In other words, it may be asked, "Does pleasure-seeking serve the end of nature or does nature serve the purpose of attaining pleasure?" It is difficult to decide which one of the two is fundamental and which one is secondary. However, Mutahhari holds that there is some kind of harmony between the natural and conscious ends, and this harmony is pre-planned and not accidental. Further, in dealing with this issue, he refers to Ibn Sina's view according to which the purposive movement is confined to conscious being only. 'Allamah says that nature itself pursues certain ends, so all the beings move according to those ends. Hence, all movements in nature are purposive, that is, governed by some ends. Man's intentional activity is also a part of the general intended scheme of nature. Mutahhari does not agree with this generalization made by 'Allamah.¹¹

'Allamah says further that one of the values is that of 'employment' or 'serviceability' (*istikhladam*), which is concerned with man's relation to his limbs and faculties and this relation is objective, real and creative. The power of my hands is under my control, which is a natural matter, that is, this power is naturally and congenially at my disposal. All bodily organs of man are owned by man and form an integral part of his being and are at the service of man. He says that all external objects may be considered to be tools for survival used by man. Not only inanimate beings and plants, etc., are for man, but even other men are also supposed to be at an individual's service.

In other words, all being, including men, who fall in the field of one's activity, are tools for a human being. Man, thus, extends his limited existence to the spheres of other beings. Mutahhari says that, according to 'Allamah, this human tendency or approach to other beings is instinctively natural, which is not confined to nonhuman beings but includes a man's attitude toward other men also. Mutahhari does not agree with 'Allamah and remarks that in this respect 'Allamah seems to agree with the evolutionists and accept the Darwinian principle of the struggle for existence. In Mutahhari's view, 'Allamah has used a more respectable term for the Darwinian idea. In the struggle for existence, every man uses others as his tools and makes them his employees.

Perhaps both 'Allamah and Mutahhari were unacquainted with Heidegger's similar notion. According to Heidegger's existential philosophy, all other beings falling in the field of human existence are tools or means of extending and developing one's existence. The quality of other beings as distinguished from human being is their *handiness* that determines how far they are useful for a human being. It is to be noted that 'Allamah Tabataba'i developed his principles of *istikhladam* in the course of about twenty years unaware of a similar theory being formulated by a European existentialist. Not only in his major philosophical work, *Usul-e falsafah wa rawish-e riyalism*, but also in his scholarly exegesis (*tafsir*) of the Holy Qur'an, *al-Mizan*, he had referred to the principle of employment on many occasions in the course of dealing with various aspects of human existence. Mutahhari seems to be more conservative on this issue, for his dubbing 'Allamah as a Darwinist shows his displeasure with the basic idea of employment of other human beings by individual human beings. Similarly, Mutahhari's rejection of 'Allamah's doctrine of relativism of certain moral values reveals his adherence to the Platonic tradition as well as the traditional Islamic philosophy.

Mutahhari infers the Darwinian principle of the struggle for existence from 'Allamah's philosophy in the context of his view that a man has to make adjustments with other human beings in the form of friendship and cooperation or through other means, so that he is able to survive in the struggle in which every human being tries to use other men as his tools. Mutahhari remarks that though 'Allamah has not explicitly pointed to this issue, his principle of employment leads to such a conception.¹⁴

'Allamah regards his principle of employment as the criterion of good and evil, right and wrong. Here two questions arise, "Does man have a natural inclination towards evil, or in other words, is evil inherent in his nature?" Mutahhari answers that from 'Allamah's viewpoint, every individual has a natural tendency to attain his own desired ends, which makes him treat others as if they were his employees to serve his ends. This tendency of not treating other men as equals to one's own ends is, in 'Allamah's view, nothing but evil.¹⁵

The other question is related to the possible identity of employment and the principle of the struggle for existence. Mutahhari does not say that both are identical but holds that since both of them lead to the same end, that is, an individual's growth (here, in the moral sense), they may be described as having a close affinity with each other.¹⁶

However, Mutahhari does not totally reject 'Allamah's views regarding man and morality. What he disagrees with is his generalization of the principle of employment. Mutahhari, while stating his own position, says that a distinction is to be made between inclination (natural tendency) and will. Animals act instinctively by natural inclination, while human beings act voluntarily. Mutahhari makes a further distinction between two types of human acts by adding the element of will to man's instinctive acts; man can refrain from eating food or certain kinds of food willingly though he has an inclination to eat them. Instinctive acts are passively done under the compulsion of nature, while in performing these acts, man's reason is suspended. Therefore, they are determined acts. On the contrary, voluntary acts are done under the guidance of reason. He, therefore, maintains that will is freedom. Man is free because he can act according to his will, and his acts are not determined like those of animals.

Mutahhari makes another significant point regarding the willed acts. He says that in his natural or impulsive behavior man is under the control of the external world, while in willing he withdraws himself from the external

world and internalizes his being to make a choice and a resolution. In willing, man recollects his being together while in acting impulsively his being is scattered. Regarding the question as to whether will is totally absent while acting impulsively, or it is only weak, Mutahhari says that will is there, but it is weak. With the increase in impulse, will weakens proportionately. He criticizes Mulla Sadra, Hadi Sabzawari and Ibn Sina for considering desire and will as one and the same thing. Though Ibn Sina occasionally made some distinction between the two, his criterion of demarcation is ambiguous.¹²

Here two other questions arise: "How can ethical issues be demonstrated?" "How can we argue as to 'what is good' and 'what is bad'?" 'Allamah is of the view that these are indemonstrable, for non-factual matters cannot be proven either by deduction or induction. We can only explain them on a linguistic basis, and that also would be a given situation. Moral values are not factual or objective matters. We can prove rationally or empirically ideas or theories concerning objective reality only. On this basis, he regards moral values as subjective and relativistic.

Practical philosophy is concerned with good and bad and these concepts are inferred from 'ought' and 'ought not'. These terms depend upon loving or desiring something or otherwise. In the matter of loving or liking, individuals differ from one another. Therefore, moral values which depend upon loving or hating some objects depend upon the individual's subjective attitude. Hence, they are both subjective and relative. Here it can be pointed out that 'Allamah is close, on the one hand, to G. E. Moore, who regards values as indefinable, and is closer to Russell, on the other hand.

Bertrand Russell is of those thinkers who arrived at the same conclusion in his book, *A History of Western Philosophy*. He analyzes Plato's view regarding justice in the following words:

"There are several points to be noted about Plato's definition. First, it makes it possible to have inequalities of power and privilege without justice. The guardians are to have all the powers, because they are the wisest members of the community; injustice would only occur, on Plato's definition, if there were men in the other classes who were wiser than some of the guardians. That is why Plato provides for promotion and degradation of citizens, although he thinks that the double advantage of birth and education will, in most cases, make the children of guardians superior to the children of others. If there

were a more exact science of government, and more certainty of men following its precepts, there would be much to be said for Plato's system. No one thinks it unjust to put the best men into a football team, although they acquire thereby a great superiority."¹³

At another place, Russell says:

"The difference between Plato and Traxymachus is very important, but for the historian of philosophy it is one to be noted, not decided. Plato thinks he can prove that his idea of republic is good; a democrat who accepts the objectivity of ethics may think that he can prove the Republic bad; but anyone who agrees with Traxymachus will say: 'There is no question of proving or disproving; the only question is whether you like the kind of State that Plato desires. If you do, it is good for you; if you do not, it is bad for you. If many do and many do not, the decision cannot be made by reason, but only by force, actual or concealed.' This is one of the issues in philosophy that is still open; on each side there are men who command respect. But, for a very long time, the opinion that Plato advocated remained almost undisputed."¹⁴

There are two points on which Mutahhari disagrees with 'Allamah Tabataba'i.²⁵

1. Mutahhari holds that we cannot attribute value-oriented activity to all animate beings as 'Allamah does. Consciousness of value is confined to man who possesses practical reason.

2. Mutahhari rejects the principles of employment as put forward by 'Allamah. His rejection of it is based on three arguments which he elaborated on in *Akhlaq wa jawidanagi*. On the basis of these arguments he proved his idea of the universality and eternity of good and evil.

The First Argument

Man has certain motives which serve to fulfill his individual needs and demands. Human activity is also stimulated by another kind of motivation which is called by Mutahhari as species-oriented motives. These are different from individual-oriented motives which serve the interests of the individual only. They may be connected with one's mate and offspring. The spe-

cies-oriented motive are general and embrace the whole of humanity. These are not confined to a particular environment, situation or time period. Because of these motives, one can place the welfare and happiness of his fellow beings ahead of his own welfare. These motives may be described as humanitarian motives, due to which one is pained if he sees another man in pain. This kind of motive may be also defined as gregarious or social motivation. He commensurates with others, he rejoices at their joy and grieves at their grief. Mutahhari says that if we accept the role of these species-oriented motives, 'Allamah's view is refuted, for he believes that man's natural mental makeup is in accordance with his natural and biological urges.

'Allamah considers his theory of employment to be applicable to all human beings as a general principle. According to Mutahhari's view this principle conflicts with our accepted criterion of morality. It is generally held that egocentric or selfish motives and acts are morally inferior, or rather evil, as compared to altruistic motives and acts. Morality liberates man from the confines of his selfish interests and is, therefore, universally applicable to all cases, times and situations. Thus he affirms the principle of universality and eternity of moral values. To the question "Why righteousness is good?", the reply is: "Because it fulfills the interests of all."²

The Second Argument

While Mutahhari based his first argument on the duality of motives, he bases his second argument in favor of the universality and eternity of morality on the duality of the human self. This view is similar to that of some contemporary thinkers who hold that it is impossible to seek a thing unless that thing is linked with one's own self. Whatever seems to be pleasant for the individual is ultimately accepted as good for the whole human species. Durkheim and some other sociologists argue, on this basis, that man has two selves: one is the individual self, while the other is the collective self. Man, from the biological point of view, is an individual, but from the social point of view he is a social being and has a social self also. Therefore, each man possesses two selves. Mutahhari, with reference to 'Allamah's writings, says that the latter also confirms this theory without being aware of recent sociological theories, and accepts that society has a real self which is not relative. The sociologists also attribute a personality and self to society, which is real, objective, and independent of individual selves. It is not the sum total of the

selves of its individual members, but something different from it. Every man is possessed of a social self along with his individual self.

Mutahhari here refers to the mystical doctrine of a universal self. According to the Sufis and other mystics, there is an underlying connection between human selves, of which man becomes aware when his self is purified. Sharing a universal self and realizing that through it all men are related to one another leads man to attain spiritual unity with the universal self.

Sociologists are of the view that society is constituted of individuals who have a common social or cultural self which is real. They saw that sometimes man's acts are motivated by individual motives, while on other occasions his acts are prompted by social motives. The individual and social motives belong to the individual and the social self respectively. The former is natural and biological, while the latter is collective. It is here that from the duality of motives sociologists infer the notion of the duality of the self. Arguing from a sociological viewpoint, Mutahhari concludes that any act which stems from the social self is regarded as morally good and is determined by a universal and eternal value system. Contrarily, any act that stems from the individual self is devoid of moral good. Hence, morality cannot be relative, individual and changing. It is governed by values which are universally and eternally valid.²²

The Third Argument

Mutahhari brings his third argument with the assertion that man does not do anything which is not related to the universe of his self. He refutes 'Allamah Tabataba'i's principle of employment, according to which human acts are imposed upon him by some other self. Elaborating this argument he takes recourse to the traditional division of human existence into two selves; one being superior (spiritual), the other inferior (carnal). Man is also an animal, and his inferior self is ruled by animal desires and motives. Morality consists in subordinating the animal self to the higher self. Whatever is done for the lower self is not moral. Moral acts have their origin in the higher self. Animal selves are subject to nature, while the higher self, which is universally shared by all men, is subject to a system of higher values. According to Mutahhari, the higher self is universal and the value to which it is subjected are also universal and eternal. He wonders why 'Allamah forgot to refer to this concept, though he was acquainted with it. He says that had he referred

to it, he would have accepted that moral acts are those which are done for the satisfaction of the higher self. In that case he would have rejected the relativistic doctrine of morality as well as the principle of employment.

Mutahhari also agrees with 'Allamah, Russell and others that good and evil, 'ought' and 'ought not', are based on man's love for certain ends and his dislike for other things. He asks, "but which self's love or hate is the criterion of good and evil?" He answers that if one says that it is the lower or animal self whose liking or disliking for an object is the standard of morality, he is wrong, for he negates the very spirit of morality. The interests of the lower self may differ from individual to individual, so there cannot be any universal and eternal moral value. On the other hand, if we believe that it is the higher self which is the basis of morality, we will have to concede that its values are universally and eternally valid.

Mutahhari says, at the end of *Akhlaq wa jawidanagi*:

"I would like to refer to an Islamic doctrine which is very significant for resolving the issue of morality, and is neglected by philosophers. That is, man has an innate nobility and excellency which may be defined as a spiritual faculty or a Divine spark. Every man unconsciously experiences it. While doing certain acts he contemplates whether they are compatible with his innate nobility or not. Whenever he finds an act compatible with it, he regards it as good and virtuous; if it is incompatible with it, it is regarded as a vice or evil. As animals know what is beneficial or harmful to them instinctively, the human self that has metaphysical virtues recognizes what is good and what is evil, what he ought to do and what he ought not... Human beings are created alike, so far as spiritual faculties and virtues are also alike, their views are also alike. Biologically and philosophically men may be different from each other and under different conditions their physical needs may also differ. But so far as the ability to attain spiritual sublimation is concerned they are alike and necessarily have similar likes and dislikes as well as similar standards of good and evil. All moral virtues, whether individual or social, such as patience, can be explained from this view."⁷⁵

Mutahhari concludes that the above quoted principle explains the criteria of good and evil and social and individual virtues, as compared to all

other moral theories discussed above. This principle also provides the most secure ground for believing in the eternity and universality of moral values. Mutahhari's moral philosophy has little affinity with contemporary moral thinkers who, in general, accept some kind of relativism. His moral philosophy is also not utilitarian. Though he does not exclude the human element in determining good and evil he cannot agree with certain western thinkers' views that regard all moral values as having their origin in human experience and social and individual interests. Morality in Islam has a Divine source and basis which is accessible to the higher self only. Mutahhari's moral philosophy is in conformity with the teaching of Islam and he has argued in the terms that are compatible with contemporary problems facing man.

Endnotes:

1. G. H. R. Parkinson, *An Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 517-718.
2. Milton K. Munitz (ed.), *A Modern Introduction to Ethics*, (U.S.A.: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 523.
3. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 469.
4. 'Abd al-Karim Surush (ed.), *Jawidanagi wa Akhlag, Yadnameh-ye Ustade Shahid Murtado Mutahhari*, (Tehran: Sarman-e Intisharat wa Amuzish-e Enghelab-e Islami, 1360 H. Shams (Iranian year)), vol. I, p. 384.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 385.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 389.
9. Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, (London: George Allen Unwin, 1984), p. 133.
10. 'Abd al-Karim Surush, *op. cit.*, p. 392.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 393.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 398.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 400.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 402.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 407.
18. Bertrand Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
20. 'Abd al-Karim Surush, *op. cit.*, p. 405.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 411.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 414.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 416.

Toward a Theology of Development

William C. Chittick¹

I had certain misgivings about accepting the invitation to speak at this conference because the announced themes and sub-themes presuppose certain ideas about civilization in general and Islam in particular that raise many questions for me. I am not quite sure, to begin with, how the organizers of the conference define the words "culture" and "civilization." It is clear that these terms are understood to have a value connotation. When they flourish, that is good, but when they languish, that is bad, what is not clear is how we are to judge when a civilization or culture is flourishing. What are the specific criteria for making this judgment? Certainly the language employed in the information that was sent to me suggests that the criteria are drawn from modern political and developmental thinking, all of which derives from post-Christian thought in the West.

My second misgiving about the conference has to do with my own interests in Islamic civilization. I have spent most of my adult life studying Islamic thought, with special attention to the school established by Ibn al-Arabi in the seventh century of the Hijra. This school, which was a continuation of the efforts of a host of earlier Muslim thinkers and was deeply rooted in the Koran and the Hadith, was profoundly influential in the thinking of most Muslim intellectuals down into the nineteenth century. However, it has been abandoned by almost all contemporary Muslim thinkers and theoreticians, especially those who have had a say in governmental decisions. Muslims who have formulated theories and ideologies for Islam have often condemned this school for leading the Muslims astray and preventing the progress and development of civilization. So how can my interest in this school be turned to the issues that contemporary Muslim thinkers consider as relevant to the development of civilization?

Having accepted the invitation despite these misgivings, I set two tasks for myself: First, to address some of the issues that arise as soon as we look at Islamic civilization in terms of categories drawn from modern thinking. And second, to suggest a few other categories that can be employed as criteria for judgment, categories that are drawn from traditional Islamic thought.

Development

Development language is strewn with pitfalls for anyone who wants to speak about culture and civilization. By "development language", I mean the well-known words that are current in the United Nations and governmental agencies throughout the world. I quote a list of these words from the table of contents of *The Development Dictionary*, a book that should be required reading for anyone who is not totally convinced that modern Western society provides the model that all peoples in the world must follow: "development, environment, equality, helping, market, needs, one world, participation, planning, population, poverty, progress, production, resources, science, socialism, standards of living, state, technology"²

All these words are part of the sacred vocabulary of the modern world. They share the characteristic of being what has been called "amoeba words." That is to say that they are constantly changing shape according to the needs of the speaker. They have no denotations but many connotations. They can mean anything their speaker wants them to mean, because in themselves they are empty of meaning. However, these words are sacred. To question their legitimacy is to rebel against the gods of modernity and to become an outcast from the religion of progress.

The authors of *The Development Dictionary* have analyzed the history and changing status of each of these words in detail. Let me make a few remarks about the term "development" itself, even though each of the mentioned terms, and many others that are currently in use, deserves detailed analysis.

First of all, it is perhaps unnecessary to point out that there is no word corresponding to "development" in the traditional Islamic languages, just as the modern meaning of the term only appears in Western languages in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The use of this word itself, or the redefinition of words in Islamic languages so that they carry its meaning shows that the idea of development was originally conceptualized by Western thinkers. Moreover, the late date of the term shows that the new meanings given to it were intimately connected with the breakdown of Christian civilization and with the industrial revolution.

The moment the word *development* is employed, especially outside the West, those who employ it have surrendered to the presuppositions of modern Western thought. To speak of development is to acknowledge "underde-

velopment." Hence, it is to accept that programs, modelled on those devised in the "developed" countries, must be put into effect. As Wolfgang Sachs', the editor of *The Development Dictionary* puts it, the use of the word has "converted history into a programme: a necessary and inevitable destiny."¹ The industrial mode of development has thereby been christened as the one and only legitimate form of social life. "The metaphor of development gave global hegemony to a purely Western genealogy of history, robbing peoples of different cultures of the opportunity to define the forms of their social life."² By speaking of development, Muslims have already given up the idea of understanding their own history in Islamic terms, since the term has been drawn from outside the Islamic conceptual universe.

Most people will object that nevertheless, we need development in our world. But what is development? Any study of the use of the word shows that, like other amoeba words, it has no precise significance. It is what you want it to be. The problem is that, although no one knows exactly what it is, everyone thinks that we *must* have it. As Gustavo Esteva writes, "The word always implies a favourable change, a step from the simple to the complex, from the inferior to the superior, from worse to better...But for two-thirds of the people on earth, this positive meaning of the word...is a reminder of *what they are not*. It is a reminder of an undesirable, undignified condition. To escape from it, they need to be enslaved by others' experiences and dreams."³ "No one seems to doubt that the concept does not allude to real phenomena. They do not realize that it is a comparative adjective whose base of support is the assumption, very Western but unacceptable and indemonstrable, of the oneness, homogeneity and linear evolution of the world."⁴

In order for "development" to be conceived of, God had to be forgotten, or at least to be relegated to the background. Since no religion has ever envisaged development as understood in scientific and industrial terms, religious categories either had to be abandoned, or to be redefined to fit the new circumstances. Suddenly, we had to discover that religion, all along, had been encouraging "development" in the modern sense.

The Divine Names

Let me now turn to a brief review of the Islamic perspective on knowledge, science, and human nature. The fundamental point that must always be kept in mind when considering Islamic views of things is that Muslim

thinkers have always put God at the head of their concerns. The fact that God plays a fundamental role in every human endeavor has been perfectly obvious. Hence Muslims focused upon understanding God and then, on the basis of this understanding, upon the role of human beings in the universe. Those who wanted to understand what it meant to be human had to understand what it meant to be God. "Theology" was utterly central to the Islamic enterprise, and I mean theology not in the sense of the discipline of Kalam, but in the widest sense of the term—the Koranic sense. In the Koranic view of things, "theology" can only mean knowing God, and knowing God means knowing the meaning of His *ayah*... His "signs."

The signs of God appear in three primary domains: First, in the revelations that God gives to the prophets, the Prophet of Islam (s) in particular; second, in natural phenomena; and third, in the human self. Hence knowledge of God demands knowledge of revelation, knowledge of the cosmos, and knowledge of the self. What makes this knowledge "Islamic" knowledge and not some other kind of knowledge is that the significance of things is understood in accordance with the principles established by the Koran and the Sunnah. The natural world signifies God, and the human self also signifies God. But the exact mode of this signification is rooted in the Islamic revelation and the conclusions that are drawn there for human activity and destiny.

I am not suggesting that Muslim intellectuals considered it sufficient to know things in the terms established by the Koran. Rather, for a great many of them—and for the greatest of them—it was necessary to know God Himself in the terms established by the Koran, and also to know God Himself by knowing the world and by knowing the self. Without the living knowledge of God, the whole Islamic enterprise is deprived of its lifeblood. After all, anyone can memorize the Koran, but if the person does not know the meaning of what he has memorized and cannot grasp how the Koran signifies God, he has not known the Koran as it should be known. In the same way, anyone can know certain things about the natural world and the self, but if he does not know God through the natural world and the self, this is not Islamic knowledge. Or rather, this is plain ignorance, because God is in fact the reality that is revealed through the signs—which are scripture, the world, and the self.

Like any other phenomenon in the universe, human society is a sign of God. If we want to know human society in Islamic terms, we need to know

it inasmuch as it signifies God. And if human beings are to devise a policy that is going to be an Islamic policy, it has to be a policy in harmony with those Islamic teachings that focus on achieving the proper human destiny. Hence, in speaking about Islamic "civilization" or "culture"—what we are talking about, or should be talking about, is the community of Muslims (the *ummah*) in terms of certain qualities and characteristics.

This *ummah* can be viewed from two different points of view—what it is in fact, and what it should be. If we look at the *ummah* in fact, then Islamic knowledge of the *ummah* tells us about God's actual relationship with the *ummah*. If we look at the *ummah* in terms of what it should be, then Islamic knowledge tells us what sort of human activity is pleasing to God. This second part of knowledge focuses on what God desires for human beings in order for them to reach felicity (*sa'ada*), that is, a happy state in the next life. All Koranic teaching is focused on the *ultimate* destiny of human beings, not their destiny in this world. The situation in this world must be shaped with a view toward the absolute importance of the next world. After all, *ma'ad*, or the "return to God," is the third principle of Islamic faith and provides the orientation for the first two principles. Hence the Koran and the Sunnah reveal God in terms of His guidance (*huda*) for human beings, guidance that takes to paradise in the next world, not this world. Knowledge of God involves knowing what God wants from people. The Shariah focuses on this kind of knowledge. An ideal Islamic *ummah*—that is, an *Islamic* civilization and culture—must be molded by this type of knowledge, failing which, it no longer conforms to God's guidance and hence is not "submitted" to His will, which is to say that it is not Islamic.

Presumably, this conference is concerned with what an Islamic society *should be*. But it makes no sense to speak of *goals* if you do not know *where you are*. What I want to do is look at where human society in general and Islamic society in particular are *now* in terms of the categories of traditional Islamic knowledge. What does the present state of the *ummah* tell us about the relationship of Muslims to God? And given that the world is made up of many *ummahs*, what does the present state of world society in general tell us about its relationship to God? Finally, and perhaps most importantly, what does the situation of the modern West tell us about God?

In the Koranic perspective, the world is a grand collection of God's signs. God knows all things, and His knowledge is not conditioned by the

temporal limitations that govern human knowledge. Hence He knows the world for all eternity and He creates it on the basis of what He knows. As one God who knows all things, He is the principle of both unity and multiplicity.

God's unity can be related to the diversity of things by describing the attributes or qualities that are shared by God and the many things. These attributes are designated by the divine names, such as Living, Knowing, Merciful, Compassionate, Creator, Sustainer. These names apply to God, who is one, and they also apply to the many things in the world—though not in exactly the same sense, of course. In the unity of His Self God possesses all these names. And His relationship with the diverse creatures that are prefigured in His knowledge can be described in term of these names. Thus, whenever we mention a name or attribute of God, we are mentioning a quality that relates God to some or all of creation.

Inasmuch as created things are many, they dwell in distance from God. God is the Far (*al-ba' id*). He is distant but in the sense that He possesses, in infinite intensity, the attributes that are ascribed both to Him and to creatures. Compared to God, the creatures possess nothing of those attributes. God is Great, Majestic, Powerful, King, while the world and everything within it is small, puny, weak, a slave. This understanding of God's relationship with the world is known theologically as the assertion of God's incompatibility or transcendence (*tanzih*), and it is the classic position of Kalam. God alone is Real in the true sense, and everything other than God is unreal and vanishing. "Everything is perishing except His Face" (28:88).

From the point of view of God's incompatibility, unity pertains to God, while multiplicity pertains to the world. The world is totally other than God, and it possesses none of God's attributes. God's incomparable greatness makes all creatures His servants—not because of their free choice, but because they gain all their reality from Him. Thus the Koran tells us that everything in the heavens and earth has submitted itself to God (3:83). *Islam* is a fact of existence for all things.

Although God is incomparably great and powerful, He has given His creatures some share, however small, of His own attributes, and He has given the greatest share to human beings, to whom He taught all the names (2:30). Hence human beings know the name and reality of freedom to some degree, and this explains why, even though they are servants of God because of their creation, they are not necessarily *free* servants of God. They are *in*

fact compulsory Muslims through their creation, but they *should be*, in addition, voluntary Muslims in order to reach the fullness of their human possibilities. That is why God sent the prophets—to call His servants to the free acceptance of His sovereignty over them and to rejoice in it.

If we look more closely at the relationship between God and human beings, we find other reasons for the sending of the prophets. For example, inasmuch as human beings are distant from God, the divine attributes that rule over their situation—such as majesty, inaccessibility, wrath, severity, and justice—tell us about the consequences of His distance. Notice that these attributes are the same attributes that rule over hell, whose basic, defining characteristic is to be veiled from God, to be distant from God. God is the source of all good and all that gives joy and pleasure. To be distant from God is to be distant from good, joy, and pleasure. In hell, to be distant from God is also to suffer the pain of regret for not having accepted God's offer to come out of distance and enter into nearness.

The prophetic message demands observance of commands and prohibitions. The goal of these commands and prohibitions is to bring human beings into harmony with the divine reality, or to establish nearness to God. To be near to God entails knowing Him. You cannot be near to God and remain heedless and ignorant of Him. After all, the worship and the service of God that mark the acceptance of God's call demand knowing God as He has revealed Himself. Coming to know God is a lifelong enterprise, or rather, it is an eternal, never-ending journey, because it continues in the next world. The Infinite can never be fully known by the finite, and that is the secret of everlasting felicity in the next world. Each moment of existence in paradise establishes a new relationship with God's reality and a new knowledge of Him, and these newly bestowed gifts increase the servant's joy.

The universe is a grand collection of signs, but things do not signify God in the same way. In Islamic cosmology, certain classes of creatures are closer to God, and others are further away. For example, angels are close to God, but inanimate things are relatively distant from God. Nearness and distance are judged by the attributes that rule over the creatures. Angels are luminous and partake directly of the unity of God. Each angel is a whole without parts. In contrast, inanimate things are relatively dark and are dominated by multiplicity.

In the cosmos as a whole, there is a great chain of created things rang-

ing from those that are closest to God and completely dominated by unity to those that are furthest from God so that multiplicity is the ruling factor. Among human beings, the same range of attributes is found. Those people who are closest to God—the prophets—are dominated by *tawhid*, and hence they find God everywhere and do whatever they do for God's sake. On the other extreme are found unbelievers in all their diverse kinds. They are dominated by *shirk*, the association of other realities with God. People who are dominated by *shirk* have a multiplicity of diverse and disparate concerns that keep them in forgetfulness of God. Between the prophets and the unbelievers are found those who submit themselves to God's will by following the prophets. They are not completely dominated by unity, nor are they completely lost in multiplicity. They struggle in between, sometimes moving toward God and sometimes drifting away from Him.

Human beings can choose to turn toward God or they can choose to turn away from Him. To the extent that people sincerely turn toward God, come to be dominated by the attributes that grow up from nearness to God. These include unity, balance, harmony, and realness. In such people, the beautiful attributes of God—such as gentleness, mercy, compassion, and love—come to dominate the personality, and the majestic attributes play a role only in function of the beautiful attributes.

To the extent that people turn away from God, they become dominated by the opposite attributes—multiplicity, imbalance, disequilibrium, evanescence, particularity, darkness, and unreality. In such people, the majestic attributes of God dominate over the beautiful attributes by keeping the person distant from God.

The message of the prophets is designed to alert people to their natural distance from God and to invite them to overcome that distance. People should become God's voluntary servants. Then, if they follow God's instructions, God will bring them into His presence. For many Muslim authorities, this is the significance of human "vicegerency" (*khilafa*). Man becomes a *khulifa* or representative of God by being His perfect servant. God chooses as His favorites only those who gain worthiness to enter His presence through obedience and service.

If we ask what this way of looking at things has to do with the contemporary world, it is not too difficult to see the answer. The world is always made up of two fundamental tendencies that become manifest on the natural,

social, and individual levels. One tendency is that of *tawhid*, which ties things together and establishes unity, harmony, balance, and equilibrium. The other tendency is that of *shirk*, which allows things to drift apart and become confused and disconnected. People dominated by *shirk* fail to see that all things are interrelated because they are rooted in God.

The result of following up on the tendency toward *tawhid* is oneness, harmony, wholeness, and nearness to God. The result of following up on the tendency toward *shirk* is manyness, dispersion, disequilibrium, disintegration, and distance from God. On the social level, the Koran sometimes refers to these two tendencies by the terms *salah* and *fasad*, or "wholesomeness" and "corruption." Hence, wholesomeness is the social manifestation of balance and harmony, while corruption is the appearance of disequilibrium, dispersion, and disintegration.

Tawhid and wholesomeness are connected to the divine attributes of beauty and mercy, while *shirk* and corruption bring about the predominance of the attributes of majesty and wrath. God is happy with those who follow His commands, and hence He brings them near to Himself, but He is angry with those who refuse His guidance, so He drives them far away from Himself (as indicated by the Koranic expression *bu'dan*, as in *bu'dan li'l-qawm al-zaimin* [11:44]).

To cling to *tawhid* yields wholesomeness, wholeness, harmony, happiness, and joy in both this world and the next world. To cling to *shirk* yields corruption, partiality, disequilibrium, suffering, and estrangement in this world and the next. Of course, these qualities are sometimes difficult to perceive in people, because they are internal qualities. But what is internal in this world—all the qualities that make up our personalities—will be external in the next world. The resurrection, as the Koran indicates, is the place where veils are lifted and secrets are bared.

Two Modes of Understanding

Tawhid is correct understanding of the actual nature of things. It is to understand the universe and everything within it in terms of the one God. In contrast, *shirk* is a false understanding of the nature of things, because it is to understand things in terms of a diversity of unconnected principles. There is nothing wrong with a diversity of principles, as long as they are tied back to the one, ultimate Principle. The divine names, after all, are diverse principles

whereby we understand God. But if the diverse principles are not integrated by God's unity, that is *shirk*.

Tawhid is a human attribute that needs to be established and made continuous. People establish it by following the guidance of the prophets. Guidance, in turn, is directed toward two fundamental modes of human understanding that many Muslim thinkers have called "reason" (*ʿaql*) and "imagination" (*khayāl*).

A rational understanding of *tawhid* leads to the assertion that God is absolutely other than all things. There is only one God, and He governs the universe with absolute and total control. This is *tanzih* and, as mentioned, it is a normative perspective for the school of Kalam.

In contrast, imaginal understanding—which plays almost no role in the school of Kalam—has the power to see God present in all things. When God says in the Koran, "Wherever you turn, there is the face of God" (2:115), reason provides clever interpretations to prove that God does not mean what He says. Imagination, awakened by the Koran, sees God wherever it looks. When the Prophet said, "*Ihsan* is to worship God *as if* you see Him," he was addressing imagination, not reason. Reason knows nothing about "as if."

When imagination is inspired by God's revelation, it provides a mode of understanding that is complementary to *tanzih*. This mode is sometimes called *tashbih*, seeing God as similar to things. For Ibn al-Arabi and his followers, to see God from the point of view of reason alone, or to see Him from the point of view of imagination alone, is to see with "one eye," like Iblis. True knowledge of God demands that people see God with both eyes. Then they will be able to understand that God is both distant and near, both absent and present.

The point of view of *tanzih* or incomparability is supported by all Muslim thinkers, especially the authorities in Kalam. Sufi authorities, following the Koran and the Hadith, add *tashbih*, while never denying *tanzih*. The perspective of *tashbih*, rooted in a vision of God's presence in all things, gives life and power to Islamic poetry. After all, it is poetry that inspires people's faith in God's mercy and gentleness, not Kalam. Ibn al-Arabi tells us that if religious matters were left in the hands of the Kalam authorities, no one would ever have loved God. Fortunately, however, few Muslims took Kalam very seriously, so love for God is a primary characteristic of Muslims throughout the centuries, and it helps explain the tremendous popularity of the *ghazal*.

Kalam can find no room for the love of God because it pushes God beyond human reach and describes Him almost exclusively in terms of attributes of majesty and severity. The God of Kalam intimidates people and frightens them. Of course, it is good for people to be frightened, because they will then be more careful about observing the Shariah. Nevertheless, people also need to love. The God of poetry attracts people because He is described in human terms that anyone can understand. He is a God who loves His servants and attracts human love in return. And this also encourages people to be more careful about observing His expectations of them as set down in the Shariah.

Scientific Rationality

One of the most pernicious errors of the contemporary world is that modern scientific knowledge and the technology that comes along with it are legitimate and neutral. This error is especially surprising among Muslims, who have plenty of intellectual resources in their own tradition to grasp the fallacies implicit in the scientific world view. In any case, there are numerous philosophers, historians, and social critics in the West who have shown that there is no scientific neutrality. One of the major focuses of the intellectual movement known as "postmodernism" is to bring out the contradictions in the claim to the neutrality of any form of rational knowledge. Nevertheless, the idea of scientific neutrality continues to have powerful supporters. In the Islamic world, it is often met in the idea that people can have both Islam and technological development without any contradictions. Somehow Islam is going to protect people from the moral bankruptcy of much of Western society. Yet there is no evidence that Muslims are in fact being protected.

It has often been pointed out that however much scientists pretend that modern scientific knowledge is disinterested, it is essentially a form of knowledge for control. In contrast, knowledge in the premodern world has been called "knowledge for understanding." In order to have knowledge for control, it was necessary to do away with any connection between knowledge of the world and knowledge of right activity, or ethics. This was done in Western thought by subverting the connection between reality and the Good—the "Good," being, of course, a primary name of God. The end result of this sort of thinking was that scientific rationality allows for no moral distinctions whatsoever. Postmodern observers of this situation, however, do not con-

clude that anything is wrong. As one historian observes, "The premoderns said that without an identity of reality and the Good, there would be no right and wrong, and the postmoderns say that there is neither Good nor right nor wrong...For only a brief period in the history of the West—the period of modern times—did anyone seriously suppose that human beings could hold knowledge without God."⁷ In short, because of the triumph of science—knowledge without God, which is knowledge for control and power—few people have questioned whether or not science and the technology that puts it into practice are legitimate in themselves. Those who do question it are ignored because, after all, they have little power, and power rules.⁸

But let us get back to the connections that were just made between two ways of looking at God—as incomparable or distant and as similar or near—and two ways of understanding God—the way of reason and the way of imagination. Modern science and technology are both rooted in rationality, even if imagination plays a certain minor role. Reason operates by analysis and differentiation, that is, by limiting and defining things. If we go back far enough in history, we find that modern science is deeply rooted in the rationalistic theology of Christianity on the one hand, and in the will to control found among magicians and sorcerers on the other hand.

Christian theology, like Kalam, tended to establish distance between God and His creatures. By using abstract language cut off from the concrete concerns of everyday life, theologians contributed to the separation of God from the world. Mainstream Western thought came to be so thoroughly dominated by the perspective of *tanzih* that eventually God was abstracted completely out of the picture. God in His inaccessible heaven became the exclusive concern of theologians, who were peripheral players in Western thought. And the world became the exclusive concern of the scientists, who established the mainstream of Western intellectual life.

As long as a world view finds God present in the world, in society, and in the human self, God's concerns will be taken into account. In such a world view, people know that they have to observe God's instructions in everything they do, because God can never be absent from them. In practically every world view except that of the post-Christian West, God is constantly present with things as well as with people. God makes demands on human beings in respect of the things of the world, and He expects people to interact with others and even with inanimate objects on the basis of His demands. Failure

to do so leads to the corruption not only of society, but also of the natural world. As the Koran puts it, "Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea because of what peoples' hands have earned" (30:41).

Imagination, which is typically voiced in accounts of origins—or in "myth" in the positive sense of this term—reminds people that God and His activity are present in all things. With the eye of imagination, it is not difficult to look at things "as if" God were present. Rationalistic theologies always devalue myth, at least by interpreting it and telling us that it does not mean what it says. Pushed to the extreme, rationalism attempts to eliminate imaginal understanding altogether.

Modern, scientific rationality is much more severe in its attacks on myth and imagination than rationalistic theology. Science presents myth as superstition. To the extent that scientific rationality dominates over a world view, the religious imagination is no longer able to find God in the world or in the self. Hence the world and the self become devoid of God. Decisions about the world and the self are left not to God, but to the scientists and technocrats, who take over the role of ulama and priests. In the modern West, this has led to the cult of experts, who must be consulted in all affairs. Dependence upon experts is obvious on the governmental level, where people give up their own autonomy to the scientific and technological ulama, who are now doctors, engineers, mechanics, and specialists in a thousand other fields. Even mothers can no longer raise their children without consulting the experts.

The fundamental characteristic of modern scientific knowledge is to be empty of unifying principles. The modern social and humanistic sciences, rooted in the scientific world view, have the same characteristic. In other words, modern knowledge is rooted in *shirk*, not *tawhid*. There is no unity in modern thought because unity is strictly a divine quality, and without knowledge of God, it is impossible to understand the nature of unity, much less establish it. Not being able to perceive the divine, unifying qualities in things, science necessarily yields ever-increasing multiplicity and dispersion—mountains of information that cannot possibly be known by any individual, much less integrated. Rationality has built a new Tower of Babel. Scientists and scholars cannot communicate with each other because they have no common language.

In their concern for establishing God's incomparability, rational theologians abstract God out of the cosmos. Reason functions by dividing, separating, and analyzing. It is essentially reductive, because it takes wholes and explains them in terms of parts. It cannot see wholes, because it divides and analyzes by its very nature. "In its very essence the analytic, scientific method is reductive without limit. Applied to man, it is the universal solvent." What it dissolves is interconnectedness and meaning.

The typical tool of science is mathematics, which eliminates all qualitative distinctions among things, except those that can be described mathematically. These qualitative distinctions are precisely what carries the meaning of the things, that is, their meaning in terms of ultimate principles, that is, *tawhid*. In other words, quantification of understanding drives the divine qualities from created things, because God's names and attributes cannot be described in mathematical terms.

One of the best recent analyses of the results of following an exclusively rational methodology in human affairs is provided by the historian John Ralston Saul in *Voltaire's Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the West*.¹⁰ This broad-ranging study brings out the appalling consequences of making reason the principle upon which to build a civilization. Reason, after all, is simply a method of analysis. It can provide no basis for understanding wholes from within itself. It has no means to perceive the good and the beautiful. It only provides a method for dividing, dissolving, taking apart, and reducing. The good and the beautiful cannot be perceived without a myth, and mythical thinking is beyond the range of reason.

In traditional civilizations, reason had a limited sphere of influence. On the basis of the civilization's founding myth, reason provided a method to differentiate and distinguish between the good and the evil, the beautiful and the ugly. The grand mistake of Voltaire and other prophets of rationality was not to understand that reason itself cannot supply the principles of good and beauty. Once reason becomes the sole principle of human affairs, it dissolves and destroys.

One of the many results of what Saul calls the "dictatorship of reason" is the modern world's enormously efficient machinery for destruction. This destruction is most obvious on the level of external human existence, where the fruit of rational methods has been the most war-filled century of history. As Saul writes, "It is difficult to think of another era in which individuals

have so carefully turned their backs upon the evidence of their own continuing violence by treating each dark event as if it were somehow unexpected—or the last of its kind. And they have done so in the midst of our millennium's most violent century.

"Never has savagery so dogged Western civilization and yet... whatever it is that our mythology of scientific discoveries and philosophical arguments so actively pretend about the evolution of society, it is war which has led the way and continues to lead the way in the twentieth century."¹¹

On the level of meaning, however, scientific rationality has been even more destructive than on the level of human lives and institutions, because it effectively removes meaning and direction from human endeavors. As a perceptive contemporary psychologist has pointed out, the end point of "all scientific method applied to human behavior... is appalling: the elimination of choice, meaning, and purpose in human existence."¹² The result is that "for the first time in Western history, our most respected institutions are preaching social anarchy."¹³

For the purposes of the experts and technocrats, no harm is done, because they have no concept of what it means to be human or where human beings should be going. As Saul points out, "The technocrat has been actively—indeed, intensely—trained. But by any standard comprehensible within the tradition of Western civilization, he is virtually illiterate."¹⁴ This illiteracy is intentional and willful. "It isn't surprising that the modern manager has difficulty leading steadily in a specific direction over a long period of time. He has no idea where we are or where we've come from. What's more, he doesn't want to know, because that kind of knowledge hampers his kind of action. Instead he has learned to disguise this inner void in ways which create a false impression of wisdom."¹⁵

Moreover, all the change done in the name of rationality is done without protest by the public. "The parliamentary systems demand that a government justify its action in public. The scientific community has changed our life more in this century than any parliament, and yet it feels obliged to justify nothing."¹⁶

The traditional function of myth and imaginal thinking was to allow unity to be seen permeating all levels of the universe, society, and the human soul. God was never absent, and through His presence He was constantly concerned for the welfare of His servants. The traditional function of reason

was to prevent *shirk*, or the divinization of lesser realities. If God is present in natural phenomena, there is a danger that some people will identify Him with natural phenomena and lose sight of His incomparability and transcendence. Again we come back to the two eyes of reason and imagination. Things cannot be seen correctly with one eye. God must be seen as both absent and present.

True myths are revealed by God by means of the prophets. They are rooted in *tawḥid*, and their function is to allow people to make contact with God in everyday life, in ritual, in nature, and in all things. When there are no longer true myths—myths rooted in *tawḥid*—there are false myths rooted in *shirk*. People cannot live without myths, because myths provide concrete ways of understanding the meaning of life. Reason can never supply meaning from within itself. "Rational structures, with their enormous accumulations of power, produce no mythology."¹ This helps explain the vast proliferation of false myths in modern society.

On the theoretical level, many of these false myths are connected with science and development. Any idea or ideology that is not rooted in *tawḥid* and that supplies a basis for interpreting human thought and activity is a false myth. And the most pervasive and influential of these false myths are the ones that we do not recognize as myths and which determine our natural and normal ways of thinking about things. These myths grow up largely from the popular perception of science and its promises of utopia. If you want a list of a few of them, look again at the amoeba-words that animate the development discussion. But what is of fundamental importance is that all the myths of science and development share one thing in common, and that is ignorance of *tawḥid*, or rather denial of *tawḥid*, and this can only be *shirk*.²

Beauty

Every civilization has myths that provide the starting point for rational understanding. The traditional myths are revealed by the 124,000 prophets of history with the aim of establishing *tawḥid*. Modern myths are based largely on human dreams of a scientific and technological paradise, and they permeate the modern mentality through the omnipresence of the sacred amoeba-words. If the discussion is to be carried out in Islamic terms, these words will have to be abandoned.

If Muslims are to remain Muslim and not become second-class Westerners, they have no choice but to return to the resources of their own tradition. There they will find all the standards they need for judging gods and myths. These standards can be summarized in terms of the key technical terms of Islamic discourse as established by the Koran, the Sunnah, and the Islamic intellectual tradition. The importance of the intellectual tradition needs to be stressed. If it is ignored, the central Koranic concepts will be redefined in terms of the modern myths of development, progress, revolution, and social change. Only careful study of how Muslims have always understood the key terms of their own discourse can prevent false assimilations. Without recourse to the intellectual tradition, Islamic terms will themselves be turned into amoeba-words that mean what their users want them to mean. They will become slogans employed in order to support an ideology. The word *Islam* itself is not immune, and a look at how it is used by every sort of political and ideological movement in the Islamic world shows that it is often empty of content.

To conclude these very brief and incomplete thoughts on the theological roots of development, let me suggest a single example of a traditional Islamic standard of judgment, one that is easy to apply to the contemporary situation. That is the already mentioned concept of *ihsan*. I would translate this word as "doing what is beautiful." The implication is that things should be done exactly as God wants them to be done, in keeping with divinely revealed norms. And this demands constant awareness of the presence of God. As soon as you forget that God is with you, you will not be doing things as He wants you to do them. Hence, the famous hadith of *Ihsan* can be rendered as, "Doing what is beautiful" is that you worship God as if you see Him."

Beauty is a divine attribute. Although this hadith alludes to *husn* rather than *jamal*, the sense of the two words is close. The dictionaries tell us that *husn* refers to beauty of the eyes, and *jamal* refers to beauty of the nose. The importance of beauty is suggested by another well-known hadith that employs the word *jamal*: "God is beautiful, and He loves beauty." The principle of *tawhid* allows us to see that this means that all true beauty belongs to God alone, and that anything other than God is not beautiful. Or rather, everything other than God is beautiful only to the extent that it is "wholesome" (*salih*) and avoids corruption, or only to the extent that it acts as a vehicle for the beauty of God.

Beauty is the name given to the whole category of attributes that are contrasted with the attributes of Majesty. As already mentioned, the divine attributes of beauty, mercy, and gentleness are oriented toward establishing nearness with the creatures. Every beautiful thing is attractive and lovable. The only truly beautiful thing is God, so only God is truly attractive and lovable. To the extent that one recognizes God's beauty, one is drawn toward God. In contrast, to the extent that one sees God's majesty, one falls back away from Him in fear and awe. But majesty is complementary to beauty, not contradictory. Majesty has a beauty, and beauty has a majesty—especially the divine beauty. Moreover, beauty has the last say, because "God's mercy takes precedence over His wrath." The attributes of beauty and mercy are the fundamental determinants of reality.

The opposite of beauty is ugliness. Ugliness, of course, is not a divine attribute, nor is it an attribute of God's creation inasmuch as God's commandments are observed. Ugliness is a human attribute that rises up out of ignorance and forgetfulness of God and disobedience toward His commandments.

As an attribute of mercy and nearness, beauty is closely allied with unity, balance, harmony, proportion, equilibrium, and realness. In contrast, majesty has a strong connection with multiplicity, disequilibrium, and distance from God, but this is a distance from God that is worthy and appropriate for God's servant. Beauty's opposite, ugliness, is not worthy. Hence it is intimately connected with everything related to nonexistence, dispersion, dissolution, destruction, corruption, ruin, and evil.

The divine beauty is reflected in the cosmos in revelation, nature, the self, and human productions and institutions. In revelation, beauty is found in the Arabic text of the Koran and in the life and character traits of the Prophet. Beauty is found throughout nature, wherever the hands of human beings have not interfered. Even the grand catastrophes of nature have an awesome beauty. In the human self, beauty is found in noble character traits that reflect the nobility of the prophetic model. In social institutions, beauty is found in interpersonal love and in healthy and wholesome relationships, it is especially obvious in art on all levels—calligraphy, recitation of the Koran and poetry, music, architecture, clothing, carpets, utensils, and so on.

In traditional Islamic civilization, art and artifacts are beautiful as a matter of course, but this is not the case in the modern world. On the con-

lrary, today ugliness has become the rule in human productions, because beauty can only be found through the manifestation of divine qualities, and perception of these qualities is not supported by typically modern knowledge and praxis. Hence the typical artifacts, institutions, character traits, and objects of the modern world are ugly. This is to say that God does not love them, because He loves beauty, not ugliness. It is also to say that they dwell in distance from God, and hence in multiplicity, dispersion, dissolution, disharmony, and corruption.

Let us come back to *ihsan* or "doing what is beautiful." It is, of course, an essential element of Islam. The Prophet cited it as one of the three basic components of religion, along with *islam* and *imam*. The Koran establishes *ihsan* as a divine attribute and praises *ihsan* in those human beings who possess it, the *muhsinin*. Note that of sixteen Koranic verses that tell us which people God love, five mention the *muhsinin*. (In three God is said to love the *muttakin*, in two the *maqsittin*, and in six more verses, people defined by various other praiseworthy attributes.) Just as God loves beauty, so also He has a special love for those who do what is beautiful.

The implications of *ihsan* for judging concrete situations in the world is suggested by another hadith that is mentioned in most of the standard sources: "*God has prescribed doing what is beautiful for everything. When you kill, do the killing beautifully; and when you slaughter, do the slaughtering beautifully. You should sharpen your blade so that the victim is relieved.*"

The first sentence of this hadith is of special importances, because it sets down a universal rule. Just as God has created the cosmos as beautiful, so also human activity, which must follow the divine model, has to be performed beautifully. Doing what is beautiful has been prescribed for *all* things.

Then the hadith turns to the specific instance which perhaps occasioned the saying in the first place. The Prophet is telling his Companions that the Koran has commanded doing the beautiful. They should not think that acts that are normally considered ugly are in any way excepted. Killing in ordinarily an ugly act, and killing a human being without just cause is sufficient reason to end up in hell. In the same way, slaughtering animals for food is not an act that most people find pleasant and attractive, and with good reason. Nevertheless, God has allowed it, and hence it should be done in the most beautiful way possible.

In the third sentence of the hadith, the prophet gives a specific example of what doing the beautiful involves on this level, where a certain ugliness is inevitable. The knife should be sharp so that the animal's throat can be slit quickly and it will not suffer. Likewise, if it is a question of killing a human being, whether in war or as retaliation, it should be done with a sharp sword. This command is not unrelated to a large number of prohibitions found in the Shariah concerning war when it must be waged.

In short, doing what is beautiful is mandatory for Muslims in everything they do. The reason for this is obvious as soon as we remember that *ihsan* is to worship God as if you see Him. Every act of a Muslim must be done in service and worship of God. God must be seen in every situation and every act. As soon as people do things while forgetting God, they are doing what is ugly, and God does not love those who do what is ugly. "Doing what is ugly" is not a bad translation for *zulm*, which is traditionally defined as putting something where it does not belong. Thus the Koran tells us that "God does not love the ugly-doers [*alzalimin*]" (3:57, 3:140, 42:40). In the same way, it says that "God does not love corruption" (2:205) and "God does not love the workers of corruption" (28:77).

In order to do things beautifully and to avoid corruption people must have an understanding of what beauty and wholesomeness are. This understanding does not come easily to rational understanding because reason works by abstracting and divesting things of their qualities. Seeing beauty is a characteristic of imagination. This is obvious as soon as we think of the beauty of poetry or music, in which the power of producing images is utterly central to the art. The beauty that we see can only be the beauty of God, since "non is beautiful but God." Hence, when imagination sees beauty in things, it is seeing God's beauty. This comes back to what I said earlier: Imagination is the faculty that perceives the presence of God. Those who do not see beauty do not see the presence of God, and those who do not understand beauty do not understand how God can be present in things. They do not worship God "as if" they see Him, that is, with the power of imagination.

I will not go any further in drawing conclusions. I think my line of reasoning is clear. Anyone who wishes can follow it through and apply it to numerous concrete situations in the contemporary world. Let me simply state openly what I feel to be the general conclusion that one must reach: Islamic activity in the modern world, at least on the social and political levels, has

known little about beauty. Until beauty is recovered by Muslims, until they do what they do in a beautiful manner as established by principles laid down by God and the nature of things, there can be no revival of any culture and civilization that deserves the name "Islamic."

Endnotes

1. William C. Chittick, (professor from the Department of Comparative Studies, State University of New York at Stony Brook), a paper published in *Namah Farhang* and presented at the International Conference on Islamic Culture and Civilization held in Tehran, February 1994.

2. Wolfgang Sachs (ed.), *The Development Dictionary* (London: Zed Books, 1992).

3. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

7. J. Bortol, "Christians and Postmoderns," *First Things*, No. 40, Feb. 1994, p. 29.

8. The underlying issue in talk of development is the desire for power and control. Perhaps, in the modern world, there is no escape from this desire. Perhaps countries must have power in order to preserve their own identities. But this does not mean that we should then say that power is good and that the Koran urges Muslim to establish modern nation states on the basis of an ideology of power. It does not mean that we can ignore the theological implications of claiming for oneself or for a country or for any contemporary organization an attribute that belongs by right only to God. And this of course is why such conferences as this are held. Muslims instinctively understand that the wish to establish dominating control over others is not necessarily sanctioned by God—quite the contrary. One must face a fundamental issue, and this is whether or not it is possible to have a modern political entity that is "Islamic." Not, I think, if we take the adjectives modern and Islamic seriously. As long as we define them loosely, however, then various degrees of compromise are possible. But it is incumbent upon Muslims to know that they are compromising and that God is not necessarily pleased with those compromises.

9. Jeffrey Burke Satinover, "Psychology and the Abolition of Meaning," *First Things*, No. 40, Feb. 1994, p. 15.

10. New York: Free Press, 1992.

11. Saul, p. 178.

12. Satinover, p. 16.

13. Saul, p. 122.

14. Saul, p. 110.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

16. Saul, p. 315.

17. Saul, p. 512.

18. On the popular level, meaning is provided for great masses of modern people by the ritual dramas of television. As Saul remarks, "The most accurate context in which to place television programming is that of general religious ritual. . . . Television—both drama and public affairs—consists largely of stylized popular mythology" (Saul, p. 454). For a thorough critique of the mind-destroying power of television, see J. Mander, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*, New York, 1975.

*Shi'ism and Mysticism:
An Interview with Dr. Gh. R. Awani¹*

Thaqalayn Staff

Q: Would you kindly give a brief introduction to the development of mysticism in Islam?

A: The word *Sufi* and *'Arif* are not found in the Islamic texts of the first century Hijrah and some scholars, especially the orientalist, have taken this fact as an evidence for the extraneous origins of *Sufism*, which, of course, is false as will be explained later. In *Sufi* texts there is some explanation for the late advent of this term. Some of them explain by saying that the first two centuries of Islam were a period of solar (*shamsi*) or universal sanctity (*wilayah*) which eclipsed the lunar or stellar (partial) sanctity as the moons and stars are evanescent in the light of the day.

For this reason, they say, the name *'Arif* and *Sufi* were nonexistent in the early period. Others explain the fact by saying that the term *Ilm* (knowledge), so highly prized in the Qur'an and *hadiths*, came to be applied, little by little, to the exoteric sciences such as grammar, syntax, prosody and other mundane sciences to the exclusion of the divine sciences of esoteric truth and the ultimate realities. So they had to distinguish themselves by calling their science *irfan* and by designating themselves as *Sufis*. The term *Sufi*, by which the mystics of Islam were designated, literally means "the wearer of wool."

According to Tirmidhi, in his book *Kitab al-Libas*, Moses ('a) was entirely clad in wool when he was addressed by God. It is also said that the Prophet of Islam (s), used to wear harsh woolen garments. It is evident that these associations were sufficient enough for them to label themselves *Sufis*. Moreover, according to Sarraj, in *Kitab al-Luma*, another reason for such designation was that in the Holy Qur'an the immediate disciples of Sayyidina Isa ('a) are called *Hawariyyun*, i.e., the wearers of white linen garments. According to Sarraj, God did not describe them according to their spiritual rank but according to their most outward form, that is their linen dress.

The first paragons of *Sufism* were the Companions of the Ledge (*ashab as-Suffah*) concerning them the following verse was revealed:

"And restrain thyself with those who call upon their Lord at morning and evening, desiring his countenance and let not thine eyes turn away from them, desiring the adornment of the present life."

Holy Qur'an (18:28)

Among the *ashab as-suffah* were included such distinguished companions as Salman, Abu Dharr and Ammar al-Yasir which play a dominant role both in Shi'ism and *Sufism*. The earliest *Sufis* were called *Zuhhad* or ascetics, many of whom were associated with Shi'ite Imams and followed their examples in the ascetic life. Spiritual figures, such as Kumayl and Maytham al-Tammar, were among such ascetics and belonged to the companions of Imam Ali ('a), who is the paragon *par excellence* of both *Sufism* and Shi'ism, to whom all the *Sufi* orders trace their spiritual lineage. He is succeeded by the other Shi'ite Imams who are the personification of the universal sanctity.

We should emphasize here that in its early stages, *Sufism* was not an institutionalized organization. There were yet no *Sufi* brotherhoods. Some of the early *Sufis* were warrior-saints like the companions of the Prophet (s). There were no *Khanigahs* or rather the early *Khanigahs* were called *ribat* which were military citadels on the borderlines of the Islamic territory, fighting against the heathens and infidels (*Kuffar*). In other words, the early *Sufis* combined in themselves the two wars, the Greater Holy War (*al-Jihad al-Akbar*) and the Lesser Holy War (*al-Jihad al-Asghar*).

In the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, extravagant wealth and imperial worldliness and mundane splendor set in and menaced the Muslim community against which the *Sufis* responded with the simplicity and pious and ascetic virtues of the Companions. They emulated the life of the Holy Prophet (s) and some of them even led ascetic lives of withdrawal from the mundane society and hence were called ascetics (*Zuhhad*). Little by little, theoretical discussions about the themes already practiced and realized by the *Sufis*, themes such as the love of God, supreme knowledge, spiritual affinity with God, spiritual states and stations developed by such distinguished *Sufis* as Harith al-Muhasibi, Dhul-Nun al Misri, Bayazid al-Bastami, Sari al-Saqati, Abul Qasim al-Junaid, Abul Hasan an-Nuri, Mansur al-Hallaj and others.

In the next period we encounter the phenomenon of institutionalization of *Sufism*. There came the proliferation of *Khanagahs* or *Sufi* convents where wandering *Sufis* took rest and exercised their devotional practices under the tutelage of a master. This period also coincides with the propagation of *Sufi* brotherhoods and chains of initiation (*silsilah*). There is ever greater systematization, organization and differentiation in *Sufi* practice.

In the last phase of the evolution of *Sufism* there is less emphasis on the doctrine which now plays a minor role and more emphasis is laid on the method and discipline which become associated with certain cults and rites. *Sufism*, as a result, gains more popular acceptance among the masses. It becomes more devotional than mystical and metaphysical and hence the term *tasawwuf* comes to be applied to this latter phase and is differentiated from *Irfan* which, from now on is applied to that more metaphysical and doctrinal aspect of *Sufism*.

Q: What are the sources of Islamic mysticism (Qur'an, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, etc.)?

A: Recently there has been much discussion and debate about the sources of *Irfan*. The European scholars and orientalists, influenced by such extravagant and devious schools as historicism of the nineteenth century, which instead of giving an essential explanation of the nature of things, make do with pseudo-historical explanations, have tried to trace the origin of *Sufism* to alien influences of the most imaginative kind. Some have tried to locate the source in Neoplatonism, as if Neoplatonism itself is a school of philosophy able to produce such Muslim saints and sages as Bayazid and Rumi. They have tried to locate the missing link in the chain of Dhun-Nun al-Misri who lived in Egypt, the cradle of Neoplatonism. Others have tried to trace the source to Buddhism through Ibrahim Adham, the most suitable candidate for the purpose. Still others see *Sufism* as a kind of reaction of the Aryan race against the Arabs' invasion or as the influence of Zoroastrian culture on the Islamic civilization. According to others, *Irfan* originated as the result of the contact of the Muslims with Christian monks, all of which, of course, fall short of explaining its true nature.

All these theories take for granted that *Sufism* is an extraneous accretion super added to Islam and hence something peripheral in relation to the spiritual means of Islam forgetting that it is its esoteric or inward aspect (*batin*) as

distinguished from the exoteric or external aspect (*zahir*). *Sufism* is the direct contemplation of spiritual or divine realities. Whereas the ordinary way of believers is directed toward obtaining a state of blessedness, the aim of *Sufism* is to get access to direct knowledge of the eternal Reality, through spiritual realization, by attaining to the two ultimate stations of extinction (*fana*) and subsistence in God (*baga*).

Needless to say, esoterism in each religion, which constitutes its core and kernel, is an integral part of that religion without which it cannot be a religion to start with. It is the "vertical" dimension of the religion leading to God as the center. There are vertical dimensions in any religion, the higher one presupposing the lower ones and at the same time transcending them. In a famous prophetic tradition these vertical dimensions have been referred to as *Islam*, *Iman* and *Ihsan*. According to this *hadith*, *Ihsan* consists in "worshipping God as if thou seest Him, for even if thou seest Him not He seeth thee."

Sufism is the attainment to such a sublime stage which leads to the stage of universal sanctity (*al-wilayah al-Kulliyah*). *Sufism* is again defined as the science of *Takhalluq*, that is, realizing the divine attributes in man which takes place through undergoing the different stations (*maqamat*) and essential virtues (*fada'il*). *Sufism* is the way of proximity (*qurb*), especially the proximity gained through performing supererogatory acts (*qurb al-nawafil*). It is to unveil in oneself that increate Divine Manifestation that is the Supreme Divine Ego. There are many other definitions of *Sufism* each of which lays stress on a certain aspect. It should be emphasized here that *Sufism* is totally based upon the Holy Qur'an, the *sunnah* of the Prophet (s) and the Household (*Itrah*).

Its similarity to mysticism in other religions is due to the fact that esoterism is the *sine qua non* of every religion, without which the religion would lose its vertical dimension and would be reduced to a horizontal and mundane level.

Q: What is the contribution of Shi'ism to mysticism?

A: There is a close relationship between Shi'ism and *Sufism*. An authority such as Ibn Khaldun has referred to this relationship in his *Muqaddimat* by saying that: "The Sufis became saturated with Shi'i theories. Shi'i theories entered so deeply into their religious ideas that they based their practices of

using a cloak (*Khirqah*) on the fact that Ali clothed al-Hasan al-Hasri in such a cloak and caused him to agree solemnly that he would adhere to the mystic path."

From the esoteric Shi'ite point of view, Shi'ism is the origin of what came to be known as *Sufism*. Shi'ite Imams play a very basic and fundamental role in *Sufism*, but not as Shi'ite Imams, rather as representatives, *par excellence*, of Islamic esoterism. As we said earlier, almost all *Sufi* orders (*Salasil*) trace their spiritual pedigree to the Holy Prophet (s), through Imam Ali ('a).

Both Shi'ism and *Sufism* can be described as the Islam of Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a). Both emphasize the principle of *wilayah* (friendship of God or proximity to Him) which in both is traced to the Shi'ite Imams and Fatimah ('a). Both believe that the cycle of sanctity (*dairah al-Wilayah*) starts immediately after the termination of the cycle of prophecy (*dairah an-Nubuwwah*).

The patched garment worn by *Sufis* is a symbol of the patched garment (*muraqqa'*) brought by the Prophet (s) from the nocturnal ascent (*miraj*) and bestowed on Ali ('a) by the command of God on which Ali used to sew patches until he said "I have sewn so many patches on this cloak that I am embarrassed before the sewer."

It is also reminiscent of the garment stretched over Ali, Fatimah, Hassan and Husayn ('a) by the Prophet (s), symbolizing the universal *wilayah*.

Moreover, in both Shi'ism and *Sufism*, emphasis is laid on a hidden form of knowledge, divine mysteries (*asrar*), symbolic allusions (*Isharat*), delicate hints (*lata'if*), primordial truths (*haqaiq*) and the use of the hermeneutic interpretation (*ta'wil*) for understanding certain verses of the Qur'an. In addition, the concept of a spiritual guide in *Sufism*, taken from the expression, *wali-i murshid*, in the Surah al-Kahf, and the concept of *Qutb Insan al-Kamil*, or perfect man, in *Sufism* is closely associated with the reality of Imamate as the pole of the universe in Shi'ism.

It is important here to emphasize that this interrelationship between Shi'ism and *Sufism* is valid only from the esoteric or the "vertical" viewpoint. There are, of course, certain important differences between the two which, however, are more or less valid from a "horizontal" and exoteric perspective.

Q: Are there mystical elements in *hadith* literature of Shi'ism?

A: The *hadith* literature in Shi'ism and the anthologies of the *hadiths* handed down from the Imams are the veritable mines of Islamic gnosis. The *usul i-Kafi* of Kulayni and the other compendia of Shi'i *hadith* are real treasures of *irfan* which have been, to some extent, known only to esoteric scholars and are much richer than anything found in orthodox compendiums of *hadith* literature. Moreover, the Shi'i prayers and litanies found in *as-Sahifah as-Sajjadiyyah* of the fourth Imam ('a), called the *Psalms of the Family of the Prophet*, is the best exposition and representation of Islamic gnosis. Some Shi'i prayers, like *Du'a Sha'baniyyah*, *Du'a Arafah*, and *Du'a Kumayl* highlight the highest themes of Islamic gnosis. Some of these prayers are found among the litanies (*awrad*) of the *Sufi* orders. Shi'i prayer books are replete with ritual formulae for acts of supererogation (*nawafil*) also much emphasized in *Sufism* and sometimes with identical formulations. The ritual invocation of the Beautiful Divine Names is the focus of emphasis in both Shi'ism and *Sufism*. For example, *Du'a Jawshan Kabir*, found in Shi'i prayer books contains one thousand divine names and is recited by pious Shi'i on many occasions and at least once a week. Some identical formulae based directly or indirectly on the verses of the Qur'an are reiterated in both. The Shi'i canonical books of *hadith* are filled with themes which can be made the object of meditation and contemplation and which can find their true explanation in real *irfan*.

Q: What is the position of *Wilayah* in mysticism? Please elaborate on the similarity between Shi'ism and *Sufism* with respect to the concept of *Wilayah*.

A: The theory of *wilayah* constitutes the basis of both Shi'ism and *Sufism*, so much so that without it they lose their reason for being. The concept of *wilayah* is the most fundamental and the most recurring theme in Shi'i thought. The whole function of the Imam is associated with his function as a supreme *wali*.

Wilayah is also the alpha and omega of *Sufism*. It is one of the attributes of God, and *wali*, unlike *nabi* and *rasul*, is a divine name and hence it is eternal and does not perish with the extinction of this world but it is taken over to the next world. The word *wilayah* comes from a root which means nearness or proximity and so a *wali* is one who has attained the utmost degree

of proximity to God. This proximity is attained through the annihilation of one's self in the Divine Self both from the point of view of actions (*afa al*) the attributes (*sifat*) and the essence (*dhat*). *Awlia* (the plural of *wali*) are considered to be the friends of God who have attained the status of friendship and proximity. *Wilayah*, according to both Shi'ism and *Sufism* is the inner dimension of both *nubuwwah* (prophethood) and *risalah* (messengership). A *rasul*, through his function as *wali* is at union (*ittisal*) with God, through his function as *nabi*, is in direct contact with the spiritual or the angelic world and is in direct communion with the angels and through his function as *rasul* he promulgates a new sacred law. According to this interpretation, every *rasul* is necessarily a *nabi* but not every *nabi* is necessarily a *rasul*, although both enjoy the function of *wilayah* to the utmost degree.

In *Sufism*, there are different degrees of *wilayah* which can be partial and particular (*juziyyah*) or universal (*kadliyyah*), absolute (*mutlaq*), and relative or determined (*muqayyad*), primordial (*wahbi, ata'i*) or acquired (*kashfi*), solar (*shamsi*), lunar (*ghamari*), stellar (*najmi*). In both Shi'ism and *Sufism* the highest kinds of *wilayah* mentioned are attributed to the Holy Shi'i Imams ('a), but this does not preclude the possibility that the lower kinds should be attributed to other saints and the friends of God in *Sufism*. The similarity between Shi'ism and *Sufism*, with respect to the concept of *wilayah*, is very startling and this results from the fact that both are connected with Islamic esoterism as such, but at the same time one should not forget the dissimilarities and the differences that exist between *Sufism* and particularly exoteric Shi'ism with respect to how and through whom this function operates and who is regarded as the seal of sanctity and also with regard to the external and political functions of an Imam in Shi'ism.

Q: Ibn Arabi, in his *al-Futuhāt*, after calling *Haqiqat-e Muhamadiyah* as the first phenomenon of being, he holds Imam Ali ('a) as the closest one to that. In some other passages, after mentioning the name of Imam Ali ('a), he writes "God may be pleased with him, Imam of the world and the secret of prophets." What is your comment?

A: This is quite true. This is the utterance of Ibn Arabi himself, but a historical note is quite in order. This expression is quoted quite often by the Shi'i commentators of Ibn Arabi but is not found in the printed texts of *al-Futuhāt*. Have the Shi'i commentators forged and interpolated the text, which seems to be unlikely or have the Sunni scribes omitted it, which seems as

unlikely. The expression is not found in the Bulaq edition of *Futbat* either. But, the new edition of Uthman Yahya sheds some new light on the problem. In this edition the expression is found almost verbatim in the B manuscript in the footnotes. But the B manuscript is Ibn Arabi's autograph. There are two autographs of *Futbat* in Ibn Arabi's own handwriting which are referred to as A and B in Uthman Yahya's edition. The B manuscript is earlier in date. Both editions of *al-Futbat* are based on the A manuscript. There are very slight differences between the two manuscripts, and if out of curiosity we collate the two we shall see that in the A manuscript, which postdates the B, all the expressions with Shi'i predilections have been either omitted or slightly altered. This can be attributed to the Shaykh's pious dissimulation (*taqiyyah*) especially if we take into consideration the fact that his life was endangered several times for his esoteric tendencies.

Q: It seems that Ibn Arabi has identified *Khatm al-Wilayah* with Imam Mahdi ('a). Can you kindly throw some light on this issue?

A: One of the most crucial issues in Ibn Arabi is that of *Khatm al-Wilayah* or the seal of sanctity. There are many passages in different works of Ibn Arabi, each emphasizing a different aspect of the problem. But a synthesis of all these texts is a very difficult task and sometimes there is a suspicion of outward contradiction in the words of Ibn Arabi. But there is also a lot of misunderstanding due to the lack of penetration in his thought. Moreover, there are sometimes denominational and theological predilections among the commentators of Ibn Arabi. Several treatises have been written on this topic and the theme has been extensively treated by Kashani, Qaysari, Seyyed Haydar Amuli, Muhammad Reza Qumshahi and recently by Michael Chadkiewich. Two of my M.A. and Ph. D. students have written their dissertations on this topic. But there are explicit references in Ibn Arabi that the seal of the saints (*Khatm al-Awliya*) is the Mahdi and not Jesus ('a).

For example, in the Bulaq edition of *Futbat* (using Ibn Arabi's autograph as the basis), vol. 3, p. 328 Ibn Arabi has expressly identified the *Khatm al-Wilayah* with al-Mahdi from the Household of the Prophet (s).

Endnotes:

1. Dr. Awami is the Director of the Academy of Philosophy, Institute for Cultural Studies and Research in Iran, and Chairman of the Department of Philosophy, Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran.

Book Review:

Towards Revolution: Development of Religio-Political Thought in Contemporary Iran (1941-1979)

Written by: Ahsanul Haq

*Published by: (AMU) Aligarh Muslim University Press, Aligarh, 1991,
181 pages.*

Reviewed by: Mostafa Izaddoust

The outbreak of Islamic Revolution in Iran prompted many academicians and scholars to explore its origin and development. Therefore, the rise and development of the Islamic Revolution has been the subject of numerous studies. So far the approach to this subject has not been unbiased and the picture that has emerged has not been accurate, mainly due to the lack of proper knowledge about Islam and the role of Shi'i scholars in its history. Indeed, in certain cases, the authors have founded their arguments on political or economic considerations, while others have touched upon one of its particular facets but venture to claim to have described it as a whole.

A survey of some of the published works on Islamic Revolution reminds us of Rumi's famous anecdote of the blind men and the elephant. When a group of blind men touched an elephant, each described it according to the part he had touched: one described the elephant like a throne, another a fan, still another a water pipe, and another a pillar. None of the blind men was able to imagine what the whole animal looked like. Such is the case with the studies published on the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

The author of the book under review is a young lecturer of Aligarh Muslim University in India. He has tried to trace the origin of the revolution and analyze the religio-political thought in Shi'ism. He has also touched upon various aspects of the revolution and Islamic thought which is considered the engine of the revolution. Although he has been successful in elaborating some of the aspects, nevertheless, his work suffers from certain shortcomings. For instance, he has not been able to comprehend the socio-political atmosphere prevailing at the time of each thinker.

Although the author has had access to Persian sources and referred to many Persian texts, however, he has failed to give an integrated analysis of the figures who contributed to the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

For instance, he refers to Dr. Ali Shariati as a political interpreter of the Shi'i religious precepts. He argues that, although Dr. Shariati could not be considered an *'alim* in the technical sense, he, nevertheless, "*made excessive use of religious terminology and concepts.*" Indeed, such an approach to analyze Dr. Shariati's contribution to Islamic thought is not accurate. Even though he was not an *'alim*, Dr. Shariati never tried to use Islam as a means to reach socio-political ends. Dr. Shariati was not an instrumentalist. He was, in fact, a revivalist. He tried to revive Islamic thought because he believed that Islam is not merely a religion concerning personal issues pertaining to the hereafter, but a religion which is, in essence, an ideology, i.e., capable of answering the socio-economic and political problems of the society.

The author also argues that the Muslim *'ulama'* developed "*accommodative-theories*" and "*cooperated with the Buyids and other monarchs, and even collaborated with the Abbasid rulers. They accepted offices in their governments. This was made possible through the use of taqiyya. The paradox of denouncing all temporal powers, except the Imamis, as unjust and illegitimate and accepting positions from the same powers has been an all-pervasive phenomenon in the Shi'i political and juridical history.*"

It seems that the author has not been able to understand the concept of *taqiyya* in Shi'ism. For instance, Al-Mufid was a Shi'a of the Imami persuasion. During the period which he lived in Baghdad, Shi'i scholars enjoyed particular freedom, and we see a blossoming of Shi'i scholarship in Baghdad, particularly Imami-Shi'i scholarship. The reason for this was that the dynasty which governed Baghdad, the Buyids, were very much inclined towards Shi'ism. Originally from Daylam in Iran, they had conquered Baghdad in 945 A.D. They were probably of the Zaidi Shi'i persuasion. Thus the Imami-Shi'i scholars were given opportunities to proclaim their doctrine in a way that had rarely occurred before. So the author's conclusion about *taqiyya* does not seem sound.

In reality, the Shi'i doctrine of *taqiyya* states that the acceptance of an office under an unjust ruler is allowed, provided he who did so was certain that he would be able to enjoin the good and forbid the evil.

He also has quoted Shahid al-Thani as saying: "*It is incumbent upon*

the mukallifun to obey the 'ulama' appointed by the state because, in effect, they are working on behalf of the Imam."

Although the author has not given any reference for his quotation, it is clear that the "state" Shahid al-Thani refers to is a state set up on the basis of Islamic rules and regulations, i.e., an Islamic state. Moreover, al-Thani (Zain al-Din ibn Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Mohammad ibn Jalal al-Din ibn Taqqi al-Din ibn Saleh) was a great *faqih* of the Imami sect. He was born in 1491 and martyred in 1545. As a matter of fact, al-Thani was martyred during the rule of Sultan Salcem because of his opposition to the ruling system. How could such a person advise others to cooperate with the system, when he himself opposed it to the extent that he was martyred by the system?

Shahid-e Awwal was another *faqih* who was martyred during the rule of Barqooq in 1366, due to his opposition to the ruling party.

History is an eloquent testimony to the struggles of Shi'i *'alims* who sacrificed their lives in opposing the illegitimate rulers. In our contemporary history, several Shi'i *'alims* also sacrificed their lives in their struggles against anti-Islamic oppressors. Some of these prominent figures include Shaykh Fazlollah Nuri, Seyed Hassan Moddaress, Navab Salimi, Seyed Mohammad Baqir Sadr and Mostafa Khomeini and many others.

The main discussion of Mr. Ahsanul Haq in his book is about the development of religio-political ideas in Iran from 1941-1979, the period of Mohammad Reza Shah. According to him the period, particularly after the death of Ayatullah Borujerdi in 1961, showed an increase in the clergy's hostile attitude toward the state. The clergy not only practically threw themselves into the political affairs of the country, but theoretically they also started reintroducing various religious concepts in order to make them usable in their struggle against the Shah and the modernization policies of his government.

In the first chapter, the author explains some major events of Iranian history like the "Constitutional Revolution", "nationalization of the oil industry", the "Islamic Revolution" and the role played by the clergy in these events. In the last three chapters he includes the biography and political thoughts of Imam Khomeini, Ayatullah Motahhari and Dr Ali Shariati. I think, if the author had shed some light on the social, political and cultural conditions of Iran, the readers could better understand the significance of these ideas. The concept of leadership (imamate), the occultation and await-

ing of the Imam of the Age, the Islamic government, the guardianship of jurisconsult (*wilayat-e faqih*) and the responsibility of intellectuals were the cornerstone of his discussion. The author divides these religio-political thoughts into three categories:

Reformist Movement

Reformists believe in a gradual, but continuous, process of reform of the society. According to the writer, Ayatullah Morteza Motahhari was one of the most active and prolific writers among the reformist clergy. He was considered as the leader and brains behind reformist activities. Motahhari believed the reconstruction of religious thought is a continuous process. He does not depend upon a single individual revivalist. The process of reconstruction of religious ideas is possible through *ijtihad*. The institution of *marjaiyat* is a means of the survival of religious institutions and Islamic sciences. It is a source through which Islamic sciences progress and solve the unsolved problems.

In Motahhari's view, the incorrect conception of religion was the main cause of degeneration of the Muslim society. He stressed the need for reforming religious practices which had gone wrong, so that religion could play a vital role in creating a sense of responsibility toward society.

In a philosophical discussion of the notion of awaiting the Hidden Imam, he explains two kinds of "waiting" (*intezar*): the positive awaiting and the negative awaiting. The former is constructive while the latter is destructive. Constructive awaiting makes man active, responsible and sensitive. The destructive awaiting, on the other hand, creates rigidity, stagnation and passivity. The positive awaiting led man to the "great hope" of the appearance of the Imam. He also emphasizes, as Ayatullah Beheshti did, that the clergy (*fuqaha*) should not be confined to the traditional juridical problems. Rather they should acquire knowledge and expertise in all branches of knowledge including science and technology and modern philosophy. If a certain number of 'ulama' would have acquired specialization in various branches of knowledge, they would be able to guide the people in all matters of life.

The writer, after explaining the views of Ayatullahs Beheshti, Taleghani, Jaza'eri and some other reformists, concludes that throughout the 1960s, the reformist clergy strove to revitalize the institution of clergy (*ruhaniyat*) by bringing them closer to the people and society. While, on the other hand, they

tried "to combine their reformism with the formulation and dissemination of an "Islamic traditionalist ideology" for the intelligentsia and youth." The net result of their efforts was increasing Shi'i traditionalism in the masses.

Radical Islam

Mr. Ahsanul Haq regards Dr. Shariati as the ideologue and precursor of the Islamic Revolution of 1978-79. He had been an active member of various organizations opposed to the Shah and his government. He mobilized the younger generations of Iran against the monarchy, despotism and imperialism. No one influenced the Iranian youth as much as Dr. Shariati did. He extensively quoted, in his writings and lectures, from contemporary humanists, existentialists and socialists like Aler Camus, Eric Fromm, Sartre, Gurevich and Massignon. Dr. Shariati's studies in sociology helped him to discover some sociological notions in the Qur'an and *ahadith*.

Dr. Shariati emphasizes the need to reinterpret many of the religious dogmas in order to explain Islam as a positive social force that can once again eliminate the "Dark Ages" and bring about the era of enlightenment. Religious tenets are not rigid and inflexible; they are subject to changing interpretations in the light of new developments. He considers *ijtihad* as the tool to reinterpret religious tenets according to exigencies of the changing time. Thus, Dr. Shariati himself tried to give a new sociological interpretation to a number of Islamic terms and precepts such as *tawhid* (unity of God), *Imamate* (leadership), *inazar* (awaiting the Imam of the Age), etc.

The philosophy of history, according to Dr. Shariati, is based upon the story of Cain and Abel. History which, according to him, is the name of continuous social process which had passed through only two stages corresponding to the social structures (*zibbenā*) or two kinds of ownerships and not in six or seven stages as described in the Marxist theories.

The writer has no doubt that Dr. Shariati was influenced by Marx in his sociological thought. He adopted the dialectical method and almost tried to explain Marxism's theory of social change and philosophy of history with slight changes. However, Dr. Shariati was a great critic of Marx's concept of man which, according to him, undermines the spiritual aspect of man and reduces man to a material and economic being. Yet, Dr. Shariati uses dialectical methods in his concept of man also. In his opinion, man is a dialectical being: he is half spiritual in so far as he possesses the spirit of God, and half

material in so far as he is made of clay. He possesses two opposite poles in himself: "God's spirit" and "debased clay". Again, Dr. Shariati claims he derives his ideas from Qur'anic anthropology and the story of creation.

In short, the basic objective of Dr. Shariati was to provide a progressive and revolutionary ideology for the masses to arouse them against despotism of the Shah. Thus, in one of his books he defines Shi'ism as an ideal and perfect party:

"Shi'ism is a perfect party. It is a party which, on the one hand, represents the genuine principles and values of Abrahamic religion; and on the other hand, it is an ideal response for an intellectual to realize his responsibility in leading the society."

Imam Khomeini—The Government of the Just *Faqih*

Imam Khomeini's theory of *wilayat-e faqih* (guardianship of jurisconsult) constitutes an important aspect of contemporary Shi'i religio-political thought. It served as a major ideological justification for the legitimacy of the attempt of the clergy to overthrow the Pahlavi regime and capture the power to establish a theocratic state.

The government of a "just *faqih* (*faqih adl*)" is the only legitimate government on earth and the 'ulama' should strive to establish such a government by overthrowing all tyrant and unjust governments.

According to Imam Khomeini, the *fuqaha* are the heirs of *wilayat* (guardianship) of the awaited Imam. Therefore, if a *faqih adl* establishes a government, it will be obligatory upon every believer to obey him in the same way he obeys the Prophet (s) and the Imams ('a). With regards to the status of the *fuqaha*, vis-a-vis Imams ('a), he says that there is no difference between them as far as the governmental right of both are concerned. But, surely, the status of the Prophet (s) and Imams ('a) are higher than the *fuqaha*'s as far as spiritual status is concerned. Then Imam Khomeini examines a number of traditions and concludes.

a) The *fuqaha* are like the Prophet (s) meaning thereby that they are the successors of the Prophet (s).

b) The *fuqaha* inherit the power of safeguarding the religion and guiding the community on behalf of the Hidden Imam ('a).

c) Their duties include not only interpretation of the revelation, but also establishment of government for the welfare of the community.

d) The establishment of a just government is as incumbent upon the *fajaha* as the interpretation of the *shari'a*.

Finally Imam Khomeini criticizes the '*ulama*' of the past who never tried to establish an Islamic government and "*destruction of the tyrant rulers*": instead, he says, "*a few of them had shown carelessness.*" Hence, such a situation came into being: the influence of Islam in society decreased; the Islamic community was exposed to decadence; the Islamic ordinances remained unexecuted and they have been changed and altered.

Mr. Ahsanul Haq's analysis of development of contemporary Iranian religio-political thought leads us to conclude that although these thinkers' discussions were based on Qur'an and *ahadith*, their understanding of political and social questions were far apart. At the same time, it is necessary to mention that the author's lack of information led him to compare Dr. Shariati's views with those of Ahmad Kasravi. For understanding the importance of Dr. Shariati's position one should consider the cultural situation when he entered into social, political and cultural activities. If persons, like Kasravi and others, unknowingly were criticizing different aspects of Islam and Islamic traditions, on the other hand, Dr. Shariati and Ayatullah Motahhari were defending Islamic principles, history and philosophy through their writings. Both Ayatullah Motahhari and Dr. Ali Shariati reconstructed Islamic thought in the light of the needs of modern times. Whereas Ayatullah Motahhari's discussions on the rights of women in Islam, social justice, determinism and freedom, and natural rights were based on *kalam* and philosophy, Dr. Shariati discussed them with the formulae of sociology and philosophy of history.

In summary, the author's view of dividing Islamic thought into two groups of radical Islam and reformism whose representatives were Dr. Shariati and Ayatullah Motahhari respectively, does not seem to be accurate.

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