

## Editorial

We are grateful to God and pleased to present the final issue of volume 11 of the *Message of Thaqaalayn*. This marks the completion of eleven years of publication of the *Message of Thaqaalayn* and brings hope that God-willing it will continue and become stronger and stronger. Publication of this issue has coincided with the first three months of the Islamic Lunar Calendar 1432 i.e. Muharram, Safar and Rabi‘ al-Awwal. Some of the most important highlights of this season is the anniversary of martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a) and his companions on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram, martyrdom of Imam Sajjad (a) on the 12<sup>th</sup> or the 18<sup>th</sup> or the 25<sup>th</sup> of Muharram, birth of Imam Baqir (a) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Safar, birth of Imam Kazim (a) on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Safar, the Day of Arba‘in which marks the fortieth day after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a) on the 20<sup>th</sup> of Safar, demise of the Prophet Muhammad (s) and martyrdom of Imam Hasan (a) on the 28<sup>th</sup> of Safar, martyrdom of Imam Riḍa (a) on the 30<sup>th</sup> of Safar, martyrdom of Imam Hasan Askari (a) on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Rabi ‘al-Awwal and birth of the Prophet Muhammad (s) and Imam Sadiq (a) on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Rabi ‘al-Awwal.

We have already discussed some of these events in previous issues. Thanks to God, in this issue, we are able to publish the first part of a very informative paper on the Prophet Muhammad (s) whose birth and demise anniversaries have coincided with the publication of this issue. Similar to the previous issues, this issue also contains seven papers on various aspects of Islamic thought.

The first paper is entitled: “Understanding God’s Mercy, Part I.” In this paper, Dr. Mohammad Ali Shomali highlights the importance of divine mercy as that which plays a central role in Islamic spirituality and morality. Dr. Shomali examines the

infiniteness of God's mercy and His aim in creating man as seen in His qualities and actions, in divine sayings, and in the supplications and hadiths of the Ahlul -Bayt (a). As a result of this description, human beings are to aspire to have good deeds. Realizing God's infinite mercy can also ensure the practice of sincerely loving God and extending that love in a person's social sphere. This paper is based on a series of eight lectures given by Dr Shomali in July 2010 on Understanding God's Mercy at the Islamic Centre of England, London.

The second paper is entitled: "Islam, Humanity and Human Values." In this paper, Imam Sayyid Musa Sadr examines the definition of humanness by offering theories given by Greek peripatetics, determinists, socialists, and materialists. He concludes that God is the primary being capable of defining humanness, and offers ways in which humanness can be achieved as stated in the Holy Qur'an. To further elucidate on this topic, Sadr also explains the effect that belief in one God has on a person's spiritual and mental state. Human beings have an honourable status, are created by the best Creator, and are given the opportunity to be God's vicegerent on earth. With this, they are given the choice to be God's righteous servants by enduring life's adversities as a means to develop in various ways, achieve humanness through Islamic morality, and work together as one united body to gain Allah's (swt) pleasure in this world and in the afterlife. This paper was delivered by Imam Musa Sadr at the Sixth Annual Conference of Assembly for Islamic Research (*Majma' al-Buhūth al-Islāmiyyah*) in Cairo, held on March 30<sup>th</sup> 1971. This paper was published in Farsi in *Adyān Dar Khedmat-e Insan* and has been translated from Farsi into English for the *Message of Thaqaalayn* by Mohammad Reza Farajian. Where required, changes have been made by the editing team of the *Message of Thaqaalayn*.

The third paper is entitled: "Taqwa, Part I." In this paper, Ayatollah Murtada Mutahhari demonstrates the importance of taqwa, or self-restraint, as put forth in the Qur'an and *Nahj al-*

*Balāaghah* through explaining its definition, meaning, value, and effect. As a result, Ayatollah Mutahhari clarifies four misunderstandings and concludes: 1) fearing God is in reality fearing His justice and making the heart wary of Him, 2) taqwa is about living a pious life rather than merely performing religious obligations, 3) taqwa is a freedom, not a restriction, and 4) rather than acting upon pragmatic obligations that force one not to sin, true perfection lies in the person's freedom to do wrong and yet he or she refrains from doing so. While knowing that taqwa is a perfect state, it is still to be protected as the entities that weaken taqwa constantly surround people. And as taqwa guarantees a successful afterlife, it also serves as a shield in life's adversities. This paper is based on a lecture delivered by Ayatollah Murtada Mutahhari in 1339/1960 in Farsi, published in *Dah Goftār*. It has been translated into English for the *Message of Thaqaalayn* by Zeynab Rahimi Sabet, Nasibeh Ramezani and Hamideh Farajian. Where required, changes have been made by the editing team of the *Message of Thaqaalayn*.

The fourth paper is entitled: "Khums: A Support for the Financial Independence, Part II." In this paper, Ayatollah Nasir Makarem Shirazi presents an additional explanation of khums by refuting objections to it. These objections and refutations are explained using two categories: 1) khums as presented in hadiths, 2) khums during the absence of Imam Mahdi (a). Ayatollah Shirazi responds to these objections to prove that khums is an obligation and it is to be performed along with the rest of Muslims' duties toward Allah (swt). As seen in some hadiths, the Imams (a) had temporarily forgiven khums only when the Shi'a were under pressure and upon scrutinizing these hadiths, there is no proof that khums is exempted during Imam Mahdi's (a) absence. The Imams (a) emphasized on the payment of khums and had assistants to help manage this income. The *Message of Thaqaalayn* has revised and summarised the English translation of this paper by Bahador Shirazian. God-willing, in the next part, two more issues will be discussed: 1) practice of khums during the dawn of Islam, and 2) distribution of half of it to needy *Sayyids*.

The fifth paper is entitled: “Shi‘ite Authorities in the Age of Minor Occultation, Part II.” In this paper, Huj. Ali Naghi Zabihzadeh studies the personality and role of a great Shi‘a jurisprudents and scholar of haith who led the community during the Age of Minor Occultation (260 -329 A.H) i.e. Muhammad ibn Ya‘qūb Kulayni. This paper is based on the second chapter of *Marja‘iyyat wa Siyāsāt*, vol. 1, published in Qum in 2005 by the Imam Khomeini Education & Research Institute. This paper has been translated from Farsi into English for the *Message of Thaqalayn* by Hamideh Farajian. When needed, changes are made by the editing team of the *Message of Thaqalayn*.

The sixth paper is entitled: “Hijab and Family Life.” In this paper, Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali examines the impact hijab has on keeping the family structure intact. In doing so, he describes the need men and women have for each other as that which God observed in His creation and legislation. In this description, sacredness of marriage, men and women’s essential roles, and the strong society it builds as a result of its practice are explained. The author uses verses from the Qur’an to portray that it merely ensures its observance. Hijab in hadiths have also been used The author uses verses from the Qur’an to show that the Islamic idea of hijab is rooted in the Qur’an. Hadiths on hijab have also been used to demonstrate its adherence by the Ahlul Bayt (a).

The seventh paper is entitled: “A Glimpse of the Character Traits of the Prophet Muhammad, Part I.” In this paper, Ayatollah Sayyid Abu’l-Fadl Mujtahid Zanjani reviews the life and conduct of Prophet Muhammad (s) in a scholarly manner. The paper first appeared in Persian under the title: “*Gush-e’i az Akhlāq-i Muhammad (s)*” (A Glimpse of the Character Traits of the Prophet Muhammad) in the book *Muhammad Khātām-i Payāambarān (Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets)*, Husayniyyah-i Irshād, Tehran, 1347/1968. This volume was published to commemorate the 1400<sup>th</sup> anniversary according to the lunar calendar of the prophecy of Muhammad (blessings be upon him and his household). The paper has been translated from

Farsi into English by Dr Karim Aghili. This translation was first published in *Apostle of God*, edited by Mohammad Ali Shomali, Islamic Centre of England, London, 2009 and is now being republished with slight changes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have contributed to this issue and pray for their success. I would also like to thank the Ahlul Bayt (a) World Assembly and the Islamic Centre of England for their continued support and encouragement. And last but not the least, I thank God the Almighty for His guidance and favours upon us in the past and present and ask request him to help us all achieve a unified worldwide community.

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February 2011

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# **Understanding God's Mercy**

## **Part I**

**Mohammad Ali Shomali**

God's mercy is by far the most frequently mentioned quality of God in the Qur'an. In addition to its theological significance, divine mercy plays a central role in Islamic spirituality and moral outlook. Trying to understand God's mercy followed by trying to be merciful to others form the core of the spiritual journey and moral practice. In this series of articles, we will try to study different aspects of God's mercy with respect to His qualities and actions. Among His actions, we will focus on the creation of man and His plan for human salvation. Of course, our understanding of any quality of God and His mercy in particular is very limited and He is far greater than that which we understand and describe of Him.

### **God's mercy is infinite**

God's mercy has no limit and does not accept any restriction. The only restriction is in our understanding and therefore we may not be able to grasp all aspects of His mercy. His mercy is all-embracing and all-inclusive; nothing falls out of it. In a beautiful supplication which is recommended to be recited after each daily prayer, we say:

اللهم إن مغفرتك أرجي من عملي

O Allah! Your forgiveness gives me hope more than my actions.

However, we need to keep in mind that performing good actions is pertinent. Merely having faith is not enough. Imam Ali (a) said:

لاتكن ممن يرجو الآخره بغير العمل

Do not be like him who hopes for (bliss in) the next life without action.

In order to achieve a good status in the hereafter, one should perform good deeds. But the question is: is it a person's deeds that will be the main factor in saving him and raising him to higher levels in heaven, or is it Allah's forgiveness that does so? As we will see later, it is by His generous reward that our little actions become very significant. This is why we say: "*Your forgiveness gives me more hope than my actions.*" For example, imagine there is a student who is about to take a difficult exam. Although he has studied a lot, he knows that if his teacher marks his paper without leniency he will fail. Despite all his effort, the subject is too difficult for him to learn all there is to know about it.

Then we say to God:

و إن رحمتك اوسع من ذنبي

O Allah! Indeed Your mercy is greater than my sins.

Here the supplicant confesses before Allah that he has committed great and major sins. But how do sins become great? When a person commits a sin he is, in fact, disobeying the Lord of the heavens, the Lord of the earth, and the Lord of whatever is between them. Therefore, even a slight disobedience of such a grand Lord is great. This is not because this person is significant

or that his disobedience harms Allah, but the fact that he dared to disobey such a Lord is by itself a mistake and a great sin. Therefore, from one perspective it can be said that there are no minor sins. However, when comparing the sins with each other, there will be major and minor sins. In any case, though our sins are very large, we have hope in Allah's mercy, which is greater.

Then we say:

اللهم إن لم اكن اهلا ان ابلغ رحمتك فرحمتك اهل ان  
تبلغني و تسعني

O Allah! If I am not qualified to reach your mercy,  
Your mercy is able to reach and embrace me.

It is not that the person who hopes for Allah's mercy is qualified for it. But it is His mercy that is qualified to come and embrace us. Why is it so?

لأنها وسعت كل شيء

Because Your mercy has embraced everything.

As Allah says in the Qur'an:

وَ رَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

My mercy has encompassed everything. (7: 156)

You cannot imagine anything not benefiting from His mercy; otherwise, nothing could have come to existence, and even if so, nothing could have survived. Even the fact that Satan is able to continue his life is due to Allah's mercy. When Satan insisted on his wrong behaviour and was cursed, he requested God to be given time until the day of Resurrection:

قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

My Lord. Respite me until the day they will be resurrected (15:36)

Allah replied:

قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ

You are indeed among the reprieved until the day of the known time. (15:37-38)

Thus, Satan has been given a chance to survive. Of course, this will not continue, as he requested, up to the Day of Resurrection. It will be up to “*the day of the known time.*” There will be a time before the Day of Resurrection when Satan will be stopped. In any case, even Satan benefits from Allah’s mercy. God is even merciful to those who do not believe in Him or dare to fight against Him.

### **The aim of creating human beings**

As we will see later, studying divine attributes and actions and studying the creation of man, guiding him by sending His messages through prophets, and His generous rewards makes it very clear that everything is based on His mercy. Indeed, the entire story of creation can be summarized in a few sentences: The Most merciful God wanted to show His mercy. Therefore, He created this world. He gave His mercy to human beings so that they would become His vicegerents on earth and become a means of His mercy. However, many human beings unfortunately failed. They did not represent Him who is the Most merciful. Instead, many human beings represented the enemy of God. These are *the devils from among humans*<sup>1</sup> who instead of being vicegerents of God, they choose to follow and work for Satan.

Nevertheless, even if a single person actually becomes the vicegerent of the Most merciful God, this world would be very valuable and worthy of being created. One perfect man

overweighs and is much greater than millions of immoral people. Imagine a university in which thousands of students can study, but due to some wrong choices the students make, such as laziness, only one Avicenna or Aristotle has graduated. Isn't it still better to have this university and give people opportunities to develop and flourish and to have at least one Avicenna or Aristotle? As far as Allah is concerned, everyone can become a good person. He has given everyone this opportunity without any limit. Therefore, the existence of people who are lazy or do not want to be good does not mean that the university has to come to an end. The same fact applies to schools, mosques, and other education systems. More importantly, it applies to the entire story of creation.

Undoubtedly there have been many who have become the vicegerents of God. Throughout history, there have been thousands of people who achieved this position. There have been at least one hundred and twenty four thousand Prophets. This is in addition to the infallible successors or holy people who have followed them.

In any case, God wants all mankind to be channels of His mercy to others, and has given them sufficient means and talents to do so. This not only includes people, but also animals, plants or indeed everything that exists, including water, air, and soil.

One important way of becoming merciful is to better understand divine mercy and all that He has done for us. According to a divine saying (*hadith-e Qudsi*) which has been narrated in many sources and from different Imams, such as Imam Baqir (a), Imam Reza (a), and Imam Asqari (a), God set up a propagation strategy for Moses. For example, Imam Baqir (a) says that God told Moses:

قال الله عز و جل: يا موسى. احبني و احببني الي خلقني

Allah says: Oh Moses! Love me and make my people love me.<sup>2</sup>

I believe this can be adopted as a general policy in our life. If a person is able to love Allah and make other people love Him, he will attain all that is good. We should constantly evaluate our performance and progress in this regard. People should evaluate how much they love Allah and how much they have made their children, colleagues, neighbours, relatives, and friends love Allah. The success of any person can be judged by this evaluation. The best people are those who love Allah the most and are able to make others feel the same way. Moses replied:

قال يا رب إنك تعلم أنه ليس شئ أحب الي منك فكيف  
لي بقلوب العباد

My Lord. You know that there is no one more beloved to me than you. However, [tell me] how can I make your love the greatest thing in hearts of Your servants?

Moses knew that as far as he was concerned, he loved Allah more than anyone else. Therefore, what he needed to ask was how to do this with other people. This was his challenge. Of course, for most people even the first part, that is, how to love Allah, may be a challenge. But for Moses, the challenge was the second piece of advice. At this point Allah told him:

ذكرهم نعمائي و آلائي

Remind My servants of My favours and My blessings for them.

In this way, God taught Moses that he did not need to do anything but to tell people about the good things that Allah has done for them. God wanted Moses to remind people of all the blessings they have received from Him.

This is a point which is normally neglected in people's relationships with one another. For example, suppose a teenager approaches you and tells you that his parents do not like him. What would you tell him? Would you not tell him that from the first day he was born and even before that his parents always cared for him? You would basically try to remind him of all the things they have done for him: how his parents supported him, fed him, clothed him, and gave him attention, a good education, and love. If you succeed, he will then feel very sorry. He will tell you that he thought he grew up all by himself.

Thus, Allah told Moses to remind people of the good things He does for them. Explaining why He wants Moses to do so, He says:

فإنهم لا يذكرون مني إلا حسنا

Because they do not remember from Me except good.

God does not harm people and nothing bad has ever come to them from Him. In a supplication which has been taught by Imam Sadiq (a) and recommended to be recited after the daily prayers in the month of Rajab, we say to Allah:

يا من ارجوه لكل خير و آمن سخطه عند كل شر

O the one in whom I can hope for all goodness and I am safe from His anger at every evil.

If one wants to gain something good, he ought to put his hope in Allah. There is no limit in His favour, power, or knowledge. Furthermore, there is no one besides Him. When He is a very kind and generous supplier that can supply you with everything and there is no supplier other than Him, it is irrational to look for someone else. He is the supplier who supplies everything and there is no other supplier. Any claim of having a supplier who is

someone besides Him is false. Everything that people have comes from God. Hence, we shall not go to others and shall have hope only in Him for all that is good.

On the other hand, if anything bad happens to us it should be known that it is not due to a personal problem that Allah has with us. It does not mean that He is angry with us or that He does not love us. Suppose you have a very kind and merciful teacher who loves you very much and has taught you all that you know. With such a teacher, you will know that if you get into any trouble it is not because your teacher has a personal problem with you. Normally when people get good marks they consider it the result of their own effort, but when they receive a bad mark, they fail to take responsibility and blame it on their teacher. The same fact applies in our relationship with Allah. At times when we find ourselves successful in our life, such as having a good spouse, children, education, or a successful business, we believe it to be an outcome of our own efforts. However, if we face a problem, we may relate it to Allah and perhaps blame Him for it. Yet the truth is the opposite. The Qur'an states this point clearly:

مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَ مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنَ نَفْسِكَ

Whatever good happens for you is from God and whatever bad occurs for you is from yourself.  
(4:79)

Similar to the example about the student who owed the teacher his good mark, everyone is dependent on Allah for every good that happens to him. Like the student whose job was to appreciate the efforts made by his teacher and to do some work, everyone has to do the same in his relation with Allah. In our example, if there was any failure, it was obvious that it was the student's fault. The same is true with Allah. Thus, we have to feel safe and know that Allah is not after us to punish or to cause problems.

يا من يؤتي الكثير بالقليل

O the One who gives a lot for the little that we do.

There is no chance of thinking that Allah might give a person less than what he has done. Furthermore, He gives people a lot for the little things they do. The rewards are to an extent that everyone should be fully satisfied. Indeed, everyone will feel embarrassed when they compare what has been given to them to what they have done. And Allah's mercy does not end here. We realise that He takes it a step further when we say:

يا من يؤتي من سأله

O the One who gives to one who asks Him.

Not only does Allah give people a lot for little that they do, He also gives them when they have just asked for it. He gives to those who simply ask Him. However, His mercy does not stop even at this point. We also say:

يا من يؤتي من لم يسئله و من لم يعرفه

O the One who gives to one who does not ask Him and does not know Him.

This refers to the third stage whereby God gives to people even though they have not asked Him and have not known Him.

Suppose there is shortage of jobs and income in a city. Those in charge should be careful to make food available for all people by subsidizing the cost. For example, they can give people packs of food for only one pound. This would satisfy the people, since for just one pound they have received the food they need. After a while, if people run out of money, some will not hesitate to continue asking for food. Those responsible for food distribution will accept and give them a pack of food for free. However, there

are some people who, due to some reason, will not ask for food. If the ones in charge are merciful, they will find them and offer them food. They will do this because they do not want them to die. If people do not come and ask for help, we should go after them.

Allah gives a lot to people because of the little good things they have done. He also gives them a lot for their requests. However, there are many people who do not ask Him and do not even know Him. Still, Allah does not prevent them from His mercy and continues to give them from His blessings. Indeed, in some cases, God may give worldly blessings to the unbelievers more than He gives the believers, because this world is the only thing that they are interested in. According to the Qur'an, had it not been for some believers possibly doubting the truthfulness of their faith, God would have given so much to the unbelievers that they could have made the ceiling of their houses out of gold or silver. The Qur'an beautifully states:

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ  
كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا

Whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it with an endeavour worthy of it, should he be faithful, the endeavour of such will be well-appreciated. (17:19)

One of the names of Allah is *shakur* (the Most Thankful). It is really important to reflect on the thankfulness of God. For example, one interesting point is that Allah thanks those who do good deeds and work for their hereafter without benefiting from their actions. They are simply recipients of His mercy. And yet He thanks them and appreciates their acts. This is for the people who work for the hereafter. However, Allah says that even people who work for the life of this world are also included in His mercy. He does so by helping them achieve what they want.

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا

Whoever desires this transitory life, We expedite for him therein. (17:18)

كَلَّا نُمِدُّ هُوَآءًا وَ هُوَآءًا مِنْ عَطَاءِ رَبِّكَ وَ مَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا

To these and to those—to all We extend the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined. (17:20)

This is like when one supports his children although they might not even like him. Of course, he does not support them in immoral acts; rather, he supports them in the way that they can achieve their good goals while telling them that they are responsible for what they do and are obliged to do good deeds.

Hence, Allah gives to those who have done little good, those who ask Him, those who do not even ask, and more importantly, those who do not even know Him. Now we understand this part of the supplication recommended for the month of Rajab, that reads:

يَا مَنْ يُؤْتِي مَنْ سَأَلَهُ يَا مَنْ يُؤْتِي مَنْ لَمْ يَسْأَلْهُ وَ مَنْ لَمْ يَعْرِفْهُ تَحَنَّنَا مِنْهُ وَ رَحْمَهُ

O He who gives to one who asks Him. O He who gives to one who does not ask Him and does not know Him out of His affection and mercy.

Continuing the supplication, we say:

أَعْطَنِي بِمَسْئَلَتِي إِيَّاكَ جَمِيعَ خَيْرِ الدُّنْيَا وَ جَمِيعَ خَيْرِ  
الْآخِرَةِ وَ اصْرَفْ عَنِّي بِمَسْئَلَتِي إِيَّاكَ جَمِيعَ شَرِّ الدُّنْيَا وَ  
شَرِّ الْآخِرَةِ

Give me, for my request to You, all the good of this world and all the good of the Hereafter. Keep away from me, for my request to You, all the evil of this world and all the evil of the Hereafter.

At this point a question arises: How can one expect this? Asking Allah all the good of this world and the Hereafter and removing all the bad in this world and the hereafter may seem too much and too ambitious. The answer comes as follows:

فإنه غير منقوص ما أعطيت

For indeed it is not diminishing what is given by You.

It should not be thought that this request is too much. When Allah gives something it does not reduce anything from Him. According to our standard it is too much, but for Allah it is nothing. Unlike when a person gives money to someone and his money is reduced, when Allah gives it does not decrease what He has. This is like when you teach something to your friend, not only do you not lose your knowledge, but your knowledge may even grow. Knowing this, we ask Allah:

و زدني من فضلك

Please give me more out of your favour.

This part of the supplication is extremely amazing. After asking Allah to give all the good things in this life and in the hereafter and to keep away all that is bad in both worlds, we still ask Him to give us more. Perhaps this is because there may be things that we have never thought about and therefore could not have actually asked for. We ask Allah not to restrict His bounty to our expectations. We ask Allah to give us whatever He has to give and not only what we need or ask for. This is like what the

Qur'an describes about the people of heaven. They will be given what they like, what they want, and even more:

وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ

and therein will be whatever the souls desire and eyes delight in... (43:71)

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاؤُنَ فِيهَا وَ لَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ

There they will have whatever they wish, and with Us there is yet more. (50:35)

When a person desires something it means that he has understood it first. We know that our understanding is limited. Thus, even if we desire that which we know of, there are still more unknown things that exist. God gives to the people of heaven whatever they wish as well as that which is unknown to them. Assume you have a three year old child. You tell him to ask you whatever he wants. What would he ask you? It will not be more than what older people normally consider insignificant: a few chocolates, biscuits, or some toys, since these are all he can think of. A three year old child will never ask for a house or some money for his higher education fees.

We are like that child to Allah. Our wishes are very little to what He has. He does not restrict His bounty to our request. In heaven, when everyone asks for all that he wants, Allah makes it known that He still has more. There are things that only Allah knows. How can we understand the pleasure that the Prophet Muhammad (s) had while performing his prayers? The greatest pleasures we have in life are very little compared to the pleasure the Prophet experienced. Sometimes when we feel satisfied with our prayer, and we think that the Prophet's (s) prayer must be similar but a bit better. We cannot understand more than that. Only the Prophet (s) himself can understand that. There are many things available that we have never thought about.

In heaven, people can have things similar to what they had in this world. For example, if they want an apple, fig or olive, they can have them. Of course, they would be of heavenly quality. The Qur'an says:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي  
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا  
الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَنْتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ  
مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

And give good news to those who have faith and do righteous deeds, that for them shall be gardens with streams running in them: **whenever they are provided with its fruit for nourishment, they will say, 'This is what we were provided before,' and they were given something resembling it.** In it there will be chaste mates for them, and they will remain in it forever. (2:25)

Thus, with respect to some of the blessings, such as fruits, people would say that they are similar to what they have had before. But there are also things in heaven that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no heart has ever thought of. There are things that Allah has kept hidden as a surprise for the righteous. For example, with respect to those who perform the Night Prayer (*salāt al-layl*), the Qur'an says:

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا  
يَعْمَلُونَ

No one knows what has been kept hidden for them to bring them joy as a reward for what they used to do. (32:17)

There is another version of the conversation between Allah and Moses which has an extra ending after asking Moses to remind people of His bounties so that they love Him. According to this

detailed version, Imam Askari (a) narrates from Imam Sajjad (a) that God told Moses:

فَلَا تَرُدُّ أَبَقاً عَنِ بَابِي أَوْ ضَالًّا عَنِّي فَنَائِي أَفْضَلُ لَكَ مِنْ  
عِبَادَةٍ [مِائَةً] سَنَةً بِصِيَامِ نَهَارِهَا وَ قِيَامِ لَيْلِهَا<sup>3</sup>

If you bring back to Me a servant of Mine who has escaped from Me or someone who has lost his way it is better for you than one hundred years of worship while you fast every day and worship every night.

Allah does not need anyone, but still, out of His mercy, He does not want even a single person to go astray. Then Moses asked:

وَ مَنْ هَذَا الْعَبْدُ الْأَبِقُ مِنْكَ

Oh, Allah! Who is this servant who has escaped?

Allah replied:

الْعَاصِي الْمُنْتَمِرُّ

The one who disobeys Me and does not listen to Me.

Allah wants the sinners to repent and go back to Him. In a divine saying, we read:

لَوْ عَلِمَ الْمَدْبُرُونَ كَيْفَ اسْتَيْقَى بِهِمْ لَمَاتُوا شَوْقًا

If the people who have turned their back on Me knew how much I love them to come back they would have died out of joy.

It can be understood from this narration that whenever a person has a problem in his relation with Allah we have to try to reconcile them. Allah has given us the authority to invite them to

go back to Him. We should never make the separation between a servant and Allah greater by telling him that you are hopeless and have no chance of returning to Him. Unfortunately, some people do this. If someone has a little problem they make it worse. Normally this happens due to a sense of pride in one's good actions and an underestimation of the good qualities and actions the other person may have. Everyone should try to encourage people to go back to Allah and think that they ultimately may be better than him in the sight of God. No one should be pleased with himself, for the one who is a good person and close to Allah today might end up being a vile person and far from Allah.

Then Moses asked:

فَمَنْ الضَّالُّ عَنْ فَنَائِكَ

Who is the one who has lost his way towards You?

God replied:

الْجَاهِلُ بِإِمَامِ زَمَانِهِ يُعْرِفُهُ وَالْغَائِبُ عَنْهُ بَعْدَ مَا عَرَفَهُ  
وَالْجَاهِلُ بِشَرِيعةِ دِينِهِ يُعْرِفُهُ شَرِيعةَهُ وَ مَا يَعْبُدُ بِهِ رَبَّهُ وَ  
يَتَوَصَّلُ بِهِ إِلَى مَرْضَاتِهِ

The one who does not know the Imam of his age, introduce his Imam to him. And to the one who knew the Imam of his age, but missed him. And to the one who does not know the rules and regulations (law) of his own religion, teach him those rules and regulations and the actions by which he can worship his Lord and seek His pleasure.

Therefore, everyone should try to introduce the people to the divinely appointed leader of their age. This is much more significant than introducing someone to his missing father or

mother. Everyone should also try to help people in learning their religion and religious duties.

Thus, the right policy in any discussion about God is to help people further understand and remember His bounties and to love Him more. If, for any reason, their relation with God has suffered, they are to be encouraged to return to Him. It is not right to cause separation between people and God or to describe God in a way that frightens people. Sometimes when people talk to their children in order to make them perform certain religious practices, they use intimidating language and logic. For example, they warn their children that if they do not pray or observe *hijab*, God will send them to hell. Upon hearing this from his or her parents, the children may start thinking of God as someone who would get angry very easily and rushes to severely punish people. It seems that this is not an appropriate attitude. Instead, parents should generate love and gratitude for Allah in the hearts of their children so that the children can feel obliged and be willing to joyfully do something to please Him.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the verse 6:112.

<sup>2</sup> *Mishkat al-Anwar*, Tabarsi, p. 332, (Najaf: Haydariyyah Library, 1385 L.A.H).

<sup>3</sup> *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il*, Muhaddith Nuri, Vo. 12, p 240, (Qum: Ālul Bayt Institute, 1408 L.A.H).

## **Islam, Humanity and Human Values**

**Sayyid Musa Sadr**

### **Defining humanity**

A definition of humanity seems easy to think of yet difficult to propose, and there have been disputes about it among different schools of thought. Most pioneers in social thought and leaders of movements claim that the main feature of their activities is their humanism and humanitarian efforts. To avoid having misconceptions about humanity or sinking in the whirlpool of literal interpretations and logical disputes, we need to first focus on the reality of the human being and his different aspects, and then discuss the derived infinitive word form *humanity*, its meaning, virtues, and functions.

First, human beings are objective beings who are different from other objective beings with respect to freedom of choice, meaning that their actions and behaviours are a result of their reasoning and will, albeit relatively.

Second, human beings are to a large extent affected by their surroundings, that is, the physical environment and other beings.

Third, human beings are social beings who naturally interact with other human beings.

Fourth, human beings are created by God, the Creator of the universe. This relation with God has different dimensions which affect them as persons and all of their relationships.

These four features are like four chapters of the book of humanity. Thus, human values are those basic elements in the nature of human beings which are to be developed by his own efforts. This development is an evolutionary movement in which no part of the human existence harms the others and none of these elements should stop the movement of the human being towards a better state.

These are the outlines for his comprehensive perfection which originate from his very nature. Man's God-given nature and colour are like seeds and potentials which are hidden in him at the beginning of creation and will flourish when man follows the right path.

#### **Alternative theories**

One theory is to deny the first aspect of a human being's nature and assume that the human being is a phenomenon in the whole creation like other phenomena. His freedom and freedom of choice are natural and determined. This theory was commonly believed among the French existentialists and Greek peripatetics.

A second theory is to exclude him from other natural creatures and assume him to be different in soul and body from the material world he lives in, but at the same time, 'subdued by his determined destiny'. This belief is widely held among determinists.

A third theory is to assume the human being as the one who is the base of the society and such a society is nothing but a collection of people. Some Jewish philosophers and radical delegators (*Mufawwidah*) have had ideas similar to this theory.

A fourth theory is to ignore the relation of God with the human being, disregard the human being's dimensions from the beginning to eternity, and ignore his relation with all other creatures in his creation, his role, and his destiny. This idea is held among the materialists and western philosophers who rose

up against scholasticism and religious thoughts. Most socialists and contemporary philosophers believe that nothing beyond matter and metaphysics should have any influence on objective creatures.

If we accept one of these four theories, we will find ourselves against another type of humanity.

### **1. Islam and humanity**

The holy Qur'an emphasizes on the full alignment of religion and humanity:

So set your heart on the religion as a people of pure faith, the origination of Allah according to which He originated mankind; There is no altering Allah's creation; that is the upright religion... (30:30)

Also, the following hadith suggests that Islam is in harmony with the human's nature: "All the born are born with the God-given nature."<sup>1</sup>

When it is said that Islam means to surrender to God, it means whenever something or someone is put in its or his real position in creation, it or he will be a Muslim. Thus, the position for which God has created human being is to achieve humanity and the human being's humanity equals his Islam, i.e., his level of submission to God. A human being is related with God, his own kind, nature, and the whole creation from that natural position. So, a human being's Islam is his humanity. The holy Qur'an emphasizes on the full alignment of religion and humanity. The following verses demonstrate this truth:

So if they believe in the like of what you believe in, then they are certainly guided; and if they turn away, then they are only [steeped] in defiance. Allah shall suffice you against them,

and He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing. The baptism of Allah, and who baptizes better than Allah? And Him do we worship. (2:137-138)

## 2. Who can define characteristics of man?

Defining man and his characteristics cannot be carried out by man himself. There are several reasons for this, the most important of which are listed below:

Firstly, people's understanding of themselves and their feelings is influenced by their social and cultural standpoints, their unique situations, and their worldly interests.

Secondly, people are at various stages of continued development and therefore, they never exactly understand existential dimensions of human beings as they progress and make efforts to reach them.

Thus, if a human being wants to define human dimensions, features and virtues, his definition will be limited or biased to some extent. This leads to a multiplicity of definitions of humanness which causes a human being's goals and purposes to go into a halo of imaginations. But, Allah (swt), the Creator of the human being and the entire universe, is the only Able One to define the human being's characteristics. These characteristics are, in fact, dimensions of one perfect humanity. This is the meaning of necessity of heavenliness, unseenness (*ghaybi*), and absoluteness of religion.

To emphasize on the truth of this issue, we need to refer to the opinions of Islamic scholars. We are also guided by principles such as 'legislative obligations are graceful indicators of intellectual obligations' and 'whatever judgement is made by reason is made by religion and vice versa.'

Thus, we can conclude that Islam is identical with humanity and human values and vice versa.

### **Impact of belief in One God**

The basic of Islamic beliefs is to believe in one God who has the Most Beautiful names and noblest qualities; One who neither begets, nor was begotten. The belief in this core possesses several advantages:

Firstly, it frees the human being from full submission to (worshipping) any natural being or any human being of whatever position and rank, and this freedom saves him from being confined to any material limits.

Secondly, it results in mobilizing all human talents and power for one purpose and saves him from all that destroys his life and activities, such as polytheism, being spoiled, etc.

Thirdly, it leads a human being towards the infinite goal and carves a long and endless path for his ambitions in which he can progress from cradle to grave and even after death. Thus, death does not stop a human's progress towards goals, As mentioned in hadiths, the progress will continue with righteous children, compiling useful books and giving an on-going zakat. If one introduces a good practice to the society and one or more people follow it after one's death, he or she will become more complete and receive more rewards until the day of resurrection.

Fourthly, it will keep one away and safe from other people's troubles and objections so that infinity and immateriality will direct his efforts, activities, and acts of giving.

Fifth, it will mobilize collective power in a competitive harmony and will prevent collective polytheism in order to prevent the society from division and thereby wasting the power of its members. It is stated in the Qur'an: "...and do not be among the polytheists of those who split up their religion and became sects..." (30:31-32)

Sixth, the meaning of “*He neither begat, nor was begotten*” (112:3) will eliminate the effect of personal elements and relations from human value-setting system, because people are equal like a comb’s teeth. Everyone only possesses through his own efforts and no one else’s.

The above-mentioned points prove the effect of belief in the resurrection and in God’s justice, on people’s thinking and views, regardless of whether the person is good or bad, and to whatever extent his goodness or badness is. Moreover, the effect of faith on these elements in knowing human values reflects the following points:

First, the great position of humanity is to take the responsibility in all major and minor works, overt and covert activities. All spoken and unspoken words of a person render him responsible for all his deeds and thoughts. Responsibility is the effect of the human being upon himself and/or others. Thus, taking responsibility results in a high status for the person and it is the reason for his dignity.

Second, it generates a trust in the person’s heart in that his visible and invisible efforts will not be wasted. It assures that if one’s efforts are made sincerely, they will be accepted and rewarded, even if the desired result is not achieved due to an obstacle beyond the person’s control. The Qur’an states in this regard: “*...And whoever leaves his home migrating toward Allah and His Apostle and is then overtaken by death, his reward shall certainly fall on Allah...*” (4:100). Thus, a person who merely attempts to act with sincerity, Allah (swt) will undoubtedly reward him or her. Moreover, Islamic scholars agree upon the fact that even if one has unintentionally made a mistake while he is trying to achieve good deed, he will have a reward before God.

Third, it can be understood from the previous point that believing in resurrection facilitates carrying out a human being’s duty in the progress of the society and his own progress in any

circumstances. A believer would make an effort to achieve that great goal, regardless of the views of those who benefit from the current status of the society. Such a person seeks God's contentment and asks Him for rewards in this life and in the hereafter.

Fourth, people must pay attention to the role of repentance in the reinforcement of human effort, keeping him away from despair and disappointment, and facilitating the making up of past errors.

### **Man is central in Islamic culture**

Islam introduces general concepts based on human values and preserving them for the establishment of the original culture for Muslims and provides a comprehensive view towards the universe and life. One would understand the extent of humanism of Islam's view if he explores it with regards to the human being, life, the universe, society, and other general theoretical concepts unavailable in the domain of science and experience. A human being is very honourable in the Qur'an and higher than many other creatures. He is created by the best Creator in the best form. He is created by God and chosen by Him to be His representative on earth. God has taught him the names and breathed into him of His spirit, ordered the angels to prostrate before the human being and disposed the sun, the moon, the stars, and the day and night for him. A human being is honoured with endless potential for knowledge and the only creature to whom God has granted the potential perfection of supremacy over universal forces and other creatures. A human being is a noble-natured creature who is guided to two ways of good and evil and is inspired with virtues and vices to become perfect in the struggle he is in with the help of his freedom of choice. This feature is exclusive to him among all creatures and this enables him to elevate higher than angels.

Islam's view about death, disease, and disasters is very compassionate and humane. Death is the ornament of life which is like a necklace around a girl's neck that beautifies her. It is the

means of testing human beings and it is a blessing that God tries us to determine which one of us does better deeds.

Death is a gateway to the All-forgiving God who has the best and most eternal things. Death is not the end of man's life. A human being can pass the bridge of death while he is happy with what he is given by God because, as he continues his life by divine sustenance, he is also being given good news about the comforts which he has not yet received. He can have eternal deeds and can eternalize his activities.

However, disease, disaster, and losing properties, people, and children are all tests for people which enable them to develop their talents and to practice patience as well as helping them learn about their real capacity and capabilities, since they belong to Allah and to Him they will return. As well, tragedies, diseases, and natural disasters can act as stimuli for knowing them, avoiding their disastrous consequences, and learning to control them to a possible extent. According to what has been mentioned above, they all create the divine school which makes human knowledge develop. In the Islamic view, the future belongs to pious people and victory belongs to God's friends and God wants the abased to inherit and lead the earth. The fruit of such a look is a positive feeling and believing in victory and success. The universe is a big altar where everything prostrates before God, praises Him, prays to Him, and seeks refuge before Him. Everything in this world is created based on order, size, and value. Such a view will have a positive effect on a human being's activities and efforts.

### **Society in Islam**

The structure Islam proposes for the society of the faithful is among the most important cultural elements of Islam and is the most effective support for human values.

In Islam, society is to be a united body where conflict and ranking based on social class has no place. It consists of people having different skills and capabilities who at the same time are connected, exchange services, and collaborate with one other. Every one of these members becomes complete and grows through interaction and exchange with others. Society is made from them and for them. Thus, it is a model of a human being and not just made of one of a human's dimensions. It is not a model of one individual or social dimension. If only one of his dimensions improved, that dimension would become a means of dominance and considerable pressure over one specific dimension and would lead to the distortion of human's reality and disfiguring of his real face.

The society is a system formed of different kinds of people. In an Islamic society, no one has any advantage over another. No class has superiority over another, no race has any advantage over another, and no group has any advantage over another. Even the majority has no advantage over the minority or vice versa; the society is simply for the human being. Such a society is built for all people and it is not set up such that only some of man's dimensions and potentials grow. This society pays attention neither just to individualism and nor to social issues only such that it gives up on individual issues. It neither ignores the body nor the soul. Therefore, there is no monasticism in Islam. The society is equivalent to all people. It enables the improvement of their skills and provides the opportunity for everyone's positive capabilities to develop.

In the Islamic view, the difference and variety of nations in the world is to know each other to foster collaboration: this leads to the perfection of human beings in the world and nations' difference is exactly like people's difference in the society. The human being's dependence on the things around him or those belonging to him restrains him from feeling any form of superiority, whether it is racial, hierarchal, and so forth.

Nationality, tribe, and family are not worthy of worship and must not become like idols. One cannot develop one of them and ignore other people's interests as a result. Wealth, like other facilities, is available to people and it is not meant for ruling over anyone. Wealth is a trust and gift from God for the benefit of mankind and therefore, what is the most fundamental is the human being and not wealth or means of production. Thus, in Islamic economy, human resources are the primary and most important factor of production. The labour can share in the profit made without being liable to any loss, while the investor has liability for losses. Also, labour may have a fixed wage, but setting a fixed increment for the capital is considered as usury and is forbidden.

Islamic rulings in social economics are full of humanistic directions. At the same time, Islam tries to prevent money from controlling human beings or just remaining among the rich ones.

With respect to dominance, Islam rejects any kind of natural or hereditary dominance of some people over others except the dominance of legitimate guardians over the weak and unable ones. The only legitimate dominance is the one that originates from God or is based on agreement and consensus of people themselves. Government is a trust and not a privilege. Furthermore, when people entrust power to a government this will be valid only if all conditions of a contract are provided such as freedom of choice, maturity, and awareness. People must not be forced to choose a government or be misinformed about the performance of governors, etc.

An Islamic society is the one in which a very productive ground for preserving human values and their promotion exists.

### **Morality in Islam**

Morality is the great goal of religious teachings and the main factor in forming a religion. In the Islamic moral system, there is

a severe opposition to those factors that inhibit people from connecting with other creatures, such as fear, and those which prevent people from communicating and interacting with one another, such as cruelty, hard-heartedness, and vanity. These qualities cause a sense of self-sufficiency that prevents one from interacting with others. It also produces an arrogance that creates a barrier to receiving divine blessings and makes it difficult for others to benefit from an arrogant person. The Islamic moral system includes foundations of human values and the paths to achieve and preserve them.

### **Islamic rulings safeguard values**

Islam does not ignore human needs. Nor does Islam ask people to ignore or oppose them. There is no monasticism in Islam. Islam considers the way and means of meeting such needs as divine blessings and fulfilling them with good intentions as worship. Islam has regulated and defined limits for meeting these needs so that all dimensions of a human being are considered and his capabilities are protected; otherwise, God has created all creatures on earth for human beings and rejects the inhibition of ornaments and the *halal* (permitted) sustenance He has created for them.

On the other hand, one can call the categorization of the above-mentioned needs as permitted and prohibited as *Islamic mysticism* (*tasawwuf*). A person would not take a step to fulfil his needs unless he is sure of divine satisfaction about his act. In doing so, he would be kept safe from going astray by following his own desires, which are mostly reflections of the surrounding material world. In fact, this mysticism is completely different from the known mysticism which is based on disregarding all desires in order to purify the self and perfect the soul. This mysticism keeps the human being safe from getting used to follow his own desires and whims. The human being is asked to be active and effective in his environment rather than passive and to be the driving factor

of development and promotion. Achieving this goal is not fulfilled by drowning in desires.

In addition to the cases and causes of permitted and prohibited issues in Islam, what is interesting is that Islam interprets the permissible as the pure and pleasant and the prohibited issues as loathsome. This shows that the human being by himself is considered as an honoured and pure being.

It is difficult to represent Islamic rulings and investigate their effects on preserving human values in this short paper. So, I suffice to bring some examples and end this discussion.

Acts of worship, obligations, and prohibitions are conditional upon one's power and ability. When severe distress and intolerable difficulties are involved, legal issues may be cancelled, and the same can be understood from the rule of negation of harming and being harmed (*lā ḍarara wa lā ḍirāra fi'l-Islam*). Unawareness, force, emergency, mistake, and forgetfulness can all be factors that absolve someone from responsibilities. Working is considered as an act of worship; so is communication and fulfilling family and social tasks in order to keep their sanctity and human-orientation. Interactions among people and groups in all forms become humane and these issues are even demonstrated in rulings of war.

The items mentioned here are just examples of how Islam protects human concepts and values which I humbly offer here. I stress that fact that every headline of this article is by itself a topic in the holy Qur'an that can be studied separately and that the unity of Islam with humanity and human values confirms the expansion of this discussion. Indeed, it proves the necessity of investigating this topic in Islamic sciences in the form of a complete encyclopaedia. I hope that God, the One who established the legislation of Islam and created man, accepts this effort of mine which has a very little value in His presence.

<sup>1</sup> *Usūl al-Kāfī*, Sheykh Muhammad Kulayni, vol. 2, p. 12.

# Taqwa

## Part I

**Murtada Mutahhari**

*“Is he who founds his building on God wariness and [the pursuit of Allah's] pleasure better off or he who founds his building on the brink of a collapsing bank which collapses with him into the fire of hell? And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing lot.” (9:109)*

### **The term taqwa**

Taqwa is the Islamic concept of having self-restraint. It is used 251 times in the Holy Qur'an as either a noun or a verb. The term taqwa comes from the Arabic root “*wa-qa-ya*” which means “protection” or “support.” Taqwa is not meant to mean “fear” or “avoidance”, but because having fear is a prerequisite to protecting oneself from something and to avoid it, it may sometimes refer to having fear. Also, since protection from something requires a feeling of fear alongside it, it may in some cases metaphorically refer to “avoidance” or “fear”. Both meanings are accurate although there is no evidence to confirm that this metaphorically means “fear” or “restraint.” While it is widely believed that the commands *ittaqu'llah* means “fear Allah” and *ittaqunnar* means “fear fire,” these commands actually refer to protecting oneself from Allah's punishment and

the harm of fire. Moreover, those who practice self-control by refraining from acting upon desires that require patience and a resolute attitude are called *muttaqeen*, which is an Arabic term for “those who practice taqwa.”

It is important to note that taqwa is not about performing religious obligations such as prayer and fasting: it is about living a pious life. A person possessing taqwa abandons living an animalistic life and chooses to live a moral one. Though there are other definitions of it, such as social and political taqwa, religious taqwa has a more superior and elevated status. It is only on the basis of religion that a person can create a well-grounded taqwa in himself. As stated in the Qur’an:

Is he who founds his building on God wariness and  
[the pursuit of Allah's] pleasure better-off or he  
who founds his building on the brink of a  
collapsing bank... (9:109)

In his *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur’an*, Rāghib says that the meaning of the word *wa-qa-ya* is to protect something against everything which may damage it and taqwā means to put the soul under protection against whatever threatens it. However, sometimes according to the rule of using the cause instead of the effect and vice versa, the words fear and taqwā are used interchangeably. In religious law, taqwā means keeping one’s self from whatever leads him to commit sins so that he refrains from prohibited acts. Rāghib explicitly says that taqwā simply means to protect oneself. He also says that this word can be translated as fear and does not denote that in the example of *ittaqu’llah* the metaphoric meaning is intended. And as we said, there is no reason to affirm that in such sentences any metaphor is used. The strange thing is that this word is translated as restraint (*parhizkari*) in Farsi. It has never been seen that any linguist ever claims that this word is used in this meaning. As it was mentioned before, Rāghib translated this word as fear but did not use it as restraint. It is not certain where, when, and why this

word became translated as piety in Farsi. I suppose that only Farsi-speaking people get the meaning of restraint from the word taqwā. No Arabic-speaking person understands this word in this way. There is no doubt that in practice, the prerequisite of having taqwā and self-protection for something is to avoid it, but it does not mean that the word “taqwā” has this meaning.

### **Fear of God**

It is necessary to understand that it is not expected for one to harbour negative thoughts of God when fearing Him. God is not meant to be viewed as an abominable or frightening entity. Rather, God is absolute perfection and the best source for a human being to love. The concept of human beings having to fear God actually refers to fearing the rule of divine justice. This notion is seen in the following supplication:

يا من لا يرجى الا فضله ، و لا يخاف الا عدله

O Who is not hoped but for His favour, and is not feared but His justice.<sup>1</sup>

The notion of fearing His justice is seen in another supplication:

جللت ان يخاف منك الا العدل ، و ان يرجى منك الا  
الاحسان و الفضل

You are too great to be feared but Your justice,  
and to hoped but for Your beneficence and  
favour.<sup>2</sup>

Justice in itself is not a vile entity. Fearing justice actually alludes to fearing oneself because of his past wrongs or a person fears that he may break the limit and violate other people’s rights in the future. As for the issue of fear and hope where a believer must always be hopeful and optimistic while simultaneously fearful and worried, it means that he must always be fearful of

transgressing in following his unquenchable desires so that they never take the rein of his affairs from his reasoning and his faith, while at the same time he must be hopeful and confident in God, and to rely on God who will always help him. Imam Ali ibn Husayn (a) states in the well-known Du'a of Abu Ḥamzah Thūmālī:

إذا رأيت مولاي ذنوبي فزعت و إذا رأيت كرمك طمعت

O My Lord! When I look at the sins I have committed, I become fearful and when I look at Your generosity, I harbour hope.<sup>3</sup>

### **The meaning of taqwa**

Taqwa is the prerequisite for a person who wants to live his life by certain principles, whether they are religious or not, and he is to have a clear direction in order to move towards a specific goal. In doing so, he is to protect himself against transitional desires inconsistent with his goals and principles. Thus, taqwa in a broader sense is a requirement for everyone who wants to be a true human being, live under control of reason, and follow certain principles. In religious context, taqwa is the quality of those who protect themselves from all that is considered by religion as wrong and sinful. In stating this, there are two kinds of taqwa: the first is just to avoid facing situations, in which sins may take place and this is the quality of the weak people and leads to seclusion and isolation, while the second is to face challenges and remain persistent and this is the quality of those who are strong in their faith and can play an active role in society.

According to the first type, a person protects himself from sins by refraining from a situation that leads to committing one. This is similar to a person who avoids an infested environment to protect his health. According to the second type, a person creates a state and power in his soul that gives him a spiritual and moral security. That is, if he does find himself in a situation where the

means and causes of sin are around him, that spiritual state protects him and prevents him from committing sins. This is similar to a person who creates a medical immunity in his body so that the microbes of the diseases have no effect on his health.

Now, laymen consider taqwā to be the first type. For those who are said to have taqwā, it usually means that he is a cautious man who secludes himself in an isolated corner and refrains from the causes of sin. It has been understood this way because the word taqwā has always been translated for us as abstinence. Moreover, abstinence from sin has been gradually construed as avoiding the grounds for sins; later on the meaning changed into isolation and avoiding society. Thus, when this word is heard in ordinary conversation, a state of avoidance and reluctance comes to mind.

Though the prerequisite of leading a reasonable life is to follow specific principles, it is not wise to avoid social life in doing so. The key to living the right way is to create a state of immunity in our soul that eventually protects us. Sa'dī, in his famous book of poetry *Gulistan*, says:

*I beheld an illustrious man in a mountain region*

*Who had contentedly retired from the world into  
a Cave*

*Why, said I, comest thou not into the city*

*For once to relax the bonds of thy heart?*

*He replied: 'Fairy –faced maidens are there.*

*When clay is plentiful, elephants will stumble.'*<sup>4</sup>

In the above poem, the man who secluded himself in the mountains refrains from returning to the city because of the “fairy-faced maidens” who may eventually cause him to “stumble.” This is the first kind of “taqwa”. However, it is not to

a person's advantage to keep himself away from a slippery surface to refrain from slipping. Better than that is to know how to walk on it without losing his balance. Baba Taher says:

*Beneath the tyranny of eyes and heart I cry,*

*For, all the eyes see, the heart stores up:*

*I'll fashion me a pointed sword of steel,*

*Put out mine eyes, and so set free my heart.*

Undoubtedly, our heart will be captivated by everything our eyes fall upon. However, blinding ourselves is not our only option. A better way is to create a power in our heart so that our eyes do not captivate our heart. If we want to make a dagger with an iron point to release our heart from our eyes, we need another dagger for our ears because everything our ears hear, our heart turns to it. The same goes for the senses of tasting, touching, and smelling. In this case, a human being becomes like a lion without a tail, belly, and head which Mulawi (Jalal al-Dim Rumi) described in his story in *Mathnawi*.

### **Pragmatic enforcement**

In some books on spirituality, reference is made to some people who used some practical method to force themselves to abide by divine law. For example, they used to put pebbles in their mouths to control their tongue from over-speaking or engaging in idle and/or prohibited talk. Usually this type of approach is taken to represent the perfect example of piety. However, imposing pragmatic obligations on oneself in order to refrain from committing sins does not necessarily mean one has perfected himself. If we succeed in doing so and abstain from committing sins, indeed, we have refrained from committing sins, yet our soul has not changed. It is simply inactive because it has no means to commit wrong.

Thus, true perfection lies in a person's freedom to do wrong and yet he chooses to refrain from sinning without practically imposing anything on himself. These kinds of preventions may be considered perfection only when they are seen as preliminaries to primary stages of creating the attribute of piety. That is because piety can be created after a course of opposing practices against wrong acts. But the real essence of piety is far from these practices. It is the great and potent holy state of the soul that supports and protects human beings. One has to struggle to achieve the true essence of piety.

### **Taqwa in *Nahj al-Balaghah***

The word "taqwa" is emphasized in the compilation of sermons and sayings of Imam Ali (a) collectively known as *Nahj al-Balaghah*, and it has always been used to mean the habit of strengthening and taming the evil-prompting soul with its unquenchable desires. In this book, Imam Ali (a) is quoted to have said:

إن تقوى الله حمت اولياء الله محارمه و الزمت قلوبهم  
مخافته حتى اسهرت ليالهم و اظمأت هواجرهم

Certainly fear of Allah has saved the lovers of Allah from the unlawful and has given His dread to their hearts till their nights are passed in wakefulness and their noons in thirst.<sup>5</sup>

In this passage, Imam Ali (a) clearly explains the meaning of "taqwa" as a spiritual state which saves people from committing sins and considers fear of God as one of its results. Thus, taqwa does not mean "to fear" but one of the consequences of it is that it makes the hearts wary of Allah. As stated in the beginning, *ittaqu'llah* does not mean the command to "fear God". In another hadith, Imam 'Ali (a) says:

ذمتى بما أقول رهينه و انا به زعيم. ان من صرحت له  
العبر عما بين يديه من المثلات حجزته التقوى عن تقحم  
الشبهات . . . الا و ان الخطايا خيل شمس حمل عليها  
اهلها و خلعت لجمها فتقحمت بهم فى النار الا و ان  
التقوى مطايا نذل حمل عليها اهلها و اعطوا ازمته  
فاوردتهم الجنة

The responsibility for what I say is guaranteed and I am answerable for it. He to whom experiences have clearly shown the past exemplary punishments (given by Allah to peoples) is prevented by piety from falling into doubts... Beware that sins are like unruly horses on whom their riders have been placed and their reins have been let loose so that they would jump with them in Hell. Beware that piety is like trained horses on which the riders have been placed with the reins in their hands so that they would take the riders to Heaven.<sup>6</sup>

In this sermon, the definition of taqwa is to control or to dominate the soul. A person who is not strong enough to disobey his desires and surrenders his control to his soul is likened to an unskilled rider on an unruly horse who lacks willpower. The prerequisite of taqwa and self-control is increasing one's willpower and having a spiritual and rational personality, like a wise horseman who skilfully rides his horse, and his horse, in turn, quickly obeys him. The person who is riding the unruly horse of desires, lust, avarice, and ambition is dependent on these vices and lets his reins of will slip away from his hands would not be controlled by wisdom and insight. As for the one reliant upon taqwa, it is like he is riding the horse of self-control and holds the reins of will. He handles himself in all directions. In this regard, Imam Ali (a) says:

فان التقوى فى اليوم الحرز و الجنة و فى غد الطريق الى  
الجنة

Certainly, for today piety is a protection and a shield, and for tomorrow (the Day of Judgment) it is the road to Paradise.<sup>7</sup>

The Imam (a) expands on piety by presenting a very moving example:

ان التقوى دار حصن عزيز و الفجور دار حصن ذليل لا  
يمنع اهله و لا يحرز من لجأ اليه

Know, O creatures of Allah, that piety is a strong house of protection while impiety is a weak house which does not protect its people, and does not give security to him who takes refuge therein.<sup>8</sup>

Here, piety (taqwa) is likened to a strong house of protection.

In yet another well-known sermon, titled “The Pious” (*al-Muttaqīn*), Imam Ali (a) responds to the request of Hammām ibn Shuray who had asked him (a) to describe who the pious are, so much so that he could clearly visualize them. At first, Imam Ali (a) gave a brief answer; however, Hammām was not contented and insisted the Imam (a) expand on it. Thus, the Imam (a) answered giving more than one hundred spiritual characteristics and mental and moral qualities of the pious. According to historians, as soon as the Imam (a) ended his speech, Hammām was so impressed that he cried out and passed away.

Thus, it is clear that taqwa is a spiritual state which is like a fortress, amulet, or a trained horse for the soul. In short, taqwa is a spiritual power.

### **Taqwa: freedom or restriction?**

Taqwa is not a restriction; it is a protection. Even if we call taqwa a restriction, then this restriction is truly a protection. Just as it is erroneous to call a house a restriction even though it is built with walls, rooms, solid doors, and windows to keep its inhabitants safe from harmful weather and to keep its furniture and equipment in safe areas, taqwa, like a house, is a protection. We can call something a restriction when it deprives us of a gift or happiness, but something that averts dangers from us and protects us against them is a safety, not a restriction.

In the Qur'an, taqwa is defined as a garment in that it protects the body from the cold and hot weather in the same way a house protects people. In the Qur'an, after mentioning the clothing for body, it is stated:

O' Children of Adam! We have certainly sent down to you garments to cover your nakedness and for adornment. Yet the garment of piety—that is the best. That is [one] of God's signs, so that they may take admonition. (7:26)

In providing guidelines for having taqwa, Imam Ali (a) states in one of his sermons:

الا فسونوها و تصونوا بها

...you should take care of it and take care of yourselves through it....<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, Imam Ali (a) holds that piety is a great cause of freedom. He states:

فان تقوى الله مفتاح سداد و ذخيره معاد و عتق من كل ملكه و نجاه من كل هلكه بها ينجح الطالب و ينجو الهارب و تنال الرغائب

Certainly, piety is the key to guidance, provision for the next world, freedom from all types of slavery, and deliverance from all ruin. With its help the seeker succeeds and he who makes for safety escapes and achieves his aims.<sup>10</sup>

Taqwa helps one to reach his goals and protects him against his enemies. In the first place, taqwa gives human beings freedom in moral and spiritual issues, frees him from the chains of slavery of long desires, and gives him a relief from the sufferings of greed, envy, lust, and anger. It also indirectly gives him social freedom. Servitude and slavery in society are the results of spiritual slavery. One who is a slave and obedient to wealth and position cannot live free socially. Hence, it is true to say that taqwa gives human beings “freedom from all types of slavery.” Thus, not only does taqwa not have a chain or restriction, but it is in fact freedom itself.

### **Protecting one’s taqwa**

Thinking of taqwa as a fortress and protector might make some people proud and ignorant and they would suppose that a person who has taqwa never makes a mistake. This may result in never noticing the great risks for taqwa. But the fact is that, although taqwa is a perfect state, it involves some danger as well. It is not impossible for a person to live under the protection of taqwa and at the same time, he himself protects taqwa too. Imam Ali (a) has referred to both kinds of protection in the following sentence: “You should take care of it and take care of yourselves through it!” Thus, we must protect taqwa and it should protect us. Also, we must seek proximity to God through taqwa and also ask God to provide us with it. Imam Ali (a) also stated:

اوصيكم عبادالله بتقوى الله فانها حق الله عليكم و الموجه  
على الله حاكم و ان تستعينوا عليها بالله و تستعينوا بها  
على الله

I advise you, O' creatures of Allah, that you should have fear of Allah because it is a right of Allah over you and it creates your right over Allah, and that you should seek Allah's help in it, and its help in (meeting) Allah.<sup>11</sup>

However, the dangers that weaken taqwa must be taken into consideration. It is seen in religious rulings that taqwa is known as a guaranteed protection and immunity against many sins, but there are some limits for the other sins which are more appealing. For instance, it is not stated in religious rulings that being alone in a place where there is a tool used for robbery, drinking wine, or homicide, is forbidden. Or it is not forbidden to be alone in a house at night, in which there are no obstacles for a person if he wants to drink wine. Faith and taqwa will guarantee him protection. But as for the sexual instinct which is stronger and more provocative, taqwa does not guarantee it and it is forbidden to be alone with the opposite sex because the sexual instinct is a danger that can destroy taqwa even though taqwa is so strong. There is a verse in a famous poem of Hafiz that whenever I come to it, the issue I have mentioned comes to my mind, as if Hafiz wanted to state this spiritual fact in the very sweet way of his own:

*Of coins, is it that they examination take*

*So that, after their own work, all the cloister-holders take?*

*In my sight, the counsel is that all work, friends*

*Should let go; and, the curl of the tress of a friend take.*

*The tip of the Saki's tress, happily the companions take:*

*If the sky permits them, a little rest they take.<sup>12</sup>*

Then he says:

*To lovely ones, boast not of the strength of thy arm  
of chastity.<sup>13</sup>*

*For, among this tribe, with a single mounted one, a  
fortress, they take.<sup>14</sup>*

In the above verse, taqwa is likened to a fence, just as Imam Ali (a) had described. Then, it is said that the power of “the lovely ones” is much more than this fortress and no one can cast it in their teeth. In this corps, even a single rider can conquer a fence, and collective attack is not needed.

### **The value and effect of taqwa**

In addition to the dramatic effects of taqwa in the afterlife and the fact that it is the only way of salvation for human beings from everlasting wretchedness, taqwa has many other values and effects in this worldly life. Imam Ali (a), who emphasized taqwa in his instructions and urged people towards it in a very outstanding way, has referred to numerous outcomes of taqwa. For example, he stated:

عتق من كل ملكه و نجاه من كل هلكه

Freedom from all types of slavery, and deliverance  
from all ruin.<sup>15</sup>

Or elsewhere, he stated:

فَإِنَّ تَقْوَى اللَّهِ دَوَاءٌ دَاءِ قُلُوبِكُمْ وَ بَصْرٌ عَمَى أَفْئِدَتِكُمْ وَ  
شِفَاءٌ مَرَضِ أَجْسَادِكُمْ وَ صِلَاحٌ فَسَادِ صُدُورِكُمْ وَ طُهُورٌ  
دَنَسِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ وَ جِلَاءٌ عَشَا أَبْصَارِكُمْ وَ أَمْنٌ فَرَعِ جَاشِكُمْ وَ  
ضِيَاءٌ سَوَادِ ظُلْمَتِكُمْ

Certainly, fear of Allah (taqwa) is the medicine for your hearts, sight for the blindness of your spirits, the cure for the ailments of your bodies, the rectifier of the evils of your breasts, the purifier of the pollution of your minds, the light of the darkness of your eyes, the consolation for the fear of your heart, and the brightness for the gloom of your ignorance.<sup>16</sup>

In fact, Imam Ali (a) holds that taqwa is beneficial for all the difficulties and hardships of human beings. In fact, if we do not merely consider the negative aspect for taqwa and think of it in the same way as Imam Ali (a) did, we must agree that taqwa is one of the pillars of a person's life, whether in one's personal or social life, and that the basis of life would be unstable without it. The value of something becomes clearer when it is known whether or not something else could replace it. Taqwa is one of the necessary components of life because nothing, whether it be power, money, or law-making, can replace it.

Among our daily problems is the existence of too many rulings and regulations which continually change. Laws and regulations are created for special issues and then they are changed and new ones are made. However, laws are not enough to reform the society. Of course, there is no doubt that law itself is also a fact of life. Aside from general divine laws, people need a series of civil laws. But societies are not entirely reformed by them. Restrictions are introduced by the law; thus, people should have a kind of power to see the value of these restrictions and to accept them. This faculty is called taqwa. It is said that the law should be respected. This is true, but if the principles of taqwa are not applied, can we still expect people to observe all the laws and regulations all the time? For instance there are some problems in our life which are officially discussed and in the media people are asked to suggest their solutions for them. The increasing number of people getting a divorce, the revision of the election system, and traffic regulations are some of them. Though I may not know

all the reasons for the increase in the number of divorce, I do know that losing taqwa is a major reason. If people did not lose taqwa and were not so unrestrained, we would not have such a high number of divorces. In the past, people had more difficulties and needs in their lives, but due to their commitment to religious and moral values, there were less cases of divorce. Certainly, the problems we see in family life today are more than in the past. Taqwa and faith can solve many of them. Today, we have lost them and although our resources today are better than in the past, we face more problems. Considering the rise in the divorce rate, we can try to decrease it using the force of increasing the restrictions of the law for men and women, using the force of the regulations, the administration of justice, executive power of the government, and by changing regulations and laws. However, all of these options will not solve the main problem.

Regarding the issue of elections, we see that some people insist on the view that problems in elections have arisen from flaws in the election law that have been created during last fifty years and are not compatible with today's needs. I am not going to defend the present election law. It certainly has defects. But do people act even according to the current law? Is the current law the cause of corruption? Or is corruption happening because people do not act even according to current law, and no one considers any limit for himself or gives others any rights. Would the current law allow anyone to enter a city and forcefully tell them "I am your representative whether you accept it or not?" while people of that city have never seen or heard of his name before? Such corruptions cannot be stopped by simply developing or changing the law. It is only possible when there is a kind of awareness, faith, and taqwa among the people.

Finally, regarding the lack of commitment toward traffic laws and speeding, does the problem exist because of existing regulations or because of something else?

Nowadays, we are frequently facing many social issues. People ask why the divorce rate is rising and why people commit crimes such as robbery and murder. Why has cheating become common? Why has prostitution become common? It is the weakness of faith and the destruction of the fortress of taqwa that cause such corruptions. It is very strange that there are people who speak and write about these questions frequently, but they themselves cut down the roots of these concerns from the souls of the people and lead them into moral anarchy, into destruction of foundation of taqwa, and into impairing the immunity of taqwa because they essentially do not believe in it. If there is no faith and taqwa - we take refuge with God - people become more vulnerable and may even consider stealing, cheating, and committing crimes as acceptable acts.

### **Taqwa and health**

As said above, Imam Ali (a) has stated about taqwa:

Certainly, fear of Allah (taqwa) is ... the cure for the ailments of your bodies...<sup>17</sup>

It might be asked what is the relationship between taqwa (a spiritual issue) and physical health? Of course, taqwa is not a tablet and medicine, but if taqwa does not exist, a physician is not good enough to heal the ailment of someone who is in need of taqwa. A person who has taqwa is satisfied with his limits and his rights, feels calm and confident, and has inner peace. This results in a healthier heart; tensions will not cause him to suffer from stomach ulcers and from pain in his intestines. He will not become weak and infirm because of being liberal in sexual relations. The well-being of his body, social life, and spirit all depend on taqwa.

### **Taqwa and insight**

Taqwa leads to clear-sightedness and insight as it is stated in the holy Qur'an:

...If you are wary of Allah, He shall appoint a criterion for you... (8:29)

This verse illustrates that insightfulness is among the important effects of taqwa and we can say that this has paved the way for the mystic journey.

### **Taqwa and deliverance**

The other effect of taqwa is that the one who has it can get himself out of predicaments and hardships. The Qur'an says:

...And whoever is wary of Allah, He shall make a way out for him and provide for him from whence he does not reckon. And whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him. Indeed Allah carries through His command. Certainly Allah has set a measure for everything. (65: 2-3)

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<sup>11</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 92, p. 439.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, vol. 99, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Misbah* by al-Kaf 'ami, p.588.

<sup>4</sup> *Gulistan*, Sa'di, Ch.V, Story no. 17, trans. by Sir Edwin Arnold.

<sup>5</sup> *Nahj al-Balaghah*, Sermon 114.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, Sermon 16.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*. Sermon 189.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*. Sermon 155.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*. Sermon 233.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*. Sermon 228.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*. Sermon 190.

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<sup>12</sup> *Ghazal of Hafez Shirazi*. Original translation by Henry Wilberforce Clarke (1840-1905) [vol. II, p. 387, Ghazel no. 209 (253), 1891.] Part 2 (version 1.03) Compiled and Corrected by Dr. Behrouz Homayoun Far, Ghazal no. 185, p.172. An online version can be found at:

<http://www2.enel.ucalgary.ca/People/far/hobbies/iran/hafez.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Hafiz uses the term “*parhiz*” which means here taqwa:

قوت بازوی پرهیز به خوبان مفروش      که در این خیل حصاری به سواری گیرند

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Sermon 228.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Sermon 197.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

# **Khums: A Support for Financial Independence**

## **Part II**

**Nasir Makarem Shirazi**

In the previous part, we referred to the significance of khums in meeting the financial needs of the Muslim society and evaluated the arguments made by those who oppose khums as envisaged in Shi'i jurisprudence. Defining necessary terminology, using Qur'anic verses, Sunni and Shi'a hadiths, and quoting exegetes, we tried to illustrate the fact that khums applies to more than war booties in the Qur'an and that it has undeniably been collected by the Prophet (s), the Imams (a), and the Caliphs. In this part, we will refer to more hadiths on khums and evaluate the objections made by those who restrict khums to war booties.

### **Further analysis of hadiths on khums**

Cavillers attempted to generate doubt using hadiths on khums through misleading objections. Below are five hadiths on khums, each including the disputants' objections and clarifications of their false ideas.

#### **1. Hadith of Mohammad ibn Ash'ari**

Some have objected the following hadith of Mohammad ibn Ash'ari by stating that the question and answer in this hadith are incompatible. The hadith is as follows:

كتب بعض اصحابنا الى ابي جعفر الثاني عليه السلام  
اخبرني عن الخمس. اعلى جميع ما يستفيد الرجل من  
قليل و كثير من جميع الصّروب و على الصّناع و كيف  
ذلك؟ فكتب بخطه عليه السلام: الخمس بعد المؤونة.

One of our companions wrote to the ninth Imam (a): Inform us whether khums applies to all the things which a person uses, from few and many, from any kind of income and also on crafts workers? And how should it be paid? The Imam wrote with his own handwriting that khums is after the costs of living.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is well understood from this text that the questioner doubted both the generality or quality of khums and the Imam (a) answered both questions in one short sentence as had been the common way of writing letters at that time. When our Imam (a) says khums is after the costs of living, the question about quality (which is the second question in the hadith) and the question about the necessity of khums in all kinds of income have both been answered.

In the above hadith, the term *ma'unah* refers to expenditure. It does not, however, refer to business expenses because the sentence “ما يستفيد الرجل” (any profit a man makes) refers to net profit, and net profit is achieved after subtracting the costs of business. Moreover, the term *al-durub* refers to *types*, that is, in this hadith, it means the types of businesses, industries, and jobs.

## 2. Hadith of Abi Ali ibn Rashid

Abu Ali ibn Rashid, one of the agents of Imam Jawad (a) and Imam Hadi (a), narrates:

قلت له امرتنى بالقيام بامرک و اخذ حقک فاعلمت موالیک  
بذلك فقال لی بعضهم وایّ شیء حقّه؟ فلم ادرا ما اجيبه.

فقال يجب عليهم الخمس. فقلت فى اى شىء؟ فقال فى  
امتعتهم و صنايعهم. قلت و التاجر عليه و الصانع بيده؟  
فقال اذا امكنهم بعد مؤونتهم.

I said to the Imam, “You have ordered me to take care of your affairs and take your right (the money that belongs to you). I told this to your followers, and some of them asked: ‘What is the right of the Imam?’ and I did not know what to say.” The Imam (a) replied, “Khums is obligatory on them.” “To what does it belong?” I asked. “In their goods and crafts,” he replied. I then asked, “What about people who do business and build something with their hands?” He replied, “Yes provided that if any savings remain after paying their living expenses.”<sup>2</sup>

Opponents of khums question this hadith by saying that it is pronominal (*mudmarah*), meaning that the name of Imam has not been mentioned explicitly and it has been merely expressed with a pronoun. However, the statement ‘I wrote to him that you ordered me to take your right’ ascertains that the addressee of the letter was the Imam. These cavillers have themselves expressed the deputation of Abu Ali ibn Rashid from the Imam although they were determined to deny the matter completely. Furthermore, the content of the hadith text testifies that the addressee of this letter could not be any person other than the Imam, because ordinary people do not have a say on goods, products, and wages.

In any case, the deputy and companions of the Imam are well-informed on the rules of khums. It should be noted that in certain periods when the Shi‘a were under financial pressure, the Imams (a) exempted them from paying khums altogether or part of it and when the situation again was normal they asked their agents to inform people to resume paying khums through them. This is why some Shi‘a were uninformed about the quality of khums.

Similarly, people today are also in need of understanding khums, whether they agree or object to it.

### 3. Hadith of Ibrahim ibn Mohammad

The third hadith is a letter written by Ibrahim ibn Mohammad Hamdani to the Imam:

كتب اليه ابراهيم بن محمد الهمداني اقرأني على كتاب  
ابيك فيما اوجبه على اصحاب الضياع انه اوجب عليهم  
نصف السدس بعد المؤونة، بأنه ليس على من لم يقم  
ضياعته بمؤونته نصف السدس، و لا غير ذلك، فاختلف  
من قبلنا في ذلك فقالوا: يجب على الضياع الخمس بعد  
المؤونة، مؤونة الضيعة و خراجها، لا مؤونة الرجل و  
عياله فكتب: و قرء على بن مهزيار عليه الخمس بعد  
مؤونته و مؤونة عياله و بعد خراج السلطان

Ali ibn Mahzyar read the letter of your father to me in which your father had ordered owners of water and land should pay one twelfth of their income after subtracting their costs to his holiness, but people whose water and land do not suffice their costs, were exempted from this payment or any other payment. People here disagree about this and say that khums of income is obligatory on water and land, and this is after subtracting the costs, the costs of water and land themselves and their tax, not the living costs of the person himself, his wife, and children. Then Imam replied in writing, and Ali ibn Mahzyar read it as follows: 'Khums is applicable after subtracting him and his family's living costs as well as the tax taken by the Sultan (ruler).<sup>3</sup>

It has been explicitly ordered in this authenticated hadith that people are obliged to pay the khums from the surplus of their

income from their lands after subtracting their living expenses. As mentioned before, the former Imam (a) had not taken more than one-twelfth because some of the Imams (a) forgave all or a part of the khums to the Shi'a due to the conditions of their time in order to relieve the pressure on them.

#### 4. Hadith of Ali ibn Mahzyar

Two reliable narrators of hadith, namely Ahmad ibn Mohammad and Abdullah ibn Mohammad report that Ali ibn Mahzyar, who was one of agents of both Imam Jawad (a) and Imam Hadi (a), was given a letter by the ninth Imam, Imam Jawad (a), and was read on their way to Mecca. The letter was as follows:

In this year 220, due to a reason which I do not want to disclose in this letter and God-willing I will explain some of that to you in the near future, I command my friends – May Allah secure their interest - to purify themselves this year by paying khums, since some of them have failed to perform their duty and I knew that. “Take charity from their possessions to cleanse them and purify them thereby, and bless them. Indeed your blessing is a comfort to them, and God is all-hearing, all-knowing. (9:103)” “Do they not know that it is God who accepts the repentance of His servants and receives the charities, and that it is God who is the All-clement, the All-merciful? And say, ‘*Go on working: God will see your conduct, and His Apostle and the faithful [as well], and you will be returned to the Knower of the sensible and the Unseen, and He will inform you concerning what you used to do.*’” (9:104 & 105)

I have not made this compulsory for them every year and I do not demand other than the zakat that Allah has obligated for them. Only this year I have

obligated khums on gold and silver. But I do not demand khums in living appliances, kitchenware, four-footed animals, servants, and the revenue of trade or land. I do not demand it on agricultural land, except the land that I will explain to you. This is a kind of rebate from me for my friends and an exemption for them in exchange of what the Sultan loots from their possessions.

Khums is obligatory on profits and benefits one makes every year. Allah says: *“Know that whatever thing you may come by, a fifth of it is for God and the Apostle, for the relatives and the orphans, for the needy and the traveller, if you have faith in God and what We sent down to Our servant on the Day of Separation, the day when the two hosts met; and God has power over all things.”* (8:41)

But profits and benefits –may God send His mercy to you- are the income that a person gains, a sizable prize that some people give a person, inheritance that he had not expected i.e. not from a father or child, possessions of an enemy who surrenders, the money that someone receives whose owner is not known and the money that has reached my friends from the sinful Khurramite. I have been informed that a great amount of possessions have reached some of my followers. Anyone who has something from those assets must give it to my agent, and anyone who lives far away must try to send it to me even if it takes time till it reaches me because “the intention of a believer is better than his action.”

But what I demand from agricultural land and cereals is one twelfth from people for whom their agricultural income covers their costs though a person whose agricultural income does not cover

his costs, one-twelfth is not upon him and neither is anything other than that.<sup>4</sup>

The following matters can be understood from this hadith:

First, this hadith highlights the necessity of khums for all profits and income, and confirms that *ghanimah* in the verse 8:41 refers to any kind of income and profit that one makes.

Second, the necessity of an extraordinary Islamic tax equal to *khums* for a specific year, the year 220 (A.H.), is pointed out because of the extraordinary conditions that had occurred for the Imam and the Shi'a, and as it is understood from history (and also a hadith stated in *Usul al Kafi*) that it was the same year that Mu'tasim the Abbasid Caliph had asked the Imam to move to Baghdad and carefully watched him. In that year, the Imam and the Shi'a of Baghdad experienced difficult conditions and the Imam had to manage the affairs of the needy Shi'a, especially the Shi'a of Bani Hashim. He had no choice other than to take an extra amount from the rich.

This is not exclusive to the Imam, and if conditions are so difficult such that khums does not suffice the costs, the legitimate authority (*hakim-i shar'*) can raise the tax for rich people in order to save the benefits of Muslims. For example, zakat may not suffice the costs or when Muslims are in danger of attack and Islamic armies need more money, Islamic authorities can collect enough money to solve the issue. As said in the previous hadith, an instance like this one happened, where the Imam demanded an extraordinary tax on gold and silver which had been with the owner for one year. Thus, Shi'a jurisprudence entails special rights to the legitimate governor in the above situations, where an extraordinary amount of khums was collected. What the disputant has ignored is the question as to the possibility of taking two types of khums, unaware of the fact that one of them is on account of the permanent ruling whereas the other is a temporary one relating to the Islamic governor. Overall, there is no doubt

concerning the collection of these two kinds of khums as seen in the above hadith.

Now let us look at some other objections made by the same disputant:

**Objection One:** Those who have narrated this hadith immediately from Ali ibn Mahzyar i.e. Ahmad ibn Mohammad and Abdullah ibn Mohammad are unknown in the works on al-Rijal [the science dealing with the biographies of the narrators of hadith in order to assess their reliability].

**Reply:** Ahmad ibn Mohammad ibn ‘Isa, who is one of those two narrators is one of most reliable, well-known, and accredited people in Shi‘a sources on al-Rijal whose name is mentioned in all of them. The reason why Ahmad ibn Mohammad is the same as Ahmad ibn Mohammad ibn ‘Isa is that the person who quoted from him is Mohammad ibn Hasan Saffar, the author of the famous book *Basā’ir al-Darajāt*, and we know that Mohammad ibn Hasan Saffar was one of Ahmad ibn Mohammad’s students. It should be also noted that Ahmad ibn Mohammad and Abdullah ibn Mohammad have both independently narrated this hadith from Ali ibn Mahzyar and therefore reliability of one of them is sufficient and we do not need to bother about the other.

**Objection Two:** This hadith indicates that some booties from the Khurramites were gained by some of the companions of the Imam, while their final defeat happened in 221 A.H., that is, one year after the date mentioned in this hadith and Babak Khurram-Din, their leader, was defeated after the year 221 A.H.

**Reply:** This is not true. According to *History* by Tabari, section on *The Incidents of the Year 218 A.H.* (that is, two years before the Imam issued the above order), many Iranians converted to the faith of Babak Khurram-Din and Mu‘tasim the Abbasid Caliph sent a great army to them, and in that same year sixty thousand followers of Babak had been killed; the others escaped to the

Roman lands. With respect to the incidents on the Year 219 A.H., Tabari registers that the commander of an army which had been sent from Baghdad to repress Khurramites “returned to Baghdad with a number of captives of Khurramites on the 11<sup>th</sup> of Jumādā al-Ūlā of the year 219 and it is said that about one hundred thousand of them had been killed.”<sup>5</sup> Obviously in such a battle with this number of people who had been killed or taken as captive, there would be a lot of spoils which would have been gained by warriors.

Of course, this is not exclusive to Tabari’s *History*. A similar statement can be found in *Al-Kāmil* by Ibn Athir: “Ishaq ibn Ibrahim, commander of army of Baghdad, entered Baghdad with a large number of captives of Khurramites in Jumādā al-Ūlā.”<sup>6</sup> Dehkhuda in his *Lughat-Nāme (The Lexicon)* cites from *Tarikh-e Barguzide* by Hamdullah Mustawfi that “Ishaq ibn Ibrahim entered Baghdad in Jumādā al-Ūlā and there were a large group of Khurramite captives with him.”<sup>7</sup> It is strange that the disputant had Dehkhuda’s work in his hands (as testified by use of his explicit words), but he still disregarded this explicit evidence of assets that had been gained by Muslims as spoils from Khurramites before the year 220 A.H.

**Objection Three:** How could Imam Jawad (a) have connection with his friends and send them letters when he was under observation in Baghdad?

**Reply:** When Imam Jawad (a) moved to Baghdad, he was neither in prison nor so much limited that he could not contact people.<sup>8</sup> We read that Imam Hasan Askari (a) who was under strong observation in Samarra was still able to be partly in touch with his friends via letters, and surely Mutawakkil was harsher with Imam Askari (a) than Mu’tasim with respect to Imam Jawad (a). In *Al-Rijal* by Kashi, we read that “Imam Askari (a) wrote a letter to Ishaq ibn Isma‘ill and expressed lots of matters in that letter.”<sup>9</sup> We also read in the book *History of Qom* by Hasan ibn Mohammad ibn Hasan Ash‘ari Qummi that Ahmad ibn Ishaq

went to Samarra when travelling to perform the pilgrimage of Hajj and then met Imam Hasan Askari (a).<sup>10</sup> Therefore, being under the observation of the Caliphs had not prevented the Imams from having contact with people. Moreover, if Imam Jawad (a) had been in conditions such that he could not write letters to the Shi‘as, how could Ali ibn Mahzyar dare to say such a false statement in the same time period which everyone could easily refute?

**Objection Four:** How can the Imam legislate and say that he ordained an extra khums on people in that year, while we know that legislation is exclusive to Allah and that the Prophet (s) can only announce Allah’s Will to people? The duty of the Imam (a) is merely to maintain and propagate the religion, not legislation of new laws.

**Reply:** The disputant took no notice of the difference between *legislation* and *order of a governor*. The legitimate leader of the Islamic state has the right to temporarily issue special orders in extraordinary cases, and ask all people to perform a special duty, consisting of financial or non-financial matters, or prohibit a permissible action temporarily for some special reasons. This authority is not only exclusive to the Imams (a) and in fact, the qualified jurists also have this right. The well-known verdict of Ayatollah Shirazi against consumption of tobacco is one example. This is one of the signs of dynamism and vitality of Islamic Law which grants legitimate leaders enough power and authority to meet unexpected challenges and meet requirements of special and emergency conditions. Of course, as soon as that extraordinary condition ends, that order also is invalidated and everything goes back to normal. Such orders are not like the primary rulings of Islam, which are eternal and universal. Accordingly, we see that the Imam (a) says about the additional khums: ‘This is exclusive for this year and it has a reason which I do not want to explain because of some conditions.’ Certainly, this is the extraordinary financial condition that existed for the Shi‘a when the Imam entered Baghdad. However, as for the

regular khums, the Imam said: 'This law is forever and Muslims should pay it every year.'

Based on the above, it is clear why Imam (a) had necessitated the first khums which had been extraordinary on gold and silver which was one year old. As we have said, the issuing of this ruling was due to using the authorities of religious governors and this should be based on the needs at that time. The Imam (a) had observed how much khums would address the extraordinary need of the Shi'a and therefore he had limited the payment to this amount.

**Objection Five:** There is a contradiction between the beginning and the end of this hadith. In the beginning, it says: 'I take khums only from gold and silver' and at the end khums is extended to other things.

**Reply:** There is no contradiction at all. As said before, khums which is required in the beginning of the hadith, was temporary and extraordinary and the Imam (a) ordered that for specific circumstances of that year while the khums which is mentioned at the end of the hadith is the general ruling in Islamic Law that pertains to all ages. This is why the Imam (a) refers to the verse of ghanimah in the second part and also makes it clear that ghanimah here includes all types of income.

**Objection Six:** Imam Jawad (a) had passed away in the year 219 A.H., so how is it possible for him to issue this order in the year 220 A.H. as it has been mentioned in the text of hadith?

**Reply:** The answer to this objection can easily be understood by referring to famous historical and hadith sources. For example, Sheikh Mufid affirms in *Al-Irshād* that Imam Jawad (a) passed away in the year 220 A.H. Also, Sheikh Kulayni in *Al-Kafi* states that Imam Jawad (a) was born in the month of Ramadan in the year 195 A.H. and passed away towards the end of Dhu'l Qa'dah of the year 220 A.H.<sup>11</sup> According to *Kashf al-Ghummah*, Imam

(a) went to Baghdad in the year 220 A.H. and passed away towards the end of Dhu'l Qa'da of the same year.<sup>12</sup> As cited in the book *Muntakhab, Durūs, I'lām al-Warā, Manāqib* and *Ithbāt al-Wasiyyah* by Mas'udi, all have affirmed that the Imam (a) passed away in the year 220 A.H. The same is the case with *Wafayāt al-A'yān* whereas the view that Imam (a) had died in 219 A.H. is taken to be weak. Allmah Majlisi in his *Bihār al-Anwār* reports that according to *Tārīkh Mawālid wa Wafayāt Ahl –e Bayt al-Nabi* by Ibn Khashab, Imam Jawad (a) passed away in the year 220 A.H.

The hadith of Ali ibn Mahzyar is one of the hadiths on khums that has no place for objection about its authenticity or its meaning.

### 5. Hadith of Samā'ah ibn Mihrān

Another hadith that proves khums in all types of income is the hadith of Samā'ah ibn Mihrān from Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (a):

قال سألت ابالحسن عن الخمس فقال في كل ما افاد الناس  
من قليل او كثير

I asked Aba'l-Hasan [Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (a)] about khums. He replied: “[Khums applies to] everything that people gain from little to many.”<sup>13</sup>

Despite the reliability and clarity of this hadith, again the same disputant has made objections:

**Objection One:** Samā'ah had died in the time of Imam Sadiq (a) so how could he quote a hadith from Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (a)?

**Reply:** Scholars of al-Rijal have affirmed that Samā'ah had quoted numerous hadiths from Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (a) and today those hadiths are available in our hadith books. Moreover, those scholars have affirmed that Samā'ah was a Wāqifi. They

have also confirmed his truthfulness and reliability. Wāqifis were those who believed up to the seventh Imam i.e. Musa ibn Ja‘far (a), but did not believe in the eighth Imam i.e. Imam Rida (a). So how is it possible that a person like Samā‘ah was a Wāqifi but died in the time of Imam Sadiq (a)? It seems that the disputant did not pay attention to the meaning of Wāqifi; otherwise he could not have accepted both that he was a Wāqifi and that he died in the time of the sixth Imam. Yes, there is a weak hadith that Samā‘ah died in the time of Imam Sadiq (a) but the late Allamah Ardabili in *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāt* illustrates that this hadith was a fabricated one. At any rate, it is not possible to hold that Samā‘ah was a Wāqifi who dies in the time of Imam Sadiq (a).

**Objection Two:** Samā‘ah asked Imam (a) about khums, but it is not known what type of khums he meant. Perhaps he just meant to ask about the khums on war spoils and therefore Imam’s answer would also be restricted to that. There is no mention of khums of mines, treasures, and diving into the sea and gains like them, or benefits of businesses and industries?

**Reply:** The narrator’s question about khums is very general and the Imam (a) answered that khums applies to “everything that people gain from little to many is.” “Everything that people gain” is very comprehensive and general and perhaps there is no expression more explicit than this about the generality of khums.

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1 *Wasā’il al-Shi‘a*, vol. 6, Ch. 8 of the chapters on khums, hadith no 1.

2 Ibid., hadith no. 3.

3 Ibid. hadith no. 4.

4 Ibid. hadith no. 5.

5 *History* by Mohammad ibn Jarir tabari, vol. 7, p. 224 (Cairo edition).

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6 *Al-Kāmil* by Ibn Athir, vol. 5, p. 233 (Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabiyyah.

7 *Lughat-Nāme* by Dehkhudā, Entry: “Bābak Khurram-Din.”

8 This matter has been affirmed in *Mir’āt al-‘Uqūl*, vol. 6, p. 95.

9 *Al-Rijāl* by Kashshi, p. 449.

10 *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 50, p. 322.

11 vol. 1, p. 492.

12 vol. 3, p. 224.

13 *Wasā’il al-Shi‘a*, vol. 6, page 350.

## **Shi'ite Authorities in the Age of Minor Occultation**

### **Part II: Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb Kulayni**

**Ali Naghi Zabihzadeh**

#### **Kulaynī's personality<sup>1</sup> and his book *Al-Kāfī***

As we know, a few years after the formation of theoretical and scientific foundations of Shi'a thought, Imam Sādiq (a) expounded the doctrines of Twelvers in a well-reasoned and demonstrated way on different subjects of theology, the Qur'ānic exegesis, jurisprudence, hadith, history, and ethics in an appropriate schedule through courses, discussions, and responses to the questions. Thereafter, public attention shifted more toward the Household of the Prophet (s) and the Abbasid oppressive rulers were very afraid of this and sought to halt the promotion of these ideas and movements. Operating a constant strict policy to prevent devotion to the Imams from spreading, they kept the Imams (a) under control causing these severe and treacherous actions to increase to an extent that they finally ended in the occultation of the Imam Mahdi (aj).

The Shi'a sought to revive and promote the Imams' (a) hadiths during the Age of Occultation. In that strained political atmosphere, they wrote some books in which they described the characteristics of the Twelver Shi'a system of thought and practice. Shaykh Kulayni was among the key individuals in reviving Twelver Shi'a principles. In the heavy atmosphere of 'Abbasid despotism, Shaykh Kulayni seriously engaged himself in gathering traditions and hadiths on different theoretical and practical issues. The book of his compilations, called *Al-Kāfī*,

became the source of a great movement. Being inspired by this rich source of Shi'a knowledge, Shi'ites made efforts to resist against injustice and form some just governments at appropriate times.

Due to this great work, Ibn Athīr (Muhammad Jazarī), the brother of the author of *Al-kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, counted him as the reviver (*mujaddid*) of the Twelver Shi'a in the early fourth century after considering the eighth Imam (a) as the reviver of the second century.<sup>2</sup>

In his book *Tabsīrah*, Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalāni wrote:

Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb Kulaynī is among the major Shi'a scholars during the time of Muqtadir and his name is attributed to the region "Kulayn", a village in Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

The Shi'a began their effective and long-lasting political-scientific role with *Al-Kāfī* and it was followed up in the school of Sheikh Sadūq whose broad activities and valuable works helped some scholars such as Shaykh Mufīd, Sayyid Murtaḡā, and Sayyid Raḡiyy in taking big steps in promoting Shi'a beliefs.

Around the time of Imam Mahdi's birth (aj), Kulayni was born in Kulayn village<sup>4</sup> in Fashāfuya, a suburb of Rey during the caliphate of the 'Abbasid Mu'tamid. His educational status and teachings are among the unknown aspects of his life. His masters were scholars from Qum, Rey, Kūfa, and Baghdad; but where and how he learned from them and how he passed elementary education are not clear.

Kulayni was the leader and religious authority of the Shi'ites in Rey. He resided in Baghdad and began to circulate hadiths there. During the time of the 'Abbasid Muqtadir, Kulayni was the head of the Twelver jurists in secret. He was alive at the time of the Special Agents. As written in his introduction of *Al-Kāfī*, he

wrote the book due to the request of one of the great Shi'a authorities whose name is unknown. He was a pious jurist scholar who was known for his authenticity in narrating hadiths.

From all statements of Kashshī in *Rijāl* and Muhaddith Neyshāburī in *Monyat al-Murtād* and *Mullā Khalīl Qazvīnī* in his Farsi commentary on *Al-Kāfī*, it is inferred that Kulaynī compiled *Al-Kāfī* in Baghdad.<sup>5</sup> According to Najāshi, Kulaynī spent twenty years compiling this great collection.<sup>6</sup> This book was taught and used as a source of religious principles for several centuries and many commentaries and annotations were written on it such as *Mir'āt al-'Uqūl* by 'Allāmah Majlisī and *Wāfī* as a commentary on *Al-Kāfī* by Fayḍ Kāshānī.

Kulayni was the first Twelver narrator of hadith who gathered and classified hadiths, as well as offered an explanation for them. Until his time, the *Four Hundred Books of Principles (Usul Arbi'ahmi'ah)* of the companions of the Imams were common sources. Kulayni narrated from Sa'd ibn 'Abdullah Ash'arī, Ḥamīd ibn Ziyād Neynawā'ī, 'Abdullah ibn Ja'far Ḥumayrī, 'Ali ibn Ja'far Ḥumayrī, 'Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī who wrote the well-known commentary of the Qur'an, and 'Allān Kulaynī, his maternal uncle who was a scholar of his time.<sup>7</sup>

### **Opinions of great scholars about *Al-Kāfī***

Throughout Islamic history, each one of the eminent Shi'a scholars benefited from this excellent book and commented on its greatness and importance. The following are some of the comments.

I Sheikh Mufid says:

*Al-Kāfī* is the greatest Shi'a religious book and the most beneficial of them.<sup>8</sup>

**II** In addition to giving permission of narration to Ibn Khāzin, Muhammad ibn Makki, the First Martyr (*shahid-e awwal*), says:

*Al-Kāfi* is a book of hadith prior to which the Twelvers had not written a similar one.

**III** Muhaqqiq Karaki, Ali ibn ‘Abd al-‘Āli in the letter of permission to Qāḍi Ṣafīyy al-Dīn ‘Īsā says:

*Al-Kāfi* is a great book of hadith, similar to which nothing has ever been written. This book includes topics such as religious laws, hadiths, and religious secrets which would not be found in any other books.<sup>9</sup>

**IV** Mulla Muhsin Fayḍ Kāshānī says:

*Al-Kāfi* is the most honourable, authentic, complete, and inclusive of all books which consists of the principles and is void of superfluous matters or faults.

**V** Allamah Mohammad Baqir Majlisī says:

*Al-Kāfi* is the best organized and the most comprehensive book about principles and it is the best writings of Shī‘ites.

**VI** Ayatollah Waḥīd Bihbahānī says:

Kulayni travelled to different places and spent twenty years in order to compile *Al-Kāfi*. He was a devoted collector of Imams' works.<sup>10</sup>

Among the advantages of *Al-Kāfi* is that it was compiled during the time of the Specifically Appointed Deputies (*al-Nuwwāb al-Arbi‘ah*) of Imam Mahdi (a). For example, Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs

makes the remark that Kulayni's works were compiled in the time of the Specifically Appointed Deputies of Imam Mahdi (a).<sup>11</sup>

### **Kulayni's masters of hadith**

Kulayni narrated hadith from great scholars such as: Abu 'Ali, Ahmad ibn Idrīs ibn Ahmad Ash'ari Qummī (d. 306 A.H.), Ahmad ibn 'Abdullah ibn Ummayah Abu al-'Abbās, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'īd Hamdāni known as Ibn 'Uqdah (d. 333 A.H.), Abu 'Abdillah Ahmad ibn 'Āsim Kūfī, Abu Ja'far Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Īsā Ash'ari Qummī, Ahmad ibn Mihrān, Ishāq ibn Ya'qūb, al-Hasan ibn Khafīf, al-Hasan ibn al-Faḍl ibn Yazīd Yamāni, al-Husayn ibn al-Hasan Husayni Aswad, al-Husayn ibn al-Hasan Hāshimi Hasani 'Alawi, al-Husayn ibn 'Ali 'Alawi, Abu 'Abdillah al-Husayn ibn Muhammad ibn 'Imrān ibn Abi Bakr Ash'ari Qummī known as Ibn 'Āmir, Hamid ibn Ziyād from Neynawā (d. 310 A.H.), Abu Sulaymān Dāwūd ibn Kuwwirat Qummī, Abu al-Qāsim Sa'd ibn 'Abdillah ibn Abi Khalaf Ash'ari Qummī (d. 300 A.H.), Abu Dāwūd Sulaymān Sufyān, Abu Sa'īd Sahl ibn Ziyād Ādamī Rāzi, Abu al-'Abbās 'Abdullah ibn Ja'far Himyari Qumī, Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī, the author of the well-known commentary of the Qur'an, 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Sa'd Ābādi, Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn 'Abdullah Khadījī Aṣghar, Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad Rāzī Kulayni known as 'Allān, 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abi al-Qāsim Bandār, Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abi al-Qāsim Barqī, 'Ali ibn Mūsā ibn Ja'far Kamizāni, Abu Muhammad al-Qāsim ibn al-'Alā', Abu al-Hasan Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl Neyshābūrī, Abu al-'Abbās, Muhammad ibn Ja'far Razzāz, Abu al-Hasan Muhammad ibn Abi 'Abdillah, Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn 'Awn Asadī Kūfī (residing) in Rey, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Farrūkh, Saffār A'raj Qummī the author of *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* (290 AH), Muhammad ibn al-Hasan Ṭā'ī, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah ibn Ja'far Himyari Qummī, Muhammad ibn 'Aqīl Kulaynī, Abu al-Hasan

Muhammad ibn ‘Ali ibn Mu‘ammar Kūfī the author of *Al-Ṣabīhī*, Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn Yaḥyā ‘Attār, and Ash‘arī Qummī.<sup>12</sup>

### **Kulaynī's pupils of hadith**

Many individuals have narrated from Kulaynī. Among them are Abu ‘Abdillah Ahmad ibn Ibrāhīm known as Ibn Abi Rāfi‘ Şeymūī, Abu al-Hasan Ahmad ibn Ahmad Kātib Kūfī, Abu Ghālib Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Sulaymān Zarārī (d. 368 A.H.), Abu al-Qāsim Ja‘far ibn Muhammad ibn Ja‘far ibn Mūsā ibn Qulawayh (d. 368 A.H.), Abu al-Hasan ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn ‘Abdullah Bazzāz Tenīsī, ‘Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Mūsā Daqqāq, Abu ‘Abdillah Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ja‘far Kātib Nu‘mānī known as Ibn Zaynab who was a special friend of Kulaynī and copied the book *Al-Kāfī*, Abu ‘Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Quzā‘ah Şafwānī who resided in Baghdad and was also one of Kulaynī's close friends and copied the book *Al-Kāfī* and had permission from Kulaynī to narrate his hadiths, Abu ‘Īsā Muhammad ibn Sanān Sīnā‘ī Zāhirī Zahrāi residing in Rey, Abu al-Faḍl, Muhammad ibn ‘Abdillah ibn al-Muṭṭalib Sheybānī, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali Mājīlūwayh, Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Iṣām Kulaynī, Abu Muhammad Hārūn ibn Mūsā ibn Ahmad, and Sheybānī Tal‘ukbarā (d. 385 A.H.).<sup>13</sup>

### **The political situation during Kulaynī's lifetime**

In that time, the ‘Abbasid government tried hard to find out about the birth of Imam Mahdi (a) in order to ensure the elimination of the Imamate institution by killing him (a). A point worthy of research in Kulaynī's life is to see how he managed to promote Shi‘ite activities in Baghdad, which was the centre of the ‘Abbasid caliphate, and how he propagated the Twelver belief and established an influential Shi‘ite seminary. Furthermore, he published *Al-Kāfī* while he was under the control of the ruling

government knowing too well that an important part of *Al-Kāfī* described the attributes of divine authorities and illegitimate rulers during a time when there were anti-‘Abbasid uprisings and rebellions in the name of Shi‘a, for example, the Carmathians (*Qarāmitah*) who were breaking out in the Muslim world.

It seems that due to the pressure of the Caliphs, Shi‘a belief was promoted in Iraq secretly and *Al-Kāfī* used to be handed on from one individual to another in the Shi‘a seminary as esoteric teachings for a long time. This continued until the pressure on the Shi‘a was lessened through establishment of the Buyid dynasty through religious activities of Shaykh Ṣadūq and the political-religious cooperation and assistance of Ṣāhib ibn ‘Abbād and ‘Aḍud al-Dawlah Deylamī.

During the time of Muqtadir Billāh, Kulayni led the Twelver jurists; however, considering the political situation of Kulayni's time, we discover that he did not profess to be a Twelver in Baghdad, but acted as an Islamic scholar and disguised his Shi‘a identity. In his book, *Rīyāḍ al-‘Ulamā’*, Afandi says:

He is a leading and authoritative Sheikh among the lay people and the elite and he is the religious authority of both Shi‘ites and Sunnites.

It can be inferred from this statement that the Sheikh was referred to as a trustworthy one by all people in Baghdad. If he had professed to be a Shi‘ite, it would be unlikely for him to be trusted by the laymen, since at that time, many lay people considered Shi‘a as a separatist sect and it was seriously criticized and pursued by the Sunni government.

Majlisi and Baḥrānī have narrated that Kulayni’s grave in Baghdad has been a visiting place for both Shi‘ites and Sunnites; however, Sunnis do not confirm of his leadership of the Twelvers and the overt promotion of the Shi‘a Islam.

To understand the greatness of Kulayni's political and religious services in compiling political philosophy of the Shi'a and to see the contrast between the ideas in *Al-Kāfī* and the unjust treatment of illegitimate rulers of Kulayni's time, it is worthwhile to review parts of some chapters from *Al-Kāfī*.

If the true and original doctrines of Shi'a Islam were not compiled in a book like *Al-Kāfī* by considerable efforts of Kulayni the evolutionary course of Shi'a history could never have been developed in the time of the Būyid dynasty, the Mongolian Ilkhanate, the movement of the Sarbadars, the Safavid Empire, the Constitutional Revolution in Iran, and most important of all, the Islamic revolution of Iran by Imam Khomeini, who was a true follower of Kulayni.

### **Political activities besides narrating hadiths**

Political activities are not limited to armed encounters; political activity also applies when an idealistic person removes the veils of vain imaginations from the thoughts of society and explains political facts to expose a corrupt system and calls for establishing a legitimate government. In this regard, in the capital of the 'Abbasid oppressive government, Kulayni began compiling the hadiths of Imams (a) on subjects such as theology, ethics, history, and politics, etc. and made them accessible for those who sought the truth.

Against the illegitimate Abbasid caliphate, Kulayni narrated many hadiths in "Kitāb al-Hujjah" from *Al-Kāfī* on the rights and authority of the infallible Imams (a), the necessity of their existence and their appointment by God. Some of these examples are mentioned in the following hadiths:

Muhammad ibn Muslim says:

I heard that Imam Bāqir (a) stated: 'For the one who seeks to be closer to God by an act of devotion for which he makes effort, if he has no

Imam appointed by God, his efforts are not accepted...’

The hadith continues up to where Imam (a) likens such a person to a sheep that is far away from its flock in the evening and passes all night and day wandering among other flocks and there it is ignored. It runs astray, is afraid, and will be caught by a stalking wolf. The Imam (a) concluded from this exemplar by stating:

I swear by God, O’ Muhammad (ibn Muslim)! Everyone from this Ummah (nation) who awakes [in the morning] and does not have an Imam appointed by God such that his Imamate is clear and he is just, awakes while he is astray and misled...O’ Muhammad (ibn Muslim)! Beware that oppressing leaders and their followers are far away from the religion of God. They are misled and misleading and whatever they do is like ashes that the wind has blown on a stormy day and they are unable to benefit from the deeds they have done. That is the manifest error.<sup>14</sup>

Abi Şabbāḥ Kan‘ānī quotes Imam Sadiq (a) as saying:

We are the people to whom God has obligated obedience...We are those firmly rooted in knowledge and we are those who are envied and God states about us: “*Or do they envy the people for what Allah has given them out of his grace?*” (4:54).<sup>15</sup>

Husayn ibn abi al-‘Alā says: We asked Imam Sadiq (a) whether obedience to them [successors of the prophet (s)] is an obligation or not. Imam (a) replied:

They are those about whom God the Exalted states: *“Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you”* (4:59). God Almighty and Glorious also states: *“Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down”* (5:55).<sup>16</sup>

In another section, Kulayni narrates a hadith from Ismā‘il ibn Jābir, who says:

I said to Imam Baqir (a): ‘Would I present to you the religion by which I practice religious acts?’ He said: ‘Present what you know.’ I said: ‘I testify that there is no one worthy of worship except God. He is the One and has no partner and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger and I acknowledge what he has brought from God and testify that Ali (a) is Imam to whom obedience is obligated by God; then Hasan (a) is Imam and God has obligated obedience to him and then Husayn (a) is Imam and God has obligated obedience to him...’ until the issue of Imamate reached him; then I said: ‘...and you yourself. May God bless you.’ Imam stated: ‘This is the religion of God and His angels.’<sup>17</sup>

In the chapter pertaining to the imamate of the Imams (a), Kulayni narrates:

Abdullah ibn Sanān asked Imam Sadiq (a) to interpret the word of God – Great be His Glory – that: *‘Allah has promised those of you who have faith and do righteous deeds that He will surely make them successors in the earth, just as He made those who were before them successors’* (24:55). Imam (a) said: ‘They are the Imams.’<sup>18</sup>

Elsewhere, he narrates a hadith from Burayd ‘Ijlī who narrated from the fifth Imam (a) as a commentary on God's word: “*We have certainly given the progeny of Abraham the Book and wisdom, and We have given them a great sovereignty*” (4:54) that Imam (a) stated:

God appointed from among them the Messengers, the Prophets and the Imams. How do they acknowledge this truth about the family of Ibrahim but deny this about the Family of Muhammad (s)? Burayd says: “I asked: What is the great dominion granted to them?” He stated: “It is the privilege that God has appointed Imams from among them. One who obeys them has obeyed God and one who disobeys them has disobeyed God. This is the great dominion.”<sup>19</sup>

In the Chapter on “*Al-Īmān wa al-Kufr*” (Faith and Disbelief), Kulayni included a section titled: “The pillars of Islam” in which Zurārah narrates from Imam Baqir (a):

Islam is founded on five issues: prayer, alms, hajj, fasting, and Imamate. Zurārah says: I asked: ‘Which comes before the others?’ The Imam (a) answered: “Imamate is prior because it is the key to all of them and the Imam leads to them.”

After mentioning the importance of each of these obligations, the Imam (a) finally said:

...but if someone prays all night, fasts all day, gives all his properties as alms, and goes to hajj many times in his life, yet he does not know the Imam appointed by God to follow him and to ask him for guidance on all his activities, he would not be rewarded by God –the Almighty and Glorious – and he would not be among the faithful.<sup>20</sup>

In the sixth hadith of the same section, ‘Īsā ibn al-Sarā ibn al-Yasa’ says that he asked Imam Sadiq (a) about the pillars of Islam, and Imam replied:

They consist of a testimony to God's Oneness, belief in the prophetic mission of Muhammad (s), acknowledging what he has brought from God, admission of alms that is due to God in one's property, and admission of the authority of the Household of Muhammad (s) that God has issued.

The narrator asked about the condition of authority. Referring to the verse: ‘*Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you*’ (4:59), the Imam (a) replied:

One who dies and does not know the Imam of his time has died in a state similar to those who died in the [pre-Islamic Age of] Ignorance.

Mentioning the rightfulness and the authority of the Prophet (s), Imam Ali (a) and the succeeding Imams (a) up to Imam Muhammad Baqir (a), Imam Sadiq (a) expressed his sorrow and blamed those who submitted to the authority of people like Mu‘āwiyah and Yazīd instead of those exemplars of divine truth and finally spoke about his own time and stated:

The earth would not be without an Imam...you need to know your Imam (a) before your soul reaches your throat (pointing to his neck) and you should be able to leave this world in such a way that you would be able to say: Certainly, I followed the right religion.<sup>21</sup>

In different chapters of the section “Al-Hujjah” (Proof; Authority), Kulayni has introduced the position and the religious-political rights of the Imams (a) by narrating related hadiths. In the following sections, Kulayni mentioned the Imams' spiritual position and the dominion of their authorities through topics such

as society's need of the Imam (a), God's ultimatum on the existence of an Imam for the people, impossibility of remaining on the earth without an Imam, the four rational bases of the existence of an Imam on the earth, the position of the Imams' leadership, Imams as rulers appointed by God and the keepers of His treasury, the Imams as representatives of God on the earth, and what God and his messenger obligated about the assistance people must give to the Imams.

Now it becomes clear that Kulayni took great risk by compiling *Al-Kafi's* whose political and religious content could be taken as a serious threat by the oppressive rulers who were already alarmed by the Shi'ites' continuous struggle against oppression and injustice.

In any case, both Ali ibn Bābiwayh (see Part I) and Kulayni played a crucial role during minor occultation of Imam Mahdi (aj) along with the four Specifically Appointed Deputies of Imam (a) and they both passed away at the end of the minor occultation in 329 A.H. as did the last S.A. Deputy i.e. Abu'l-Hasan Ali Ibn Mohammad Seymuri, whose demise marked the end of minor occultation and beginning of major occultation of the Twelfth Imam (a).

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<sup>1</sup> According to Najāshi, in his time Kulayni was the master of Shi' community in Rey (before his journey to Baghdad) and was the religious leader in that region. He was the most meticulous and trustworthy person in narrating hadiths. It took him twenty years to write the well-known book *Al-Kāfi*, which consists of Kitāb al-'Aql, Kitāb Faḍl al-'Ilm, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, Kitāb al-Hujjah, Kitāb al-Īmān wa al-Kufr, Kitāb al-Wūdū wa al-Hayd, Kitāb al-Salāt, Kitāb al-Siyām, Kitāb al-Zakāt wa al-Ṣadaqah, Kitāb al-Nikāḥ wa al-'Aqīqa, Kitāb al-Shahādāt, Kitāb al-Hajj, Kitāb al-Ṭalāq, Kitāb al-'Itq, Kitāb al-Hudūd, Kitāb al-Dīyyāt, Kitāb al-Aymān wa al-Nudhūr wa al-Kaffārāt, Kitāb al-Ma'ishah,

Kitāb al-Ṣayd wa al-Dhabā'ih, Kitāb al-Janā'iz, Kitāb al-'Ishrah, Kitāb al-Du'ā, Kitāb al-Jihād, Kitāb Faḡl al-Qur'an, Kitāb al-Aṭ'imah wa al-Ashribah, Kitāb al-Zayy wa al-Tajammul, Kitāb al-Dawājin wa al-Rawājin, Kitāb al-Waṣāyā, Kitāb al-Farā'id, Kitāb al-Rawḡah. He also authored some books other than *Al-Kāfi*, such as *Kitāb al-Radd 'Alā al-Qarāmiṡah*, *Kitāb Rasā'il al-A'imma (a)*, *Kitāb Ta'bīr al-Ru'yā*, *Kitāb al-Rijāl*, *Kitāb Mā Qīl fī al-A'imma (a) Min al-Shi'r*. He passed away in Baghdad in 329 AH and was buried in Bāb al-Kūfa. (Najāshī, *Al-Rijāl*, p. 377)

<sup>2</sup> Khunsāri, *Rawzāt*, vol. 6, p. 111; Muhaddīth Qumī, *Fawā'id al-Radawiyah*, vol. 2, p. 657.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Khunsāri, op cit. contrary to 'Asqālāni's view, the birthplace of the Kulayni is the village Kulayn near Fashāfuya, southern Tehran. [*Message of Thaḡalayn*: Perhaps 'Asqālāni meant Iraq of 'Ajam which included central Iran like Isfahan, Qum, Kāshān, Ray, Qazvin and Zanjan.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Muhammad ibn Sulaymān Tunikābuni, *Tadhkirat al-'Ulama*, p. 203.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Khunsāri, op cit. pp. 115 and 116.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Najāshī, *Al-Rijāl*, p. 377.

<sup>7</sup> Muhammad 'Ali Mudarrisi Tabrizi, *Rayḡānat al-Adab*, vol. 3, p. 379.

<sup>8</sup> Kamarehī, *The Introduction to Al-Kāfi*, pp. 15 and 16; 'Ali Dawānī, *Maḡākhīr al-Islam*, vol. 3, pp. 35 and 36.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Khunsāri, op cit. p. 112, cited from *Biḡār al-Anwār*, vol. 107, p. 190.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Kamarehī, op cit. ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Cited from Kamarehī, ibid. of course the mentioned criterion is ineffective for verifying the truth of all the traditions.

<sup>12</sup> Cited from Abu al-Qāsim Gorjī, *History of Jurisprudence and the Jurists*, pp. 126 – 129.

<sup>13</sup> Op cit. ibid.; cf. Dawānī, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> *Al-Kāfi* vol. 1, Kitāb al-Hujjah, the Chapter on "Acquaintance with the Imam and Departure to Him."

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. the Chapter on "The Obligation of Obedience to the Imams (a)", hadith no. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. hadith 13.

<sup>18</sup> *Al-Kāfi*, Kitāb al-Hujjah, the Chapter: “The Imams (a) are God’s Vicegrents.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., the Chapter: “The Imams (a) Are the Responsible Guardians.”

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Kitāb al-Īmān wa al-Kufr, the Chapter: “Pillars of Islam,” hadith no. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Ibid., hadith no. 6.

## **Hijab and Family Life**

**Mohammad Ali Shomali**

Allah (swt) has created human beings to act as His vicegerents on earth and, like all other forms of living beings, human beings cannot be complete unless they are in a pair. This is incomparable to Allah (swt) Who indeed has no need of a partner. Even the most perfect human being is in need of a partner. Allah (swt) says in the Holy Qur'an:

And of His Signs is that He created for you mates from your own selves that you may take comfort in them and He ordained affection and mercy between you. There are indeed signs in that for a people who reflect. (30:21)

One of the signs of Allah (swt)'s wise creation is that He has created spouses for us from ourselves. A man needs a woman to be complete and vice versa. Even when people go to Heaven, they need to be there with their spouse. When Adam (a) was asked by Allah (swt) to go to Heaven, Allah (swt) said:

.....O Adam, dwell with your mate in paradise..... (2:35)

Thus, the formation of a family, initially consisting of a man and a woman, is one of the fundamental elements in Allah (swt)'s design for human life. He (swt) blesses us even more by giving us children. Children can only be well protected and well brought up in the atmosphere of a family where there is a father and a mother who love each other and their children, and who regard their

children as a gift from Allah (swt), bringing them even closer to one another.

### **Marriage: a sacred covenant**

Given that the family is a crucial aspect of creation, marriage is considered as a sacred covenant between the husband and wife and Allah (swt) is the witness above them. Keeping their marriage and family ties strong is essential. In a well-known hadith, the Prophet Muhammad is quoted as saying:

ما بنى فى الاسلام بناء احب الى الله عزوجل واعز من  
التزويج

No construction has been built in Islam more beloved in the sight of Allah (swt) than marriage.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, divorce is considered as the most disliked permissible act. The Prophet Muhammad said:

ما من شىء ابغض الى الله عزوجل من بيت يخرّب فى  
الاسلام بالفرقة

There is nothing more disliked by God than a house which is destroyed by separation.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, marriage is a sacred unity on which we need to build society and needs to be very strong. To establish and strengthen this unity, Allah (swt) has observed certain aspects in His creation and others observed in His legislation. These two are very much in harmony with each other.

### **Marriage according to divine creation and legislation**

**Divine creation:** In His creation, Allah (swt) has made us in such a way that we desire the opposite gender, that is, a man for a woman and a woman for a man, at various levels. Some people

may only experience this at the shallowest level, which is sexual desire. But the desire of a man for a woman or the other way around should not only be about sexual desire, because it can be experienced at deeper levels, first psychologically and then spiritually. Therefore, those who go to Heaven will still be in need of having a partner not merely because they want to have a sexual relationship but because they find complete comfort and tranquillity on the overall relationship with their partner. We find that our missing element, the only thing that can make us feel complete, is a woman for a man and a man for a woman. Thus, Allah (swt) has made us in such a way that we have this deep desire for a partner and their somewhat different yet similar natures make for a perfect match with one another.

This desire brings a man and a woman together despite the fact that everyone loves to be free and loves to have neither commitments nor responsibilities. However, Allah (swt) has made us so much in need of this that we are ready to endure all kinds of difficulties and undertake the many responsibilities involved in finding and keeping our match. Of course, people who are more compassionate and spiritual do not find it very difficult to accommodate another person in their own sphere. However, for those who are selfish and self-centred, marriage is a great challenge. Being used to doing everything as they wish and wanting to be free from any responsibility, it is difficult for them to be somewhat restricted and responsible. In any case, sexual, psychological, and spiritual desires lead people of the opposite gender towards one another.

Not only do human beings have a desire for the opposite gender, but in His Wisdom, Allah (swt) has created men and women with different personalities. There are many things that men and women share and therefore they are a good match for each other. If a man did not share anything with a woman then they could not be good partners for each other but at the same time the beauty is that there are also some differences between them because if a person is exactly like us, why would we need them and how

could they give us comfort? We need someone similar to us in some aspects and yet different in other ways.

So the personality of a man is different to that of a woman but not so much so that they cannot understand one another. It is possible to understand each other because we have many things in common but we need to also understand and appreciate the differences that we naturally have. If a man wants his wife to think and behave exactly like him then this is missing the point. In the same way, if a woman wants her husband to think and behave exactly like her then this demonstrates a lack of understanding. What is important and crucial is for a husband and wife to make efforts to understand and appreciate these differences and work together to use them to the advantage of their family and society.

More than anything else, a man is responsible for making sure that his family does not lose its direction in life. Therefore, he is responsible, for example, for showing some sort of power and strength in protecting his family against poverty, enemies, problems caused by natural catastrophes, and so forth. The man brings security to his family by the virtue of this power. On the other hand, the woman brings peace to her family by showing love and affection. These two elements need to come together to create a balanced family.

Allah (swt) has both attributes of Glory (*sifat al-jalāl*) and attributes of Beauty (*sifat al-jamāl*). The power of a man and the love of a woman are manifestations of these two important attributes of Allah (swt). Man manifests the Glory of Allah (swt) more and woman manifests His Beauty more. Of course this beauty is not merely a physical beauty because spiritual and psychological beauties are more important in bringing peace and tranquillity to a husband and children.

**Divine legislation:** As discussed above, Allah (swt)'s legislation is in harmony with His creation. According to Allah's plan, the

role of women is more the role of acting as the internal support for the family whereas the man's role is its external support. It can be found not only in Islam but throughout the history of mankind, apart from the modern age which is in many ways not natural and somewhat incompatible with human nature. Women have always acted as the internal support, maybe because there have been prophets for all nations or maybe because women have a natural tendency to do so. The beauty, attraction, and love of a woman are meant to serve the family to keep it firmly connected. The love and care she shows to her husband, children, brother/s, sister/s, father and mother keeps the family together and gives them so much power and strength that when they are exhausted from being outside facing the daily struggles of life, they can always find comfort and relief at home.

Thus man's role is mainly to act as an external element, that is, to go out and face all the challenges and difficulties in the outside world. Though this may sometimes result in him becoming exhausted and tired, he always knows that there is someone at home who can bring joy and comfort, giving him a newfound strength. Of course, women are not banned from going outside or from being publicly active. Indeed, as it will be explained later on, the very reason that *hijab* is legislated is to create an opportunity for women to be active in society. However, there are two different functions expected from men and women. Though in some cases the man may need to act as a mother and be responsible for the internal aspect of the family and sometimes the woman may have to work outside the home, the man's *essential* role is to protect the family from the outside and a woman's is to protect it from the inside.

Therefore, this beauty and attraction of a woman, which is a manifestation of Allah (swt)'s Beauty, should serve the family from inside the home. It should not be made available or presented to outsiders. Indeed, if it is presented to outsiders then it will be used against the stability of the family. For example, in a mixed-gendered environment, it is very likely that a man may

become attracted to a woman other than his wife because it is rare that a man's wife is always the most beautiful or the most attractive one and even if she is, people who are not spiritually purified always underestimate what they have and look for something new. Thus, in a mixed environment, the beauty of women would be working against the stability of the family which is the foundation of human society. As a result, the disaster of the breakdown of the family will occur as has indeed been witnessed in many societies throughout the world. Allah (swt) wants this beauty and this attraction to be used as a powerful means of keeping the family intact. As previously said, we are not only talking about the physical or sexual aspect of beauty as it has many other aspects. For example, there is great beauty and power in the loving and affectionate voice of your wife, mother, or sister, and therefore it is not merely the sexual aspect of a woman that matters.

The concept and legislation of hijab can be found in all divine religions. It ensures that this great power of attraction is not used against human life and society and so that women are protected against strangers who have not been proven to be trustworthy and may result in taking advantage of a woman. Interestingly, we find that before Islam, and even before Christianity and Judaism, there has always been a long history of hijab. This is especially emphasised in Abrahamic religions, so much so that up until today we find traces of hijab in different Abrahamic traditions, though it is practised more so in Islam.

### **Hijab in the Qur'an**

When we look at the Holy Qur'an we find that it has addressed the issue of hijab in about ten verses and in none of these verses does Allah (swt) introduce hijab as a new command. It is not a new command. Islam did not introduce hijab for the first time; rather, Islam tries to remind us of that which has always existed and ensure that we understand and practise it in its proper way.

For example, Prophet Muhammad (s) was asked by Allah (swt) to tell ladies that they should keep their covering, or *jilbab*, close to themselves, so that it covers them properly:

O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters  
and the women of the faithful to draw closely over  
themselves their *jilbāb*... (33:59)

Allah (swt) did not say that they should wear a *jilbāb* because this was a known and understood idea at the time, but they did not know how to practise it correctly so sometimes they wore it so loosely that the parts of the body supposed to be covered were visible. Through the Holy Prophet (s), Allah (swt) asked them to keep their *jilbāb* close to their bodies so that it suitably covered and protected them. Allah (swt) also told the Holy Prophet (s) to ask the believing men to be cautious about their approach in looking at women because this is another aspect of a woman's protection.

Thus, part of the protection of her beauty derives from the lady wearing proper hijab and part of the protection comes from Allah (swt) asking men to respect a lady by not having bad intentions when looking at her and by not looking at the parts of her body that are not to be seen. To protect the beauty of a lady, Allah (swt) says that men of faith, principles, and high values should be careful about the way in which they look at her, all of which is done out of a sense of care, respect and honour for a lady. Contrary to how some people think, if a woman is considered as a sexual object, there would be no reason to be so careful about the beauty of a lady and trying to safeguard and protect it from anyone who may have bad intentions. Islam regards this beauty as a manifestation of Allah (swt)'s Beauty and only some clearly defined people can look at, touch or have contact with. These are either the people who have no sexual intention at all like a father, brother, uncle, young children, or the one who has proven himself

trustworthy and reliable and has made vows and commitments to protect her, which is her husband. Therefore, in Islam, hijab is not merely related to clothing. It also regulates the manner in which women should look, how contacts should be formed and maintained, and the manner in which they are to speak. For example, Allah (swt) says in the Holy Qur'an that the wives of the Prophet (s) should speak very carefully to people who are not their close relatives. They should not speak in a way that might attract those people to their beauty or to their privacy. Allah (swt) says:

O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other women: if you are wary (of Allah), then do not be complaisant in your speech, lest he in whose heart is a sickness should aspire, and speak honourable words. (33:32)

The wives of the Prophet (s) are asked not to speak very humbly and softly to men who are not related to them by birth or marriage in case they have a sickness or weakness in their heart and who therefore may think that the lady is giving them an improper signal.

Another important part of hijab is reducing unnecessary contact with unrelated members of the opposite gender. A man and woman who are not related should keep their contact to a minimum. As previously stated, Islam is not against women being active in society and, indeed, hijab facilitates this. However, men and women should not form and increase unnecessary contacts without having specific and useful aims and intentions. For example, if there are men and women working together in the same office they should keep their contacts at a reasonable level. They must not openly and freely speak to each

other, and this includes laughing, joking, or doing everything apart from, for example, physically touching each other.

### **Hijab as a sign of a woman's honour**

Hijab is a special outfit of honour. Historically, there has been a custom among kings to give special clothing to people who had done a great service to him or to those who were highly revered in his court. This clothing was considered very respectable and was not used, for example, in the house or when going to buy something from the market. It was an outfit of respect and was normally only used in official ceremonies, to receive guests, or to visit the king. Hijab is this clothing of honour given to women by Allah (swt) indicating that is more than a protection. The following are a few examples that further portray its reverence:

When a woman prays in her home while no one else present, not even a child, she must still wear hijab when she is standing before Allah (swt), the Lord of all the worlds. If hijab was something only intended to protect a woman from men who are not relatives and may have bad intentions, then why should she wear it when she is standing alone before Allah (swt)? This shows that hijab is clothing of honour and should be worn when we meet those who are very important. So a woman should wear her best dress i.e. her hijab when she stands before Allah (swt) in prayer, when she visits the shrines of the Holy Prophet (s) and the Imams (a), a masjid, and going out into the public. A woman at home does not need to wear hijab the same way the beneficiaries of the king wear it. Indeed, sometimes she should not wear it at home. It is only when she goes out that she should observe it.

A further piece of evidence is as follows. Slavery was a phenomenon that existed all over the world and Islam managed to end it relatively quickly and indeed centuries earlier than it ended

in other parts of the world. During the era in which slavery still existed but was being tackled and was finally stopped by Islam, the female slaves were not obliged to wear hijab. For them, hijab was not compulsory though they could choose to wear it. However, a free woman, or the mistress of a house, was required to observe hijab. So if hijab is a burden or is only a form of protection, why must a free woman observe it? Many people who do not understand hijab think that it is a sign of a woman's inferiority and that they are to wear hijab because they are inferior to men or to unveiled non-Muslims. On the contrary, those in higher positions are supposed to observe hijab more. Thus, whoever is closer to Allah (swt) should observe hijab more.

We know that historically people like Lady Fatimah (a) observed hijab more than anyone else. If hijab is a burden then presumably she should have been exempted from it or at least only have to observe it to a very minimum extent. Lady Maryam (a) also observed *hijab* more than anyone else at her time.

So hijab is an outfit of honour and the people who are closer to Allah (swt) should observe it more. Though real elevation is being close to Allah (swt), those who are considered to be in a high position in society, for example, a lady who is more educated than others, such as doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers or university lecturers should dress in hijab more because Allah (swt) Himself has offered them this clothing of honour. Women who are educated are expected to appreciate and understand it more than those who are not. If Allah (swt) has given someone more blessings in this world such as intelligence, education, wealth, and possessions, and if someone is given respect because, for example, they come from a respectable family or a large tribe, such people are supposed to observe hijab more because this shows that they know how to appreciate this outfit of honour that Allah (swt) has provided. It is a matter of disgrace and sheer ungratefulness that the king gives someone something and the

beneficiary refuses to take or use it and instead of appreciating it, it is regarded as a burden. This is definitely not the way that hijab is to be regarded.

Furthermore, for women who are not Muslim and do not observe hijab as a requirement of their own faith for whatever reason, a faithful Muslim man, who is not to look at the hair of a Muslim woman, may look at the hair of a non-Muslim woman provided that he does so without wrong intentions. If a man has bad intentions, he is not permitted to even look at a woman's clothing that is not worn. However, if a man has to speak for a good reason to a lady who is not a Muslim and therefore does not wear hijab, then he may look at her hair, but of course without any wrong intentions. Thus, if hijab is a form of restriction and pressure, then the non-Muslims who lived in Muslim lands and under Islamic rule would be required to observe hijab more and men would be allowed to look at them even less than at Muslim ladies.

Therefore we can conclude that hijab is not a form of restriction. Hijab is to be used as a way of protecting ladies and as a means to be active in society. It also reminds everyone that ladies are not to be treated as someone's wife when they appear in public. Men must remember that when a lady comes out in public she is not someone from whom they should want to gain something physically or sexually. When a lady appears in public she is to be regarded as a human being. She must be judged, examined, and treated based on her intellectual and spiritual merits. If a lady is to be employed in an office or as a lecturer, for example, should she be employed simply because she is very beautiful or because she dresses in a way that can attract the youths? Is this the attitude of a rational society? What about those people who are not that beautiful? What about those people who are aging? Should a woman only be treated with respect in public when she is beautiful and when she does not dress properly? This is obviously wrong. Hijab is there to make sure that when a woman appears in public she would only be treated according to her

human qualities such as her good character, good behaviour, intelligence and wisdom. These human qualities are things that can be easily maintained, promoted and improved by her, but no one can change their appearance without spending large amounts of time and money which are not available to everyone. Hijab assists in creating a proper and rational society in treating people according to the moral qualities they strive to achieve rather than their mere physical appearance.

Furthermore, what is wrong with someone who is not considered by others to be beautiful? Do they have to remain at home and should not appear in public? This is an incorrect idea. A good, proper and rational society would treat people according to the good qualities that they have achieved and not according to their physical appearance. Thus hijab also helps in this regard.

### **Hijab in hadiths**

Finally, there are many hadiths from Prophet Muhammad (s) and the Ahlul Bayt (a) about hijab. Some people think that hijab is not something that was taught by the Prophet himself, but was made up by people later on. However it is certainly rooted in the Holy Qur'an. As explained previously, it existed before the advent of Islam. There are ten verses in the Qur'an specifically about it and then the Holy Prophet (s) mentioned it with so much care and giving so many details. Those who are interested can find tens of hadiths in major collections of hadith. In what follows, I will refer to some hadiths to illustrate how delicately hijab is treated in Islam.

Prophet Muhammad (s) advised ladies to be careful about their hijab when in their homes. For example, sometimes even when a lady is inside her house, her neighbours may still be able to see her when she stands next to the window, goes out into the courtyard, or goes onto the roof (as people do in eastern countries).<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, Umm Salamah, the wife of the Holy Prophet, (s) said:

عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ قَالَتْ كُنْتُ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَ وَ عِنْدَهُ مَيْمُونَةُ  
فَأَقْبَلَ ابْنُ مَكْتُومٍ وَ ذَلِكَ بَعْدَ أَنْ أَمَرَ بِالْحِجَابِ فَقَالَ احْتَجِبَا  
فَقُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَيْسَ أَعْمَى لَا يُبْصِرُنَا قَالَ أَفَعَمِيَا وَ أَنْتُمَا  
أَلَسْتُمَا تُبْصِرَانِي

One day Maymunah and I were with Prophet Muhammad (s) and Ibn Umm Maktum who was blind came to see the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) asked us to have our *hijab*. We said: “O Apostle of God! Ibn Maktum is blind and is not able to see us”. The Prophet (s) said: “Aren’t you able to see him?”<sup>4</sup>

Thus, it is not proper for a lady to appear without hijab next to an un-related man, even if he is blind. Whilst it is true that the blind man cannot see the lady, it cannot be forgotten that she can see him, and this may have an effect on her. In some cases, it is also possible that the man is pretending to be blind.

In a hadith about Lady Fatimah (a), we find that instead of the Prophet (s) or Imam Ali (a) telling her what to do when there is a blind visitor, she autonomously put on her hijab:

عَنْ مُوسَى بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ ع قَالَ قَالَ عَلِيٌّ ع اسْتَأْذَنَ  
أَعْمَى عَلَى فَاطِمَةَ ع فَحَجَبَتْهُ فَقَالَ لَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص لِمَ  
حَجَبْتِهِ وَ هُوَ لَا يَرَاكَ فَقَالَتْ ع إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ يَرَانِي فَأَنَا أَرَاهُ  
وَ هُوَ يَشْتَمُ الرِّيحَ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ بَضْعَةٌ  
مِنِّي

Imam Ali (a) reports that a blind man asked permission to visit Lady Fatimah (a). Upon hearing this, Lady Fatimah covered herself. The Holy

Prophet (s), in order to illustrate her (a) level of understanding and knowing too well what her (a) response would be, asked: ‘O Fatimah! Why are you observing *hijab* when this man is unable to see you?’ She (a) replied: ‘He cannot see me but I can see him and he can smell my fragrance.’ In response to her wisdom, the Prophet (s) said: ‘I bear witness that you are part of me.’<sup>5</sup>

So this is the way in which the Holy Prophet (s) and the Ahlul Bayt (a) very carefully observed *hijab*.

According to another well-known *hadith*, one day the Prophet (s) asked his companions: ‘What is the best for women?’ No one was able to give the right answer. Imam Ali (a) then asked Lady Fatimah (a), and she replied: “The best for women is not to see men who are not her close relatives (non *mahrims*) and not to be seen by them.” When the Prophet heard this, he was very pleased, and said: “Truly, Fatimah is a part of me.”<sup>6</sup>

After their marriage, Imam Ali (a) and Lady Fatimah (a) asked the Prophet (s) to advise them as to what their duties are. The Prophet (s) instructed that Imam Ali (a) should undertake the tasks outside the house and Lady Fatima (a) should undertake the tasks inside the house. Lady Fatimah (a) said afterwards: “Other than God no one knows how happy I became when the Apostle of God saved me from interacting with men.”<sup>7</sup>

With *hijab* necessary contacts are fine. From a spiritual point of view, unnecessary contacts should be kept very much to a minimum or if possible completely stopped, even though this may not be obligatory from a jurisprudential point of view. A woman can be very active in society but this should be only for doing something useful and productive with which she can feel very happy and satisfied such as teaching, nursing and seeing patients. A woman should not be just wandering around on the streets, going to different places and talking to many people,

without any good reason to do so. This is not good for a lady and would also gradually exhaust her because a woman is created like a flower. Imam Ali (a) advised Mohammad ibn al-Hanafiyah not to assign women difficult tasks and to treat them cordially under all circumstances.<sup>8</sup>

So a woman should not exhaust herself, and the family should not let a lady exhaust herself, by doing unnecessary things.

May Allah increase our understanding of His creation and His plan for us! May Allah make our families and societies stronger day by day! May Allah bring that peace and tranquillity that He has planned for us into our life!

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<sup>1</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 100, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *Al-Kafi*, vol. 5, p. 328.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 10, p. 261.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 101, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 43, p. 54. The text of the hadith is as follows:

وَ رُوِيَ عَنْ عَلِيٍّ ع قَالَ كُنَّا جُلُوسًا عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص فَقَالَ  
أَخْبَرُونِي أَيُّ شَيْءٍ خَيْرٌ لِلنِّسَاءِ فَعَيَّبْنَا بِذَلِكَ كُلَّنَا حَتَّى تَفَرَّقْنَا فَرَجَعْتُ  
إِلَى فَاطِمَةَ عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ فَأَخْبَرْتُهَا الَّذِي قَالَ لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص وَ  
لَيْسَ أَحَدٌ مِمَّا عَلِمَهُ وَ لَا عَرَفَهُ فَقَالَتْ وَ لَكِنِّي أَعْرِفُهُ خَيْرٌ لِلنِّسَاءِ أَنْ  
لَا يَرَيْنَ الرَّجَالَ وَ لَا يَرَاهُنَّ الرَّجَالُ فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص  
فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ سَأَلْتُنَا أَيُّ شَيْءٍ خَيْرٌ لِلنِّسَاءِ وَ خَيْرٌ لِهِنَّ أَنْ لَا  
يَرَيْنَ الرَّجَالَ وَ لَا يَرَاهُنَّ الرَّجَالُ قَالَ مَنْ أَخْبَرَكَ فَلَمْ تَعْلَمْهُ وَ أَنْتَ  
عِنْدِي قُلْتُ فَاطِمَةُ فَأَعْجَبَ ذَلِكَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ص وَ قَالَ إِنَّ فَاطِمَةَ  
بَضْعَةٌ مِنِّي.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 43, p. 81. The text of the hadith is as follows:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ أَبِيهِ ع قَالَ تَقَاضَى عَلِيٌّ وَ فَاطِمَةُ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص فِي الْخِدْمَةِ فَقَضَى عَلِيٌّ فَاطِمَةَ بِخِدْمَةِ مَا دُونَ الْبَابِ وَ قَضَى عَلِيٌّ بِمَا خَلْفَهُ قَالَ فَقَالَتْ فَاطِمَةُ فَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَا دَاخَلَنِي مِنَ السُّرُورِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ بِإِكْفَائِي رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ص تَحْمُلُ رِقَابَ الرِّجَالِ.

<sup>8</sup> *Man lā Yahduruh al-Faqih*, vol. 3, p. 566. The text of the hadith is as follows:

وَ قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع فِي وَصِيَّتِهِ لِابْنِهِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحَنَفِيَّةِ يَا بُنَيَّ إِذَا قَوَيْتَ فَأَقْوِ عَلَى طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ وَ إِذَا ضَعُفْتَ فَاصْغُرْ عَنْ مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ وَ إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ لَا تَمْلِكَ الْمَرْأَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهَا مَا جَاوَزَ نَفْسَهَا فَافْعَلْ فَإِنَّهُ أَذْوَمُ لِحَمَالِهَا وَ أَرْحَى لِإِبَالِهَا وَ أَحْسَنُ لِحَالِهَا فَإِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ رِيحَانَةٌ وَ لَيْسَتْ بِقَهْرْمَانَةٍ فَدَارِهَا عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ وَ أَحْسِنِ الصُّحْبَةَ لَهَا لِيَصْفُو عَيْشُكَ.

# **A Glimpse of the Character Traits of the Prophet Muhammad**

## **Part I**

**Sayyid Abu'l-Fadl Mujtahid Zanjani**

### **Introduction**

Since the foundation of Islam up to the present day, biographers, historians, and narrators of tradition have gathered details about the life of the holy Prophet in thousands of their works and compilations and have thus placed rich and valuable sources of information within the reach of researchers. However, in most of these works, the characteristics of the life of the Prophet have not been categorized in an orderly manner but are instead, rather disorderly. Therefore, it is not easy to become acquainted with these characteristics. In addition, as most of these works have been written in Arabic, they are inaccessible to those who are unfamiliar with this language. The technological lifestyle of the present age further aggravates the situation because rather than providing more time and opportunity for human beings, against all expectations, it has caused time constraints and has prevented people from spending time reading these detailed works. For this reason, and with regards to the significance of the topic in hand, the writer of this article, while acknowledging his poor knowledge, will seek to place within the reach of readers, a brief summary of the way of life of the Prophet. Rumi says:

*“If you cannot drink [all] the ocean’s water,*

*take a sip of it to quench your thirst.”*

Efforts have been made to use information that is in conformity with what is unanimously agreed upon by, or widely known among the historians and the reliable narrators of tradition.

## **1. Childhood**

Muhammad’s father, ‘Abdullah, died at a young age away from his birthplace and kinsfolk, without knowing that his wife was expecting and that he was leaving behind a precious legacy for the world of humanity. ‘Abdullah was the most beloved of the sons of ‘Abd al-Muttalib, who sacrificed one hundred camels for him and distributed the meat among the needy. ‘Abdullah did not return from a trade journey to Syria. He died in Medina a few days after falling ill and was buried in the house of a member of the tribe of Banu Najjar [*Dār al-Nābighah*].

‘Abd al-Muttalib was very upset at this tragic loss but his deep grief and heartbreak was somewhat alleviated by his newborn grandson, the only memory of ‘Abdullah left to him. He found peace of mind in him and came to love the child ardently. On the seventh day after his birth, he named him Muhammad (the praised one). This name was rare among the Arabs of the time. It is reported that upon being asked why ‘Abdul-Muttalib had named his grandson in this way, he replied:

I did so with the desire that my grandson would be praised by God in Heaven and by men on earth.<sup>1</sup>

It seemed as if he inwardly knew his grandson’s destiny, and the name Muhammad, which befitted his grandson, had been inspired.

It was the general custom of the Arabs who lived in towns to send their children away to Bedouin wet nurses. It was believed that growing up in the free and healthy surroundings of the desert would be deeply effective in aiding the physical and mental development as well as the eloquent speech and gallantry of

children. Therefore, ‘Abd al-Muttalib entrusted the young Muhammad (s) into the care of Halimah, daughter of ‘Abdullah ibn Harith, who belonged to the noble tribe of the Banu Sa’d.

Muhammad (s) lived for about six years in this tribe and with the passage of time, he developed well both physically and mentally. He became more mature than others of the same age in every respect. He was cleaner, more joyful, and more magnanimous than all the other children. At the age of six, Halimah took Muhammad (s) to his mother. This noble lady was still grieving the death of her beloved husband and thinking of her only orphaned child brought more sadness to her tender heart.

In order to show her fidelity, to relieve her deep sorrow, and to revisit the grave of her husband, who had left her a few days after their marriage, she set out for the long journey to Medina (at that time known as *Yathrib*), accompanied by her beloved son. Muhammad (s) went with her so that he too could shed tears over the grave of his father and sympathize with his mother, since he had already been deprived of his caress, smiles, and care. Amina stayed in Medina for a whole month, and every day she would sit at the grave of her husband and relieve her burning heart through her tears. This painful sight was imprinted on the memory of Muhammad (s). Later, during the emigration, while he was passing through the lanes of Medina, he recognized a house and said that he had been in it with his mother and it was there that his father lay buried.<sup>2</sup>

The deep grief and heavy blow suffered by her at the early stage of her married life led to Aminah’s premature death. On her journey back to Mecca, she fell ill and died at a place called *Abwā’*. Muhammad (s) was now completely orphaned. Upon the death of his mother whose presence, love, and care he was in need of, the six year-old boy’s tender and sensitive heart became mournful. His subtle spirit was overcome with an unforgettable grief. It has been recorded that after fifty-five years, during the journey for performing the compensatory or lesser pilgrimage

(*‘umrat al-qaḡā*), Muhammad (s) passed the grave of his mother, where he stopped and wept so much that those present there were also moved to tears. It is said that it was the memory of the affection of his mother that moved him to tears.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Under the care of ‘Abd al-Mutallib

Umm Ayman (or Barakah, a notable African woman who was highly esteemed by the noble Prophet), took him to Medina and left him with ‘Abd al-Muttalib. Seeing the child bereft of his mother aroused ‘Abd al-Muttalib’s pity and affection and his love for his grandson increased. He loved him more than all of his own children<sup>4</sup> and never left him. Even when an assembly of the Quraysh nobles was held in the Sacred Mosque (*masjid al-harām*), ‘Abd al-Muttalib would sit in a prominent place and let Muhammad (s) sit on the couch, and whenever his uncles wanted to drive the child away from the seat of his father, he would prevent them from doing so saying, “Leave my son alone”. He foretold, based on his inspiration or insight, that his grandson would have a very bright future.<sup>5</sup> However, even the amount of love and affection shown by his grandfather could never fill the gap caused by the loss of his parents. Muhammad (s) most often displayed his grief within the context of the following moral lesson:

Stroke the heads of the orphans and honour those who are away from their homes, because I became an orphan as a child, and as an adult, I became afflicted with the pain of being away from home.<sup>6</sup>

In order to encourage others to help this underprivileged group in society, he said:

Whoever looks after an orphan and brings him up until he is an adult will be next to me in heaven.<sup>7</sup>

It was providentially foreordained that this new stage of his life, in which he almost found peace of mind, would not last long.

When he was eight years of age, his grandfather died, and Muhammad (s) experienced more grief. He escorted the dead body of ‘Abd al-Muttalib weeping silently.<sup>8</sup> The Prophet had thus been endowed with the ability to tolerate a high degree of hardship in order to prepare him for the hardships and sufferings that would occur during his prophetic mission. It was necessary that the Prophet should taste grief and pain from his early childhood so that he could develop a forbearing and patient spirit.

### **3. Under the care of Abu Talib**

‘Abd al-Muttalib embraced the Prophet on his deathbed, crying, and turned to his eldest son Abu Talib, who was to become his father’s successor and the chief of the Hashim clan. Abu Talib was a highly respected man of the Arab tribes. ‘Abd al-Muttalib gave him his final instruction, saying:

Remember, my son, that after me you should take care of and support this only gem who was bereft of his father’s presence and who did not enjoy the affection of his mother. Protect him as your own and keep him away from any harm. I do not know of anyone from among the Arabs like his father who died in the prime of his life, away from his home and without fulfilling his young desires. His mother, who passed away in deep distress, frustration and sorrow, also left him alone. Will you accept my last will?

Abu Talib responded:

Yes father, and I call upon God as a Witness.

He then put his hand over his father’s and made a pledge of allegiance to him to which ‘Abd al-Muttalib replied,

Now it has become easy for me to die.

To bid him a final farewell, he held his grandson close to his chest, smelt and kissed him and breathed his last breath.<sup>9</sup>

Thereafter, the courageous Abu Talib, in order to preserve the veneration of his nephew and to protect him, made every effort possible for more than forty years, until he also breathed his last. He protected Muhammad (s) with bravery, sincerity, and unique self-sacrifice. His wife Fatimah, who was also one of the lionhearted women of the Quraysh, nursed him together with her husband, and out of her motherly affection (which the holy Prophet never forgot), she spared nothing to provide him with more comfort than her own children. His behaviour in the house of Abu Talib attracted everyone's attention and before long he was well-loved by the whole family.<sup>10</sup> Unlike other children of his age who appeared dishevelled with messy hair and dirty eyes, the Prophet always made his hair tidy and kept his face clean. He had the appearance of an adult who lived in comfort. He was not greedy for food in the least. The children sharing food with him, as is the custom of children, ate hurriedly and sometimes snatched morsels from each other, but he contented himself with little food and avoided eating greedily.<sup>11</sup> He was magnanimous beyond his years and under all circumstances. Sometimes, as soon as he got up, he would go to the well of Zam Zam and drink a few sips of water from that well. Then, when he was called to have a meal in the morning, he would say that he did not feel hungry and did not want to eat.<sup>12</sup> He never complained of feeling hungry or thirsty during his childhood or adulthood.<sup>13</sup> Also, Abu Talib always let him sleep beside his own bed. He narrates:

One day, I told him [the Prophet] to take off his clothes and go to bed. I sensed that he did not like my order but as he did not like to refuse, he said, 'Uncle, turn away from me so that I can take off my shirt.' I was very surprised at this. I never heard any lie nor saw any indecent act or laughter from him. He did not like childish games and

enjoyed seclusion and loneliness, and he was always humble.<sup>14</sup>

#### **4. Working as a shepherd**

Once, while he was living under the care of Halimah, Muhammad (s) asked her, "Where do my brothers go?" Halimah replied that the other men were taking their sheep to the pasture. The Prophet then said, "I will be with them from today onwards."<sup>15</sup> At the age of seven, he was seen carrying clay in the folds of his long shirt to help Abdullah ibn Jud'an in building houses. He was not seen spending a single day in idleness throughout his life. When praying, he always said: "O God, I take refuge in you from idleness, laziness, and abjectness."<sup>16</sup> He encouraged Muslims to work and said:

Worship consists of seventy parts, the best of which is to earn a livelihood through lawful means. The supplication of one who sits at home and who asks God for provision without working is not answered.<sup>17</sup>

And:

If any of you carries a pack of firewood on his shoulder, it will be better than to ask someone else who may give it or may not.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps, it was because of this very interest in work and also because he did not like to live among the family of Abu Talib without taking any responsibility and contributing to their means of livelihood, that he started shepherding the sheep of Abu Talib.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, from his early childhood, the Prophet liked open spaces and vast deserts, and the idea of seclusion had been gaining strength in his mind. It was as if he had been inspired to move away from the confines and hustle and bustle of the city so

that he could reflect on the world of creation insightfully and consider its parts precisely. The power of thought spreads and flourishes well in open spaces, like light waves that do not encounter any obstacles. On the other hand, looking after simple animals, protecting them from the harm of wild animals, and precipices and preventing them from fighting with one another was good experience for the Prophet's future mission. The reason was that he would face ignorant, misguided, and headstrong people and would have to save them from the dangerous situations that they were caught in. Before him, Moses and David had been shepherds for periods of time as well.<sup>20</sup> Being a shepherd, therefore, was not a shameful profession.

### **5. Leading the trade caravan**

The Prophet made some trade journeys to Syria and the Yemen. His first journey was made when he accompanied his uncle Abu Talib to Busra, where he learned the techniques of trading. On his last journey, he was hired by Khadijah, whose merchandise he took to Syria and returned with a great profit. He always observed justice and equity while he was trading and avoided telling lies and fraud, which was the practiced by many tradesmen.

Muhammad (s) was never strict in his business dealings with others. Sa'ib ibn al-Sa'ib relates:

During the age of ignorance, I was his [the Prophet's] trade partner, and I found him the best of the partners in every respect. He neither argued with anyone nor was he obstinate and nor did he blame anything on his partner.<sup>21</sup>

He became so well-known for his truthfulness and honesty that everyone who knew him acknowledged his trustworthiness and called him Muhammad *al-Amin* (the trustworthy).<sup>22</sup> During the prophetic mission, when the Quraysh rose to oppose him, they nevertheless still entrusted their goods to him. An example of his

trustworthiness can be seen when he migrated to Medina and ordered Ali to stay in Mecca primarily so that he could return the things that people had entrusted to him to their respective owners. He considered truthfulness and trustworthiness to be the basis of life and said:

These two [virtues] have been confirmed and emphasized in all the teachings of the prophets and apply to anyone who is entrusted with a task.

He also said:

Each one of you is a guardian and is responsible for what he is entrusted with.<sup>23</sup>

## **6. Towards the oppressed**

During the age of ignorance, there was no legal system or authority that could safeguard the limits of individual rights or to which one could appeal for litigation and adjudication. Excluding those who relied on their own power, influence, or tribal partisanship, the rest of the people were subject to all kinds of transgressions, against life, property, and family. A savage and barbarous temper and the law of the jungle were dominant. In the city of Mecca, the situation was very chaotic. Strangers were especially mistreated. Their belongings were often snatched in public and sometimes, they themselves were taken captive. Of course, among this unbridled multitude, there were a small number of people who had not totally abandoned human virtues, and there were traces of emotion, mercy and chivalry in their hearts. Naturally, they were annoyed at and exhausted with this abnormal situation. One day, an event occurred that significantly moved them, and in response to their dissatisfaction and the injustice they saw, they took some positive steps.

A stranger from the Zubayd tribe came to sell his merchandise in Mecca. ‘Âs ibn Wā’il, one of the chieftains of the Quraysh, acquired the entire amount but paid nothing in return. As a result

of this, Zubayd approached several influential leaders of the Quraysh to no avail. They refused to listen to him. In despair, he went to the top of Mount Abu Qubays and pleaded for justice in a loud voice, saying:

O family of Fahr! [Fahr was the ancestor of the Quraysh, that is, Quraysh himself. He was the man who the entire tribe was related to and was well-known for his chivalry.] I am a stranger in your city and have not yet performed the rituals of *'Umrah* (the lesser pilgrimage). I have been shown no respect and my goods have been unjustly possessed. Where are the brave men who can come to my rescue and safeguard my right?

The sigh of the oppressed man resounded in the air and moved the hearts of the dissatisfied people of Mecca. Muhammad (s), accompanied by his uncle Zubayr ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, rose up and with the help of some of the leaders of the clans of the Quraysh assembled in the house of 'Abdullah ibn Jud'an al-Taymi. Together, they made a pact for the repression of acts of lawlessness and the restoration of justice to the weak and oppressed.

Then all the members of the covenant approached 'Âs ibn Wā'il together. He could not resist the angry people moved by injustice and was forced to yield and to return the merchandise of the man.<sup>24</sup> The holy Prophet remembered this event afterwards and said:

I was present when the covenant was made in the house of 'Abdullah ibn Jud'an, and I will not break that covenant under any circumstance. Even right now I am ready to participate in such a pact.<sup>25</sup>

From Muhammad's (s) point of view, all the members of a society are duty-bound to resist oppressors and should not be content as onlookers. He has also been quoted to have said:

Help your brother whether he is the oppressor or the oppressed one.

When his companions asked him how they should help an oppressor he replied:

By preventing him from oppressing others.<sup>26</sup>

## **7. Towards his family**

Despite Prophet Muhammad's youthful vigour and vivacity he was never influenced by his urges and desires as a consequence of the virtues of chastity and magnanimity that he possessed. Before his marriage, he was never seen with Khadijah nor was it ever heard or said that he was intimate with women. For instance, even after he migrated to Medina, in his old age, he married several women, but each marriage was based on expediency. If he had intended to seek gratification, he would not have married older women. It was very easy for him to marry beautiful girls to obtain pleasure, but he condemned and cursed those who considered marriage as a means of obtaining pleasure only.<sup>27</sup>

The Prophet's first wife was Khadijah, daughter of Khuwaylid ibn al-Asadi, who belonged to a well-known family. She herself was regarded to be the First Lady of the Quraysh. She was endowed with chastity and honesty, and for this distinction, she was called al-Tāhirah (the pure one).<sup>28</sup> She was one of the wealthiest traders in Mecca. She had turned down several noblemen of the Quraysh who proposed marriage to her, believing that they were after her wealth. The well-known moral virtues of Muhammad (s) the Trustworthy attracted the attention of Khadijah. She found in him the qualities that she had long been searching for and married him. Unlike most marriages prevalent at the time, their marriage did not occur out of love for

position, wealth, beauty, financial and material gain, or for ostentation. Rather, it was a marriage based on moral homogeneity, love of virtue, spiritual union, and mutual affection, giving it permanence. This marital union played an extremely effective and useful role in the propagation of the call of Islam and the encouragement of the messenger of God.

Khadijah, a virtuous and self-sacrificing woman, always shared her husband's pain and comfort and consoled him in the face of hardships. She gave away all her wealth to the needy for the exaltation of the proclamation of *Tawhid* (the Oneness of God). Khadijah was the first woman who converted to Islam and prayed behind her husband. The Blessed Prophet married no other woman as long as she was alive. After her death, he re-married and treated all his wives kindly and justly without giving preference to one over the other. Whenever the Prophet intended to go on a journey, he would draw lots among his wives and would take with him the one to whom the lot fell.<sup>29</sup> He was not morally rough but especially kind and tolerant. He tolerated the bad-temperedness and foul language of his wives, even when some of them were so bold as to disclose his private secrets and annoy him by plotting and colluding, to the point where Qur'anic verses were sent down admonishing and reprimanding them.<sup>30</sup>

After the wars with Banu Naḡir and Banu Qurayzah (the two Jewish tribes), some of his wives fantasized about an aristocratic and luxurious life and demanded jewellery, knowing that the treasures of the Jews were now in possession of the blessed Prophet. The Prophet, who did not want to sacrifice social justice for the whims of his wives and let the public Muslim treasury be used privately, refused to accept their demand and paid no attention to their rough words. Abu Bakr and 'Umar, who were informed of this matter, were determined to punish their respective daughters 'A'ishah and Hafsaḡ, but the blessed Prophet prevented them from doing so.<sup>31</sup> He just contented himself with keeping away from them. After one month, it was ordered, based on the Qur'anic verses revealed on the occasion,

that he should let his wives choose one of two alternatives: if either of them was still interested in being his wife, she should abandon seeking an increase in wealth, live a simple and contented life, and be hopeful of more reward. However, if either of them preferred the luxuries and glitter of this world, then the Prophet should release her in a fair manner.<sup>32</sup>

The blessed Prophet elevated the status of women to the level of full human beings who had the right to independent possession of their lives and property. He always, even in the last moments of his life, recommended getting along with one's wife; that is, observing the exigencies of a woman's primordial nature and exemplified this in the following way:

A woman is like a rib which will break if you try to straighten it. You can benefit from it if it remains as it was made (by Allah).<sup>33</sup>

The order of creation and the limits of human primordial nature cannot be changed, and some things that can be done by men cannot be done by women, and within the order of creation each one has his/her own position and talents. The Prophet emphasized that women should be treated kindly and said:

All people have both good and bad qualities and a husband should not just consider the bad qualities of his wife and hate her, because when he is displeased with one bad quality in her, he becomes pleased with that one which is good and these two points should be considered together.<sup>34</sup>

Prophet Muhammad also cursed those who fail to struggle for the comfort of their family, saying:

One who neglects his family and leaves them alone is deprived of the mercy of God.<sup>35</sup>

He treated his children kindly explaining that, “Our children are an integral part of us.” He was diligent in rearing his children and taught them the etiquette of Islam. He used to say:

Fatimah is part of me, and she is my heart and soul, and whoever offends her offends me.<sup>36</sup>

And:

Hasan and Husayn are from me and I am from them.

When the Prophet would go into prostration, Hasan and Husayn would climb on his shoulders and he would either prolong his prostration until they got down, or slowly put them down and rise from prostration. He embraced them and kissed their cheeks and faces. One day, one of the people present with the Prophet saw this and commented, “We never kiss our children.” The Prophet responded:

What can I do for you if God has removed from your hearts the feeling of compassion?

Another day, when he sat Hasan on his knee and kissed the child’s face, Aqra’ ibn Habis said:

I have got ten children, and I have never kissed any of them.

The Prophet looked at him and said:

One who has no compassion for others is not entitled to compassion (from God).<sup>37</sup>

The Prophet not only caressed his own children but he was also affectionate towards the children of others and embraced and greeted them.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the blessed Prophet’s love and affection did not stop there. He also embraced his servants. Anas ibn Malik narrates:

I served the Prophet, peace be upon him, in his house day and night for ten years and he never said to me ‘Why did you do that?’ after I had done something or ‘Why did you not do that?’ after I had neglected to do something. He never said a word of contempt to me.<sup>39</sup>

In short, he treated his family kindly, not strictly or severely and said:

The best of you is he who is the best to his family,  
and I am the best among you to my family.<sup>40</sup>

## **8. Towards the slaves**

Slavery is one of the hideous habits of man and is indicative of his cruelty. It has been prevalent since the early history of mankind, gradually becoming a part of the rights of masters and of indisputable social principles. As such it has permeated all human societies to the extent that even the intellectuals and scholars of many nations considered it expedient and right. In these civilizations not only were there no steps taken to abolish it but there were also no steps taken to amend it. The Greek philosophers believed that two types of human beings were created: the free and the slaves, and that the latter were created to serve the former. Aristotle considered the system of slavery to be one of the necessities of human society. He said that with regards to work, when more manpower is needed, the government should use slaves, but attention should be paid to the improvement of their lives.

The blessed Prophet understood with his mature reason and sound conscience that human beings are alike in terms of their primordial nature and natural talents. He knew that they all possess souls, wills, sentiments, and emotions. He also understood that differences in race, colour, language, nationality, and even the privilege of piety and knowledge cannot be the

cause of discrimination against them and their rights. Why do some human individuals enslave others, and deprive them of their freedom and due privileges? The Prophet was well aware that removing a thousand-year-long idea that had penetrated deeply into the minds of both masters and slaves would not be possible, except by changing social modes of thought. If a code was legislated without an executive backing or enforcement guarantee from within the souls of the masters and the slaves, this deep-rooted class system would never be abolished. After all, the masters considered the blatant injustice to be part and parcel of their rights.

The slaves too, by force of habit, had gradually become too weak to exercise their willpower and were not able to act freely. As a result of their total lack of a sense of freedom and free living, they came to believe that their right to live was confined to the very cruel situation in which they were caught. Therefore, the social situation had to be improved in parallel with the gradual social growth. Much thought and wisdom was needed when taking measures to put this into effect.

As an initial step, the Prophet advised the masters and the slaves to regard one another as brothers on a number of occasions. He began convincing them that they were all of the same race and were created from clay.<sup>41</sup> He said:

Whites have no natural privilege over Blacks, and the worst of people in the sight of God are slave traders.<sup>42</sup> Slaves are your brothers. They have been put under your command and they have their own rights. You should feed them of what you eat and dress them of what you wear. Do not ask them to do things beyond their capacity and help them to do things.<sup>43</sup> When you call them, call them politely and do not say, 'My slave' or 'my slave-girl'. Rather, you should say, 'my lad', 'my lass' or 'my boy'. All your men and all your women are

servants of God, and He is the True Master of all.<sup>44</sup>

This expressive and appropriate logic, which emanated from the depths of the heart of a true humanitarian in the form of a heavenly message, played a major role in breaking the arrogance of masters, in obliterating the sense of inferiority from the hearts of the slaves, in the intellectual transformation of many people, and in creating doubt about something that was considered an indisputable principle for centuries. Naturally, it made people reconsider their situations and they gradually came to the conclusion that a brother should not subjugate his fellow brother.

Thereafter, through his practical steps, the blessed Prophet paved the way for the freeing of the slaves, either by encouraging the people to do so and promising them a reward: their sins would be expiated and their repentance would be accepted; or the slaves could be emancipated through redemption (repurchase) so that they would pay their masters a certain amount of money out of their wages by instalments, or that it would be paid from the public Muslim treasury (*Bayt al-Māl*) until they were free.

In this way, the Prophet blocked almost all the roads leading to slavery so that it would gradually die out. He took the lead, demonstrating by practical example, and freed his slave Zayd ibn Hāritha, who his wife Khadijah had presented to him. Furthermore, in order to erase the sense of inferiority and servitude from Zayd's mind, he called him his 'adopted son' in public. As soon as Zayd reached the age of puberty, the Prophet gave his cousin in marriage to him, in order to abolish racial superiority on which the world in those days, especially the world of Arab tribalism, relied heavily. Thus, the Prophet founded the principle of equality.

## 9. Cleanliness

As previously mentioned, the blessed Prophet was interested in cleanliness from his early childhood and was unique in observing cleanliness of the body and clothes. In addition to observing the manners of *wuḍu* (ablution), he washed and bathed himself on most days and encouraged both of these as acts of worship. He washed his hair which fell to his ear lobes with Lote tree leaves (*sidr*) and combed and rubbed violet oil in it. He perfumed himself with musk and ambergris incense so that his scent could be smelled wherever he passed. He cleaned his teeth with a natural toothbrush (*miswāk*) carefully, several times a day, especially before sleeping and after waking up. His white garment, which reached below his knees, was always clean.

Before and after eating, he used to wash his hands and mouth and would avoid eating bad-smelling herbs and/or vegetables. An ivory comb, a collyrium for the eyes, a container, a pair of scissors, a mirror and a *miswāk* (a natural toothbrush) were always part of his luggage wherever he went. His house was always clean, despite its simplicity and lack of luxury. He emphasised that rubbish should be taken out during the day and should not be left till night. His physical cleanliness was in harmony with his sacred spiritual purity. He advised his companions and followers to keep their heads, bodies, garments, and houses clean and he especially persuaded them to wash and perfume themselves on Fridays so that they would not smell bad while attending the Friday prayer.<sup>45</sup>

He further ordered his followers not to relieve themselves near graves, beside rivers, or in the shade of trees. He emphasised that care should be taken not to pollute water to the extent that even while washing, it was better to wash outside the water rather than entering it.<sup>46</sup>

## 10. Manners of Social Interaction

The blessed Prophet was cheerful and bright in public but had a sad and meditative expression when he was in private. He never stared at anyone's face and used to look down more often than he raised his head. He was careful to greet everyone first, even the slaves and children. He often used to sit on his knees and would not stretch his legs in the presence of others. Whenever he entered an assembly, he used to sit in the nearest vacant spot and never allowed anyone to stand up for him or make room for him. While being addressed, he did not interrupt the speaker and treated his associate in such a manner that the associate would go away thinking himself to be the dearest person to the Messenger of God. He did not speak unnecessarily. He spoke slowly and clearly and never used bad language. He was a perfect model of modesty and shyness. He never got annoyed at anyone's behaviour but on occasion, annoyance might appear on his face. He never used to complain or object. He frequently visited the sick and participated in funeral processions. He did not allow anyone to speak against anyone else except when pleading for justice.

In one incident, a group of Jews came to the blessed Prophet and said, "as-Sām-u-‘Alaykum" (death be upon you), whereupon the Prophet replied, "Wa ‘alaikum". ‘A'isha understood their meaning and cursed them but the Prophet told her, "'A'isha, do not do that, for God does not like the use of harsh words".<sup>47</sup>

## 11. Forgiveness

The Prophet always overlooked the maltreatment and disrespect shown towards him. He did not hold a grudge against anyone and never sought to take revenge. His powerful spirit, which transcended passiveness and psychic complexes, preferred forgiveness over revenge. His sensitivity to adversities did not go beyond grief. In the Battle of Uhud, despite the level of cruelty and disrespect carried out on the dead body of Hamzah ibn ‘Abd

al-Muttalib, which hurt the Prophet and saddened him deeply, he did not retaliate against the dead of the Quraysh. Even afterwards, when he gained access to the perpetrators of that cruelty including Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, he did not seek revenge. In fact, when Abu Qutadah al-Ansari was about to curse them, the Prophet prevented him from doing so.<sup>48</sup> Another similar incident took place after the victory at Khaybar, when a group of the Jews who had surrendered sent poisonous food to the Prophet. The Prophet was informed of their attempt on his life, but forgave them.<sup>49</sup> On yet another occasion, he also forgave a Jewish woman who was the perpetrator of a plot to feed him poison.<sup>50</sup>

‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites, who had been granted immunity by acknowledging the *Shahādah* (the Muslim declaration of belief in the oneness of God and the acceptance of Muhammad (s) as his prophet), and who had been nurturing hostility in his heart toward the blessed Prophet, thought that with the emigration of the Prophet to Medina, his governance would come to an end. He was colluding with the hostile Jews and was active in the defamation of the Prophet, provocation of hostility towards him and rumour-mongering about him. It was he who, at the Battle of Bani al-Mustaliq, said:

When we return to Medina, those with honour will drive out those who are dishonourable, that is the emigrants (*muhājirin*).

The companions of the holy Prophet who had a deep-rooted hatred for ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy frequently asked the Prophet to punish him. However, not only did the Prophet not permit them to do so, but he also treated ‘Abdullah with the utmost tolerance. When ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy was sick, the Prophet visited him. He attended his funeral and prayed over his dead body as well.<sup>51</sup>

It has also been narrated that a group of hypocrites once plotted to kill the Prophet while he was on his way back from the Battle of Tabuk. They planned to terrify his camel and thereby make him

fall into the valley as he passed along the mountain road. They had covered their faces, but the Prophet identified them. Nevertheless, he did not divulge their names in spite of the insistence of his companions and overlooked their punishment.<sup>52</sup>

## **12. The limits of law**

The Prophet readily pardoned any mistreatment of his own sacred person, but he did not disregard those who violated the limits of the divine law. When it came to administering justice and punishing the violators of it, he was not lenient at all because the laws of justice safeguard social security and are crucial to the very existence of society. These laws should therefore not be trifled with by whimsical people otherwise society would be sacrificed for the individual. In the year of the conquest of Mecca, a woman belonging to the famous tribe of Makhzūm committed theft and her crime was legally confirmed. Her relatives, who were still under the influence of the pre-Islamic class system, felt that the punishment due for the woman would disgrace them too. They tried to influence the holy Prophet so that the sentence for theft might not be passed. Usāmah ibn Zaid, who was loved by the holy Prophet, was selected to intercede for her so that the punishment might be overlooked by the Prophet. As he was about to attempt to intercede, the Prophet said:

Do you try to intercede for somebody in a case connected with God's Prescribed Punishments?

Usāmah became aware of his error, apologized, and asked God for forgiveness. Then the Prophet got up and delivered a sermon in which he explained the matter in the following way:

What destroyed the nations preceding you was that if a noble among them stole, they would forgive him, and if a poor person among them stole, they would inflict God's Legal Punishment on him. By Allah in whose Hands is my life, I will not be

lenient in administering justice to anyone, even if the criminal be my nearest relative.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, Muhammad (s) did not exclude himself or consider himself above the law. One day, he went to the mosque and ascended the pulpit from where he addressed the people. During his speech he said:

The Most High God has sworn that He will not overlook any unjust or oppressive acts so in God's name I beseech whoever has suffered an injustice at the hands of Muhammad to rise up and take his revenge, for retribution in this world is more desirable to me than retribution in the next world, in the presence of God's angels and the prophets.

Sawādah ibn Qays then stood up saying:

May my mother and father be sacrificed for you oh Messenger of God. When you were coming from Tā'if, I came to greet you and you were riding upon your she-camel with your stick in hand and when you raised it you struck me in the abdomen. I do not know whether you did it intentionally or unintentionally.

The Prophet replied:

God forbid that I should do such a thing intentionally.

He then ordered for his stick to be brought to him and asked Sawādah to return the strike, like for like. Sawādah rose and approached the Prophet, but when he reached him he began to kiss his body. The Prophet asked him:

Are you taking your revenge or granting your pardon?

Whereupon Sawādah said:

I am granting my pardon.

The Prophet then prayed for him, saying:

May God forgive you too!<sup>54</sup>

Such was the behaviour of this religio-political leader who was providentially bestowed with full power to administer justice and protect the law.

### 13. Worship

From very early on in life, when he tended sheep at a place called al-Ajyād, the Prophet cherished seclusion and solitude and spent hours contemplating in the retreat of the desert. He was used to spend long hours meditating and speculating on all aspects of creation around him. He had been in a totally different world from that of his tribe and had never attended their entertainment and amusement gatherings. Furthermore, he did not participate in the pagan ceremonies, nor did he contaminate his hands and mouth with the sacrificial meat offered to the idols.<sup>55</sup> He quickly completed his contemplative journey through the first stage of belief; the Oneness of God (*Tawhid*). That is, he had negated, through reason and contemplation, all but the monotheistic God. He hated the idols and used to say, “I hate nothing more than these idols.”<sup>56</sup> In order to pass through the second stage of the proclamation of the Oneness of God (*Tawhid*), the stage of affirmation, his God-given lofty spirit and flowing thought soared high above the visible world. Beyond the boundaries of the visible world and in an amazing, yet fleetingly transient phenomenon, he contemplated the Omnipotent and Everlasting Creator. He used to acknowledge this in his heart:

Lo! I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright, and I am not of the idolaters. (6:79)

From then on, his attachment to seclusion and retreat increased and he found Mount Hirā an appropriate setting for his purpose. He spent most of his time there and every now and again went into retreat and secluded himself for several consecutive nights, with little provision, solely to worship the One God.<sup>57</sup> Regretfully, his manner of worship while he was in the cave on Mount Hirā has been passed over and therefore silenced in history so very little can be said about it. No one else had access to the retreat and it is not known whether the Prophet knelt down or raised his hands during supplication or if he prostrated himself during the moments he spent in the cave. He might have done all of these. In any case, he had comprehended the reality of worship. In truth, worship has no meaning other than self-negation, attention, resignation (*riḡā*), and submission (*taslim*) to God, the Exalted. After the start of his prophetic mission, the archangel Gabriel taught him the rituals of ablution and prayer as they are laid down in Islamic Law (*Shari‘ah*), and from then on he performed the prayer with the same conditions and essential components as are observed now, including the awareness or presence of heart.

The Prophet used to spend the greater part of each night in prayer, supplication, and communion (*munājāt*) to the extent that his feet were often swollen due to prolonged standing. He considered worship to be a duty of the servant, and he performed it enthusiastically. He did not worship God in the hope of gaining reward or out of fear of punishment. Those who were heedless of his states would say to him sympathetically, “Why do you do this while you are free from all sins?” And he would reply,

Should I not be a thankful servant?<sup>58</sup>

In addition to the month of Ramaḡan and the greater part of Sha‘ban, the Prophet used to fast on every alternate day throughout the rest of the year.<sup>59</sup> He would retreat in the mosque for the last ten days of the month of Ramaḡan.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, he was lenient with regards to others. He would say:

It is sufficient for you to fast three days in every month. Do as many deeds as you are capable of doing. The deed most liked by God is one to which the doer adheres constantly, even if it is small.<sup>61</sup>

Although he made the correctness or excellence of some acts of worship conditional, depending on specific spatio-temporal characteristics, he generally had a broad view of the acts of worship and did not restrict worshipping God to a specific place or to certain ceremonies or to the direction of certain individuals. He considered everywhere on earth a *masjid* (a place for prostration), considered all servants able to connect with God without the mediation of anyone, and considered every good deed an act of worship on the condition that the act *per se* was legitimate and imbued with sincere intention. The blessed Prophet made this clear in the early years of his prophetic mission when the order of migration to Medina was issued for the purpose of laying the foundation of Islam by declaring:

He whose migration is to seek the pleasure of God and His Messenger, his migration is to God and His Messenger; but he whose migration is for some worldly thing he might gain, or for a wife he might marry, his migration is to that for which he is migrating.

He based the criterion for judging the correctness of people's acts on the following statement:

Actions are judged according to intentions and everyone will be recompensed according to what he intends.<sup>62</sup>

Any act, even a daily activity, that emanates from a sincere intention will be considered an act of worship. If a husband puts a morsel of food in his wife's mouth<sup>63</sup> or has sexual intercourse

with his wife to guard his chastity and not allow himself to be contaminated with sin, then this is also worship.<sup>64</sup> Where there is no pure intention, then even prayer and fasting will not be rewarded by God, although they may appear justified.

Muhammad (s) also deemed it necessary to preserve equilibrium between the material and the spiritual life and forbade going to extremes. He condemned isolation from social life, but also condemned giving in to animal lusts to the same degree. He showed the middle way between the two with his words and actions and prevented those who spent all their time in prayer and fasting and who were negligent of the affairs of worldly life from deviation by reminding them:

Your family has a right upon you, your visitor has a right upon you, and your body has a right upon you.<sup>65</sup>

Once, as he was on one of his journeys, some of the companions who were with him were fasting and others were not. Those who were observing fasts fell down on account of weakness. The companions who had not fasted pitched tents and watered the mounts. Seeing this, the Messenger of God said:

The breakers of the fast have received the reward today.<sup>66</sup>

In the stillness of the night, he used to spend long hours keeping vigil and offering night prayer and communion, but when he was leading the congregational prayer he was always careful of others and would say:

When I stand for prayer, I intend to prolong it but on hearing the cries of a child, I cut it short, as I dislike troubling the child's mother.<sup>67</sup>

In another incident, a man was driving two camels used for agricultural purposes when night fell. He found a person by the

name of Mu'ādh praying so he made his camel kneel and joined Mu'ādh in prayer. The latter recited *Surat al-Baqarah* (the Chapter of the Cow) and, due to the length of the surah, the traveling man separated himself from the congregation and performed his prayer on his own. Mu'ādh was informed of this, and remarked that the man was a hypocrite. When the remark was conveyed to the man, he was upset and went to the Messenger of God to inform him of what Mu'ādh had said. Upon hearing what had happened, the Apostle of God became sad and advised Mu'ādh:

You are scaring people away. It would have been better if you had recited the short chapters, for behind you are the weak, the aged, and the people who have business to attend to. In congregational prayer, you should have a regard for the aged and the weak.<sup>68</sup>

The holy Prophet did not like the raising of voice in supplication as is often done by ostentatious people. While journeying, whenever his companions ascended a high place, they would raise their voices with *Takbir* (glorification of God). The Prophet would come close to them and explain:

O people! Don't exert yourselves, for you are not calling on one who is deaf or absent. You are calling the One Who Hears, Who is Near.

And in another version:

...and He is nearer to you than the neck of the beast you ride.

And in yet another version:

...and He is nearer to you than the jugular vein.<sup>69</sup>

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1. *Al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, Ali ibn Burhan al-Din al-Halabi, vol. 1, p. 93
  2. *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 95
  3. *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 125
  4. *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, Zaini Dahlan, vol.1, p. 29
  5. *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 129
  6. *ibid.* vol.1, p. 59
  7. *Sahih al-Muslim*, Abul Husayn Muslim ibn al-Hallaj al-Qushayri al-Nisaburi, vol. 8, p. 222
  8. *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 134
  9. *I'lam al-wara'*, al-Tabarsi, p. 23
  10. *Ruh al-Islam*, Sayyid Ameer Ali, p. 19
  11. *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, Zaini Dahlan, vol. 1, p. 80
  12. *Imta' al-Asma'*, Maqrirzi, vol.1, p. 8
  13. *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, vol.1, p. 111
  14. *Bihar al-Anwar*, Allamah Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, vol. 9
  15. *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 111 and *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 9, Bab fi Makarim al-akhlaqihi
  16. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Muhammad al-Bukhari, vol. 8, p. 79
  17. *Wasa'il al-Shia'a*, Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Hurr al-Amili, Bab al-Tijarah
  18. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari, vol. 2, p. 57
  19. *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 150
  20. *ibid.*, p. 150
  21. *ibid.*, p. 162
  22. *ibid.*, 172
  23. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 6
  24. *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, vol.1, p. 157
  25. *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 156 and *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, Zaini Dahlan, vol. 1, p. 101
  26. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 2, p. 128

27. *al-Islam Ruh al-Madaniyyah*, Shaykh Mustafa al-Ghalayini, p. 182
28. *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, vol. 1, 163
29. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 4, 34
30. Chapter 66 (al-Tahrim: the Prohibition), 3-5
31. *Sahih al-Muslim*, Abul Husayn Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj Qushayri al-Nisaburi, vol. 4, p. 187
32. Chapter 33 (al-Ahzab: the Allies), 28-29
33. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 7, p. 26
34. *Sahih al-Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 178
35. *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, Bab al-'afw 'an al-Zaujah
36. Nur al-Absar, Muhammad ibn Mu'min al-Shablanji, p. 27
37. *Sahih al-Muslim*, vol.7, p. 77
38. *Nur al-Absar*, p. 28
39. *Sahih al-Muslim*, vol. 73
40. *Wasa'i al-Shia'ah*, Bab al-'afw 'an al-Zaujah
41. *Man la-Yahzaruh al-Faqih*, Shaykh al-Saduq Muhammad ibn Babuyah al-Qummi, p. 575
42. *ibid.*, p. 354
43. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 3, p. 149
44. *Sahih al-Muslim*, vol. 7, p. 48
45. The content of this chapter is found in all the books of Sirah and Hadith.
46. *Sahih al-Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 163
47. *ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 4
48. *Imta' al-Asma'*, Ahmad ibn Ali al-Maqrizi, vol. 1, p. 425
49. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 100
50. *Sahih al-Muslim*, vol. 7, p. 14
51. *Imta' al-Asma'*, Ahmad ibn Ali al-Maqrizi, vol. 1, p. 496
52. *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 479
53. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 5, p. 152
54. *Bihar al-Anwar*, Bab fi Wafat al-Nabi

55. *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, Zaini Dahlan, p. 95
56. *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, vol. 1, 270
57. *Sahih al-Muslim*, vol.1, p. 97
58. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 2, p. 50 and *Sahih al-Muslim*, vol. 8, p. 141
59. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 2, p. 50
60. *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 48
61. *Sahih al-Muslim*, vol. 3, pp. 161 and 162
62. *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 144
63. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 7, p. 62
64. *Sahih al-Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 82
65. *ibid.*, 3, p. 163
66. *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 144
67. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 1, p. 139
68. *Sahih al-Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 42
69. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 57