

MESSAGE OF THAQALAYN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

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The *Message of Thaqaalayn* feels responsible to present the teachings of Islam in general and the School of the Ahlul Bayt (a) in particular with complete honesty and accuracy and at the same time to emphasise the common ground that binds all Muslims together. Strengthening ties of brotherhood amongst all Muslims, whatever school of Islam they may adhere to, and establishing genuine, enduring and intimate friendship between all those who believe in God are two of the main aims and tasks of the *Message of Thaqaalayn* and indeed, any responsible media.

Editor-in-Chief

INDICATORS OF PIETY, PART II¹

MOHAMMAD ALI SHOMALI

ABSTRACT: What are the indicators of piety? And how can we guarantee that we are heading in the right direction in our spiritual journey? This series elucidates the merits and consequences of piety as seen in the Qur'an, hadith, and the lives of the Ahlul Bayt, and introduces indicators by which one can examine one's own piety or, if needed, others' piety. Indeed, piety is one of the most important concepts in the Qur'an by which people are ranked before God as it goes beyond the actions of the body, and is related to the intention behind all actions. In the previous part, the merits of piety (*taqwa*) according to the Qur'an were studied. In this part, the definition of piety will be explored along with the factors that contribute to its formation.

Piety in hadiths

According to the teachings of the Prophet and Ahlul Bayt which echo the teachings of the Qur'an, piety is required for happiness in this world and the hereafter.

¹ This paper is the first part of a series of seven lessons by the author in London, at the Islamic Centre of England in July 2011. This course was an attempt to explore the essence of faith and piety, and moral values on which faith and piety are based.

Here we refer to some hadiths about the significance of piety. Imam Ali said:

التقى رئيس الاخلاق²

Piety is the master of all traits of character.

ان التقوى افضل كنز و احرز حرز و اعز عز³

Taqwa is the best treasure, the most protective protection, and the most dignified dignity.

Some only seek worldly treasures, although we should seek taqwa which brings richness, protection, and honour.

Imam Ali also said:

ان تقوى الله منتهى رضى الله من عباده و حاجته من خلقه⁴

Truly piety is the ultimate and most pleasing thing that God wants from His servants.

God does not expect us to be like angels or among those who are near to Him (*muqarrabun*). He expects from us that which is manageable according to our capacity and situation and can put us in the right position with Him and His creation. He expects from us to be pious, a great quality through which we can ascend to higher levels of perfection and become one of *muqarrabun*.

Imam Ali also said:

² *Nahj ul-Balagha*, Hikmat 410, p. 520

³ Shaykh Tusi, *Al-Amali*, session 38, p. 685, hadith no. 1456 (9)

⁴ *Ghurar ul-Hikam wa Durar ul-Kalim*, Chapter on Fazilatuhuma wat-taghrabi fihima, p. 269

اوصيكم عباد الله بتقوى الله⁵

O servants of God! I advise you to have piety.

Let your heart experience piety. It is not something that you can say with words or even show in your actions. Piety is not just performing prayers, giving alms, or any other act of worship though they are all important. However, just by seeing one performing prayer we cannot talk about one's piety. Piety goes beyond the actions of the body. It has to do with the heart, with the intention behind actions. This makes it difficult to evaluate it. We do not even know exactly what is in our heart let alone the heart of others. This is why we are not able and not supposed to judge people's level of piety.

After the above phrase, Imam Ali talks about piety and then he says:

وَأَشْعِرُوهَا قُلُوبَكُمْ⁶

Let it (piety) reach your heart.

The Arabic verb used here is *ash'iruha* from the same root as *sha'ir* (hair). This literally means let it touch your skin like your hair so that there would be no distance. Now this phrase becomes even more meaningful that one should let piety reach one's heart. It's not an outfit; rather it is something that must touch your heart.

It is due to this close relation between piety and the heart that it can have healing effects on the heart. Imam Ali said:

⁵ *Nahj ul-Balaghah*, Sermon 233. This phrase can be found in many sermons and even nowadays lecturer often starts their sermons by this phrase.

⁶ Ibid

ان تقوى الله دواء داء قلوبكم و بصر عمى افئدتكم وشفاء مرض اجسادكم
و صلاح فساد صدوركم و طهور دنس انفسكم⁷

Truly piety is the medicine for the illness of your heart,
the sight of your blind hearts, the cure of your ill bodies,
the fix for your spoiled chests and the purity for the dirt
of your souls.

Piety can even cure physical illnesses. There are many illnesses nowadays whose causes are unknown, such as different anxieties or panic disorders. A person who has equipped himself with piety and has put his trust in God will not be influenced greatly by the ups and downs of this world, the fluctuating rate of currencies. Therefore, they are less harmed by such anxiety disorders. One of the good qualities of the children that is even mentioned in the hadiths is that they can detach themselves easily. For example, they can spend hours to make a sand castle only to ruin it in few minutes. A pious believer should see the world with the same mind-set, that it is only a game, a game not worth worrying for.

Piety in the Quran

It can be said that piety is one of the most important concept in the Qur'an and the criterion by which people are ranked before God. In the Quran chapter Hujurat, verse number 13 we read:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا
إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

⁷ *Nahj ul-Balaghah*, Sermon 189

O mankind! Indeed We created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may identify with one another. Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of God is the most pious among you.

In this verse, God explains how our differences are there so that we get to know one another and become interested in the lives of others. They are by no means values based on which we can evaluate others. At this point, God introduces piety as the only valuable thing that can elevate one's position, the only thing that affects our place before God.

Chapter Baqarah, verse number 2 we read:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This is the Book (Quran), there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the pious.

Of course, some people would want to gain piety by following the Quran, yet it says that it will give guidance to people who are already pious. How can this work? If one already has piety then there would be no need to be guided by the Quran and if one doesn't have piety then the Quran say it will not guide him. The answer is that piety has different levels and only the minimum level of it is enough for a person to be able to benefit from the Quran and add to his piety.

We can understand this better by looking at the first Muslims in Mecca who accepted the mission of the Prophet. When the Prophet started his mission some people believed in him and the Quran while others did not. What quality was in some people that made them accept the message of the Prophet? People like Abu Dharr, Salman, and Ammar

must have had some good qualities even before accepting Islam, some level of piety. They were not arrogant and were open to the truth. Piety is not just saying prayer, fasting, or going to Hajj although these acts are very important. However, being interested in the truth is also a level of piety. We will explain this more in future.

Tirmidhi narrates from the Prophet that the clouds have not cast shadow on any one more honest than Abu Dharr. When the Prophet wanted to migrate from Mecca to Medina, Abu Dharr was responsible for accompanying the Prophet. Since the Prophet was not to be seen, Abu Dharr covered him. However, a pagan saw Abu Dharr and asked him what was under the cover. Abu Dharr said he was carrying the Prophet. The pagan who could not even think a person would be honest to this extent thought this must be a joke and did not investigate further. It was this level of honesty and submission to the truth that had helped him accept Islam in the first place.

Another example is Hurr who managed to repent and join the truthful army of Imam Husayn. He was not like the other people in the army of Umar ibn Sa'd and it was just by chance that he accepted Islam. Hurr was a polite and honest person who acknowledged the merits of Imam Husayn. He was there to stop the Imam from proceeding yet at the time of prayer he stood with his army behind the Imam and prayed with him. The same is true about people who accept Islam today. It is not by chance that they convert. They are humble and honestly seeking the truth. These are the people who have some light in their hearts and will sooner or later believe, since this light of piety will guide them.

The following verses of Chapter Baqarah, verses 3-5, describe the pious:

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ أُولَئِكَ عَلَى
هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

Those who believe in the Unseen, and maintain the prayer, and spend out of what We have provided them with and who believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you, and are certain of the Hereafter. Those follow their Lord's guidance, and it is they who are the felicitous.

The pious believe in the unseen. But what is the unseen (*ghayb*)? It is God and the angels. And the reason they are unseen is not that they are hidden; rather, it is us who are unable to see them because of the veils in front of our sight. If the lights are turned off we would suddenly stop seeing everything we could see a second ago. They are still there though we are no longer able to see them. With a little light, we can see them again. The same is true about God; for us He is unseen, yet what is more obvious than God? In his supplication of Dua Arafa, Imam Husayn says:

متى غبت حتى تحتاج الى دليل يدل عليك

When did you become hidden that I would a guide to find you?

For Imam Husayn God was never unseen and had never disappeared. For us, it is not the same – God is not as obvious to us though still we believe in Him, and this is one of the qualities of pious people. They are mature enough to realize that in this world where the eyes are limited to

seeing only a specific range of lights, all realities do not necessarily need to be seen.

The rest of the verses then mention another quality of the pious. If we believe in something, we must act upon it. For example, if we believe a certain medicine is needed for our healing, it would be unreasonable to refuse to take it. The same is true regarding our religious beliefs. Believing in religion as a code of life and not a mere theory requires practice, otherwise you will not benefit. One important act as mentioned in verse is to establish prayer. There is no believer who does not pray. This is the second quality mentioned for the pious people in this verse, to establish prayers.

Interestingly, verse 2:3 does not say those who perform prayers; rather, it says those who establish prayer (“*yuqimoon as-salaat*”). Prayer should have the position it deserves in society since it is the pillar of Islam.⁸ Everything in life should be built around prayer.

The third quality is that the pious spend from what God has given them for charitable purposes. This is not limited to many and it includes all the blessings we get from God; it can be money, knowledge, or even time:

You will never attain piety until you spend out of what you hold dear, and whatever you may spend of anything, God indeed knows it. (Quran, 3:92)

⁸ Shaykh Tusi, *Amali*, session 19, p. 529: الصَّلَاةُ عَمُودُ الدِّينِ

It is a matter of giving what you love. In other words, if you give something that you do not need or like dearly, though it might solve a person's problems, it is not enough to make a better person of you.

The next verse then mentions yet some other points about the pious: they believe in that which is sent down to the Prophet and that which was sent to the previous prophets.⁹

Finally, the pious are certain of the Hereafter. The three principles of the religion include faith in God, prophethood, and the hereafter. However, the previous verse mentions them as those who *believe* in God and in what has been sent to the Prophet; thus, it refers to belief and faith. Yet, when it mentions the Hereafter, the verse says they are certain of resurrection. Certainty (*yaqin*) is a very strong level of faith (*imaan*). There are many Muslims who have not achieved certainty about the hereafter as this certainty must reach to a point where he would act as if he could see heaven and hell.

A person who can see hell would never commit an act that would get him there. If sometimes we commit sins it is because we have not achieved this level of certainty:

كلا لو تعلمون علم اليقين لترون الجحيم ثم لترونها عين اليقين

⁹ On a side note, this verse is one of the verses that show Islam to have the best potential for dialogue as it is the only religion in the world accepts all the previous revelations. Muslims are in easiest ground because to be Muslim means we must believe in Jesus, Moses, and all the prophets before Abraham.

*No indeed! Were you to know with certain knowledge, you would surely see hell. Again, you will surely see it with the eye of certainty.*¹⁰

There are three types of certainty: *‘Ilm ul-yaqin* (knowledge of certainty), *Haqq ul-yaqin* (true or total reality of certainty), and *‘Ayn ul-yaqin* (eye of certainty). To explain this, we will use an example:

There are three ways of knowing that there is a fire somewhere.

First level: You might see smoke and conclude that there must be a fire that has caused the smoke. You haven't seen the fire but you are sure it's there.

Second level: You might also see the fire with your eyes. Now, you have seen the fire itself.

Third level: A part of your body touches the fire: this is the strongest level of knowledge.

Thus, with regards to the hereafter, the same levels can be achieved; to be pious, we are required to at least have the lowest level. Imam Ali describes the pious at the highest level:

فَهُمْ وَالْجَنَّةُ كَمَنْ قَدْ رَأَاهَا فَهُمْ فِيهَا مُنْعَمُونَ وَهُمْ وَالنَّارُ كَمَنْ قَدْ رَأَاهَا فَهُمْ فِيهَا مُعَذَّبُونَ¹¹

With respect to the Heaven, the pious are like those who have been there and have actually seen the Heaven and are enjoying its blessings; and with respect to the Hell

¹⁰ Al-Takathur: 5-7

¹¹ *Nahj ul-Balaghah*, Sermon 184 (Sermon of the Pious)

they are like those who have been there and have actually seen and are suffering there.

In the same sermon, Imam Ali says that when the pious read verses of the Quran regarding heaven they reflect so much so that they feel as if these verses relate their own situation. Or when they read the verses that warn about hell they read it so wholeheartedly and feel as if they are seeing the blaze.

Having mentioned the qualities of the pious, the next verse of the chapter *al-Baqarah* mentions the position of the pious: they are guided by their Lord and are felicitous. And what a great achievement this is!

IMAM SAJJAD'S ADVICE ON UPBRINGING

MOHSIN IMANI & NASREEN ILMASY

TRANSLATED BY FATEMEH SOLTANMOHAMMADY

ABSTRACT: When reflecting on the hadiths of the Ahlul Bayt, we realise the wisdom they have left behind for all people. In his advice to his son, Imam al-Sajjad emphasises on specific etiquette, good conduct, and various acts of worship. Examples of such conduct include the proper etiquette during birth, prayer for children, and involving children in enlightening Islamic discussions. Moreover, advice on how to teach religion and social skills, as well as how to resolve difficulties is also described.

The following three hadiths are regarding Imam Sajjad's advice to his son:

Refrain from upsetting people and respond to their needs flowingly. Help your tongue in being silent, for there are states in which the tongue can be damaging. Refrain from socializing with the unintelligent, even if it is a friend, similar to how you would refrain from befriending an intellectual person who is your enemy. Avoid being hostile with people, for you may either be challenged by a tolerant and patient person or be harmed by a mean person.

Refrain from lying, be it small or big, serious or humorous; for if a person says a small lie he will find the audacity to say a big lie.

My son! Be patient during difficulties, do not oppose other people's rights, and do not consent to your brother in doing something that damages you more than benefiting him.

The aforementioned are examples of advice regarding ethics and acts of worship, and this shows that applied and verbal training are insufficient on their own. To the same extent in which we teach kids the good and evil in actions in their rightful place, we should be ready make suggestions and advise because maybe certain actions have not yet been carried out or have not been experienced. Hence, before an incident, the child must be made familiar with it so as to know how to maturely deal with it bearing in mind that ordering, prohibiting, and suggesting more than necessary will lead to dissatisfaction and become overwhelming, consequently yielding no results.

Traditions and etiquettes during birth

Since Islam as a complete religion sets a unique importance for training children, it includes practices and etiquettes for their upbringing from birth.

Amongst the common practices to be carried out at the beginning of birth are reciting the call to prayer (*adhan*) in the child's right ear, and a shorter call to prayer (*iqamah*) in the child's left ear, circumcising boys, choosing an appropriate name for the child, sacrificing an animal, and holding a reception for family and friends. Serving food is a tradition that was

carried out by Imam Sajjad. Jabir said, "Ali bin Husayn's custom was to serve food when his children were born."

Giving a good name to the child holds great importance in Islam and in some instances is seen as a means to an individual's prosperity or decline in life. The Prophet considered giving a good name a child's first right that is to be performed by the parents. Just as we see amongst the names of the Infallibles that Muhammad and Ali are plentiful, likewise it has been narrated that the Imams would name their male children "Muhammad" for the first few days after their birth, and afterwards, if they wanted to, would give them another name. Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad al-'Azrami narrates an incident in this regard that happened to Imam Sajjad:

Mu'awiyah made Marwan bin Hakam the governor of Madinah and instructed him to allocate an amount for the Qurayshi youth. Imam Sajjad says. 'I went to him and he asked my name.' I said, 'Ali bin al-Husayn.' He asked, 'What is your brother's name?' I said, 'Ali.' He said, 'Ali and Ali! It seems your father plans to name all his children Ali.' Subsequently he fixed a set amount for me and I left and went to see my father. I told him about the incident. My father said, 'Woe unto the son of Marwan! If I have a hundred children, I would not like to name them anything but Ali.'

Fostering faith and religion

Family is the most important union for raising children. A great part of people's beliefs and faith are formed and enriched in the home by the father and mother; it with the parents' teachings that the child makes his or her first contact with his Lord.

A child's understanding of God from a young age will influence his personality a great deal and will give purpose to his future. Having a proper understanding of God and seeking nearness to Him is the most important principle in Islamic teachings and upbringing.

As found in Islamic narrations, especially in Imam al-Sajjad's *Treaties on Rights (Risalat al-Huquq)* as one of the parents' major responsibilities is that of familiarizing the child with God, the Creator of the universe. Through inspiration from the Ahlul Bayt, parents must acquaint their child with God and His attributes and blessings using simple and comprehensible language.

Imam al-Sajjad said regarding a father's responsibility: "And in relation to managing your child, you are responsible to raise him well and familiarize him with his Lord."

Emphasis on Children Learning Prayer

The late Mirza Nuri writes in Mustadrak:

Imam Sajjad would encourage the kids that were with him to perform noon (*dhuhr*) and afternoon ('*asr*) and also sunset (*maghrib*), and nightfall ('*ishaa*) prayers together. To those adults who objected to the Imam, he would say, 'This is easier and better and will cause them to willfully pray and not harm their prayer with sleep and leisurely activities.' The Imam did not order the kids to anything else other than obligatory prayers. He would say, 'If they have the strength and patience to perform the obligatory prayers, do not prevent them.'

Even though the Imams were extremely kind and gentle in raising children and would only consider the minimum burden upon them, they emphasized on prayer as an obligation because of its grave importance in everyone's lives.

The Imam himself was a practical role model in performing prayer and encouraged his children to perform the recommended prayers. A narrator says that Imam's son, Zayd, said: "My father, Ali ibn Husayn, would never fail to perform the fifty rak'ah prayers." The narrator asked: "What do you mean by fifty rak'ah prayers?" Zaid replied, 'Seventeen rak'ah are the obligatory daily prayers, eight rak'ah are the recommended prayers before dhuhr prayer, four rak'ah are the recommended prayers after dhuhr prayer, four rak'ah recommended prayers before 'asr prayer, four rak'ah after maghrib prayers, eight rak'ah are the night prayers, three rak'ah are salat al-witr (two rak'ah with the intention of shaf' prayer and one rak'ah with the intention of witr prayer), and two rak'ah after fajr (morning) prayers. Then he added, 'My father (Imam Zain al-Abideen) would teach these prayers to his children.'

Regarding his father's qualities, Imam Baqir says, "The recommended prays in which his holiness could not perform during the day, he would make up for during the night. He would say, 'My children, it is not mandatory upon you to make up the recommended prayers. However, if you have made a habit of performing a good act, I would like you to be persistent in doing it.'"

In addition to this, the Imam taught his children to take advantage of worshipping and supplicating on nights such as the fifteenth of Sha'ban and Eid al-Fitr. Zayd said, "My father, Ali bin al-Husayn, would gather all of us on the night of the fifteenth of Sha'ban. Thereupon, he would divide

the night into three parts. In the first part of the night, he would perform prayer for us; then he would say a prayer and we would say “Amen”. Then he would repent, and we would likewise repent and ask God to grant us heaven, until the rise of dawn.”

Sayyid bin Tawus narrates from Imam Baqir, “On the night of Eid al-Fitr, Imam Sajjad would remain in the mosque, and while performing prayer until morning, he would spend the night awake in devotion and would tell his children, ‘The virtue of this night is no less than the Night of Measure (*Qadr*).’”

Prayer for Children

In *Sahifah Sajjadiyah*,¹ Imam Zayn al-Abideen prays for his children in the following:

O God, be kind to me through the survival of my children, setting them right for me, and allowing me to enjoy them: My God, make long their lives for me, increase their terms, bring the smallest for me, strengthen the weakest for me, rectify for me their bodies, their religious dedication, and their moral traits, make them well in their souls, their limbs, and everything that concerns me of their affair, and pour out for me and upon my hand their provisions! Make them pious, fearing, insightful, hearing, and obedient toward Thee, loving and well-disposed toward Thy friends, and stubbornly resistant and full of hate toward all Thy enemies.

¹ A composition of prayers and supplications

Many great scholars recommend the father and mother to pray to God for their children's guidance and well-being. One of the most effective prayers before God is a parent's prayer for his or her child. Even though the infallible Imams had righteous children, still, like Imam Sajjad, they would raise their hands in prayer and ask God to place their children on the right path and grant them a long and respected life. This matter in itself shows the importance of this act and points out this responsibility to the parent; to never deprive your children from this blessing. Imam al-Sadiq says, "There are three forms of prayer that will not be denied God's kindness, mercy, and acceptance: the prayer of a parent for his child, in the event that he shows kindness towards his parent, and his curse the moment he is unaffectionate and disobedient towards his parent."

Discussing Islamic Sciences with Children

Zayd, Imam Sajjad's son, tells his father, "My dear father, tell me of my grandfather, the Messenger of God, when they took him to the heavens and his Lord ordered him to perform fifty sets of prayer. Why did he not ask God for a reduction for his nation (*Ummah*) until Musa bin Imran told him, 'Ask God for a reduction, for your people do not have the tolerance for such a thing.'

The Imam replied, 'My child, the Prophet of Islam was not such a person to turn back and request after his Lord has ordered him, and when Prophet Musa asked the Prophet and interceded on behalf of the Prophet's nation, the Prophet did not feel such a request was worthy of rejecting. Hence, he requested God to decrease the prayers for his nation and God reduced the fifty sets of prayer to five sets.'

The Social Upbringing of Children

Proper Interactions with Others

The Imams interacted with the highest level of courtesy, respect, and generosity with the people they interacted with. Even if the other party was ungrateful or faithless, they still would not step out of the domain of etiquette and respect. Imam Baqir heard his father say, “If a person sat to your right and spoke ill of you and then after went to your left and apologized, accept his apology.”

Imam Baqir narrates, “When my father was on his deathbed, he held me to his chest and said, ‘My child, I advise you to what my father told me when he was passing, and this is a will his fathers advised him to: Beware of oppressing the one who finds no helper other than God.’”

Befriending Others

Friendship and socializing is an important need, and is unhealthy when taken to the extremes. Parents play an important role in their children’s social lives: One of the parents’ responsibilities is to oversee how their children make friends, since children and youth are affected most by their peers, and may emulate those who are influenced by immoral friends, and eventually make the wrong decisions that lead to an unsuccessful future. Imam Sajjad forbade friendship with those who possess the following qualities:

- a) A person who lies: “Imam Sajjad told one of his sons the following regarding what groups of people to refrain from socializing with: ‘My child! Keep in mind five groups of people and abstain from accompanying, speaking with, and befriending them...Do not socialize with a liar for he is like an illusion. He will make far seem close to you

and close seem far.” So the first group to avoid is the liars who speak against the truth and form wrong thoughts and ideas in people’s minds. Hence, for this reason they cause intellectual deviation in people.

- b) A sinner (*fasiq*): In continuation of the previous narration, Imam Sajjad says, “Do not socialize with a sinner because he will sell you out for nothing but a piece of bread or even less.” Such people easily trample over his friend’s rights and forget the promise they have made. These kinds of people are only after their personal gains and when they see they can make a better profit elsewhere, they will leave their friends and pay no attention to them.
- c) The stingy (*bakhil*): Imam Sajjad told one of his children, “Do not make friends with a stingy person, for when you gravely need his help, he will leave you.”
- d) The foolish (*ahmaq*): Imam Sajjad said, “Do not befriend a foolish person for when trying to help you, he will harm you.”
- e) One who has cut off family ties (*qat‘ rahim*): He also said, “Stay away from socializing with someone who has cut off his family ties for I have seen such a person cursed in three places in the Qur’an. God has said, ‘Did you reach power? Do you want to cause corruption on earth and break your family ties? These are the people that God has cursed, whom He has deafened their ears and blinded their eyes.’” And he said, “And those people who break God’s covenant after it has been established and disrupt that which God has ordered to be joined and cause corruption on earth, God’s curse is upon them and the ills of the next world are for them. (13:25)” In the chapter, The Cow (*al-*

Baqarah), God has said: “*Those who break God’s covenant after they have pledged to keep it, and sever whatever God has ordered to be joined, and act depraved on earth, will be the losers. (2:27)*”

A person who has cut off his relation with his family is rejected, and from God’s perspective, is abominated and cursed upon. Hence, reason tells us to deter from someone who is cursed by God and under no circumstances to befriend him or her.

How to Resolve Problems

-Performing Prayer to Remove Difficulties

Abu Hamzah al-Thumali says, “Imam Sajjad would tell his children, “My children, if a calamity or poverty befalls you and you have a difficult task or necessity, one of you should make ablution for prayer and perform four sets or two sets of prayer; after the prayer, recite this supplication: “O abode where complaints are overseen! Oh hearer of all that which is whispered! O healer of all distress! O knower of all secrets! O remover of calamities He wills, O savior of Moses, O selector of Muhammad, O He who resolved Abraham’s needs! I beseech you just as he whose poverty, misery, and afflictions have become severe and his strength has weakened and his resorts have lessened. I call upon you like the supplication of he who has drowned and is a stranger and a poor person who has no alternative to resolve his tragedies but You. O most loving of benefactors! O Lord! You are glorified! It was I who was oppressive. Then Imam Sajjad said, “There is no individual who recites this prayer unless God disentangles his difficulties.”

-Patience before Difficulties

Imam Sajjad advised his son, Imam Baqir, in his will:

My son! Be patient with difficulties and troubles and do not place yourself in fatal situations; do not advance upon something which harms you more than benefiting you.

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**MORAL GOVERNANCE OF PROPHET
MUHAMMAD
PART III: PEACE & WAR, JUDICIARY & POLITICS**

MOHAMMAD NASR ISFAHANI
TRANSLATED BY HANNANEH FATHOLLAHI AND STAFF

ABSTRACT: Prophet Muhammad was sent to perfect people's ethics and to establish a community based on moral principles. In the administration he formed, he encouraged public participation, and eradicated idol worship in Mecca by replacing it through constructing places of worship for Muslims. The Prophet also established a comprehensive system of laws in which the duties of each person was taken into consideration to form an independent and unified nation. According to these guidelines, the Prophet succeeded in creating a system grounded on perfect principles in which all believers have equal rights rather than abiding by rules based on tribe, gender, race, or social class. In the previous part, Prophet Muhammad's ethical management of the economy in the Islamic state was described. This part studies his peace-making strategies as well as managing war and dealing with opposition within and outside Medina, such as the Prophet's emphasis on use of consultation, as well as leniency and kindness towards war captives. His judicial and political approaches are also taken into account.

Ethical management of peace and war

God describes the conduct and kindness of the Prophet in the Holy Qur'an:

There has certainly come to you a messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is your distress; he is full of concern for you, and most kind and merciful to the faithful.
(9:128)

The aims of the Prophet's peace-making and warfare were done for the people's peace and comfort. Naturally, pacifism was the Prophet's favourite policy because it brings about security, and as a result, people can achieve their personal and social goals and pursue their material and spiritual aims.

a) Managing peace

The Prophet made massive efforts to establish peace and security. By announcing Medina to be a divine and secure sanctuary, the Prophet established a legal boundary for it so that it is safe from invasion and conflict. As soon as he entered Medina, the Prophet managed to sign a peace treaty with all the pagan tribes around the city. As Safwān ibn Umayyah explained to his pagan Qurayshite friends, "Muhammad has blocked the coastal route to Damascus (*Shaam*) and made a treaty with all tribes in this route so that we are not able to trade from here."¹ Some delegations from Najran, Thaqif, and other regions were coming to the Prophet to negotiate from regions such as Najrān and Thaqī. The Prophet himself sent agents to different areas to make peace with all tribes. His insistence on peace was such that when Imam Ali was sent to Yemen, he advised, "When you reach there, do not initiate war; if they began the war

¹ Wāghidi, *Maghāzi*, vol.2, p. 143.

and one or two of you were killed, do not wage a war. Act leniently with them and forgive them."²

At the peak of his power, the Prophet wrote letters to various tribes granting them autonomy, provided that they would pray and give Zakat and make roads safe. According to these treaties, if these tribes were attacked, Muslims must defend them against the enemy, and if the Muslims needed their help, they must assist them.³ Those whom the Prophet sent as envoys spoke the language of those people.⁴ Zayd ibn Thābit Ansāri, who was eleven years old when the Holy Prophet entered Medina, said, "The Prophet told me to learn Hebraic or Syriac writing and I learned it within seven nights so that I could read the Jews' letters for him."⁵

In battles, the Prophet tried not to initiate the battle, and if invaders offered peace, he would welcome it.⁶

He was not also willing to fight even against the most aggressive enemies such as the Quraysh. For this reason, he praised 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah and Hakim ibn Hizām because they did not seek to fight and invade the Muslims.⁷

The Prophet propagated Islam through dialogue and instruction, but his enemies did stubbornly resisted and resorted to violence. Although the Prophet prepared to defend the Ummah against enemy, he also tried to ally himself with various tribes to prevent their attacks on – and union with –

² Ibid. vol. 3, p. 26.

³ *Tabaqāt*, vol.1, p. 255, 257.

⁵ Ibid. vol.1, p. 249.

⁴ Ibid. vol.2, p. 342.

⁶ *Maghāzi*, vol. 1; p. 49,54.

⁷ *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, pp. 233-234.

the enemy. When Abū Jahl had taken up the position to fight against the Muslims along with Quraysh army in the battle of Badr, the Prophet despatched 'Umar ibn Khattāb to Abū Jahl and told Omar to tell them to return, since the Prophet is not willing to fight him.⁸

Those who initiated the battles of Uhud and Khandaq were also polytheists, and the Prophet only defended himself and the Muslims. He lived with the Jews in peace as long as they agreed not to be a military threat or plot militarily. As soon as he felt the weakness of the Qurayshite polytheists, he went to Mecca for pilgrimage (*hajj*) unarmed. In this event, Badil ibn Warqā' came to the Prophet and said, "We have come from your relatives, Ka'b ibn Lūi and 'Āmir ibn Lūi. The Quraysh have brought a mob along with their allies and their families who are all armed and have taken an oath that won't allow you to enter the Ka'ba unless you kill all of them." The Prophet said, "We have come not to fight, but for circumambulation of Kaaba, we will fight anyone who attempts to prevent us."⁹ He made peace with the Meccans during this journey and treated them with tolerance. This was portrayed in writing a peace treaty where he accepted "*Bismik Allahumma*" to be written instead of 'Allah' and 'Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allāh' instead of 'Messenger of Allāh'.

b) Managing war

The newly established government of Medina had potential and dangerous enemies who prevented Muslims from a peaceful life; they constantly engaged in plotting against Medina. The enemies of the Muslim authority were both external and internal:

⁸ *Maghāzi*, p. 45.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 450.

Enemies outside Medina: The Qurayshite pagans and their allied tribes were the chief enemies of the Muslims. Primitive barbarian and savage tribes of the Arab polytheists took any opportunity to attack and plunder Medina.

The Jews of Yathrib were among the Muslims' potential enemies who lived around and out of Medina. They bore enmity and grudge against the Muslims, while the Christians displayed friendliness towards the Muslims, as the Qur'an stated:

لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقْرَبَهُمْ مَوَدَّةً
لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصَارَى ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ قِسِيَسِينَ وَرُهْبَانًا وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا
يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

You find Jews and pagans among the worst of the enemies of the believers. (Of the non-believers) nearest to them (the believers) in affection you find those who say, "We are Christians," for among them are the priests and monks who are not proud. (5:82)

Enemies within Medina: Most of the people of Medina had completely embraced Islam, although some became mere Muslims by name because they could not confront the majority of the people. The Qur'an labels them as 'hypocrites' as they constantly harmed the Muslims through their acts of sabotage.¹⁰

While the Prophet was peace-loving, he did not forgive those who violated the Muslims' lives and property. He confronted them as he considered their

¹⁰ "O Prophet! Wage jihad against the faithless and the hypocrites, and be severe with them. Their refuge shall be hell, and it is an evil destination." (9:73)

acts deserving of severe punishment. Usually, when he heard a clan or tribe intend to attack Medina, he quickly prepared himself for defense.

In a world where the law does not rule, if you do not have power, you will be swallowed by the powerful. The Quraysh and other Arab tribes were very likely to attack Medina. For this reason, the Prophet dispatched the Emigrants (*Muhajirin*) on various military missions to reveal his power so that nobody dared to invade the Muslims:

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهَبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَ
عَدُوَّكُمْ وَأَخْرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ إِيَّاهُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تظَلُمُونَ

Mobilize your (defensive) force as much as you can to frighten the enemies of God and your own enemies. This also will frighten those who are behind them whom you do not know but God knows well. Whatever you spend for the cause of God, He will give you sufficient recompense with due justice. (8:60)

Military missions were carrying out to familiarize themselves with the region, to conclude treaties with tribes around Medina, and to intimidate the enemy. In addition to preventing the enemy's invasion of Medina and securing the city, the missions created convenient jobs suitable to the mind-set of the Emigrants (*Muhajirin*).

Wāqidi writes, "Before the battle of Badr, the Prophet did not dispatch any of the Helpers (*Ansaar*) for war."¹¹ After the Prophet arrived, coinciding with the revelation of the verses of jihad, no military move was made by

¹¹ Wāqidi, *Maghāzi*, vol.1, p. 7, *Tabaqāt*, Vol. 2, p. 2.

Muslims for one year. During the ten years that the Prophet lived in Medina, 74 military combats took place which were initiated by the pagans. The Prophet was present in 27 of the battles and he personally fought in nine of them. In the other 47 battles, the Prophet sent other the troops under commandment of another person.¹²

The pagans were extremely hostile to the Muslims; one battle was imposed on them within every 50 days. Naturally, the Prophet spent most of his social life in Medina in the battles, and war is the most challenging scenario for observing human ethics because of its special requirements and conditions, although the Prophet represented the highest level of ethical management of war in this scene.

The Prophet also disliked compelling someone to do something; instead, he delegated those who volunteered. In the Battle of Badr, when it was known that the trade caravan of Quraysh had gone to Mecca and the Muslims confronted the Qurayshite army, the Prophet thought that the Ansaar (the Helpers) would defend him only inside Medina; however, the Ansaar assured him that none of them would leave him, and after that unity, the Prophet went for the battle.¹³

During the Hajj season, when attacks were likely to occur, the Prophet consulted with his companions. After the allegiance of Ridwān, which indicated their consent, he decided to wage war. During the battle of Tabūk, when many did not volunteer, the Prophet reproached them afterwards for having preferred their own desires over God's. Evidently, he

¹² Ibid., vol.1, p. 5.

¹³ *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, vol.2, p. 227.

forgave them when they expressed regret.¹⁴ In the middle of the battle of the Ditch (*Khandaq*), Bani Hārithah sent a message to the Prophet by Aws ibn Qayzi, telling him that their homes were defenceless, although the Ansaar's homes are not. The Prophet exempted them from war, and they prepared to return to their own homes. When Sa'ad ibn Ma'ādh heard this news, he told the Prophet, "They're always making excuses during challenging situations." Then he turned to Bani Hārithah and said, "You are always like this when there is a problem, this is how you react." However, the Prophet did not compel them to stay and returned them.¹⁵

The Prophet was not an opinionated person; he carefully listened to others' opinions and then acted upon what seemed logical, to which some of the ignorant leaders of the time regarded his behaviour as a defect, calling him an 'Ear'.¹⁶ Nonetheless, war was among the important affairs that the Prophet consulted about with others.

Before the battle of Badr began, he consulted with the companions, including the Ansaar and the Muhajirin (the Emigrants).¹⁷ He also consulted during the battles of Uhud and Khandaq, and implemented their suggestions. Examples of these implementations include Salman Farsi's proposal to dig a ditch that blocked the enemy.¹⁸ Also, during the siege of Bani Thaqif, when it lengthened, the Prophet consulted with the people.

¹⁴ Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 185-190.

¹⁵ *Maghāzi*, p. 347.

¹⁶ "Among them are those who torment the Prophet, and say, "He is an ear. Say, An ear that is good for you. He has faith in Allah and trusts the faithful, and is a mercy for those of you who have faith. As for those who torment the Apostle of Allah, there is a painful punishment for them." (9:61)

¹⁷ *Sirat-e Rasūl Allāh*, vol.2, p. 536.

¹⁸ *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, vol.1, p. 247.

When Salmān Farsi suggested using a mangonel,¹⁹ he accepted this suggestion and instructed them to build it.²⁰

Sometimes these consultations resulted in ideas contrary to the Prophet's suggestions. In the battle of Badr, Hubāb ibn Mundhr asked the Prophet, "Have you selected this military position by revelation or it is your own opinion and war tactic?" He replied, "It is my opinion." Mundhir said, "It is not a suitable military position. We should camp near the water." He made some other suggestions. The Prophet stated, "You're right." And he ordered the army to act according to Mundhr's suggestion.²¹

In the battle of Uhud, he also consulted with the companions and acted upon the view of majority, contrary to his own opinion.²²

During the battle of Khandaq, although the Prophet had agreed with the Bani Ghatafān that one-third of Medina's products would be given to them if they stop helping the Quraysh, before signing the contract, he consulted with the chiefs of Aus and Khazraj tribes. And because they did not accept it, he said, "It is up to you."²³ Abū Hurayrah said, "I have not seen anybody who consulted with his companions as much as the Prophet did."²⁴

In the beginning of the battle of Khaybar, Hubāb ibn Mundhr ibn Jamū' went to the Prophet and said, "You have camped near the rampart, in the palm grove and wet lands, and no tribe is more aggressive than the people

¹⁹ A war engine for throwing stones

²⁰ *Maghāzi*, p. 706.

²¹ *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, vol.2, p. 232.

²² *Sirat-e Rasūl Allāh*, vol.2, pp. 648 & 649.

²³ *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, vol. 3, p. 246.

²⁴ *Maghāzi*, p. 440.

of fortress of 'Natāh'. Also, they overlook us and we will be within range of their arrows. It is likely that they hide in the palm grove at night. You should move from here and place a pebble land between us and them, so that we are out of range of their rows." The Prophet called Muhammad ibn Muslimah to consider a place farther, away from the enemy's rampart, theft, and night raid.²⁵

Discipline was another important issue in the Prophet's personal and military activities.²⁶ He did his works such as putting on his dress and walking from the right side.²⁷ Before every battle, he used to rank forces in rows and arrange those who were front or back toward the line by moving his stick, and then he organized them.

When the Muslims reached the rampart of Nā'im in Natāh, the Prophet marshalled the companions and commanded them not to begin the battle until they received an order. At this moment, a man from tribe of 'Ashja" attacked a Jew named Marhab and killed him. Others asked, "O Prophet! Is this man a martyr?" He asked, "Was he killed after I had forbidden fighting?" They replied, "Yes." He stated, "The crier should proclaim that paradise will be forbidden for anyone who has disobeyed my command."²⁸

He also made his companions take turns to guard at night when they were in Raji' for seven days.²⁹ Umme Salamah narrated, "During the battle of

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 489 & 490.

²⁶ Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqāt*, vol. 1, p. 366.

²⁷ Ibid., vol.1, p. 370.

²⁸ *Maghāzi*, pp. 493 & 494.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 492.

Khandaq, I was with the Prophet, and at night, while it was extremely cold, he got up, prayed, and went out of his tent to guard the place."³⁰

When there was nobody to guard the region, the Prophet did it himself. Āyishah reported, "One night when we were beside the trench, the Prophet constantly walked through an opening adjacent to it, and guarded it until the weather got too cold. I warmed him and he again went through that gap to continue guarding it, saying, "I fear that the enemy will penetrate through this area." At this time, I heard sword strokes. When the Prophet came to know it was Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqās, the Prophet asked him to guard the opening. And then the Prophet slept."³¹

The Prophet also managed the military equipment and enemies' weaponry. In the battle of Khaybar, the Prophet put on two armours, the helmet and breast plate, and was riding on a horse named Zīrb. He also used to hold spear and shield in his hand.³²

Before beginning any military operation, the Prophet made great efforts to obtain information to make military decisions, and was confidential if it undermined the morale of the defence forces. For example, once the Prophet sent Hubāb ibn Mundhir to obtain information and assess the enemy among Quraysh; he ordered him, "After returning, do not give your information to anybody except me in private."³³

In previous battles, war crimes were committed. The Prophet gave ethical advice to the troops before war to prevent these war crimes. After the

³⁰ Ibid., p. 348.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 347 & 348.

³² Ibid., p. 479.

³³ Ibid., p. 151.

victory of the Battle of Hunayn, the Prophet dispatched Tufayl ibn 'Amr to Tā'if to destroy idol-temples there. Before he left, the Prophet had advised him, "Give my greeting to people, help your own people, grant food, and be afraid of God as such anyone is afraid of his respected family members; and if you do a bad deed, compensate it with goodness."³⁴

The Prophet advised 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn 'Awf in the Siryah of Dūmah al-Jandal as follows: "Go to jihad in the name of God and wage a war with the unbelievers only in the way of Him. Do not deceive people and do not kill children."³⁵ The Prophet also ordered his people to bury the enemies' corpses in the Battle of Badr.³⁶

It was customary among the Arabs not to refrain from doing any savagery if they overcame the enemy. They would cut their body parts into pieces, take parts of them as a souvenir, and blind them. Islam forbade these acts. When the Prophet sent a group to Syria, he forbade them from mutilating enemies' corpses.³⁷

After capturing Suhayl ibn 'Amr, 'Omar ibn Khattāb told the Prophet, "Command us to take out his front teeth and tongue so that he won't be able to deliver sermon against you anymore." The Prophet said, "Never will I mutilate him, and you do not want the prophet of God to give such command."³⁸

³⁴ Ibid., p. 703.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 424.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 83.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 432.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 79.

The Prophet was also kind and merciful to the war captives. Abū al-'Ās ibn Rabi', a Qurayshite captive, said, "The Prophet advised the Muslims to treat the captives kindly; during the Muslims' mealtime, they gave us bread even though it was little, and they themselves would eat dates. The Ansaar took us on horse, and they went on foot."³⁹

After the victory of Muslims over Bani Mustalaq, the Prophet ordered the captives to be treated kindly. They gathered men in one place and women and children in another; the Prophet also appointed someone to protect and watch them.⁴⁰

After Bani Thaḡif had been under siege in their fortress for a long time, the Prophet said, "Every slave who comes out of the fortress and joins us will be free." About twenty men came out and joined the Muslims. Later, when some became Muslim, the Prophet paid for their freedom and gave each of them to a Muslim his living expenses were taken care of. After the Muslims' victory over the Bani Thaḡif and their conversion to Islam, they asked to retract the slaves, although the Prophet said, "They were sent in the way of God and no one has control over them."⁴¹ When the Prophet arrived at the place of keeping the Hawāzin's captives in Ji'rānah, he ordered Busr ibn Sufyān to bring clothing for the captives from Mecca. Then he said, "None of the captives must be without clothes."⁴²

In another event, Nabbāsh ibn Qays, one of the captives of Bani Qurayzah, wrestled with the Muslim who brought him. The Muslim punched Nabbāsh on the nose and it bled. The Prophet, who witnessed this,

³⁹ Ibid., p. 88.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 305.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 709.

⁴² Ibid., p. 718.

reproached the Muslim and said, "Why did you treat with him like this?" He replied, "He wrestled with me and wanted to escape, so I hit him." Nabbāsh stated, "By the Torah! He is lying. Even if he frees me, I will not go away from my tribesmen." The Prophet told the Muslim, "Treat the captives leniently and give them water to cool them down."⁴³

The Prophet strongly opposed mental torture of captives. When Safiyah, the ex-wife of Kunānah ibn Abi al-Haqiq, was captured, the Prophet sent her and her cousin along with Bilāl to a certain place. During the walk, Safiyah's cousin wept bitterly as Bilāl led her and her cousin through battlefield. The Prophet was upset with Bilāl's action, saying, "Do you have not any mercy? Why do you take a young girl through the slain?" Bilāl replied, "I did not know this act would disturb you; I only wanted them to see the place where their relatives had been."⁴⁴

In another event, the Prophet passed by a pregnant woman who was about to deliver the baby and asked, "Whose share is this woman?" After it was pointed out who it was, he said that if the man takes the child as a slave he would be cursed; a curse which will be with him even in his grave."⁴⁵

Ethical judicial management

Killing and bloodshed were prevalent among the Arabs before the advent of Islam; getting revenge was a tribal duty, as they believed that murder was to be retaliated with murder. When possible, several people would be killed in return for one murdered person. However, Islam provided a balance and replaced violence with leniency. It also encouraged people to forgive and

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 388 & 389.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 514.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 521.

take blood-money and in return for it, it promised them paradise and forgiveness for their sins.⁴⁶

In the advent of Islam, Muhallim ibn Jaththāmah killed 'Āmir ibn Adbat because of pre-Islamic grudges. After the Muslim army returned from the battle of Hunayn, in the presence of the Prophet, Uyyinah ibn Hisn sought vengeance for 'Āmir. The Prophet said, "Are you ready to take blood-money?" Uyyinah refused and made a fuss. People asked for retaliation against Muhallim and told the Prophet, "If you like to take blood-money from killers, start this act from tomorrow." The Prophet raised his hands and stated, "Accept blood-money. We offer fifty camels now and fifty camels after reaching Medina." They did not accept. The Prophet insisted on his position so much that they accepted to discontinue bloodshed; however, the killer had made himself ready for retaliation. He came to the Prophet and asked for God's forgiveness. The Prophet reproached him because of his unforgivable act and said three times, "O God! Do not forgive Muhallim." Then he told him, "Stand up." Muhallim left there crying and ashamed. Those present said they witnessed the Prophet secretly

⁴⁶ "In the Torah We made mandatory for the Jews these rules of retaliation: Capital punishment for the murder of a person; an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and a just compensation for a wound. If the perpetrator is forgiven by the affected party, this will be an expiation of his crime. Those who do not judge according to what God has revealed are unjust." (5:45)

"Believers, in case of murder, the death penalty is the sanctioned retaliation: a free man for a free man, a slave for a slave, and a female for a female. However, if the convicted person receives pardon from the aggrieved party, the prescribed rules of compensation must be followed accordingly. This is a merciful alteration from your Lord. Whoever transgresses against it will face a painful punishment." (2:178)

"There is life for you in retribution, O you who possess intellects! Maybe you will be God wary!" (2:179)

asking for God's forgiveness for Muhallim, but he reproached Muhallim in public to warn everyone against homicide.⁴⁷

When someone hid one of the spoils, the Prophet blamed him and asked to be punished. When a companion asked for the Prophet's forgiveness three times, the Prophet replied, "Do not ask me for forgiveness and to reduce the criminals' punishments."⁴⁸

In the battle of Uhud, Hārith ibn Suwayd surprisingly killed another Muslim named Majdār ibn Ziyād to take the revenge for his father's murder who had been killed during tribal conflicts between Aus and Khazraj before Islam. When the Prophet ordered Harith to be arrested, Harith, with deep regret, said, "Satan dominated me and I was overcome with my desire and pre-Islamic beliefs; I will repent and feed sixty poor people, pay his blood-money and fast for two consecutive months." But the Prophet did not know him worthy of forgiveness and ordered that he be killed so that his unfair act would be compensated for.⁴⁹

Ethical management of politics

The Prophet's sublime character was reflected in his politics, too, for or the Prophet, management and political power were not only a goal but also a means of gaining access to Exalted God in Hereafter. The Prophet stood among Muslims in Dhi Tuwā and to express his own humility to the Exalted God, he bowed his head so much that his beard almost touched the saddle. He thanked God and the large crowd of Muslims for the liberation of Mecca and then stated:

⁴⁷ *Maghāzi*, p. 701.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

العيش عيش الآخرة

Life is the life in the Hereafter.⁵⁰

After the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet stood by the door of the Kaabah and announced general amnesty. He turned his face to the nobles of the Quraysh and said, "What do you say now?" They said, "Goodness and charity, you are our brother and brother's son that have come to power now." The Prophet stated, "But I tell you the same word which my brother, Joseph said to his brothers: He said, 'There shall be no reproach on you today. Allah will forgive you, and He is the most merciful of the merciful.'"⁵¹

The Prophet divided task according to the peoples' capabilities and qualifications. He did not officially recognize any previous office and post except the offices of guarding the Kaaba and giving water to the pilgrims.⁵²

'Uthmān ibn Talhah, a former guardian of the Kaaba, brought the key of Ka'ba to the Prophet and gave it to him. Abbās ibn Abd al-Muttalib used the suitable occasion, extended his hand, and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Grant us the post of guarding the Ka'ba and giving water to pilgrims." The Prophet said, "I assign you a duty by which you undertake some costs and not earn money." He returned the key to 'Uthmān and said, "You will continue to assume this duty." He granted Abbās the responsibility of giving water to the pilgrims, in which he annually paid high costs for.⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 630. This means that real life and joy come in the hereafter.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 639 & 640.

⁵² Ibid., p. 639.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 614 & 637.

The Prophet never misused his power, and considered himself a member of Islamic community. When he was busy marshalling Muslims in the battle of Badr, he hit Sawād ibn Aziyah with a stick and told him, "O Sawād! Stand in the line." Sawād objected that the blow had annoyed him and he retaliated against the Prophet. The Prophet made his stomach bare and said, "Hit me back." Sawād embraced the Prophet and kissed his face. The Prophet asked the reason. Sawād replied, "We are going to fight in the way of God and I fear I will be killed and won't see you anymore; I wanted my last encounter with the Prophet to be embracing him."⁵⁴

The Prophet was known not to use his leadership as an excuse to escape hardship. In one event, the Muslims had to dig a ditch in the battle of Ahzāb, and the Prophet worked with them. The Muslims had borrowed some baskets, spades, and axes from the Jews of the Bani Quraydah. The Prophet assigned each group to dig one part of the ditch. Marwān ibn Abi Sa'id narrated that on that day, the Prophet was carrying lumps on earth with a basket. The Prophet pushed aside some earth with a pick, a spade, or he carried it with basket. One day the Prophet leaned on a stone to the left side of ditch and fell asleep from extreme exhaustion. One of the Muslims approached the Prophet. He woke up, picked up the pick and began working again."⁵⁵

After the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet prepared his army to confront the tribe of Hawāzin who rebelled and waged war on the Muslims. To do so, the Prophet requested to borrow a hundred armours from Safwān ibn Umayyah. Safwān asked, "Do you demand them because you have control

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 42.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 339 & 340.

over us or do you demand it willingly?" The Prophet said, "I demand it on loan and I will give you a guarantee."⁵⁶

The Prophet deceived neither his friends and nor enemies; he kept his promise even to his worst enemies, who admitted it. Before the Prophet entered Mecca, a group of Qurayshites had met with him and said, "O Muhammad! By God, you were not known for deception during your childhood and adulthood. Why did you enter the Holy Sanctuary with an armed tribe while you promised that you would enter with passenger's arms [i.e. not as a warrior] and swords in sheath." The Prophet replied, "This time would be the same and we will not enter Mecca except in this way."⁵⁷

After a three-day lesser pilgrimage (*hajj*) in Mecca, the morning of the fourth day, the Prophet was among the Ansaar and Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah was talking with him when Suhayl ibn 'Amr and Huwaytib ibn Abd al-'Uzzā came and said, "Your respite has been finished. We ask you to leave our land for the sake of God and for your promise to us." Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah got upset by their bitter tone and told Suhayl, "This land is neither yours nor your father's. By God! The Prophet won't leave this land unless he wills too." The Prophet smiled and said to Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah, "Do not disturb those who have come to see us." And then he ordered Abū Rāfi', "No Muslim must stay in Mecca tonight."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 680.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 560.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 564.

HISTORY OF THE SHI'A IN THE TIME OF IMAM BAQIR

SAYYID AHMAD REZA KHIZRI ET AL.¹

TRANSLATED BY SAMEREH NOOSHINRAVAN AND STAFF

ABSTRACT: Imam Baqir's Imamate began one century after the dawn of Islam, during the rule of Mu'awiya and the Umayyads. Given the oppressive rule of the Umayyads in their thirst for power through seeking conquests, dividing the Islamic community, promoting pre-Islamic traditions, and boycotting the Shi'a and the 'Alawites, Imam Baqir made efforts to spread the Islamic culture promoting the teachings of the school of Ahlul Bayt by establishing an Islamic educational institution. The following article offers a brief biography of the Imam, including his intellectual and political accomplishments. Some of Imam Baqir's endeavours include solidifying the religious beliefs of the community, spreading a jurisprudential-religious culture, training students so as to become Islamically proficient, and protecting Shi'a organizations from collapsing in the hands of the Umayyads.

¹ This paper is a translation of Chapter Eight of *The History of Shi'ism*, vol. 1: The Period of Shi'a Imam's Presence, Qum: 2005, Hawzah wa Daneshgah and Samt Publishers.

A brief biography of Imam Baqir

Imam Muhammad ibn Ali Baqir ibn Husayn is the fifth Imam of the Twelver Shi'a, his patronymic (*kunya*) being Abu Ja'far. He was nicknamed Bāqir, Hādi, Shākir, Amin, Sābir, and Shabih,² and was the first Imam whose lineage reached Prophet Muhammad from both his maternal and paternal sides.³ His mother, Fāṭima, was a distinguished woman whom Imam Ṣādiq said she was matchless among the descendants of Hasan.⁴ There are disagreements about the date of his birth and martyrdom. According to the most well-known accounts, Imam Baqir was born on Friday, the 1st of Rajab, 57 AH in the city of Medina, and was martyred on the 7th of Dhil Hijjah, 114 AH at the age of 57.

Imam Bāqir lived during the last four years during the Imamate of his grandfather, Imam Husayn ibn Ali, and during about thirty-seven years of the period of the Imamate of his father Imam al-Sajjād. His life coincided with the rule of ten Umayyad caliphs. The Imamate of Imam Bāqir lasted nineteen years and coincided with five Umayyad caliphs, from al-Walid I to Hishām.

The Imam lived in Medina his entire life with the exception of one journey to Damascus, Syria explained in the following.

1 *Kashf a-Ghummeḥ*, vol. 2, p. 329, the nickname of Shabih is because of his resemblance to the Holy Prophet (s)

2 Khārazmy, Mowaffaq Ibn Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Mallky, *Al-Manaqib*, vol. 4, p. 208.

3 *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 469.

4 Ibid; *Kashf al-Ghummeḥ*, vol. 2, p. 329, *Al-Irshād*, vol. 2, p. 158; Ibn khalkan, Ahmad Ibn Muhammad, *Wafiat al-A'yaan*, vol. 3, p. 314. Also it is said in 56 A.H. : Ibn 'imād, *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, vol. 1, p. 149; *History of Islam and Wafayat Al-Mashāhir and Al-'Aalam*. vol. 4, p. 401; Ṣafḍary, Khalil Ibn Iback, *Al-Wafa Bi al-Wafiyāt*, vol. 4, p. 102.

Political, social, and cultural conditions

The anti-Alawite and anti-Islamic policies of the Umayyads intensified after their establishment. Their approach was based on conquest and expansionism; the Umayyad caliph Walid ibn 'abd al-Malik⁵ promoted victory, wealth, and convenience⁶ and managed to improve, repair, and develop roads and construct buildings. Later eastern conquests halted at the time of Sulayman ibn Abdul-Malik, another Umayyad caliph. Thus, Khurāsān⁷ was where Arabs and Khorasanians disputed, and this paved the way for the Abbasids. The conquests in the western front proceeded toward Constantinople. During the end of Abdul-Malik's term, Rome dominated.⁸ The victories halted during the time of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Aziz.⁹ Since he had been the governor of Medina for six years during the time of previous caliphs, he formed a shelter for people who were prosecuted and tortured by the cruel agents of caliph. 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Aziz adopted the approach of the first caliphs (*The Rashedin*, or “*The Guided Ones*”) during his caliphate. In order to decrease the hostility of Shi'a and Khārijis towards the Umayyads, he provided relative freedom for groups and was lenient toward the non-Muslims. He attempted to invite them to Islam and exercised relative freedom of religion. He also adopted reformist methods in the administrative and governmental system, and forbade vilifying and cursing Imam Ali to continue implementing detente

⁵ 86-96 AH/705-715

⁶ Taqqush, Muhammad Suhei, *The History of the Umayyad Rule*, translator, Hujjatullah Judaki, p. 112.

⁷ Mashhad, Iran

⁸ Ibid, pp. 118-142.

⁹ 101-99AH

policies.¹⁰ Moreover, by taking a courageous measure, he lifted the ban of recording and narrating hadith an act implemented for one century. But after the death of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz and other caliphs' reign, the Umayyad policies continued with the same oppressive, authoritarian approach. In particular, at the time of Hishām, more severe repressive policies, especially toward the Shi'a, ruled the society.

A conversation between the Imam and one of his own devotees portrays the social and political conditions of that time.¹¹ These types of exchanges depicted the intolerable political and social circumstances under which the Imams and the Shi'a lived.

3. Causes of the Umayyad downfall

The decline of the Umayyad government began after Hisham, and during the time of Imam Bāqir. The downfall of such governments occurs due to

¹⁰ Ibid; pp. 152-142.

¹¹ Tusi, Muhammad ibn Hasan, Amāli, p. 95; Greeting the Imam, that person asked him, "How are you?" Imam Bāqir, who was very upset with the people of that time, sighed and told him: "Don't you ask me what is happening to us?!" Then he explained about oppression and enmities of oppressors and stated, "Among the Ummah, we are like Bani Isrāil (children of Israel), whose children they killed and whose women they kept alive, oh' they, rulers, kill our children and keep our women alive. Arabs think that they are superior to non-Arabs, and when non-Arabs ask about the reason for this, they say: Because Muhammad is from among us, and he was an Arab. And people accept this argument. The Quraishites supposed that they are superior to other tribes of Arab and in the response to those who ask about it, they used to say, "Because Muhammad is from among Quraish. "And people accepted this argument. If this is logical, then we are progeny of Muhammad and his household, and we have no equal in this virtue."

In that moment, the man swore by Allāh and said, "Truly I love your family." The Imam replied, "So, accept calamities. By Allāh! Difficulties and pains rush to us and our Shi'a faster than flood of valley. First, we face difficulties then you, as such if there is a comfort, it will be for us then for you."

the natural stages they experience of coming into existence, growth, strength, decline, and eventually, collapse.

3-1. Conflict within the Umayyad family

The policies of Mu'āwiyah¹² were as follows: 1) Demanding assistance from the elite Umayyads; 2) Preventing their power and influence from increasing; 3) Protecting the caliphate of the Umayyad family through the Yazid, the heir; 4) Creating unity within the Umayyads and preventing disagreements and conflicts.

With the decline of the Sufyanids, the Marwanids came to. It seems that there was a minor conflict between the family of Abi Sufyān and Abi al-'As, the father of Marwān. Marwān came to power after the death of Muāwiyah II. A contract was signed for the caliphate of Marwān on the condition that Khālid ibn Yazid and then Umar ibn Sa'id ibn 'As become caliph after him, though he disregarded the contract after a while and then secured allegiance to 'Abd al-Malik and then Abd al-'Aziz.¹³

After a while, 'Abd al-Malik killed his rival, 'Amr ibn Sa'id, and conflict intensified so much that, his brother, Yahya ibn Sa'id, confirmed ibn Zubayr's movement.¹⁴ After experiencing an array of obstacles, Abd al-Malik managed to reduce the clashes through creating unity.

There were disagreements over the election of Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, but when Yazid ibn 'Abd al-Malik was elected as the heir, the disagreements decreased. Of course, Hishām was one of Umar's opponents. There were some from among the Umayyad family who opposed Umar ibn Abd al-

¹² The first Umayyad caliph

¹³ *Tārikh al-Tabari*, vol. 5, pp. 541, 611

¹⁴ *Ansāb Al-Ashraf*, vol. 4, section 4, p. 142.

Aziz's open policies. Therefore, with the death of 'Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz and the reign Yazid, the same past stifling policies were adopted. Hishām is the most political caliph of Umayyad; his period is considered the height of the Umayyad power. At that time, there appeared some opponents from among the Hishām family, and his heir-apparent led them. Finally, he escaped from Hishām and lived out of Damascus until the death of Hishām.

The period of weakness of the Umayyads started after the death of Hishām. Hishām's son, Walid II, was an unbeliever and heretic and a widespread revolt emerged against him.¹⁵ Disunity within the Umayyad family intensified, and Walid was killed by his kin. Under such circumstances, the power struggle intensified, and many caliphs came to power shortly one after another. This way, the Umayyad stability was undermined and they were buried under the dust of fire which they themselves had ignited.

3-2. Appointing two heirs

It seemed that the Umayyad family could resolve conflicts by appointing two heirs from both sides; this arrangement was made for the rule of Marvān in Jābīah, but he disregarded it and elected two heirs from among his sons.

'Abd al-Malak wanted to oust his brother and appointed his two sons as heirs, but 'Abd al-'Aziz died earlier and in any case, 'Abd al-Malak appointed his two sons as heirs. Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik overthrew his brother so that his son, 'Abd al-'Aziz, would become heir. At this chain of

¹⁵ *Tārikh al-Tabari*, vol. 7, p. 232.

successors, only 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz did not seek to overthrow Yazid ibn 'Abd al-Malik despite his conflict with Yazid. Likewise, Hishām was going to oust Walid, but he died. When Walid came to power, he decided to take revenge on followers of Hishām who plotted to overthrow his heir. There are some instances of vengeance of rulers and their successors which penetrated from the level of caliph to princes and commanders and caused a severe political turmoil.

Conflicts and disagreements between tribes

To the Umayyads, the caliphate was a new type of pagan tribal system. Bigotry and prejudice were the most important principles in protecting and managing tribes. By shattering the tribal system and removing bigotry and prejudice, Islam created a new plan in managing society and protecting the Islamic nation. The sources of pride, competitions, and conflicts were revived by the Umayyads' power and their paganism.

The Umayyads exercised authority through a) Opening immigrations of northern and southern (Yemeni) Arabs to Iraq (Jazirah), Shaam, and Iran, including their conquests and spoils, b) coexistence with non-Arabs, c) the presence of non-Arabs in the social, economic, and military arenas, d) boasting Arab superiority, and e) introducing a tribe to the government or vice versa. Sometimes Qaysies (Midrids) were luck and sometimes the Kalbies (Yemenis). Those who came to power retaliated against rivals, and the other sought to oppose and rebel against him. During his ruling, Hishām was once the ally of Qaysies and then the ally of Yemenis in two completely different cycles. In other words, when he felt threatened by one of them, he took the side of the other. The danger of these engaged tribes was so great that all Yemeni tribes of Iraq and Damascus rebelled against the caliph under the pretext of the murder of Khālid ibn 'Abd Allāh

Qasari. They killed Walid in 126 AH and pledged allegiance to Yazid. The Abbasids took advantage of the rivalry between the tribes and conquered the Umayyads.

Politico-religious disagreements

The various religious sects and the adherents of each claimed caliphate during that era are as follows:

A. The Umayyad followers, most of whom were Sunnis, confirmed and assisted the Umayyad caliphs.

B. The Shi'as and Alawis who regarded the caliphate as belonging only to the descendants of Imam Ali and constantly strived to restore this violated right, although they did not always succeed as their activities undermined the Umayyad government.

C. The Umayyads had extensive conflicts with the Khārijis, who considered the rule of tyrannical caliphs unlawful and struggled to destroy them.

G. The Abbasids were the most powerful opponent whom, during their secret struggle for 34 years, patiently propagated their ideas in the large political area from Khurāsān to Iraq. They also succeeded in attracting opposition groups towards themselves using the slogan "The appointed one from among the progeny of Prophet Muhammad." Finally, they conquered the Umayyad government by uprising of a group called the Ones with the Black Outfit.

The transition of government from the Umayyads to the Abbasids occurred with assistance of Iranians, Khurāsānids, and rebellious Umayyad forces, Shi'as and Alawids.

The prohibition of the writing of hadith was one of the important cultural issues during that time, an issue raised during the rule of the first caliphs with political motives and forcefully implemented under the pretext of religious motivation and sympathy toward the Qur'an in order to protect it from mixing with hadith. Because of the above-mentioned prohibition, the hadiths of the Prophet were gradually forgotten. The Prophet's companions each of which knew tens or perhaps hundreds of hadiths by heart were killed in the battles or died naturally without teaching them to others. Using their faulty memories, they could pass on just a few of hadiths to the next generation.

Because the hadiths of the Prophet were not accessible, by the order of the caliphs, hadith narrators and liars forged many hadiths and spread them with religious, personal, and political motivations.

It seems that the claim of caliph protecting the Qur'an from mixing with hadith was only related to the Prophet's hadiths, because the spread of Jewish Lore was not prohibited, and storytellers' practice was not banned. Islamic hadiths were replaced by this type of news and myths. The lack of hadith and Muslims' need for Islamic hadiths on the one hand and delivering Jewish Lore and spurious news to society on the other hand paved the way for accepting those news, and Jewish Lore became a part of Islamic culture and gained an important position in Islamic society.

Among the Muslims, the Shi'a strove to narrate and record hadiths of the Prophet from the very beginning. Imam Ali was the first who tried to protect the prophetic legacy by recording the hadiths of the Prophet. The book *Sahife* on blood-money and other kinds of financial compensation was written by Imam Ali, and it had been passed down to other members

of the Ahlul Bayt until it was received by Imam Bāqir, who showed it to some of his elite companions.

Imam Baqir had many students and taught a variety of subjects; he also emphasized on studying the Prophet's hadiths, especially during a time when the ban on the recording of hadiths was lifted. For this reason, his students published numerous works such as the prominent collection of *Usūl Arba'miah*,¹⁶ principles (*usūl*) on various topics of Islamic jurisprudence and sciences that later became an important source for hadith scholars on Shi'a history and jurisprudence.

4. Imam Bāqir's accomplishments

According to all Shi'a and Sunni scholars, because Imam Bāqir had considerable knowledge, Jābir Ibn 'abd Allah al-Ansāri narrated that the Prophet named him "Bāqir" and "Bāqir ul-Ulūm" because, as the Prophet said about him, Bāqir means one who "dissects sciences completely."¹⁷

This means that Imam had knowledge of the most delicate issues and was also able to bring out new ideas and sciences from the existing knowledge. In the Imam's biography, historians have accepted this reason, and for his vast knowledge, even Sunni historians considered him as one of the jurists

16 According to Shaykh Mufid: Imamiyyah wrote four hundred books called "*Asl*" from the time of Imām Ali until the time of Imām Askary and according to Muhaqiq Hilli, this number of four hundred indicates only principles (*Asl*) which have been compiled by four hundred students of Imām Ṣādiq. In fact, the total number of them is more than this. Like Allāmah Hilli, Ibn Shahr Ashūb, talked of seven hundred principles which has been written by the students of Imams cf Gulbarg, Etn, *Usūl Arba'miah*, the Sciences of Hadith Quarterly, issue 17.

17 *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, pp. 536-537. *يبقر العلم بقرا*

of Medina.¹⁸ Great lexicographers such as Ibn Manzūr and Zubeydi referred to Imam Bāqir while explaining the meaning of the root *ba-qa-ra* and considered the reason for his naming a proof of meaning of this word. The name is also used in prayers and ziyarats as follows:

باقر العلم بعد النبي

The one who dissects the sciences after the Prophet

باقر علم النبيين

The one who dissects the sciences of the prophets

4-1. The cultural aspects of Imam Bāqir's accomplishments

A. Imam Bāqir in the era of Islamic jurisprudence

The scientific and cultural outcomes of the activities of Imam Sajjād helped establish the school of Ahlul Bayt at the time of Imam Bāqir, who was one of his father's students, and successor to his Imamate. This school influenced the jurists and many students were trained. The great number of scholars, students, and learners in that university as well as remarkable variety of taught sciences indicates significance and vastness of scientific and cultural dominance of the Imam.

Regarding the Imam's intellectual status and the scholars' regard for him, Sheikh Mufid wrote that the companions who survived as well as prominent successors and jurists narrated religious issues from the Imam.¹⁹ The Imam narrated information from the past peoples and prophets, and his society learned about the biography of the Prophet,

¹⁸ *Vafiyāt al-'Ayān*, vol. 3, p. 314. *Al-Vafiy bal-vafiyāt*, vol. 3, p. 102, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, vol. 1, p. 149.

¹⁹ *Al-Irshād fī Ma'rifat Hujaj Allah ala al-Ibād*, vol. 2, p. 157

including his way of life and the military expeditions. They relied on Imam Baqir during the Hajj pilgrimage and wrote down his Qur'anic commentary. Both laymen and elites regarded his narrations as hadith and trusted and valued his statements.²⁰ These cases were so great in number that Imam became an epitome of virtue.²¹ According to Sheikh Tūsi, prominent students of Imam Bāqir were 466.²²

B. Struggle with the politico-religious thought of the Khārijis

The Khārijis raised the objection of accepting an arbiter in Islam. In response to them, the Imam referred to this verse:

فابعثوا حكماً من أهله و حكماً من أهلها ان يريدوا اصلاحاً يوفق الله بينهما

*Appoint [two] arbiters, one from his family, and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation.*²³

Sa'ad Ibn Ma'ādh acted as an arbiter in the battle of Bani Quraidah and this was another historic example which Imam pointed out.²⁴

C. The Issues of compulsion and volition

The Qadarites (Mu'tazilis) and Fatalists (Ash'arites) were two schools of thought that existed during this time. These groups argued for their own claim from some verses of the Qur'an:

كل حزب بما لديهم فرحون

20 Ibid., p. 163.

21 Ibid., p. 157.

22 *Rijal al-Tusi*, pp. 102-142.

23 Sūrah al-Nisā 35.

24 *Al-Ihtijāj 'alā Ahl al-Lijāh*, vol. 2, p. 344. Cited in "Imām Bāqir: The Manifestation of Imāmate in the Horizon of Knowledge." pp. 80- 81; There are other examples as well.

Every group is happy because of whatever they have.

These sects deviated due to separation from the Ahlul Bayt, intellectual poverty, and separating human intellect from the divine knowledge and revelation.

By rejecting both theory of absolutism in both compulsion and volition which went to extremes, Imam Bāqir established a moderate way, neither compulsion nor volition.

D. Confronting extremism

Some of the extremists believed in the divinity of Imam Ali and some of the Imams such as Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, and Imam Bāqir. Like the Imams before and after himself, Imam Bāqir firmly opposed extremists. He began fierce and all-out combats by dissociating from them, explaining true and right beliefs, uncovering their conspiracies and in some cases ordered to execute them.

Extremists who labelled themselves Shi'a tarnished the reputation of the Shi'a society through their opinions and immodest actions. Disgracing the Shi'a in public caused the greatest damage to Islam and the Shi'a Imams. These extremists were usually permissive and immodest in their own deeds and behaviour.

Some of them believed Allah to be physical, with body parts such as having hands, feet, eyes, and ears as interpreted from the Qur'an. They also denied corporeal resurrection, the necessity of some religious obligations, propagating liberalism, permitting sinful acts, marrying those whom are forbidden to marry, and belief in reincarnation. Later a group called the Bāqiriah believed Imam Bāqir is the last Imam who never dies.

These beliefs were held to attack Islamic and Shi'a thoughts, and it was only the Imam who guarded and protected Islam and Shi'ism.

Imam Bāqir and his students were the pioneers who combated such intellectual–religious deviations. Discussions about divine unity (*tawhid*), the attributes of Allah, and an exegesis on some Quranic verses were the most significant accomplishments in clarifying and publicizing true Islam.

In this intellectual movement and cultural struggle, the Imam powerfully opposed the Jews and spread of Jewish Lore since it was one of the reasons for banning hadith documentation.

4-2. Political endeavors

Because little has been recorded on the life of Imam Bāqir, little is known about his political measures. Imam Bāqir practiced dissimulation (*taqiyyah*), and his political and cultural activities play a remarkable role in explaining the Shi'i point of view in various issues.

The calling people to the Imamate of the Ahlul Bayt, introducing the Imam, raising the issue of the scientific authority of Ahlul Bayt, proving of rightfulness of caliphate and Imamate of Ahlul Bayt and negating the legitimacy of Umayyad caliphate were cultural and political activities whose political message and effect indicates a widespread and undeniable movement.

Regarding his accomplishments, Imam Bāqir disclosed the Umayyads' plans: he knew the Umayyad rulers attempt to avert people from inclining to the Ahlul Bayt. He strived to prevent the forging and spreading false hadiths, campaigned against denying the Shi'as liberty and security, and confronted the maligning and belittling of the Shi'a Imams. All these undertakings, including his objection to Hisham, his teachings on the

right of the Ahlul Bayt in guiding people, and considering the Umayyad rule short-lived led to his imprisonment.²⁵

The Imam's support of his brother Zayd, preventing some Shi'as from accepting official positions since they were at risk for taking part in government crime, and expressing distrust in response to some from Iraq who had expressed their preparedness for obedience to the Imam all indicate his political shrewdness.²⁶

Another way in which the Imam protected Islam and Muslims against the Romans was his advice to engraving Islamic coins in place of the Roman coins with the motto of tawhid (unity of God) and prophethood.²⁷ His advice to rulers, especially to 'Umar ibn 'Abd al 'Aziz, as well as a letter he wrote to Umayyad rulers was noteworthy and enlightening.

25 *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 8, p. 120; *Al-Irshād*, vol. 2, pp. 163,164.

26 The Encyclopaedia of the Islamic World, the entry of "Al-Bāqir" p. 633, in addition to it. Of course, he used to guide rulers when it was necessary for protecting the honour of Islam and in Muslim's interests. It was reported that somebody had traded weapons before becoming Shi'a. He decided to give up his job after he had accepted Shi'ism and acquainted with political ideas of Shi'ism, and understood that selling weapons to the oppressive rule, the real enemies of God and Imāms of shiah, strengthened enemy, and asked Imām Bāqir about it. Imām Bāqir told him: "Sell your weapons to them, because God will repulse enemies (Romans) by them." Imām Bāqir : the Manifestation of Imāmate in the Horizon of knowledge, pp. 149, 150; Narrated from *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 5, p. 112.

27 Ibid., pp. 151-153, with narrating difference of opinions about this issue. History of Islamic civilization (Tārikh tamaddun islāmi), p. 102, for more information cf: Thawāqib, Jahānbakhsh, "striking coins in Islamic caliphate" *Mishkat Magazine*, No. 68-69, p. 264.

a. Imam Bāqir and the heads of state

The rulers contemporary with Imam Bāqir were Walid ibn 'abd al-Malik,²⁸ Sulaymān ibn 'abd al-Malak,²⁹ 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz,³⁰ Yazid ibn 'abd al-Malak,³¹ and Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malak.³²

Soon after the start of the Imamate of Imam Bāqir,³³ Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik died in 96AH. There is no report about the interaction between Imam Bāqir and Walid. Suleymān's caliphate was short, though it was replete with injustice, oppression, extravagance, and tyranny.

Reported by Ya'qūbi, there was a letter exchange between Imam Bāqir and Suleymān, though there exists no report about its content and the reason behind its writing. When the cause of eulogistic address was asked, he said, "Suleymān was oppressor and tyrant; I wrote to him as is written for oppressors."³⁴

"Umar ibn 'Abd ul 'Aziz was heir to the caliphate in 96 AH. His conduct and behaviour were praised in Islamic historical sources as he was a protégé of companions and successors of Medina and attained the rank of "Hujjat" in science and knowledge.³⁵ In the short period of 'Umar ibn

²⁸ 86-96 A.H.

²⁹ 96-99 AH

³⁰ 99-101 AH

³¹ 101-105 AH

³² 105-125 AH

³³ 94-95 AH

³⁴ Tārikh Al- Ya'qūbi (the history of Ya'qūbi), vol. 2, p. 305.

³⁵ Ahmad ibn Hanbal said: "I don't accept the speech of any successor except Umr ibn 'Abd al 'Aziz." Taqqūsh, Muhammad Suhayl, "the History of Umayyad Caliphate", p. 142, the translated by Hujjat Allah Jūdaki, according to KhaTib Baqdādi : "The highest praise is to call somebody Hujjat.. "Hujjat" is applied to a person who is to a person who knows three hundred thousand

'Abd al 'Aziz's caliphate, his policies were different from all Umayyad's rulers. Once he praised Imam Sajjād after his demise by saying, "The light of the world was turned off and the beauty of Islam and the ornament of the worshippers demised."

The audience reminded him of Imam Bāqir. 'Umar wrote a letter to Imam Bāqir and the Imam responded positively with advice. 'Umar noticed the difference between the letter written to him and that of the Imam and Suleymān's, and the Imam responded by calling Suleymān an oppressor whereas 'Umar was worthy of that letter.³⁶ It is noteworthy that he returned Fadak to Imam Bāqir and the Ahlul Bayt. Imam Bāqir played such an important role in speaking with 'Umar and his advice was so effective that at that meeting, 'Umar immediately demanded paper and an inkpot to officially return the lost right to its owners.³⁷ The open-door policy, high opinion, and just performance of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al 'Aziz provided the opportunity for Shi'as to connect freely with their Imam and the Imam was also at liberty to teach Islam and Shi'ism.

After 'Umar, 25 year old Yazid ibn 'Abd al-Malik experienced a four-year caliphate and continued his fathers' policies in ruling the country, though he was immoral; he was notorious for being impulsive and hedonistic.³⁸ He was preoccupied with his mistress Hubaba while his agents were engaged in civil wars with Yazid ibn Muhallab and in war with Rome in

traditions. "Hujjat" is superior to trustworthy (Thiqah)." Ma'jam 'Ulūm Al-Hadith Al-Nabawi, pp. 89-90.

36 For more information cf (refer to): Fā'ūr, Ali, the Biography of Amr ibn 'Abd al Aziz.

37 For more information cf (refer to): Imām Bāqir - *Manifestation of the Truth in the Horizon of Knowledge*, pp. 180-182.

38 *Tārikh Al-Islam*, vol. 7, p. 279-281.

the Antākiah and Armanistān.³⁹ Their fixation on war led to a decrease in danger towards the Imam.

After Yazid, Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik, the tenth Umayyad caliph, became his successor; his caliphate lasted nineteen years and seven months. He was a tough, oppressive, hard-hearted, cruel, hot-tempered, miserly, and jealous.⁴⁰ Mas'ūdi narrated from Haytham ibn 'Uday, Madā'ini and others as follows:

The politicians of Umayyad were three: Mu'āwiyah, 'Abd al-Malik, and Hishām. Hishām was the last Umayyad politician. Mansūr Davāniqi considered himself the follower of Hishām's policy in many of affairs and strategies.⁴¹

The mentioned characteristics and the long period of his caliphate indicate the suffocating and stifling atmosphere during this period, as Mas'ūdi said, "The time of Hishām was the most difficult period in the history."⁴² Naturally, Shi'as were in more trouble. Hishām and his agents had controlled the Shi'ah's actions and immediately defeated any rebellion such as the event of the uprising of Zayd Ibn Ali in 122 AH.

At that time, dissimulation was the most basic policy of the Imam. Hishām recognized the status and position of the Imam and his effectiveness. On the other hand, the dissimulation of the Imam and his followers protected them from Hishām's harm and caused him to have no

39 *Tārīkh Y'aqūbi*, vol. 2, p. 313-315

40 *Ibid.*, P. 328, *Muravij al-Dhahab*, vol. 3, pp. 205-210.

41 *Murūj Al-Dhahab*, vol. 3, p. 211.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 205.

excuse for bothering them. But Hishām did not find peace and desperately tried to find ways to prevent them from dissimulation. Hisham reported various actions held against the Imam:

1. Holding debates with Imam Bāqir

Hishām and others asked the Imam questions and raised misconceptions (*shubha*) hoping to find fault with the Imam's knowledge.⁴³ Their attempts were unsuccessful.

2. Competitions in archery

Hishām then decided to hold a competition of archery, a sport that needs a youth's strength, practice, and perseverance. Therefore, he held a meeting with the elders of tribe and invited Imam Bāqir and Imam Sādiq, his son, as well. During the event, he insisted that the Imam take part in the competition in hopes to expose the Imam's possible failure; however, when the Imam agreed to take part, the nine arrows he shot cracked each other and scored a bull's eye. Hisham was then obliged to confess to the Imam's victory.

Imam Bāqir took advantage of the event; after reciting the verse of *Ikmāl al-Din*,⁴⁴ said, "Allah has completed His blessing on the descendants of the Holy Prophet." Then Imam introduced himself as a hujjah of God that the earth will never be void of."

3. Humiliating the Imam

43 There are some examples in the following references: *Al-Ihtejāj ala Ahl al-Lijāj*, vol. 2, p. 323; *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 2, p. 331.

44 Māidah, 3.

With the aim of humiliating and degrading the Imam in front of others, Hishām took any possible measure to isolate him, and his most impolite behaviour was calling the Imam “Baqarah” (cow).

4. Spreading rumours

Hishām wrote a letter to the governor of Madyan and informed him that the Imam would enter it very soon, saying, "Muhammad Ibn Ali had a conversation with Christian priests in Shām and has inclined toward Christianity. Do not allow him to enter to the city and do not trade with him."⁴⁵

5. Imprisoning Imam Bāqir

Hishām’s rancour and grudge against Imam Bāqir and the inferiority he felt by hearing the sermon of Imam Bāqir in Mecca drove him to invite the Imam to Shām. When he understood that all of his plots and tricks had been neutralized, he ordered his men to imprison the Imam. After a short time, the prison guard complained to the caliph about the presence of the Imam among prisoners and his effectiveness and influence over them. Therefore, Hishām was obliged to send the Imam from Shām to Medina.

5. The Martyrdom of Imam Bāqir

After a fruitful life and his persistent efforts to revive Islam and spread Islamic knowledge, and establish Shi’ism, Imam Bāqir was martyred⁴⁶ and poisoned by Ibrāhīm ibn Walid ibn 'abd al-Malik in on Dhul-al-Hajjah 7th, 114 AH.⁴⁷ He was martyred in the time of Hishām as his vengeance and

45 Tabari, *Dala’el Al-Imāmat*, pp. 105-107.

46 *Al-fuṣūl al-Muhimmah*, p. 221. *Al-Ṣawaiq al-Muhriqah*, p. 210.46

47 The date of martyrdom of Imām Bāqir has been mentioned differently, in 111,113, 114, 115, 116, 117, and 118 AH, and more historians mentioned the 114 AH. Cf: Tabarsi, *I’lām al-Warā*, p.

enmity toward Imam Bāqir was undeniable, and thus there existed a strong motive for killing the Imam as the Umayyad's murdered. He was buried in Baqi' cemetery.⁴⁸

Conclusion

Imam Bāqir became an Imam one century after the dawn of Islam, roughly seventeen and eighteen years since the rule of Mu'awiya and the Umayyads. The method of Umayyads in the different periods of their own government was based on seeking more conquests, having social-political posts, promoting the culture of predestination, struggling against spreading Islamic justice, dividing and misleading the Islamic community, promoting pagan (pre-Islamic) traditions, destroying ideological bases of Muslims, threatening, boycotting and killing the Shi'a and the Alawites. Imam Bāqir made every effort to teach and train students, and to promote and spread the pure Islamic culture when he observed these deviations. By establishing an Islamic traditional school, he cleansed the Islamic belief of deviations and debated with masters of other sects and revealed invalidity of their beliefs. The cultural activities of the infallible, aware Imam in the arena of cultural struggle were a holy scientific movement that destroyed ignorance and revived Islam.

259 (he mentioned Rabi al Awwal instead of Dhul-Al-Hajjeh), *Tārikh al-Ya'qūbi*, vol. 2, p. 320; *Tadhkirat al-Khawāṣ*, p. 306; *Kashf al- Ghummah*, vol. 2, p. 322; Abu al-Fidā' Ismā'il ibn Ali , *Al-Mukhtaṣr fi Tārikh-al-Bashar*, vol. 1, p. 203; Yāfi'i, Abd Allah ibn Asad, *Mirāt al-Jinān*, vol.1, p. 247; *Kāmil fi Tārikh*, vol. 5, p. 180; *Al-Tabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 5, p. 238; *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 372; *Al-Irshād*, vol. 2, p. 156; Abu Anbah, Aṣqar, *'Umdat al- Tālib*, p. 137. Cf: *Imām Bāqir: the Manifestation of Imāmate in the Horizon of Knowledge*, p. 23.

48 *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 372; *Al-Irshād*, vol. 2, p. 156.

To succeed in this field, Imam Bāqir decided to use dissimulation in his political struggles so as to not damage this war. Some outcomes include:

1. Solidifying the ideological bases and religious beliefs of the Islamic community;
2. Spreading the jurisprudential-religious culture and explaining the legal injunctions;
3. Training students to be proficient so as to play a vital a role in jurisprudential, theological, ethical, social, and political arenas;
4. Protecting the Shi'a organizations from destruction by the Umayyads;
5. Rejecting the aberrant ideas and doubts that had entered minds of some Muslims;
6. Struggling with the wrong methods used to comprehend Islam in general and the Quran in particular on the basis of personal opinions, analogies, and baseless reasoning;
7. Setting an example for Muslims in worship, piety, science, and ethics;
8. Opposing a luxurious life;
9. Using advice to bring about reform.
10. Confronting innovation and innovators.

THE EMPHASIS ON JUSTICE IN *NAHJUL BALAGHAH*

SAYYID JA'FAR SHAHIDI

TRANSLATED BY HOWRAA SAFIEDDINE

ABSTRACT: Justice (*'adl*), according to the Shi'a school of thought,¹ is one of the principles of religion; anything God has said and any right He has given over anyone is based on justice. The Quran places emphasis on justice and the Prophet of God was a perfect manifestation of justice. The repetition of the term 'justice' appears more so in *Nahj ul-Balaghah* than in the Quran and Sunnah. This is because, on the one hand, after the Prophet's demise, streams of revenues to the treasury of the Muslims began to flow; on the other, there was the caliph's discrimination in their distribution of revenues among the social classes. Thus, drastic class differences overcame society. Imam Ali was faced with two facts: 1) He was himself a man of justice and piety, and 2) he was faced with people who were unacquainted with the Sunnah and *sira* of the Prophet, and who had not observed a trace of justice in the Muslim community. Therefore, a separation was placed between society and justice, and it was Imam Ali who put forth his greatest effort in implementing justice.

¹ Or Imamiyyah, "... a title for those who believe in the necessity of Imamate and its continuity in all ages, and that every Imam must be explicitly designated, and must also be infallible and perfect." (al-Mufid, p. 36)

Introduction

Justice (*‘adl*) means to divide something equally, or to establish balance and equilibrium among all, whether a material matter or spiritual one. Relating to the second meaning, the Prophet said, “The heavens and the earth have stood with justice”² meaning all of the components of the universe have been established with equilibrium such that if a fraction of it were out of place or disproportionate, the global system would fall apart.

According to the Shi‘a school of thought, it is important for justice to be among the fundamentals of religion. That is, to acknowledge that anything God says and any right He gives over anyone is founded on justice.

Justice is an important pillar in Islam. In the Quran, being just is to achieve piety:

اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى

*Be fair; that is nearer to Godwariness.*³

Throughout his blessed life, the Prophet – a perfect exemplar of justice – invited others to be just and not one-sided. When the Prophet, in order to help in paying the blood money of two individuals from Bani Sulaym,⁴ went to Bani Qurayzah, they secretly conspired to kill him. God made their plot known to the Prophet and the following verse was revealed:

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَتَاؤُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ آلَا تَعْدِلُوا

*...and ill feeling for a people should never lead you to be unfair.*⁵

In other words, do not unjustly harm someone out of an aversion you hold in your heart for those who wronged you.

² بالعدل قامت السموات و الارض [Tafsir Safi, Commentary on the verse 7 of Chapter al-Rahman]

³ The Table (*al-Ma'idah*) [5:8].

⁴ An agreement was signed between the Jews and the Messenger of God to help one another in paying the blood money.

⁵ The Table (*al-Ma'idah*) [5:8].

When the Prophet sent Khalid ibn al-Walid for propagation (*tabligh*), Khalid senselessly killed many people from the tribe of Bani Jadhimah. In response, the Prophet raised his hands in prayer and said, "O Allah, I loathe Khalid." He then sent Ali to pay the blood money to the families of those who were killed, and to return any stolen property.

Those who are familiar with the Prophet's life (*sira*) know that when he lived in Mecca, the polytheists would severely agitate him. In Medina also, he was not spared from verbal abuse and malice. However, he did not get angry or curse them on account of their persecutions. Instead, from time to time he would ask God to guide them. When dividing the spoils of the Battle of Hunayn, a man from the tribe of Tamim named Thu al-Khuwaysara told the Prophet, "Be just; you have deviated from justice." The Prophet was visibly upset and rejected their accusations saying, "Woe to you, if I do not act justly, who will?"

Without a doubt, Islam is a just religion and the Prophet is the enforcer and embodiment of justice. He would exercise justice to the point where during the last days of his life, in the mosque of Medina, he said, "Whoever I am indebted to, come and demand it" as the Quran initially ordered him to say:

امنت بما انزل الله من كتابٍ وامرت لاعدل بينكم

*I believe in whatever Book Allah has sent down. I have been commanded to do justice among you.*⁶

This is similar to what the Muslims were commanded to do:

وَ إِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ

*...and, when you judge between people, to judge with fairness.*⁷

⁶ Consultation (*al-Shura*) [42:15].

⁷ Women (*al-Nisa*) [4:58].

Implementing justice has been urged more than ten times in the Quran – justice with the self, justice between the self and people, and justice between the self and God.

This was a brief mention regarding justice and its implementation during the Prophet's age wherein we can ascertain its importance in Islam. However, in Imam Ali's speeches, sermons, letters, and short sayings, we see more than triple the amount of times where he instructs the people to exercise justice as well as instructing governors and agents to apply justice and refrain from partiality. Why is justice emphasized in Imam Ali's speeches more than the Quran? By understanding Islamic society in the year 35 AH onward the reason becomes clear. And those who are familiar with Arabian history back then can understand this era.

One of the reasons for injustice is the increase of money and longing for status. In the Prophet's time, money was not enough to fight over and the little money people acquired would be distributed equally amongst everyone. Moreover, they would not take a wage for the work they vowed to do. Rather, there was no wage to take; by committing to work, they wanted God's satisfaction in serving the people. This changed, however, after the Prophet's death.

On the one hand, streams of income from the opened lands flowed into the state treasury; on the other, when it came to using the state treasury, Muslims were categorized into those who accepted Islam earlier and who those accepted it afterwards. As a result, one group would attain greater advantages without having done anything for it.

During the first years of the second caliph's administration, the harm of creating social classes was not yet revealed. Over time, its effects became apparent; that is to say, a deep social gap among the people emerged. Achieving piety, which during and shortly after the Prophet's era was recognized as an admirable principle, was now replaced with attaining the material world. Conversely, family rivalry and racial competition that was hidden beneath the ashes of Islamic equality flared. Tamimi would pride

over Makhzumi and Umawi over them both and all three would pride over Yamani. In such a society, Ali assumed the caliphate, and what an unfitting time it was!

Knowing all too well the unfavorable situation, he said, "Leave me and seek someone else. We are facing a matter that has several facets and colors in which neither the hearts can bear nor can intelligence accept."⁸

Ali was a man of justice and piety; as with the rest of his virtues, these two were acquired from the Prophet. He wanted justice to rule over the people, most of whom had only heard of the name justice and had not seen any indication of piety; people who had neither seen the Prophet nor knew his Sunnah well. From the day they entered society, they became acquainted with fighting and obtaining spoils of war.

Ali was the example of justice when the world could not tolerate it. They killed Ali, thus removing justice and replacing it with oppression which continues until the day universal justice will be established.

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2. *Nahj al-Balaghah*

⁸ *Nahj ul-Balagha*, Sermon 92:

دَعَوْنِي وَالْتَمَسُوا عَيْرِي؛ فَإِنَّا مُسْتَعْبِلُونَ أَمْرًا لَهُ وَجْهٌ وَالْوَأْنُ؛ لَا تَقُومُ لَهُ الْقُلُوبُ، وَلَا تَثْبُتُ عَلَيْهِ الْعُقُولُ

THE PROPHET AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

ALI TAQIZADEH AKBARI¹

TRANSLATED BY SAYYID RAHIM RASTITABAR

ABSTRACT: International Humanitarian Law is a body of laws and regulations regarding the rights of people – including soldiery and civilian – in wartime. This body of laws, applicable to international armed conflicts, was enacted in the four conventions of Geneva in 1949 and the two annexed protocols in 1977. Although these laws and regulations have been formulated in the modern era, they are available in the divine religions, particularly Islam. More than 14 centuries earlier, Prophet Muhammad verbally and indirectly forbade the following actions during war: killing civilians, mutilation, killing the enemy's emissary, using mass destruction weapons, betrayal and perfidy, and torturing and killing the captives. Adducing the Prophet's way of life and other evidence, jurists deem these actions illegal.

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Introduction

War is a phenomenon that has more or less always existed. Most wars have an aggressive nature; there are few instances of just wars. Aggressive wars were waged to spread hegemony, conquer lands, gain material benefits, and kill the innocent. Just wars were waged to counter hegemony and defend one's honour, life, properties, reputation, and land. Those initiating aggressive wars often pursue brutality and ferocity, and commit nonhuman acts to achieve illegal goals.

Many efforts have been made throughout history to end anti-human wars. These efforts have had two orientations: firstly, to bring wars under norms and laws, converting them to just and legitimate wars; secondly, to wipe out any nonhuman methods such as using mass destruction weapons, invading inhabited areas and killing civilians, and torturing and killing captives. These efforts have resulted in enactment of international laws and regulations about wars, called 'The Law of International Armed Conflicts' or 'The Law of War'. Some are about rights of human beings in wars, known as 'International Humanitarian Law' or 'Law In War'. However, the bitter fact is that despite these laws and regulations, and sometimes through wrong and selfish interpretations of these very laws and regulations, aggressive wars continue to ensue, killing masses of innocent people. The world still witnesses unlimited cases of trampling over human rights in wars.

International humanitarian law – as a part of international public law pertaining to using armed forces, treating people during armed conflicts, and aiming at reducing people's hardship – goes back to the second half of the nineteenth century.

Since then, efforts have been continuously made until a century later when in 1949, four conventions were enacted on the following matters: casualties and patients of war; casualties, patients, and afflicted in the sea; war captives; and supporting civilians. In 1977, two protocols completed the four protocols mentioned above: one on the international armed conflict, and the other on the civil armed conflict.² The Geneva Protocol of 1925 had already forbidden the act of choking and using poisonous gases, liquids, bacteriologic (biologic) methods, and other tools of similar effects in wars. According to the 1972 convention, poisonous and bacteriologic weapons are the only weapons whose production, possession, and use is illegal in the international law. The last item annexed to the list of forbidden weapons, based on the 1980 convention³ was related to the prohibitions and limitations of using some normal weapons, such as the extensive use of land mines, explosive traps and time bombs, as well as using incendiary weapons against civilians.⁴

Despite the formulation of International Humanitarian Law in the last 150 years, centuries ago, Islam laid down laws and regulations to forbid aggressive war aiming at hegemony and gaining power, conquering lands, gaining material benefits and booties, and imposing one's beliefs. It is true that Islam legitimizes jihad as a holy and just war with a defensive nature, aiming at eradicating the polytheists' rule, wiping out obstacles in the way of propagation, eradicating oppression, saving the oppressed, and defending Muslims' lives, properties and reputations; nevertheless, it

² Robert Bledsoe & Boleslaw Boczek, *International Law Dictionary*, tr. And ed. Alireza Parsa, p. 455-8, Qumes Pub., 1st ed., 1375 SH.

³ ready to be signed in 1981

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 479-81.

stresses observing human rights in jihad. In the verse 2:190, Allah wants believers to fight against those who wage wars against them, but avoid aggression and oppression; in other words, they must avoid fighting against those who do not intend to fight them or are not among the enemy's military forces. In another verse, He warns the believers that enmity with a group must not lead them to oppression and injustice.⁵ Furthermore, in the Prophet's way of life and that of the Impeccable Imams, we see great emphasis on humanitarian law. The present paper is seeking to provide answer to the following question: 'What are examples of humanitarian law in the Prophet's teaching and practical way of life?'

The Quran enumerates some of the Prophet's characteristics that display his concern for the guidance of humankind. According to the Quran, the Prophet possesses a noble character;⁶ he is a mercy for the people of the world,⁷ it grieves him that men should perish; he is ardently anxious to guide people; he is full of pity and mercy for the believers.⁸ He may die out of grief when he sees that the polytheists do not become believers.⁹ It is due to mercy of Allah that he deals with people gently, and had he been rough and hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around him.¹⁰

Naturally, a person with the abovementioned qualities would not only care for human rights in wars, but he would care more than anyone. It has

⁵ Quran, V, 8.

⁶ Quran, LXVIII, 4.

⁷ Quran, XXI, 107.

⁸ Quran, IX, 128.

⁹ Quran, XXVI, 3.

¹⁰ Quran, III, 159.

been narrated that whenever the Prophet was to send an army to the battlefield, he would talk to the commanders and forces regarding actions that were prohibited.¹¹ Since these instructions revolved around humanitarian law, they can be considered as the basis of the Islamic Charter of Humanitarian Law. Below are some instances of humanitarian law in the Prophet's way of life:

I. Prohibition of killing civilians

The Prophet expressly prohibited killing women, children, the elderly, monks, and convents:

1. Do not kill the elderly, the children, and the women.¹²
2. Do not kill children and those inhabiting on high mountains (convents).¹³
3. Fight against the enemies of God and yours in Syria. There, you will see men retiring in convents. Do not attack them... Do not kill women, children, and the elderly.¹⁴
4. Fight the polytheist enemies and let their elderly and children live.¹⁵

Whenever the Prophet saw a woman killed in the battlefield, he would ask the reason as to why she was killed. On one occasion, he passed a slain woman and asked, 'Who has killed this woman?' A man replied, "Oh,

¹¹ Sheikh Hurr 'Amili, *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, xi, p. 43-4, Maktabat al-Islamiyya Pub., 5th ed., n.d.

¹² Ibid., p. 43

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, xxi, p. 60, Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyya Pub., 2nd ed., 1363 SH.

¹⁵ Sheikh Hurr 'Amili, *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, xi, p. 48.

Prophet! I've killed her.” The Prophet asked the reason, and the man replied, “She grappled me to take my sword.” The Prophet kept silent.¹⁶ Similarly, the Prophet stood beside a woman's corpse in the war with Banu Qurayza and asked, “Why has this woman been killed while she hasn't fought?”¹⁷

Adducing the aforesaid traditions, the jurists regard killing women and children illicit. According to most of them, even women and children who join the military must not be killed.¹⁸ They also deem killing the blind and the like illicit, just like killing the elderly.¹⁹ Jurists have legitimized killing of only those women who have taken up arms to fight Muslims.²⁰

II. Prohibition of mutilation

While sending armies to the battlefield, the Prophet warned against mutilating the enemy.²¹

Similarly, Imam Ali related that the Prophet said, “Avoid mutilating, even if it is for a biting dog.”²²

All jurists unanimously consider mutilating enemies illegal while in war.²³ Here, they present the aforementioned traditions. In his *Jawahir al-Kalam*,

¹⁶ Ali b.Abi Bakr Haithami, *Majma' al-Zawa'id wa Manba' al-Fawa'id*, v, p. 316, Dar al-Kutub al_Arabi, 3rd ed., 1402 AH.

¹⁷ Muhammad Hassan Najafi, *Jawahir al-Kalam*, xxi, p. 75 (quoting *Sunan Beihqi*, iv, p. 91), Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, 7th ed., 1981.

¹⁸ Ibid., 73.

¹⁹ Ibid., 76.

²⁰ Ibid., 75.

²¹ *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, xi, p. 43.

²² *Nahj al-Bakagha*, tr. Muhammad Mehdi Fuladwand, letter 47.

²³ *Jawahir al-Kalam*, xxi, p. 77.

Ayatollah Sheikh Mohammad Hasan Najafi uses these traditions and most of the jurists' legal verdicts to conclude that mutilation, whether in war or elsewhere, and before death or after it, is illegal. He also maintains that it makes no difference whether the enemy has mutilated the Muslims or not.²⁴

III. Prohibition of killing enemy emissaries

Ibn Masoud relates that two emissaries from the false prophet, Musaylima Kadhdhab, went to the Prophet. When the Prophet said to them, "Bear witness that I am the Messenger of God," they said, "We bear witness that Musailama is the Prophet." The Prophet said, "If I were to kill any emissary, I would behead you."²⁵ Similarly, Imam Sadiq related that the Prophet said, "The emissaries who are enemies are not killed."²⁶

Jurists use these traditions to conclude that killing the emissaries who are enemies is unlawful.²⁷

IV. Prohibition of mass killing weapons

Imam Sadiq quotes Imam Ali as saying, "The Prophet has prohibited spreading poisons in the towns of the polytheists."²⁸

Many jurists adduce this tradition to proclaim the illicit use of poisons in wars.²⁹ Others regard the use of poisons in wars as religiously prohibited,

²⁴ Ibid., p. 78.

²⁵ *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, v, p. 314.

²⁶ *Bihar al-Anwar*, c, p. 31.

²⁷ *Jawahir al-Kalam*, xxi, p. 77.

²⁸ *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, xi, p. 46.

²⁹ See Ali Asghar Murwarid, *Silsila al-Yanabi' al-Fiqhiyya*, iv, p. 51 (*al-Nihaya* of Sheikh Tusi); p. 152 (*al-Ghaniyya* of hamza b. Ali b. Zohra); p. 160 (*al-Wasila* of Ibn Hamza Tusi); p. 178 (*al-Sara'ir* of Ibn Idris

arguing that the authority chain of this tradition is faulty, unable to convey the illicitness of the act.³⁰ Those jurists claiming the illicitness of the act have replied that the transmitter of this tradition, Sukouni, is approved of as to transmitting, and there is consensus as to acting according to traditions he has transmitted.³¹

Some say that Sukouni's tradition on the prohibition of using poisons holds true for the polytheists' towns, because it often results in killing children, women, the elderly, and Muslim inhabitants in which killing them is forbidden. But it does not mean that using poisons for killing those unbelievers who may be killed in any way (military forces and combatants) is not allowed.³² After relating this, the author of *Jawahir al-Kalam* – seeking to prove the legitimacy of using poisons in battlefield against combatants, and the illegitimacy of using them in the towns of unbelievers – reinforces the idea that using poisons in the inhabited areas of the unbelievers, even if the victory is dependent on it, is illicit. This is because is Sukouni's tradition there is no condition.

We conclude with the following three propositions:

1. It is forbidden to use poisonous weapons in inhabited areas, as it results in killing civilians, and killings civilians is illegal. Sukouni's tradition on illegal use of using poisons in the inhabited areas of polytheists (*bilad al-*

Hilli); p. 277 (*al-Mukhtasar al-Nafi'* of Muhaqqiq Hilli); and xxxi, p. 223 (*al-Durus al-Shar'iyya* of Shahid I), Fiqh al-Shi'a Institute, al-Dar al-Islamiyya Pub., 1st ed., 1410 AH.

³⁰ See Sayyid Ali Tabatabai, *Riyaz al-Masa'il*, vii, p. 504, Al al-Bayt Institute, 1st ed., 1404 AH.; Shahid II, *Masalik al-Afham*, iii, p. 25, al-Ma'arif al-Islamiyya Institute, 1st ed., 1414 AH.; Allama Hilli, *Tazkirat al-Fuqaha*, ix, p. 70, Ahlul Bayt Institute, 1st ed., 1419 AH.

³¹ *Jawahir al-Kalam*, xxi, p. 68.

³² Ibid.

mushrekin) is apparent, and according to the author of *Jawahir al-Kalam*, this unlawfulness is absolute and unconditional even if it results in victory.

2. Acknowledging Sukouni's tradition for the illegal use of poisons in inhabited areas, it is not used to justify the illicit use of poisons in the battlefields against military forces. As it is permitted to kill unbeliever combatants (*kafir harbi*) if we doubt whether it is permitted to kill them with poisons or not, it is assumed to be permitted, especially if they themselves use such weapons. Of course, as some jurists assert, using poisons in the battlefield is not allowed if it leads to killing civilians. Moreover, if the Muslims accept an international treaty on the prohibition of mass killing weapons, such weapons must not be used for the sake of being committed to the treaty.

3. Given that the author of *Jawahir al-Kalam* strictly opposes the use of poisons and deems it illegal, even if victory is dependent on it, it is not to be used in retaliation either.

It should be noted at the end that if we take the reason for prohibition of poison —or today any kind of chemical weapons — their being mass killing weapon, we may extend this verdict to other mass killing weapons, such as nuclear and microbiologic weapons. Today, mass killing weapons kills numerous civilians due to its destructive power and its lasting dangerous effect on the environment and due to the extension of the battlefield to the garrisons or deserts around the cities, and perhaps eventually to inhabited areas themselves. Thus, the use of using mass killing weapons is absolutely illegal, both in cities and in battlefields.

V. The prohibition of betrayal

The Prophet would tell the delegations sent out to the battlefields to never betray.³³ Etymologically, the root *ghadr* means betrayal. According to some jurists, *ghadr* is to grant a respite to the enemy and then kill him by surprise.³⁴ Apart from this sense – seemingly being one instance of *ghadr* – all jurists adduce to the aforementioned tradition to proclaim *ghadr* forbidden.³⁵

Betrayal is different from deception. Deception, verbally through spreading rumours or practically through actions, is a tactic to mislead the enemy regarding the insider's intentions. All jurists allow deception in war, adducing the well-known Prophetic tradition: “War is deception.”³⁶ Similarly, in the law of international armed conflicts, betrayal is forbidden, although deception is legitimate.³⁷

VI. Prohibition of torturing or killing war captives

After the victory of the Muslims in Battle of Badr and their capturing 70 Qurayshi polytheists, the Prophet dispersed the captives among his companions and said, “Treat the captives kindly.”³⁸ The companions obeyed this, and even gave them priority to themselves in eating food. Abu Aziz bin Umayr, Mus'ab bin Umayr's bother and one of the captives in the Battle of Badr said, “I was among a clan of Ansaar. When they

³³ “*Lā Taghdurū*” - “Do not betray!” - *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, xi, p. 43.

³⁴ See *Masalik al-Atham*, iii, p. 27; *Jami' al-Maqasid*, Muhaqqiq Karaki, iii, p. 508; Ahlul Bayt Institute, 1st ed., 1408 AH.

³⁵ *Jawahir al-Kalam*, xxi, p. 78.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

³⁷ See International Law Dictionary, p. 477.

³⁸ Muhammad Jarir Tabari, *Tarikh Tabari*, ii, p. 159, A'lami lil-Matbu'at Institute, n.d.

brought lunch or dinner, they gave me their bread and contented themselves with dates. Even if I returned the bread out of shyness, they would return it back to me.”³⁹ Abul-As b. Rabi', another captive in Badr, says, “I was with a group of the Ansaar. God may bless them. When eating during the day or night, they would eat dates and give me bread, and they ate little bread with the dates being their only provision.”⁴⁰ Another captive says, “...they would go on foot and would take us mounted.”⁴¹

The Prophet's recommendation was towards those very people who had harassed him in Mecca and expelled him from his hometown. In the Battle of Badr, replying to Umar who wanted the Prophet to pull out the front teeth of one of the captives to prevent him from speaking against him, the Prophet said, “I won't mutilate him; otherwise God would mutilate me, even though I'm a prophet.”⁴² After Banu Qurayza's betrayal in instigating the Qurayshi polytheists to initiate the Battle of Ahzab, the Prophet set out to fight against them immediately after the Battle. After a few days siege, the Jews finally surrendered, ready to follow the verdict issued by Sa'd b. Mu'az who, based on Torah, ordered their men to be killed due to their betrayal. While executing this verdict on a hot summer day at noon, the Prophet said, “Treat the captives kindly. Let them rest and drink water...do not make them suffer from both the heat of the sun

³⁹ Muhammad Ibrahim Ayati, *Tarikhe Payambar-e Islam*, p. 252, Tehran University Pub., 2nd ed., 1361 SH.

⁴⁰ Ali b. Hasan b. Hibbat Allah Shafi'i, *Tarikh Madinat al-Damishq*, lxvii, p. 9, Dar al-Fikr Pub., 1st ed., 1419 AH.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² *Tarikh Tabari*, ii, p. 162.

and the weapons.”⁴³ After the polytheists were captured in the Battle of Hunain, the Prophet ordered the Muslims not to kill any of the Hawazin's captives. When he was informed that one of the captives, Ibn Akwa, sent by the Huzail tribe to bring news from the Prophet during the conquest of Mecca, had been killed by an Ansari at the behest of Umar, the Prophet said, “Did I not order you not to kill any captive?”⁴⁴ After this, another captive named Jamil b. Ma'mar was killed by the Ansaar. The Prophet was angered and sent a message to the Ansaar, saying, “Why did you kill him while my emissary brought you my message ordering you not to kill any captive?” They replied, “We killed him at the behest of Umar.” The Prophet turned angrily.⁴⁵ It was in the same battle that the Prophet released the Hawazin's captives without taking any ransom.⁴⁶ He also ordered Muslims to dress all the captives.⁴⁷ According to a famous account, it is not permissible to kill the captives taken after the battle.⁴⁸ And according to the Quran,⁴⁹ these captives are released either with indebtedness or through getting ransom. It is also obligatory to feed the captives even if they are to be executed due to their betrayal.⁵⁰

⁴³ Muhammad b. Umar b. Waqidi, *Kitab al-Maghazi*, ii, p. 514, A'lami lil-Matbu'at Institute, 3rd ed., 1409 AH.

⁴⁴ Sheik Mufid, *Musannafat*, xi, p. 144 (*al-Irshad*), al-Mu'tamar al-'Alami li-alfiya al-Sheikh al-Mufid, 1st ed., 1413 AH.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁴⁶ *Kitab al-Maghazi*, iii, p. 949-53.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 954.

⁴⁸ *Jawahir al-Kalam*, xxi, p. 126-7, 129.

⁴⁹ 47:4

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

Conclusion

The Prophet's guidelines on human rights during war fourteen centuries ago are the bases for laws and regulations, today termed International Humanitarian Law. The followings are conclusions derived from the Prophet's sayings and conduct: The necessity of distinguishing the military forces from civilians and avoiding any attack on civilians such as massacring them; avoiding torture and debasement of the enemy, the most striking example of which is mutilation; granting security to the enemy's emissary; not using weapons lavishly; prohibition of using mass killing weapons; avoiding betrayal or breaking a promise; and prohibition of torturing or killing war captives. The Islamic precepts on human rights in wars – most of which are founded on the Prophet's way of life – are dynamic until today, and is used by the jurists to compensate for the drawback of humanitarian law.

GOD'S MERCY THROUGH FASTING

HUSAYN ANSARIAN

TRANSLATED BY MOHAMMAD JAVAD SHOMALI

ABSTRACT: Although all acts of worship that are done out of sincerity attract God's mercy, fasting holds a special place in attaining it. Fasting not only is practiced by Muslims, but the worshippers of previous religions also practised it. The doors of mercy are opened during the month of fasting, or the Month of Ramadan. During this month, Muslims all over the world refrain from food, drink, and other physical needs during the day; moreover, this period is also a time to achieve nearness to God by purifying the soul and taking advantage of His mercy through worship and good deeds. This article expounds on God's mercy during this blessed month by describing the wisdom and benefits of fasting, and the position achieved by those who fast.

Special features of fasting

There are two elements that distinguish fasting from the other acts of worship:

1. Fasting is not specific to Islam: previous religions also included fasting as an act of worship, for example, the Torah relates that Moses fasted for forty days.

2. The Month of Ramadan, the month of fasting, has been said by our Imams to be a month in which the doors of mercy are open.

Every year, when the month of Ramadan approached, the Prophet would say, “Oh, Muslims, at the dawn of crescent of the Month of Ramadan, the soldiers of Satan will be bounded and the doors of the heaven and mercy will open.” During the last days of the month of Sha‘ban he would say, “Oh People, the month of God has come towards you with blessings, mercy, and forgiveness.”

God’s blessings are of two types:

- a) The blessing that creates in us the ability to grow and perfect ourselves as it installs in us the tendency towards purity and divine manners: “*Were it not for God’s grace and His mercy upon you, not one of you would ever be pure.*”¹
- b) The mercy given to people in return for their good deeds and worship. Along with helping the poor, fasting is one of the best good deeds that qualify for this type of blessing.

One of the least advantages of fasting is its effects on our physical health; it gives our body a break to repair itself and balances its chemicals. Many illnesses can be cured by fasting. The Prophet said, ‘Fast and be healed’.

¹ Qur’an: 24: 21

Furthermore, through fasting a person is replying to God's call. God loves us and because of His love and mercy, He wants to help people in their spiritual and emotional challenges and so He calls out to people in different forms, as stated in the Qur'an. Among these calls are the call for forgiveness. In the verse 14:10, God calls all human beings to forgive their sins which means to do something to qualify ourselves for forgiveness.

How can we answer this call? One of the ways is to engage in acts of worship. During the Prophet's night ascension – the *Mi'raaj* – the Prophet asked God what the first act of worship was, to which God replied, "The first worship is silence and fasting." Then the Prophet asked about the result of fasting and God answered:

Fasting leads to wisdom, wisdom leads to awareness, and awareness to certitude; once a person reaches certitude, it no longer matters how days and nights are spent, with difficulty or ease.

This is perhaps why God singles out fasting as belonging to Him and that He will be the reward of it. In the same way that all lands belong to God although the Kaaba has superiority, all months are special though the Month of Ramadan is considered to be the month of God.

Fasting is superior to other acts of worship in two ways:

- 1) Due to its nature, fasting can only be done out of sincerity. Unlike other acts of worship that can be observed by people, the span of fasting is so long that at least for parts of it, one will be on his own.

If a person only intends to show off, he can avoid eating in front of others and eat in private so he would not fast the whole day. Therefore, a person who completes his fasting even in private proves that he has done so for the sake of God, because there is no observer other than God over what a person does in private. Imam Ali said, “God made fasting obligatory to test people’s purity of intention (*ikhlaas*).”

- 2) Fasting also disarms Satan, our worst enemy, and makes it easier for us to approach God. Satan usually finds his way into through our lust which is empowered by eating and going after our other worldly desires. Satan uses them to distract us from our higher goals so that our hearts gradually become his residence. However, fasting gives us a break from our desires, a chance to strengthen our will, and helps us focus on the more important aspects of life. A fasting person is in such good state that he or she can easily abandon temptations and enjoy the remembrance of God.

The wisdom behind fasting

When Imam Sadiq was asked about the wisdom behind fasting, he replied:

God made fasting compulsory so that the poor and the rich would be the same. This is because the rich does not feel the pain of hunger to be able to understand and show mercy to the poor. Whenever he wants something, it is available to him. Therefore, God wanted His creation to be equal; for the rich to feel the pain of

hunger so that He is kind to the weak and shows mercy to the poor.

There is a difference between knowing something and feeling something. The rich know that there are hungry people, but now must fast to experience real hunger. Furthermore, this hunger reminds both the rich and poor of their hunger and thirst on the Day of Resurrection, a reminder which can have powerful effect on a person's soul. Furthermore, one feels his weakness before God and will become humble towards Him.

The benefits of fasting

1. Accessing the mysteries

Imam Ali said, "God has placed five effects in five things: Respect in obedience, abjection in disobedience, wisdom and knowledge in hunger, solemnity in the night prayer, and richness in contentment."

Hunger (or fasting) is said to be the place where wisdom is placed by the means of which a person can reach knowledge. In another hadith, Imam Ali says he is shocked by a person who tries to seek knowledge with a full stomach.

2. Banishing Satan

Once the Prophet asked his companions, "Do you want me to tell you of an act that if you act upon it will distance Satan from you, the way the east is distant from the west?" When they all showed interest, he mentioned three acts: Loving for the sake of God, giving charity, and

fasting were tools to defeat Satan. As the Prophet said, “Fasting is a shield against the hellfire.”

3. Attracting God’s mercy and love

According to the Prophet, God likes it when people lessen their speech, food intake, and sleep and dislikes over-eating, over-sleeping, and excessive talking. The Prophet also said there is nothing more detested by God than a full stomach. Normally, during the Month of Ramadan, we are more likely to succeed in repenting, purifying ourselves, helping others, and being patient, as these are acts that earn us God’s love. It does not come as a surprise then that God appoints a group of angels to take care of those who fast. Imam Sadiq said:

He who fasts in the warmth of the day for the sake of God and bears thirst and hunger, God appoints a thousand angels to touch him with love and give him glad tidings that when he breaks his fast God will tell him how he looks and smells. My angels! Be witnesses that I have forgiven him.

On another occasion, Imam Sadiq said, “There are two moments of joy for a fasting person: one is when [the day finishes and] he breaks his fast and the other when he meets his Lord.”

4. Abundant reward

The reward one achieves because of fasting is so big that it cannot be compared to the difficulty he experiences when avoiding his desires for

short moment. The reward given for fasting is more than that of other acts of worship. According to a *Hadith Qudsi* (divine saying):

Every righteous act is rewarded ten times or a hundred times more except for fasting which is Mine and I will be its reward.

Fasting is also the best example of patience. Imam Sadiq interpreted the term patience in the verse 2:45 as fasting. When patience is interpreted as fasting, the reward appointed for it is given for fasting as well:

Indeed the patient will be paid in full their reward without any reckoning. (39:10)

Although our entire existence is from God and it is only with his help that we can fast, still God is extremely loving and fasting is so special that for every breath a person takes in the month of fasting and for every moment of his sleep he will be rewarded. The Prophet said:

He who fasts a day voluntarily, even if he is given gold as much as this world, still he has not received his reward completely, and it will only be completed on the Day of Judgement.

The high position of those who fast

The biggest source of happiness for believers is when God accepts and loves them. Fasting opens a door to the love of God and puts people under His attention. The Prophet said, "Indeed, God has appointed angels to pray for those who fast." In another narration, the Prophet

said that if angels are appointed to pray for a group of people, their prayer will be definitely accepted by God. The Prophet also said, "I swear by He in whose hands lies my life, the change in the smell of a fasting person's mouth is more likable to God than the smell of musk."

Of course, God will show more mercy to a person gives up on his desires for a while for His sake and submits his will to the will of God. Imam Ali said:

When a person fasts, his sleep will be counted as worship, his silence as *tasbih* (glorification of God), his prayers will be answered and his acts will be rewarded twice. Without a doubt, his prayers when he breaks his fast will be granted.

The Prophet said:

Indeed, there is a special entrance to heaven called *Rayyan* from which no one will enter except for the people who fast.

Therefore, fasting has many benefits, such as helping us tolerate our difficulties easier and making us better people who are worthy of God's love and mercy and this is why fasting has been considered as one of the best acts of worship that existed in all divine religions.

THE ISLAMIC UNDERSTANDING OF HARDSHIP, PART II¹

MOHAMMAD ALI SHOMALI

ABSTRACT: In the previous part, we studied the fact that suffering is a reality of our life; it is so important that more or less every religion has given an account of human suffering and pain. In Islam we find that in the Quran and in the teachings of the Prophet and the Ahlul Bayt, this issue receives great attention. Continuing with our brief account of Islamic understanding of hardship, we continue to expound on the importance of suffering and why those who are closer to God may suffer more in this world.

Suffering: A reality of life

As said in the previous part, when Adam and Eve descended on Earth, their tests and trials began, and there are ongoing tests for us as well. Either we can be thankful to Allah and succeed or we will show lack of gratitude to Allah and fail:

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا²

¹ This paper is based on the second part of two lectures delivered by the author in Dar al-Zahra in Qum during the Fatimiyyah commemoration, 2011.

² الإنسان : 3

Indeed We have guided him to the way, be he grateful or ungrateful.

These tests occur at every moment, and cannot be without some difficulty or pain. No test can be passed by all people otherwise it would not be a test:

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ³

Do the people suppose that they will be let off because they say: 'We have faith,' and they will not be tested?

So it is not enough to believe and embrace Islam. It is not enough that we that we have managed to become faithful people without expecting that we will be tried again and again. We are always tested and tried. The test is an ongoing one:

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَ لَمَّا يَأْتِكُم مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ
الْبُاسَاءُ وَالضَّرَاءُ وَ زُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرَ
اللَّهُ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ⁴

Do you suppose that you shall enter Paradise though there has not yet come to you the like of (what befell) those who went before you? Stress and distress befell them and they were convulsed until the Apostle and the faithful who were with him said: 'When will Allah's help (come)?' Look! Allah's help is indeed near!

³ العنكبوت:2

⁴ البقرة:214

Do we expect to be able to enter heaven while we have not experienced what the previous nations have experienced when they were put under pressure? They were shaken to the extent that they said, “When will Allah’s help come?” The fact that they were shaken is very striking. They were moved and shaken by many difficulties to such an extent that their Prophet and messenger, and those who believed in him said, “When will Allah’s help come?” indicating that they were pushed to the very edge of their patience which of course they did not lose entirely.

The necessity of tests and trials

Being tested and tried is not to be deemed negatively. Indeed, it offers opportunities. This is very encouraging for people who appreciate it, because we can then seize the opportunity at every moment. For example, sportsmen who want to set a record sometimes have to work for years until the Olympic Games take place during which they may be able to set it. Thus, the practicing and competition they perform in their own country are not counted because it must be in an international competition where the international referees are present and register the records set.

However, in our journey towards Allah we do not need an audience nor going to any national or international assembly. At each and every moment, between us and Allah, we can set a record and gain something. Sometimes we may forget what we have done. Indeed, the believers are those who forget their good deeds, although Allah will never forget. He keeps them for us. So these tests and trials are an opportunity for those who appreciate that at each and every moment we can achieve success

and make progress. However, we can also look at this from another perspective which is that these tests and trials help us detach ourselves from this *dunya*⁵ and the material life. When we are born in this *dunya*, there are elements that make us very attached to it. This physical world is the very first thing upon which we open our eyes to, and for many, the last thing we see. We think this is the only thing we have as we do not see the hidden aspect of the world (*ghayb*). Many do not experience spirituality or have been in the company of holy people. We begin and end our days thinking about this life and what we are going to do for ourselves and our families. We are so concerned about it, to the extent that Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ اتَّأَقَلْتُمْ إِلَى
الْأَرْضِ⁶

O you who have faith! What is the matter with you that when you are told: 'Go forth in the way of Allah,' you sink heavily to the ground?'

Allah asks us what has happened to us that we have become so attached to and fixated with this world, that even when the Prophet invites us to join him in struggling for the sake of Allah, we are fervently attached to this life. It is by no means a perfect life; indeed, it is filled with troubles and pains and yet we are still attached to it. Imagine what would happen if this life was free from pain and suffering, if there was no illness, no calamities, no death; if people did not lose their money and

⁵ The world

⁶ التوبة: 38

go bankrupt or lose their respect, and if they did not become old and weak. If it were like that, who would obey Allah and who would be ready to depart from this world?

As mentioned in hadiths, if there were no poverty, death, and illness many would not have worshipped Allah.

We also have this tendency to feel self-sufficient:

كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُفٍ ۗ
كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُفٍ ۗ
كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُفٍ ۗ⁷

Indeed man becomes rebellious when he considers himself without need.

This tendency can be treated and cured, but if we do not train and discipline ourselves, it will remain. As soon as we feel that everything is all right, we may forget Allah and think we will last forever on earth. Sometimes for people with a position, although they know it is for a limited time, they act as if it is permanent. They forget Allah even though they know they will die soon.⁸ Even some senior dictators still fear losing their power; when people ask them to let go, they refuse and even appoint their son after themselves. This attachment to this dunya is very strong and for many of us, dunya is the only thing that we understand. Prophet Muhammad said:

حُبُّ الدُّنْيَا رَأْسُ كُلِّ خَطِيئَةٍ

⁷ 6-7 العلق:

⁸ Indeed it is forgetting God that leads to being attached to worldly pleasure or position which in turn leads to a stronger level of forgetfulness.

Excessive love for this worldly life is the root and the foundation of every mistake.⁹

Thus, the mistakes we make are also due to our love for this world. *Khati'ah*¹⁰ is different from *dhanb*.¹¹ It is not only our sins that are due to our excessive love for this dunya. Maybe we do not commit any sins, but we make many mistakes. For example, what occupation should we choose? What type of husband or wife should we marry? How should we train our children? Which school should we send them to? What kinds of friends should they make? What type of furniture should we buy for our house? Many of these do not necessarily involve sins, but even so they can involve making the wrong choices; if we look carefully at these mistakes, many of them are caused by love of this world. Moreover, love of this world is not only about love for money; it is comprehensive as it includes love for fame and reputation as well. In a well-known saying, we read:

وَأَخْرُ مَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ قُلُوبِ الصَّادِقِينَ حُبُّ الْجَاهِ

The very last [bad] thing that leaves the hearts of the most truthful is love for the fame and social position.¹²

⁹ Bihar al-Anwar V.70 P. 90 & 119, Al Khisal V.1 P. 25, Kanz al-Fawaed V.1 P. 217, Tafsil Wasail al-Shia Ilā Tahsil Masail al-Sharia V.16 P. 9, Tasnif Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar ul-Kalim P. 142. Please check spellings

¹⁰ Mistake

¹¹ Sin

¹² The idea is very much accepted by Muslim scholars. Furthermore, in some books, this has been cited as a hadith, but I have not been so far able to find a reference for it in major collections of hadith.

If we are completely truthful, this is the last thing that would leave our hearts. There are people who are ready to live a simple life in a humble house with adequate clothing, although they still suffer from the illness of yearning for people's attention and praise.

Thus, love of this world is the root of all sins and many of our mistakes. The word *many* is used and not *all* because some are natural due to our fallible nature with much to learn as we grow and develop. Apart from the Infallibles (Ma'sumeen) no one is safe from faults.

However, there are mistakes that can be prevented or avoided. If we have an enlightened vision with insight and wisdom, and if our hearts are free from love for this world, many of the mistakes made by individuals or societies can be avoided. The only way to rid ourselves of this *hubb al-dunya* is to give up the material objects we are attached to. For example, we could start with money.

The Prophet and purifying people

The Prophet was sent to purify people:

حُدِّ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا¹³

Take charity from their possessions to cleanse them and purify them thereby...

يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَ يُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَ الْحِكْمَةَ¹⁴

¹³ التوبة:103

¹⁴ آل عمران:164، الجمعة:2

...to purify them and to teach them the Book and wisdom...

How did the Prophet do so? Did he ask people to become like those who isolate themselves from society and busy themselves with remembrance (*dhikr*), glorification (*tasbih*), and fasting? This is actually not how the Prophet purified. He asked people to be active in their social lives, whilst sorting out their personal spiritual problems. People who do not have deep insight want to resolve problems by keeping themselves and others apart from society and by offering physical exercises and assume the problem will be solved. However, the Prophet knew better. He travels around, searching for and finding those who are ill¹⁵ as he knows he must sort out the problems in the hearts of people. One of the important lessons taught by the Prophet is asking people to give *khums*¹⁶ and charity (*sadaqah*).¹⁷

حُدِّ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةٌ¹⁸

Take charity from their possessions...

¹⁵ Tasnif Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim p. 109, Nahj ul-Balāghah, Sermin 108. The hadith is as follows:

The Prophet was like a roaming physician who has set ready his ointments and heated his instruments. He uses them wherever the need arises for curing blind hearts, deaf ears, and dumb tongues. He followed with his medicines the spots of negligence and places of perplexity.

¹⁶ One fifth tax

¹⁷ Legal alms

¹⁸ التوبة: 103

However, this is not merely because there needy people. Even if there are no people who are in need, we still have to look for opportunities to give charity. After the Imam al-Zamān (atf)¹⁹ comes to establish justice and equity then there will be no poor people; in order to look for way to spend charity, people will be in search to spend money for Allah's sake. Thus, the need to give charity is not simply because someone is waiting for our help. What is important is that we need to give. For example, sometimes we donate blood because someone is waiting for our blood, but sometimes we donate blood because we have blood to give even if there is no one in need.

حُدِّ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةٌ تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَ تُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا²⁰

Take charity from their possessions to cleanse them and purify them thereby...

So by giving we are purified. If we ask the Prophet to exempt us from giving charity, promising that we will pray, fast, and recite the Qur'an more it will not suffice. Similarly, if we say we will give as much money as is wanted but ask to be exempted from prayer and fasting, especially when there are cold nights and hot days, it also does not work. Both must be done together as prayer and giving alms are a summary of Islamic practice:

وَمَا أَمْزُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا
الزَّكَاةَ وَ ذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ²¹

¹⁹ The twelfth Imam

²⁰ التوبة: 103

Yet they were not commanded except to worship Allah, dedicating their faith to Him as men of pure faith and to maintain the prayer and pay the zakat. This is the upright religion.

There are many practices in Islam but the most fundamental ones which are the pillars of a Muslim way of life are prayer and giving alms as these are the pillars of a Muslim's way of life. A Muslim is the one who is mindful of Allah and tries to benefit others with their money. The one thing we need is to detach ourselves from this dunya is to free ourselves from our money. Sometimes we free ourselves voluntarily and sometimes somewhat unwillingly. For example, some give due to bankruptcy or worldwide financial problems such as recession. Many things can happen, but it is far better to voluntarily give charity rather than facing a problem that prompts us to do so. Sometimes we may wonder why giving sadaqah is said to prevent many problems. One reason may be that we have to experience financial restraints so we can choose between giving sadaqah and becoming bankrupt. A rational person would surely choose to give voluntarily²² to receive a reward for their action.

Types of tests and trials

Allah says in Surah al-Baqarah:

²¹ البينة:5

²² 24:49”

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَ
الشَّمَرَاتِ²³

*We will surely test you with a measure of fear and
hunger and a loss of wealth, lives, and fruits...*

We get worried knowing that this world does not have permanent peace and security. Though prayers are made for everyone's happiness, this insecurity has occurred throughout the history of mankind. Even in the time of the Prophet, Muslims experienced much fear in Mecca and Madinah. They hardly had even short period of complete ease and comfort. They faced many difficulties in Mecca, and continued to do so in Madinah where there were fights with the pagans, and problems with the People of the Book who betrayed them, with the hypocrites, and those who wanted to assassinate the Prophet. Fear, hunger and thirst are parts of the fabric of this life. If we always had security, adequate food and drink, good health, and loaded bank accounts, then we would not be concerned about preparing ourselves for our eternal life. Thus, sometimes we are tested by losing our money, or by losing our beloved ones, or by losing the fruits of our efforts (2:155).

In the above verse, "lives" ("al-Anfus") can refer to either ourselves giving our lives, or the death of our children, parents, relatives or friends. These are all tests for us.

"Thamarāt" literally means 'fruits', but can also refer to the fruits or outcome of our hard work and efforts in this dunya. Sometimes we

²³ البقرة:155

work hard for many years and establish something good only to see it damaged by someone else. We nurture a project and when it starts bearing fruits, for one reason or another it is discontinued. We start many projects which are then halted, and we are left with the choice of patiently continuing and refusing to become disheartened or disappointed.

Acquiring patience as an outcome of undergoing tests and trails

²⁴ وَ بَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

...and give good news to the patient.

All these trials and tests are available to help us achieve patience (*sabr*). No one can achieve it if there are no trials or difficulties. We have to go through difficulties to strengthen our patience. If everything was easy we would not understand of the concept of patience, let alone actually having the quality. Patience difficult quality to achieve as it requires practice and hard work. Who are the patient?

²⁵ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

*....those who, when an affliction visits them, say:
'Indeed we belong to Allah and to Him do we indeed
return.'*

This verse confirms that achieving patience requires acknowledging that we are not going to remain here forever. We have come from another

²⁴ البقرة:155

²⁵ البقرة:156

origin and we are going back to that origin. This is the concept of achieving patience. If we think that we have always been here and are going to be here forever, thus forgetting that we have come from another dimension of existence and you are going to leave this one to return to it, then this prevents us from acquiring patience. However, if we realize that this is a temporary life, a transient situation, then we can achieve patience. Remembering death is necessary for everyone desiring patience because if this dunya is the only thing that matters to us, then why would we need to be patient? The patient are those who know and acknowledge that they come from Allah and they will return to Him. For example, we can imagine that we are going for ziyarah²⁶ or for Hajj²⁷ which is sometimes difficult. For example, when we are in Mina or in Arafāt, life is very difficult, but we remain patient because we know that we have gone there for a purpose, that we have to do certain things there and then we are going to leave. However, if we forget that we have gone to Arafāt or Mina for a purpose and we start to think that we are going to remain there forever, we may wonder how we could manage to survive. Or we may start doing useless things such as building a permanent place or even a palace in Mina completely forgetting that we are only staying there for two or three days. We say that we have to have a palace there and a car, a garden, and servants. We exhaust ourselves, disregarding the rights of other people in order to build because we think that we are going to be there forever. This is the example of life in this dunya. However, if we remember that our life

²⁶ Pilgrimage

²⁷ Pilgrimage to Mecca (or Hajj), an obligation upon every Muslim o at least once in his or her life

here is only for a short time and we have to work hard to gain something for another world far greater than this, then we can choose to be patient. Thus patience is a great or perhaps the greatest quality.

Patience and faith

Imam Sadiq is quoted as saying:

الصَّبْرُ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الرَّأْسِ مِنَ الْجَسَدِ وَ لَا إِيْمَانٌ لِمَنْ لَا صَبْرَ لَهُ

Patience with respect to faith is like the head with respect to the body.²⁸

We can have a body without a hand or a leg or even without an eye, but we cannot it without a head. Similarly, faith (*Iman*) cannot survive without a head. There must be tests and trials that need painstaking effort to overcome to eventually acquire patience. In this way we can prepare ourselves to leave this dunya at any time; indeed, we will count the days until we leave it because we are not enjoying it much except to gain some provisions for Hereafter (*akhirah*).

Something very beautiful we find in Islam, especially in the school of Ahlul Bayt is that we can have collective hardship. We can share our hardship with each other and as a result the reward would be shared. The richest people on the Day of Judgment are the people who are patient:

إِنَّمَا يُوقَى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

²⁸ Al-Kafi, vol. 2, pp. 87 & 89

*Indeed the people who are patient would be rewarded
without any measure.*²⁹

Can someone be richer than this? On the Day of Judgment, the martyrs will see that a group of people is going into Heaven before them. These martyrs would be surprised and ask to whom those people are. They will say that as martyrs they have given their lives for the sake of Allah. They will be told that those are the patient people (*al-sābirun*); if martyrs died once these people were dying many times. When we have this problem of suffering, we wish to die soon but we have to wait. So every day and night we are somehow dying. Thus the richest people are the patient ones suffered. Among the patient, those at the highest level are the ones who suffered the most in this dunya, more than anyone else from Adam to the last human being. They are Prophet Muhammad and the Ahlul Bayt who indeed suffered more than anyone and yet did not deserve to suffer because they never did anything contrary to what Allah wanted and was pleased with.

Before leaving Mecca, Imam Husayn said in his sermon:

لَا مَحِيصَ عَنْ يَوْمٍ خُطَّ بِالْقَلَمِ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ رِضَانًا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ نَصْرًا عَلَى
بَلَائِهِ - وَ يُؤَقِّبِنَا أَجْوَرَ الصَّابِرِينَ

There is no way to escape from what Allah has decreed.
Allah's pleasure is our pleasure. We are patient. We are

²⁹ The Qur'an 39:10

ready to endure anything Allah plans for us, and Allah gives us the reward of the patient.³⁰

The Ahlul Bayt suffered more than anyone else and what is very striking is that their followers can join them in their hardship. And this is open to everyone because it is not based on ethnicity or blood relations. If we have this understanding (*marifah*) and we have the love for the Ahlul Bayt which means that we take their suffering as our own suffering then we can share with them in their suffering, in their *musibah*. Then, Allah would register for us the reward of the greatest suffering in the world which is that of Karbala.

We say in Ziyārah Ashurā:

أَسْأَلُهُ أَنْ يُعْطِيَنِي بِمُصَابِي بِكُمْ أَفْضَلَ مَا يُعْطَى مُصَاباً بِمُصِيبَتِهِ مُصِيبَةً مَا
أَعْظَمَهَا وَأَعْظَمَ رَزِيَّتَهَا فِي الْإِسْلَامِ

I ask Allah to give me, because of my suffering with respect to you, the greatest thing that He has ever given to anyone who has suffered.³¹

What a great tragedy was the tragedy of Karbalā and Imam Husayn's martyrdom. And what a great tragedy was the tragedy of the demise of Lady Fatimah. Thus, there is a possibility for us to connect ourselves to the Ahlul Bayt and to have such unity with them that we are counted as one of them, those whom Allah will reward for sharing in the greatest suffering in history.

³⁰ Bihar Al- Anwar V.44 P. 367, Al-Luhuf Fi Qatla Al-Tufuf P. 61

³¹ Ziyārah Ashurā