

## INDICATORS OF PIETY, PART IV<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** *Indicators of Piety* focuses on the advantages of piety (*taqwa*) in the Qur'an, hadith, and the lives of the Ahlul Bayt. Piety – one of the most important qualities a person can have – is how people are ranked before God as it is related to the intention behind all actions and is required to reach salvation. Part I and II delved into the merits of piety in the Qur'an and explored the definition of piety along with the factors that contribute to its formation. Part III illustrated the qualities of the pious as those who have faith in the unseen, establish prayer, give charity, believe in the hereafter, and have faith in what has been revealed to the Prophet as well as the previous prophets. This part further defines the faithful as those who will achieve true success and offers an illustration of who the faithful are, and what they will achieve in this world and the next.

In the previous series we have established that according to the Qur'an, piety is the fundamental quality by which we can achieve success, and anything less will not yield satisfactory results in this world and the Hereafter. To further understand, verse 2:2-5 was cited, in which God describes the pious as those who have faith in the unseen, in the

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on the fourth and fifth parts 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, religiosity, and moral values on which they are based.

revelation of Prophet Muhammad, and in the revelations of the previous prophets. What follows is an illustration of faith as described in the chapter *al-Mu'minoon* (*The Believers*):<sup>2</sup>

### **True success**

*The Believers* begins with eleven verses that describe the faithful. In the very first verse, God states:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

*Certainly, the faithful have attained salvation. (23:1)*

This verse uses a past-tense verb, along with a particle *qad* for added emphasis, which indicates the definite and guaranteed success of the faithful.

The root of the word employed in the verse for success – *falāh* – originally means ‘to open’. A farmer is known as *fallāh* because he opens the ground and sows seeds into the soil. God uses this term for human happiness, perhaps because people are like seeds with the potential for growth, provided they acquire a fertile ground, which is faith. This, in turn, facilitates personal growth, and thereafter offers shade (i.e. security and comfort) and fruit (i.e. benefit). If not, then opportunities are wasted and the person will ‘wither’ away.

The broader connotation of the term *falāh* is success and happiness in both this world and the Hereafter. According to the famous lexicographer al-Raghib al-Isfahani, the term encompasses three factors of worldly happiness, and four benefits in the Hereafter:

*Factors of worldly happiness:*

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter 23 of the Qur'an

1. To be able to live a sufficient quantity to achieve one's goals
2. To live with honour and dignity
3. To be able to afford the financial expenses of one's life.<sup>3</sup>

*Factors of success in the Hereafter:*

1. Eternal life
2. Honour from God
3. Perpetual wealth without lack or poverty
4. Increase in knowledge

### **Description of the faithful**

The first 11 verses of the Chapter *The Believers* include six features of the faithful:

#### ***1. Those who are humble in their prayers (23:2)***

The Qur'an mentions those that pray in different contexts. At times, when simply mentioning those who perform prayer, it laments their position:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

*Woe to them who pray - those who are heedless of their prayers. (107:4-5)*

Merely performing prayers does not necessarily cause faithfulness; it is the quality of the prayer that qualifies being amongst the faithful. The faithful are extremely humble in their prayers, and because of their

<sup>3</sup> Whilst it encourages simplicity in lifestyle, Islam is firmly against financial poverty, and an Islamic government is tasked with eradicating poverty from society. Interestingly, the Qur'an states that faith plays a role even in material wealth (7:96)

humble and softened hearts, they can concentrate when they pray. There are two terms often used in the context of a person's demeanour during prayers:

*Khudū'*: A physical display of humility in which the heart may or may not be in conformity.

*Khushū*: A heart-based state of humility which may manifest physically as well.

The above verse uses the *Khushū'* to denote the prayer performed by the faithful.

In one narration, Prophet Muhammad saw a man praying whilst simultaneously playing with his beard. He said, "Surely, had his heart felt humility, his limbs would have also been humble."<sup>4</sup>

Some well-known commentaries such as *Majma' al-Bayan* and *Tafsir al-Kabir* report that before the revelation of these verses, the Prophet would sometimes look humbly at the sky during prayer, but after the revelation of these verses he would always cast his eyes down.

## 2. Avoiding vain talk (23:3)

The faithful refrain from vain and useless pursuits, conversations, or even thoughts. Anything that is vain (*laghw*) is not beneficial, although not necessarily forbidden. The faithful, however, do not engage in it because they are motivated by a clear purpose in everything they do. They value every moment of their lives because they see death as something real and imminent.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 68, p. 228. The original hadith is as follows:

أما أنه لو خضع قلبه لخشعت جوارحه

***3. Carrying out their duty of charity (23:4)***

This verse refers to a broader act of charity. The above verses were revealed in Mecca, before the compulsory alms-tax (*zakah*) was legislated. Thus the term mentioned in this verse cannot be the obligated alms-tax. Moreover, the Qur'an often mentions prayer and charity together.

***4. Those who guard their private parts (23:5)***

The faithful are those who remain within their conjugal boundaries and have physical relationships with their legitimate spouses only.

***5. Those who keep their trusts and covenants (23:8)***

The faithful observe their promises under all conditions, and if entrusted with any property, then they deliver this with utmost reliability. Imam Zayn al-Abidin declares that were he entrusted by the killer of Imam al-Husayn with the very sword that brutally murdered his father in Karbala, he would return it to its owner.

Similarly, before Prophet Muhammad undertook the migration from Mecca to Medina, he was in possession of a number of trusts of the Meccans due to his renowned honesty. He ensured he returned their trusts by leaving his deputy, Imam Ali, in his place in Mecca with the clear conditions to proceed to Medina only after he had returned the people's property. The Prophet did not abuse their trusts despite their enmity towards him.

Regarding covenants, the faithful also sense their deep responsibility in discharging the covenant they have made with God:

وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ

*Fulfill God's covenant when you pledge, and do not break [your] oaths after pledging them solemnly and having made Allah a witness over yourselves. Indeed Allah knows what you do. (16:91)*

Thus, the concept of discharging one's promises is very broad and is a responsibility of which the faithful are constantly aware of.

#### **6. And who are watchful of their prayers (23:9)**

The mention of the prayer twice in this passage highlights its fundamental importance. In addition to their humble state in prayers, the faithful are mindful of the timings, etiquettes, and recommended acts of their prayers. They protect their prayer from any external or internal challenge or problem.

#### **The faithful will inherit Heaven**

At the end of this description, God states:

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

*It is they who will be the inheritors. They shall inherit paradise, and will remain in it forever. (23:10-11)*

Curiously, the Qur'an employs the term 'inherit', and in this regard we can cite three opinions. Some scholars of Islam say that in the same manner as someone benefits from inheritance without having worked for it, heaven is so magnificent it is granted to the faithful out of God's kindness, and is much more than a recompense for their efforts. The doers of good do not *deserve* heaven; it is more like an unexpected gift.

This concept can be further seen in the Qur'an's descriptions of heaven and hell:

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

*And paradise will be brought near for the Godwary.*

وَبَرَزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِلْغَاوِينَ

*And hell will be made manifest for the perverse. (26:90-91)*

The pious have made a gesture towards heaven with their deeds in their lives, but are still in need of God's kindness to bring it close to them. God vows to grant heaven to the righteous by bringing it closer to them. With regards to hell, the wrongdoers are already dwelling there; it simply remains to be unveiled for them.

The second opinion states that everyone has a place in heaven, but through their actions they can lose this position. Prophet Muhammad said:

ما منكم من احد الا وله منزلان: منزل في الجنة و منزل في النار

Each of you has two houses: one house in heaven and one house in hell. If someone dies and enters hell, then others will inherit that house in heaven.

Heaven will not remain empty, and no space will be wasted. Some spaces in heaven will be inherited from those that failed to claim their positions. Interestingly, a quality of hell and heaven is that they can accommodate all human beings. Hell has the ability to expand its capacity and accommodate more people:

يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأْتَ وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَّزِيدٍ

*The day when We shall say to hell, 'Are you full?' It will say, 'Is there any more?'*

Thirdly, the term 'inherit' is used to emphasise that heaven is something that only God creates. However, control of this paradise is granted to its inhabitants who reside therein, not as tenants whose future occupancy may be jeopardised, but rather as owners with full control.

### **Description of the faithful in hadiths**

Now that we have covered the Qur'an's description of faith, we turn our attention to the relevant hadith, which are replete with references to faith. In order to keep our discussion focused, we will suffice with hadiths that are concerned with the signs of a faithful person.

Some hadiths refer to the external signs of faith while others refer to internal signs. For example, this famous narration from Imam Hasan al-Askari mentions five external signs:

علامات المؤمن خمس: صلاة إحدى و خمسين و زيارة الاربعين والتختم باليمين  
و تعفير الجبين والجهر ببسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

The signs of a faithful person are five: Performance of fifty-one units of prayer [daily], recitation of *Ziyārat al-Arba'in*, to wear a ring on the right hand, to prostrate upon dust, and to recite *Bism Allāh al-Rahmān al-Rahim* loudly [in prayer].<sup>5</sup>

The word used in this saying for signs ( *'alāmāt* ) comes from the root *'ilm* (knowledge). A sign is defined as 'that which assists in understanding'. For example, the sign of a fire is smoke, and when

<sup>5</sup> Tusi, *Tahdhib al-Ahkām*, vol. 6, p. 52; 'Āmilii, *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 4, p. 58



smoke is witnessed, it assists the observer in understanding that a fire is present.

Though the narration mentions five signs of a faithful person, it is not limited to these five. Imam al-Askari mentions these five in particular due to their importance. Furthermore, the term 'faithful' in this narration refers to a follower of the Ahlul Bayt and mentions signs particular to the way they practice Islam.

*The first sign:* The performance of fifty-one units of prayer on a daily basis. Those fifty-one units are made up by the seventeen units of the mandatory daily prayers and thirty-four units of supererogatory prayers (*nawāfil*), which are eight units before the midday prayer, eight units before the afternoon prayer, four units after the dusk prayer, one unit after the evening prayer, eleven units as the night prayer, and two units before the morning prayer. These supererogatory prayers hold great significance, and if one is not able to perform all of them then at least some of them should be performed, especially those of the midday and the night. Furthermore, they are the only supererogatory prayers that can be performed even after their time has passed as lapsed prayers (*qadā*).

Imam Zayn al-Abidin once taught his companions that when a person prays the obligatory daily prayers, only those parts of the prayers are accepted that were performed with the presence and concentration of the heart. When his companions retorted that this was a very difficult proposition, the Imam assured them that the performance of the supererogatory prayers helps compensate the lapses of the obligatory prayers.

*The second sign:* Recitation of *Ziyārat al-Arbaʿin*, a well-established visitation prayer recited on the fortieth day following the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn. From other Islamic references, we know that the number forty has a special significance. It is hoped that the performance of any act for forty days makes it an established habit and transforms it into the person's second nature. A person who begins the visitation of Imam al-Husayn on the day of his martyrdom, and then continues the visitation prayers for forty days thereafter, culminating on the fortieth day, builds a firm and immovable relationship between them and Imam al-Husayn. This relationship is hoped to remain as a heartfelt bond. However, for someone that merely recites the visitation prayers on the day of his martyrdom, or for one day in isolation, he or she will not be able to form such a bond.

*The third sign:* To wear a ring on the right hand. This would be a very swift and easy manner of identifying a follower of the Ahlul Bayt.

*The fourth sign:* The faithful perform their prayers by prostrating upon dust or other natural (earthy) substances.<sup>6</sup> The adherents of the Sunni sect of Islam have many narrations regarding this practice, but they confine them to a specific time in history and do not apply this injunction outside of that time.

The Shi'a scholars do not endorse claims that the Prophet allowed his companions to prostrate upon cloth or their own clothes. History shows that the companions would carry sand with them and when they would

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<sup>6</sup> According to Shi'a jurisprudence, it is not valid to prostrate in the ritual prayers on anything except on earth and those things which grow on it and are not used for food or clothing. Other schools of jurisprudence may allow prostration on rugs and carpets or any other thing including even a part of one's turban, provided it is ritually clean (*tāhir*).

prostrate, they would put the cool sand down and prostrate upon it, instead of the floor that had become scorching hot due to the sun. Had the Prophet permitted his followers to prostrate upon cloth or their clothing, then this practice of carrying sand holds no meaning.

In another narration, Suhayb, a nephew of Umm Salamah, one of the wives of the Prophet, would blow the sand away when he would prostrate to avoid becoming dusty. She told him, “O son of my brother! Do not blow, because I heard the Prophet telling his servant Yasar who had blown, ‘For the sake of God, let your face become dusty,’<sup>7</sup> because the dust upon one’s face encourages humility and displays utter servitude.

Other reports describe the companions prostrating upon date leaves, and only a few reports state that they used the sides of their turbans. Thus, the stance taken by followers of the Ahlul Bayt is at least a precautionary stance and is a practice that is undisputed and accepted by all Muslims, whereas prostration upon cloth is disputed by some Muslims and is therefore a possible error.

<sup>7</sup> *Musnad* by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Baqi Musnad, Hadith of Umm Salamah, hadith number 25360 reads as follows:

حدثنا : طلق بن غنام بن طلق ، حدثنا : سعيد بن عثمان الوراق ، عن أبي صالح قال : دخلت على أم سلمة فدخل عليها ابن أخ لها ف صلى في بيتها ركعتين ، فلما سجد نفخ التراب فقالت له أم سلمة : ابن أخي لا تنفخ فإني سمعت رسول الله (ص) يقول ل غلام له يقال له يسار : ونفخ تراب وجهك لله.

There is also a similar hadith in the same source (hadith number 25519) which indicates that Umm Salamah said to her nephew, “Do not blow, because the Messenger of God told a servant of us, known as Ribāh, ‘Let your face become dusty. O Ribāh.’” A similar hadith can be found in many other sources. For example, refer to *Sunan* of Tirmidhi, the Section of Salat, hadith number 348. The hadith reads as follows:

حدثنا : أحمد بن منيع ، أخبرنا : عباد بن العوام ، أخبرنا : ميمون أبو حمزة ، عن أبي صالح مولى طلحة ، عن أم سلمة قالت : رأى النبي (ص) غلاماً لنا يقال له أفلح إذا سجد نفخ فقال : يا أفلح تراب وجهك. ...

*The fifth sign:* The recitation of the *Bismillah* ('In the name of God') in the prayers. Of the five daily mandatory prayers, the chapters of the Qur'an recited in the first two units of prayer of the morning, dusk, and evening prayers are recited loudly. In the midday and afternoon prayers, these sections are recited in a whisper, but it is recommended that the *Bismillah* be recited loudly.

Regarding the *Bismillah*, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq says, "It is the most magnificent verse stolen by Satan."<sup>8</sup> Today, the majority of Muslims read their prayers without reciting Bismillah, although the verse is so important that God revealed it 114 times. The Ahlul Bayt regard this verse as part of the beginning of each chapter except chapter nine, but it is then included twice in chapter twenty-seven.<sup>9</sup> The repetition of this verse shows that God wishes His servants to remember His names, especially the three mentioned in the verse: Allah, *Rahmān* (Compassionate), and *Rahim* (Merciful). Prophet Muhammad has said, "Every important matter not begun with *Basmalah* will remain fruitless."<sup>10</sup>

From these teachings, we can extract two points:

1. God wishes us to understand Him as a Lord who is merciful and compassionate. Despite his hundreds of names, He wishes us to identify Him primarily with these qualities. The name *Rahmān* signifies His general compassion to all His creation and is a proper noun for Him

<sup>8</sup> أعظم آية سرقها شيطان

<sup>9</sup> Chapter nine of the Qur'an contains stark warnings to the pagans, and hence does not begin with this verse. Interestingly, God does not choose any alternative, for example 'In the name of the Avenger' or 'In the name of the Enforcer'. Perhaps this is because He wishes to be known as compassionate and merciful, or nothing at all.

<sup>10</sup> كل امر ذي بال لم يبدأ بسم الله فهو ابتر

alone. The name *Rahim* signifies His special mercy reserved for the faithful. God's mercy is the closest thing to His unfathomable essence. When mentioning His mercy He states: "*Said He, 'I visit My punishment on whomever I wish, but My mercy embraces all things'* (7:156)."

2. The verse encourages those who have faith in such a God to espouse these qualities within themselves. By remembering Him regularly with these qualities they should display the same within their own merits, otherwise the recitation of this formula becomes hypocritical. The faithful therefore have utter compassion and mercy for all other beings, although especially towards fellow believers, since they are more deserving of this, albeit in a non-discriminatory manner. This is like loving all children, but having extra love and concern for one's own children.

These five signs are external and each of them can be easily seen in the external behaviour of a person. This can help quickly decipher those who are not faithful. However, it does not necessitate that those who do possess these signs are necessarily faithful. For this, we are in need of further signs. Imam al-Baqir has said:

من علامات المؤمن ثلاث: حسن التقدير في المعيشة، والصبر على النائبة،  
والتفقه في الدين

Of the signs of a faithful person are three: good management of the economy of his family, patience upon calamity, and deep knowledge of religion."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Tusii, *Tahdhib al-Ahkām*, vol. 7, p. 236

This hadith refers to three additional signs of the many signs of a faithful person:

*The first sign:* A faithful person will be able to manage and plan the economy of their household. This means they are neither miserly, nor do they indulge in waste and extravagance. Avoiding waste and valuing their possessions is also a quality the faithful practice in their homes.

Once a baker told his preteen son he would consider him an adult when he earned his first dirham.<sup>12</sup> So the boy effortlessly took a dirham from his mother, and when he showed it to his father, his father said it was not accepted and threw the coin into the oven. This repeated for the following few days, and the boy grew increasingly perplexed as to how his father knew that he had not earned the dirham. His mother then advised him to try and actually earn the dirham to present it to his father. The boy finally agreed and worked hard to earn it, and when he showed it to his father, the dirham was once again tossed into the oven. This time, the boy frantically reached into the oven and drew the coin out, despite the danger of being burned. The father then acknowledged that this coin was earned, and said that he had known the previous coins were not earned due to his son's nonchalant reaction. This lesson was to teach his son the worth of money and that it should be spent wisely.

*The second sign:* To have patience during problems. Difficult situations of life act as a sifting processes where a person's character and resolve is tested. In hadith it is said that patience is a fundamental requirement for a person's success, just as the head is to a body.

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<sup>12</sup> A silver coin.

*The third sign:* They are deeply fascinated with and attached to religion, and strive to dig deep into it. Their lives are so consumed with pleasing their Lord and learning the ways of their religion. It is noteworthy to mention that the knowledge spoken about in this tradition (*tafaqquh*) refers to a deep understanding rather than superficial knowledge.

From these two sayings it has become obvious that faith has both an external manifestation as well as internal signs that involve the personality, interests, and skills, and will ultimately rest in the heart. Each hadiths refer to one set of signs.





# INNER AND OUTER BEAUTY IN ISLAM: AN INTRODUCTION

ALI REZA MAKTABDAR

TRANSLATED BY MOHAMMAD JAVAD SHOMALI

**ABSTRACT:** A person's physical appearance plays a big role in both individual and social situations. Regardless of a culture's fashionable apparel, particular types of grooming and dressing are universal and can have a drastic effect on a person's life, such as affecting our self-esteem and giving the people we meet a long-lasting impression on us. The Prophet Muhammad himself was well-known for his striking good looks and hygiene. Moreover, qualities such as intelligence, sincerity, and compassion give the soul inner beauty. This article expounds on the importance of inner and outer beauty in Islam by using verses from the Qur'an and narrations from the Ahlul Bayt.

## Introduction

People naturally seek beauty and dislike untidy appearances. Based on human nature, Islam has taken humankind's tendency towards beauty into consideration and issued helpful guidelines to fulfil this natural need. According to the Qur'an, appreciation for beauty as a God-given blessing is a sign of His wisdom and it goes hand in hand with the existence of beautiful beings in the world. Islam guides its followers to appear neat and tidy in public.

Besides the natural pursuit of beauty, humans have to appear neat and tidy to strengthen and extend their family relationships and social ties. As social beings, people cannot reach most of their goals without having societies, thus it is important to make a good impression by looking presentable.

More importantly, inner or spiritual beauty, such as having knowledge, patience, and faith are some adornments of the human soul. In this article the idea of Islam on appearance and beauty will be discussed, with a further explanation on spiritual beauty.

### **Beauty in the Qur'an and hadiths**

In the Qur'an, God mentions the beautification of the heavens with stars: "Indeed, We have adorned the lowest heaven with the finery of the stars."<sup>1</sup> Plants<sup>2</sup> and natural scenes<sup>3</sup> are also seen as a way of beautifying the Earth. In one verse, people are asked to look pleasant when going to the mosque. The following verse provides us with a general rule that Islam is not against beauty and adornments. God says:

O Children of Adam! Put on your adornment on every occasion of prayer, and eat and drink, but do not waste; ... Say, Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants, and the good things of provision? Say, these are for the faithful in the life of this world, and exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Qur'an 37:6

<sup>2</sup> The Qur'an 10:24

<sup>3</sup> The Qur'an: 18:7

<sup>4</sup> The Qur'an 7:32

As said earlier, there is a deep sense of beauty in human beings. And by displaying beautiful appearances and avoiding disheveled ones, humans harmonize with nature.

Along with the Qur'an, the traditions received from Imams also indicate great importance for the inner and physical beauty. There is a hadith from Imam Ali that shows how important outer beauty is in Islam. Imam Ali stated, "God is beautiful and likes beauty, and also likes to see His blessings being used by His servants."<sup>5</sup>

Beautiful appearance was important in our Prophet's lifestyle. Once, as the Prophet was leaving the house, he began combing his hair and beard, using a bowl of water as a mirror. Aisha asked, "You are the best son of Adam and the Prophet of God! Are you combing your hair and beard?" The Prophet answered, "God likes a believer to get ready and adorn when he wants to meet another believers."<sup>6</sup>

The Prophet also said, "When you want to appear in a gathering of believers, choose nice and neat clothes so that you become distinct among people like a beauty spot on one's face, because Allah dislikes uncomeliness and looking repugnant."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, Bihar ul-Anwar, Islamiyyah Publications, vol. 10, p. 92:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ وَ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَرَى أَتْرَ نِعَمَتِهِ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ

<sup>6</sup> Tabarsi, Abu Nasr Razi ud-Din Hasan ibn Fadl, *Makarim ul-Akhlaq*, Sharif Radi publication, pp. 96-97:

وَقَفَّ رَجُلٌ عَلَى بَابِ النَّبِيِّ ص يَسْتَأْذِنُ عَلَيْهِ قَالَ فَخَرَجَ النَّبِيُّ ص فَوَجَدَ فِي حُجْرَتِهِ زَكَاةً فِيهَا مَاءٌ فَوَقَفَ يُسَوِّي لِحْيَتَهُ وَ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا رَجَعَ دَاخِلًا قَالَتْ لَهُ عَائِشَةُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَنْتَ سَيِّدُ أَدَمَ وَ رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَقَفْتَ عَلَى الزَّكَاةِ تُسَوِّي لِحْيَتَكَ وَ رَأْسَكَ قَالَ يَا عَائِشَةُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ إِذَا خَرَجَ عَبْدُهُ الْمُؤْمِنُ إِلَى أَخِيهِ أَنْ يَهَيِّئَ لَهُ وَ أَنْ يَتَجَمَّلَ.

<sup>7</sup> Javadi Amuli, Abudllah, *Mafatih ul-Hayat*, Isra Publication, p. 161:

إِنَّكُمْ قَادِمُونَ عَلَى إِخْوَانِكُمْ فَأَصْلِحُوا رِجَالَكُمْ وَ أَصْلِحُوا لِبَاسَكُمْ حَتَّى تَكُونُوا كَأَنَّكُمْ شَامَةٌ فِي النَّاسِ فَلَنْ يَكُونَ اللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُحْشَ وَ لَا التَّقَشُّشَ

The amount of money the Prophet spent on his perfume was more than that which he spent for food.<sup>8</sup> Using perfume was very important to the Imams as well. Regarding Imam Sadiq there are narrations which say people could easily locate him in the mosque by the fragrance of his perfume.<sup>9</sup>

Imam Ali taught us that beautiful appearance is part of a believer's etiquette<sup>10</sup> and advised us saying, "You should adorn yourselves for your brothers the same way you do for strangers who you like to see you in your best appearance."<sup>11</sup> He also described true believers as those who appear neat and adorned even when they are poor.<sup>12</sup>

Some see an opposition between religion (or piety) and beauty and so they object if they see religious leaders in beautiful clothes. This has a long history rooting back to the time of Imams. For example, it is narrated by one of Imam Sadiq's companions, Ibn Qaddah, that one day Imam Sadiq had high-quality clothes on when he came across Abbad Ibn Kasir the Suffi. Abbad said "You are from the household of the Prophet and your great father, Imam Ali, always wore burlap! What are these good clothes you have?" Imam replied, "Oh Abbad, be aware! Why do

<sup>8</sup> Tabarsi, Abu Nasr Razi ud-Din Hasan ibn Fadl, *Makarim ul-Akhlaq*, Sharif Radi publication, p. 43:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص يُنْفِقُ عَلَى الطَّيِّبِ أَكْثَرَ مَا [مِمَّا] يُنْفِقُ عَلَى الصَّطَامِ

<sup>9</sup> Tabarsi, Abu Nasr Razi ud-Din Hasan ibn Fadl, *Makarim ul-Akhlaq*, Sharif Radi publication, p. 42:

كَانَ يُعْرَفُ مَوْضِعُ جَفْعَرٍ ع فِي الْمَسْجِدِ بِطَيِّبِ رِيحِهِ وَ مَوْضِعُ سُجُودِهِ

<sup>10</sup> Javadi Amuli, Abdullah, *Mafatih ul-Hayat*, Israa Publication, p. 160: أَلْتَجَمَّلُ مِنْ أَخْلَاقِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

<sup>11</sup> Majlesi, Muhammad Baqir, *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Islamiyyah Publications, vol. 10, p. 91:

لِيَتَرَنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ لِأَخِيهِ الْمُسْلِمِ إِذَا أَنَا هُكَمَا يَتَرَنَّ لِلْغَرِيبِ الَّذِي يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَرَاهُ فِي أَحْسَنِ الْهَيْئَةِ

<sup>12</sup> Sayyed Radi, *Nahj ul-Balaghah*, Hijrat Publications, p. 305:

مِنْ عَلَامَةِ أَحَدِهِمْ أَنَّكَ تَرَى لَهُ قُوَّةً فِي دِينِهِ ... وَ تَجَمُّلاً فِي فَاقَةِ

you protest like this? Who has made blessings of Allah impermissible? Allah, the exalted, likes to see His blessings being used.”<sup>13</sup>

A believer can avoid all factors that take his attention away from Allah and the afterlife and yet still care about his appearance and adorn it in a way that even his tidiness and neat appearance attracts others to the religion.

There is nothing wrong with pious people having good houses, eating delicious food, enjoying the best drinks, and wearing the finest clothes. It is possible for them to gain pleasure from this world and yet have the best afterlife. These are blessings provided by God for everyone.<sup>14</sup>

Imam Ali said “Clothes reveal beauty.”<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, some people are not concerned with a tidy appearance, and to make it worse, assume it against their spiritual wayfaring to care about their appearances. This belief is against the teaching of Islam.

Imam Hasan always wore his best clothes for prayers and when he was asked about it, he said, “God is beautiful and likes beauties so I adorn

<sup>13</sup> Majlesy, Muhammad Baqir, *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Islamiyyah Publications, vol. 47, p. 361:

كَانَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) مُتَكَيِّمًا عَلَى أَوْ قَالَ عَلَى الْبَيْتِ - فَلَقِيَهُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ كَثِيرٍ وَعَلَيْهِ ثِيَابٌ مَرْوِيَّةٌ جَسَنَةٌ - فَقَالَ يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّكَ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِ نُبُوَّةٍ - وَكَانَ أَبُوكَ وَكَانَ فَمَا هَذِهِ الْمَرْيَئَةُ عَلَيْكَ - فَلَوْ لَبَسْتَ ذُوْنَ هَذِهِ الثِّيَابِ - فَقَالَ لَهُ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ يَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ - مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ - إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِذَا أَنْعَمَ عَلَى عَبْدٍ نِعْمَةً - أَحَبَّ أَنْ يَرَاهَا عَلَيْهِ لَيْسَ بِهِ بَأْسٌ

<sup>14</sup> Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Nu'man, *Al-Amali*, Congere-ye Shaykhe Mufid, p. 263:

أَنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ... سَكَنُوا الدُّنْيَا بِأَفْضَلِ مَا سَكِنَتْ وَأَكَلُوا بِأَفْضَلِ مَا أَكَلَتْ شَارَكُوا أَهْلَ الدُّنْيَا فِي دُنْيَاهُمْ فَأَكَلُوا مَعَهُمْ مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ وَ شَرِبُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا يَشْرَبُونَ وَ لَبَسُوا مِنْ أَفْضَلِ مَا يَلْبَسُونَ وَ سَكَنُوا مِنْ أَفْضَلِ مَا يَسْكُنُونَ - وَ تَرَوُجُوا مِنْ أَفْضَلِ مَا يَتَرَوُجُونَ وَ زَكَبُوا مِنْ أَفْضَلِ مَا يَزَكَبُونَ أَصَابُوا لَذَّةَ الدُّنْيَا مَعَ أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا وَ هُمْ غَدَا جِزَاءُ اللَّهِ يَتَمَتُّونَ عَلَيْهِ فَيُعْطِيهِمْ مَا تَمَنَّوْهُ وَ لَا يَزِدُّ لَهُمْ دَعْوَةً وَ لَا يَنْقُصُ لَهُمْ نَصِيبًا مِنَ اللَّذَّةِ..

<sup>15</sup> Tabarsi, Abu Nasr Razi ud-Din Hasan ibn Fadl, *Makarim ul-Akhlaq*, Sharif Radi publication, p. 96: الثِّيَابُ تُظْهِرُ الْجَمَالَ

myself for my Lord. He orders us to use our adornments for prayers. And because of this, I like to wear my best clothes.”<sup>16</sup>

When the Prophet saw an unkempt man wearing dirty untidy clothes, he said to him, “It’s a religious act to use and reveal God’s blessing”<sup>17</sup>

As said, when the Imams used fine clothes and faced some complaints as a result, they supported their stance by explaining how other prophets, such as Salomon and David, did the same. One of Imam Rida’s servants, Obayd, said, “Some people from Khorasan came to him and told him that they did not like him to wear fine elegant clothes. The Imam replied that Joseph had been a prophet and son of the prophets and yet he had worn elegant clothes and participated in Pharaoh’s meetings, yet this did not degrade his spiritual level. [Buying] elegant clothes is wrong if there are unmet needs.”<sup>18</sup>

In another story, once a person saw Imam Sadiq in a bright-coloured shirt. He is surprised as he thought that bright colours are only worn by young people. The Imam noticed his reaction and said, “Who prohibited

<sup>16</sup> Ayyashi, Muhammad ibn Mas’ud ibn Muhammad, *Kitab ut-Tafsir*, Elmiyye Publications, Tehran, vol. 2, p. 14:

رَوَى الْعِيَّاشِيُّ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنِ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ (ع) أَنَّهُ كَانَ إِذَا قَامَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ لَبَسَ أَجْوَدَ ثِيَابِهِ- فَقِيلَ لَهُ يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ لِمَ تَلْبَسُ أَجْوَدَ ثِيَابِكَ فَقَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ- فَأَتَجَمَّلُ لِرَبِّي وَ هُوَ يَقُولُ: «خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ»، فَأُجِبُّ أَنْ أَلْبَسَ أَجْمَلَ ثِيَابِي

<sup>17</sup> *Al-Hayat*, vol. 6, p. 217:

أَبْصَرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص رَجُلًا شَعْنًا شَعْرَ رَأْسِهِ وَسِجَّةً ثِيَابُهُ سِجَّةَ خَالِهِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص مِنَ الَّذِينَ الْمُتَعَتَّةُ وَإِظْهَارُ التَّعَمُّةِ

<sup>18</sup> Tabarsi, Abu Nasr Razi ud-Din Hasan ibn Fadl, *Makarim ul-Akhlaq*, Sharif Radi Publication, p. 98:

دَخَلَ قَوْمٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ خُرَاسَانَ عَلَى أَبِي الْحَسَنِ ع فَقَالُوا لَهُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ أَنْكَرُوا عَلَيْكَ هَذَا اللَّبَاسَ الَّذِي تَلْبَسُهُ قَالَ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ إِنَّ يُوسُفَ بْنَ يَعْقُوبَ ع كَانَ نَبِيًّا ابْنِ نَبِيٍّ وَ كَانَ يَلْبَسُ الدِّيَنَاجَ وَ يَتَرَزَّرُ بِالذَّهَبِ وَ يَجْلِسُ مَجَالِسَ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ فَلَمْ يَضَعْهُ ذَلِكَ وَ إِنَّمَا يَدْمُ لَوْ اخْتِيجَ مِنْهُ إِلَى فُسْطِهِ

the beautifications that God allows for people? I have got married recently [I am expected to wear nice clothes.]<sup>19</sup>”

Looking presentable is so important in Islam that a person is not considered a spendthrift when he or she buys different types of clothing. Imam Sadiq was asked “Can a believer have two sets of clothes?” to which he replied “Yes.” The person went on asking until twenty sets and at last he replied “[No], it is not considered extravagance unless you wear your party clothes for work.”<sup>20</sup>

There is a similar hadith from Imam al-Kadhim in which he was asked about having ten sets of clothes; he answered, “It is not extravagance; indeed, it may even help your clothes last longer. Extravagance is wearing your formal clothing in an unclean environment.”<sup>21</sup> According to this hadith, having different sets of clothes is good both for looking presentable, which is an answer to one’s tendency towards beauties, and for keeping clothes for a longer time which is more economic.

Neatness is so important in Islam that there are instructions about the slightest actions such as caring for and combing hair,<sup>22</sup> polishing nails,<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 105:

دَخَلْتُ عَلَى أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ عَ وَ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَصْبُوعَةً بَعْضُهَا قَدْ نَقَصَ صَبْغُهَا عَلَى عَاتِقِهِ قَالَ فَتَطَرْتُ إِلَيْهَا فَقَالَ يَا حَكَمُ مَا تَقُولُ فِي هَذَا قُلْتُ إِنَّا لَنَعِيبُ الشَّابَّ الْمَرَاهِقَ عِنْدَنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا فَأَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَقُولُ وَ هِيَ عَلَيْكَ فَقَالَ يَا حَكَمُ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ يَا حَكَمُ إِنِّي حَدِيثٌ عَمَّا بَغَسَ

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 98:

يَكُونُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ عَشْرَةُ أَفْعَصَةٍ قَالَ نَعَمْ قُلْتُ عَشْرِينَ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَ لَيْسَ ذَلِكَ مِنَ السَّرَفِ إِنَّمَا السَّرَفُ أَنْ يُجْعَلَ ثَوْبٌ صَوْنُكَ ثَوْبٌ بِذَلِكَ .

This means that it is important for a person’s clothes to fit the right occasion.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.:

الرَّجُلُ يَكُونُ لَهُ عَشْرَةُ أَفْعَصَةٍ أَوْ يَكُونُ ذَلِكَ مِنَ السَّرَفِ فَقَالَ لَا وَ لَكِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَبْقَى لِثِيَابِهِ وَ لَكِنَّ السَّرَفَ أَنْ تَلْبَسَ ثَوْبَ صَوْنِكَ فِي الْمَكَانِ الْقَدِيرِ

<sup>22</sup> Majlesi, Muhammad Baqir, *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Islamiyah Publications, vol. 73, p. 116

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 123:

and trimming nose hairs.<sup>24</sup> There are even teachings about how to decorate a tablecloth.<sup>25</sup>

Though it is important to look presentable in public, there is more flexibility in what a person wears in private. For example, one may wear old or coarse clothes in private and fine and soft clothes in public to both practice an ascetic life and simultaneously look presentable in the public.

In one narrative, when Sofyan the Sufi saw Imam Sadiq in fine clothing, he told the Imam that none of Imam Sadiq's fathers had ever worn that. Imam replied, "The holy Prophet lived in the time of poverty and so he lived like other people, but afterwards came times of richness. The best people to use God's blessings are believers." And he recited this verse "Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants, and the good things of [His] provision?"<sup>26</sup> and then said, "We are the best to use God's blessings. Besides, what you see of my clothes is what I have worn for [meeting] people." Then he showed him the coarse clothes he was wearing underneath, and said, "You wear coarse clothes on top to make people think you have an ascetic life, yet under it, hidden from people, you wear soft clothes that make you comfortable."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 109:

قَالَ لِلرِّجَالِ قُصُوا أَظْفَارَكُمْ - وَ لِلنِّسَاءِ انْزِكْنَ فَإِنَّهُ أَرِيئُ لَكُنْ

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. vol. 59, p. 300:

أَخْذُ الشَّعْرِ مِنَ الْأَنْفِ يُحْتَسِبُ الْوُجْهَ

<sup>26</sup> The Qur'an 7:32

زَيَّنُوا مَوَائِدَكُمْ بِالْبَقْلِ فَإِنَّهَا مَطْرَدَةٌ لِلشَّيَاطِينِ مَعَ السَّخِيمَةِ

<sup>27</sup> Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Islamiyyah Publications, vol. 47, p. 360



## Spiritual beauty

Verses of the Qur'an and hadiths were shared regarding physical appearance. Regarding inner and spiritual beauty, God introduces faith as beautification of people's hearts: "God has endeared faith to you and has adorned it in your hearts" (Qur'an, 49:7). Thus, adornment applies even to the realm of spirituality and faith is one instance of it. Intellect,<sup>28</sup> knowledge,<sup>29</sup> wisdom,<sup>30</sup> good manners,<sup>31</sup> silence,<sup>32</sup> patience,<sup>33</sup> modesty,<sup>34</sup> and gratitude<sup>35</sup> are some examples of spiritual beauties.

In a beautiful hadith where the Prophet lists qualities that result in inner beauty,<sup>36</sup> he mentions that in every situation a virtue that can beautify our lives, such as patience in times of hardship, humbleness when in a

<sup>28</sup> Tamimi, Abdul Wahid, *Tasnif Ghurar ul-Hikam*, Daftar Tablighat Publications, p. 51:

العقل زين لمن رزقه

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 281:

العلم أشرف حليّة و عطيّة

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 58:

عليك بالحكمة فإنها الحليّة الفاخرة

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 247:

لا زينة كالآداب

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 216:

الصمت زين العلم و عنوان العلم

<sup>33</sup> Daylami, Hasan ibn Abul-Hasan, *Irshad ul-Qulub*, Sharif Radi Publications, vol. 1, p. 199:

العلم زينة

<sup>34</sup> Payande, Abulqasim, *Nahj ul-Fasahat*, Danesh Publications, p. 453:

الحياء زينة

<sup>35</sup> *Al-Irshad fi Marefat Hujajj-illah lil-Ibad*, vol. 1, p. 300:

الشكر زينة الغنى و الصبر زينة البلوى

<sup>36</sup> Shu'ayri, *Jami' ul-Akhbar*, Radi Publications, p. 123:

العفاف زينة البلاء و التواضع زينة الحسب و الفصاحة زينة الكلام و العدل زينة الإيمان - و السكينة زينة العبادة و الجفط زينة الرواية و حفظ الحاج [الججاج] زينة العلم و حسن الأدب زينة العقل و بسط الوجه زينة العلم و الإيثار زينة الزهد و بذل الموجود زينة اليقين و التقلل زينة الفتاة و ترك المني زينة المغرور و الخشوع زينة الصلاة و ترك ما لا يعني زينة الودع

high social position, eloquence when speaking, justice of those who are faithful and tranquility in the time of worship.

### **Keeping a balance**

There are many hadiths regarding the importance of having a neat and beautiful appearance that there remains no doubt about its significance in Islam. This is to bear in mind that Islam is a religion of balance. The Qur'an instructs that people should not be excessive in beautifying themselves or their belongings.<sup>37</sup> This becomes even more important in societies where the majority cannot afford basic necessities. As explained by Imam Rida when asked why his clothing differed to that of Imam Ali, and he replied that at the time of Imam Ali people were challenged with poverty and thus had to wear simple clothes; but because people were well-off during Imam Rida's period the Imam blended in.<sup>38</sup>

Unfortunately, we fall into the trap of tending towards extremes. For example, some are either too sluggish to even have a simple yet tidy and neat appearance or they go towards the other extreme and spend endless hours on their appearance. A balance is to be made in looking presentable without troubling themselves with complications.

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<sup>37</sup> Qur'an: 7:31

<sup>38</sup> Tabarsi, Abu Nasr Razi ud-Din Hasan ibn Fadl, *Makarim ul-Akhlaq*, Sharif Radi publication, vol. 1, p. 183

## MORAL GOVERNANCE

### PART IV: CULTURE & EDUCATION

MOHAMMAD NASR ISFAHANI

TRANSLATED BY HANNANEH FATHOLLAHI AND STAFF

**ABSTRACT:** Prophet Muhammad was sent to establish a community based on moral principles, and in doing so, he set out to perfect people's ethics. During his leadership, he established a comprehensive system of laws in which the duties of each person was taken into consideration to form an independent and unified nation. He encouraged public participation and eradicated structures of idol worship in Mecca by replacing them with places of worship for Muslims. In part II, Prophet Muhammad's ethical management of the economy in the Islamic state was described. Part III studied his peace-making strategies, management of war, and dealing with opposition within and outside Medina, such as his judicial and political approaches, his emphasis on the use of consultation, and leniency and kindness towards war captives. This last part focuses on the Prophet's own ethical conduct as the perfect exemplar, and his efforts to eradicate differences based on tribe, gender, race, and social class to create a system grounded on principles in which all believers have equal rights.

#### **Ethical management of culture and training**

In Pre-Islamic Arabia, people generally followed their selfish motives and interests, and due to the close relationship of the individual and their tribes, the motives of each tribe were important. If consideration

was given to matters of ethics, training, and humanitarianism, this was restricted to the interests of the tribe. To transform this community into one where it was concerned with the welfare of others for the sake of God was a task that required determination. Prophet Muhammad took all efforts to remove the narrow outlook of the Arabs and introduce them to morals free from personal, tribal, and racial interests. Despite being immensely difficult, he was ultimately successful in his task, and was able to bring forth a series of noble people who became exemplars in their own right. All of the Prophet's activities were undertaken for this very objective: the ethical and divine nurturing of human beings. Prophet Muhammad, himself a symbol of ethics, was naturally considered to be the ideal example of moral behaviour. Furthermore, at every relevant stage and when confronted with different circumstances, he provided guidance and procedures on how to best deal with those life events.

In Medina, the first step he took was to stabilise and establish a monotheistic outlook. The ethical consequence of this was that the former frameworks where superiority was determined by factors including age, gender, wealth, tribal authority, and race, which in the past had been the root causes of discrimination and injustice and stood against the authority of God. Whenever he settled in any area, it was his practice to immediately eradicate such manifestations of polytheism. After the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet declared, "No one should have an idol in their home; and anyone who has any must destroy them." Following the success in Medina, the Prophet exerted his methods in Mecca. Whilst standing on the head of the idol Hubal, he ordered all other idols to be broken. Zubayr ibn 'Awwām turned his face to Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb and said, "O! Abū Sufyān! The idol Hubal has been

broken while you were so proud of it in the battle of Uhud!” Abū Sufyān replied, “Leave this matter. I realise that if another god existed besides the God of Muḥammad, then the situation would have been different.”<sup>1</sup>

There was no one from the Quraysh who did not possess an idol in his home. Following this order, the Muslims began to break the idols.<sup>2</sup> The Prophet dispatched individuals as well as the Muslim armies to various regions to convey the message of Islam to all tribes, and his first instruction was to destroy idols and manifestations of polytheism. Khālīd ibn Walīd and thirty others were dispatched to ‘Arnah to destroy the temples dedicated to ‘Uzzā,<sup>3</sup> and Ṭufayl ibn ‘Amr Dūsī was sent to destroy the idol Dhul Kaffayn and the idol of the tribe of ‘Amr ibn Ḥumamah.<sup>4</sup> Sa'a ibn Zayd Ashhalī was sent to destroy the idol Manāt, and ‘Amr ‘Āṣ to ruin the idol Suwā – the idol of the Hudhayl tribe.

After the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet stood atop the Ka'bah and announced the death of the barbaric, inhuman, and unethical culture and principles of the pre-Islamic age, and invited people towards morality and Islamic thought. He said:

Any blood and property that you possessed, and all false, pre-Islamic superiority that you deemed to have, have now disappeared. God has removed the pre-Islamic arrogance and the boasting over one's ancestors. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim, and all Muslims are brothers of one other. All of you are from dust and the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 636-637.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 665.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 668.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 665.

dearest one to God is the one who is most pious. All Muslims are equal. The weak and strong from among them benefit equally from the spoils of war. To fight either in the left wing or right wing does not affect the rewards of the battle. The Muslims' blood is honourable and must be protected. Muslims must be united and coordinated against their enemy. No Muslim should be killed in front of a disbeliever and no allied person should be harmed whilst the treaty is valid."<sup>5</sup>

The Prophet also fought harshly against superstitions, and would not pay heed to any unjustified demands and what was not in harmony with the principles of Islam. The Arabs worshipped a green tree named Dhāt Anwāt as they deemed it holy; they would gather around it and made a sacrifice to it once per year, before entering Mecca. The people performing Hajj would hang their cloaks from it to derive blessing, and would then proceed to Mecca. On the journey to the battle of Hunayn, the Muslim army passed by this tree. Some requested the Prophet to appoint a tree like Dhāt Anwāt within Islam, but the Prophet said, 'God is the Greatest' [Allāhu Akbar] three times to show his own dissatisfaction of their request, and then stated, "The tribe of Moses also did such a thing with their prophet."<sup>6</sup> And in the battle of Tabūk, the Prophet ordered the Muslim army to open the glass beads from their camels and horses. The Arabs would hang such beads from the necks of their mounts to prevent harm by the power of the evil eye.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 639-640.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 681.

<sup>7</sup> *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, vol.4, p. 92.

The Prophet's main objective was to encourage people to submit to the truth, and he was prepared to pay any price to achieve it. He would not force anyone to accept Islam, whether in Mecca or even in Medina,<sup>8</sup> despite having the power to do so. Some of the pagans did not accept Islam for a long time and together with the Jews of Medina they harassed the Prophet and his companions;<sup>9</sup> this is also mentioned in the Qur'an.<sup>10</sup> Some persons converted to Islam during the battle of Uḥud<sup>11</sup> and some others after the conquest of Ḥunayn in 9 and 10 AH. The only restriction upon the pagans came with the revelation of Surat al-Tawbah, which forbade them from partaking in the Hajj ceremony.

On the journey to Ḥudaybiyyah, the Prophet met groups of Banī Nahd in the region Rūḥā and invited them to Islam, though they did not accept. They then sent some milk to the Prophet, whereupon he refused to accept it, saying, "I do not accept gifts from pagans." He ordered the Muslims to purchase the milk instead.<sup>12</sup>

The Prophet was very pleased when anyone accepted Islam. For example, Khālīd ibn Walīd who previously played a significant role in defeating the Muslims in the Battle of Uḥud, narrates: "I put on my fine clothes and became ready to visit the Prophet. My brother saw me and said, 'Hurry up! The Prophet has been informed that you want to become a Muslim and he is gladly waiting for you.' When I saw him from afar I saw that he was smiling. I stood and greeted him with his title as a prophet and he returned my greeting with a smiling face. I

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol.1, p. 359.

<sup>9</sup> Wāqidi, *Maghāzī*, vol.1, p. 133.

<sup>10</sup> Qur'an, 3:186.

<sup>11</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, vol.2, p. 723.

<sup>12</sup> *Maghāzī*, p. 436.

said, "I testify that there is no god but Allah and you are the Apostle of Allah." The Prophet said, "I knew you were smart and intelligent and hoped that it would lead you into righteousness and goodness."<sup>13</sup>

‘Amr ibn ‘Āṣ has recounted his own acceptance of Islam: "I paid allegiance to the Prophet on the condition that my past sins are forgiven and that I never return to them. After this, the Prophet would never treat us differently to his other companions in any matter."<sup>14</sup> The Prophet would say to new Muslims, "I prefer for every one of you that follows me what I prefer for myself; and in any case, we are together in our understanding of what is lawful and unlawful. I swear by God, never will I lie to you, and surely God loves you."<sup>15</sup>

Furāt ibn Ḥayyān was the guide of the trade caravan of the Quraysh to Shām, and took unknown and small roads to avoid being captured by the Muslims. When the Muslims overcame them, Furāt – a wrongdoer worthy of punishment – was brought to the Prophet. He was promised that if he converts to Islam his life will be protected. He then became Muslim and was not killed.<sup>16</sup> The objective of the Prophet was to not seek revenge and cause bloodshed, especially while in a position of power.

After the Battle of Ghābah, when the Prophet reached Medina, Abū Dharr's wife who had rode on the Prophet's she-camel, Quṣwā, entered the city. She came to the Prophet and delivered news from the enemy to him and then said, "O Apostle of God! I have vowed that if God saves

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 571.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 568.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 572.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 144.



me by this she-camel, I will kill her and eat from her liver and hump.” The Prophet replied, “What a bad reward you have appointed for this animal! Is the reward of what has saved you, is that you kill it? Your vow is not valid regarding that which you do not own and that which is a sin against God.”<sup>17</sup>

The Prophet’s acceptance of new Muslims and leniency towards them resulted in their deep attraction to Islam. In one instance, ‘Abdullah Dhū al-Bijādīn, who had a loud voice, was standing in the mosque reciting the Qur’an loudly as others were preparing to embark on the expedition to Tabūk. Omar protested to the Prophet that this man’s loud voice was preventing others from reciting the Qur’an. The Prophet replied, “Let him be, for he has left his own lands to migrate toward God and His Messenger and assist them.”<sup>18</sup>

Representatives of the pagans of Thaḳīf approached the Prophet in the mosque to speak with him about Islam. They were spoken to and greeted in the way of pagans, with “Good day”. The others in the mosque at that time questioned the Prophet as to whether the pagans can enter the mosque. Considering this event as an opportunity of guidance to the pagans, the Prophet said, “There is no problem. Nothing can make clean earth ritually impure.”<sup>19</sup>

Some representatives from Thaḳīf came to the Prophet to learn more about Islam. He ordered his people: “Make shade for them in the mosque so they are protected from the heat of the sun.” They were also given accommodation. With this opportunity, they were able to hear the

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 414-415.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 722.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 733.

voices of the Muslims worship and recitation of the Qur'an in the night. At the times of the obligatory prayers, they would observe the straight lines of Muslims in prayer, and would listen to the Prophet's sermons.<sup>20</sup>

Whilst the Prophet was lenient and accommodating in order to pave the way for guidance, he would not allow any negotiation in discharging the mandatory laws of God, and in abandoning any unlawful practices.

The representatives of Banī Thaqīf asked the Prophet what would happen to the idol Lāt if they accepted Islam. The Prophet said, "It must be destroyed." They requested the Prophet not to destroy it for three years. He refused. They then requested two years, but he did not accept. They then asked for one year. Again, he did not accept. They asked for one month, and still the Prophet refused. Although they were frightened of the reaction of other people, they submitted and accepted Islam. The Banī Thaqīf also asked the Prophet to exempt them from praying. He said, "There is no goodness in a religion that does not have prayer." Finally, they accepted all of Islam's regulations and fasted the remaining days of the Month of Ramadan. It is interesting that the Prophet appointed Abū Sufyān to destroy the idol Lāt. This had two effects: firstly, Abū Sufyān was given the opportunity to destroy his own deep attachment to idols; secondly, because of Abū Sufyān's reputation and respect in society, the laypeople of Banī Thaqīf did not react strongly to his act of destroying Lāt.<sup>21</sup>

After the conquest of Mecca, Shaybah ibn 'Uthmān, one of the hypocrites, accompanied the Muslim army for the Battle of Ḥunayn toward the tribe of Hawāzin. He intended to kill the Prophet at a

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 734.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 736.

suitable opportunity to avenge the deaths of his uncle and father who had been killed in the Battle of Uḥud. Upon finding a suitable opportunity to attack the Prophet, the Prophet called him and said, "O! Shaybah! Come near me." He then placed his own hand on Shaybah's chest and said, "O Lord! Keep Satan away from him." Shaybah was transformed. He devoted his heart and mind towards the Prophet, who knew of his evil intention, yet still treated him with kindness. Then the Prophet told him, "O Shaybah! Fight against the disbelievers."<sup>22</sup>

In the Battle of Ghaṭfān, the Prophet kept aloof from his own companions. A man named Da'thūr intended to attack and kill the Prophet when he saw him without any of his supporters. He drew his sword over the Prophet and said, "O Muḥammad! Who will protect your life against me?" The Prophet replied, "God." By the grace of God, Da'thūr became anxious after seeing the Prophet's confidence, courage, and belief and the sword fell from his hand. The Prophet then took his sword and said, "Now who will protect you against me?" Da'thūr testified to the unity of God and the apostleship of the Prophet. The Prophet gave him back his sword. He swore to abandon any enmity with the Prophet, and went back to his tribe and invited them to Islam.<sup>23</sup>

The Prophet's patience with those who took time to accept Islam is particularly noteworthy. In the foray of Nakhlah, one of the pagans named Ḥakam ibn Kaysān, who intended to kill the Prophet, was captured by the Muslims. When he was brought to the Prophet, he invited him to Islam and had a long talk with him. Omar ibn Khaṭṭāb

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 694.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

protested to the Prophet and said, 'Do you invite him to Islam? He will not accept Islam even if you talk with him forever; let me cut his neck to send him to his place in hell!' The Prophet did not heed these comments and continued to guide him towards Islam. He became a devout Muslim and finally became a martyr in the way of God in the Battle of Bi'r-e Ma'unah. The Prophet said about him: "If I had obeyed you and killed him, he would have left this world without achieving felicity."<sup>24</sup>

The Prophet never probed into the degrees of faith of others, and indeed there is no way of discovering anyone's inner nature. Osamah has narrated: "After I killed Nahik ibn Mirdas, I became extremely upset about it, and I had no strength to do anything, not even for eating food. When I came to Medina, the Prophet embraced me and said: "O Osamah! Tell me the news of the war." Osamah described it and the killing of Nahik ibn Mirdas. The Prophet stated: "O! Osamah! Did you kill him while he had said 'There is no god except Allah'?" Osamah made excuses and replied, "He said this statement just to save himself." The Prophet then asked, "Did you split open his heart and find out whether he is a truthful person or a liar?" Osamah said, "From now on I will not kill anyone who says 'There is no god except Allah'." Osamah would also say: "I wish I had not become Muslim up to that day."<sup>25</sup>

When the Prophet and the Muslim army were returning from the battle of Tabuk, the Prophet said to his companions, "Do not speak with those who refused to participate in the holy war unless I permit you." The Muslims obeyed his command and this behaviour caused those

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 552-553.

offenders to come to the Prophet and present their excuses. But the Prophet and the believers continued to turn away from them. After some time the Prophet treated them with kindness, forgave them, and accepted their excuses whilst leaving their inner intentions to God. Three members of this group – Hilāl ibn Ummayyah, Ka'b ibn Mālik and Murāwah ibn Rabī' – refused to offer any excuses. The hypocrites were approaching these three men and encouraged them to be offensive towards the Prophet. After a while, the Prophet allowed the Muslims to associate with all the offenders except those three. After some time, they greatly regretted their actions. They sincerely repented and remorseful, and God revealed verses 117-119 of *Surah Tawbah*, which confirmed their faith and honesty. The community of Muslims congratulated them and the Prophet warmly received them. Ka'b wanted to donate all of his own property in the way of God and His Apostle in appreciation of the verse that had been revealed about him, but the Prophet said to him, "It is better for you to keep your property for yourself." He said, "I will only keep my share of the spoils and I grant the rest of my property." The Prophet refused to agree, whereupon Ka'b said, "I grant half of it." The Prophet said, "No." Ka'b responded, "I grant one-third of it." The Prophet then agreed. He did not take material advantage from that moment of spiritual excitement, and instead acted justly according to Ka'b's decision.<sup>26</sup>

This story illustrates a remarkable manner of the Prophet in educating and transforming people by the Prophet, whereby he not only taught a lesson, but also spiritually purified and promoted the wrongdoer.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 779-803.

### **Social management based on ethics**

The most important factor in the nurturing of the Islamic community was the personal conduct of the Prophet. As much as the Prophet's power increased, his mercy and forgiveness similarly increased. Through his conduct, the Prophet taught people merits such as freedom, mercy and kindness, philanthropy, forgiveness, good-naturedness, and humility.

The people felt comfortable and free in the presence of the Prophet. Once, Abī Lubābah ibn ʿAbd al-Mandhar was arguing with an orphan regarding the ownership of a date palm. When the Prophet judged that it belonged to Abī Lubābah, the orphan cried and complained. So the Prophet said to Abī Lubābah, "Grant it to me so that I give it to the orphan and God will grant you similar in paradise." Abī Lubābah refused to accept. Ibn Daḥdāhah came to the Prophet and said, 'If I buy this date palm and grant it to the orphan, will I have similar in paradise?' The Prophet said, "Yes." Ibn Daḥdāhah came to Abī Lubābah and said, "I buy this tree against my palm grove." And he accepted. Soon after, Abī Lubābah became a martyr in the Battle of Uḥud.<sup>27</sup>

The Prophet was very attached to his companions and would express his fondness to them in various ways. In the Battle of Khaybar, when Maḥmūd ibn Muslimah fought along with the Muslims, the scorching heat became so unbearable, especially with the armour he was wearing, that he sat under a fence to benefit from its shade, and imagined that it would be free from any soldiers because it was used to house horses and goods. At this moment, one of the pagans named Marḥab threw a

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 381-382.

millstone toward Maḥmūd ibn Muslimah and severely wounded his forehead and face as such the skin of his forehead was suspended on his face. The Prophet then returned the skin, cured his wound, and closed it with a cloth.<sup>28</sup>

In the Battle of Uḥud, when all were dispersed, five persons from amongst the Ansar came to assist the Prophet and drove the enemies back with determined fighting. One of them was ‘Ammārah ibn Zīyād who was injured after fighting bravely. When ‘Ammārah passed away, he did so while being embraced by the Prophet and resting on his leg.<sup>29</sup>

On his last night, Sa’d ibn Ma’adh’s wound bled without him knowing. The Prophet came to visit him along with some of his companions and saw Sa’d wrapped in a white cover. He sat beside him, embraced his head, and said, “O God! He struggled in Your way and assisted Your Apostle, receive his life in the way that You receive the life of Your best servants.” Sa’d woke up and said, “You have surely executed your divine mission.” The Prophet left and Sa’d died after some hours.<sup>30</sup>

The Muslims bathed and shrouded the corpse of Sa’d ibn Ma’adh, the loyal companion of the Prophet, and placed him into a coffin. They then witnessed the Prophet carry a corner of the coffin on his shoulders. ‘Ā’ishah said, “I saw the Prophet who was moving in front of Sa’d’s coffin.”<sup>31</sup> The Prophet buried Sa’d ibn Ma’adh himself. After the grave was dug, he placed the corpse in the grave and prayed for him. The

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 491.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 379.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 398-399.

people present were so many that the cemetery of Baqī' was full of men.<sup>32</sup>

Mazanī was a fighter who had said “yes” many times to the call of the Prophet and would fight amongst the enemy and rout them. After his martyrdom, the Prophet personally wrapped him in a shroud, placed him in the grave, and buried him, even though he himself was wounded and could hardly stand on his feet.<sup>33</sup>

The Prophet ordered the Muslims to bury the corpses in large and well-formed graves, advising them to bury first those who were familiar with the Qur'an, and then the other the dead.<sup>34</sup> He would not forget the martyrs, and once a year he would visit the grave of Ḥamzah and other Muslims who were martyred in the Battle of Uḥud.<sup>35</sup>

He also did not like extravagance in mourning. On the day after the Battle of Uḥud, a group of men and women came to the Prophet's home to continue mourning for those that fell at Uḥud, especially Ḥamzah, the Prophet's uncle. But the Prophet said, ‘This act is not correct and I do not ask for such acts.’ He strictly forbade them from excessive wailing.<sup>36</sup>

Before the Battle of Ṭā'if, when the Prophet was looking at the grave of Abī 'Uḥayḥah ibn Sa'id ibn 'Āṣ, Abū Bakr said, “May God curse this grave's occupier who had enmity toward God and His Apostle.” The two sons of Abī 'Uḥayḥah said about their own father: “May God curse him, he was neither generous towards guests, nor did he fight against

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 399-400.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 228.



injustice.” Hearing this, the Prophet said, “To abuse the dead is a source of annoyance to the living. If you want to curse the pagans, curse them in a general manner.”<sup>37</sup>

The Prophet not only despised abusiveness toward the dead but also toward his own enemy. After the Battle of Uḥud, Abū Qutādah observed the deep sadness of the Prophet at the killing and mutilation of Ḥamzah, and began to curse the Quraysh. The Prophet asked him three times to be silent. On the fourth time, he said, “I will summon you in God's presence because of your abusiveness, O Abū Qauādah! The people of Quraysh are trustworthy people. Were it not for their arrogance and hostility toward their own Prophet they would have reached a high status in the presence of God.” Abū Qutādah explained that he said what he said upon seeing the Prophet's upset and the Prophet forgave him.<sup>38</sup>

The Prophet was very humble and against arrogance. Those who met the Prophet for the first time were not able to distinguish him from his companions because his conduct and appearance did not resemble any superiority, pride, or haughtiness.<sup>39</sup> He would speak carefully,<sup>40</sup> would offer his hand to the one who was met or greeted him, and would not be the first of the two to release his hand. Whilst sitting, his knee would not stretch beyond the knee of his companion.<sup>41</sup> He would also warmly greet children.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 705.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 35-73.

<sup>40</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol.1, p. 361.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., vol.1, p. 363.

When during the middle of the Battle of Uḥud, the sword of Abū Dujājah – one of the commanders of the Muslim army – became blunt, the Prophet sharpened it and returned it to him. When he received it from the Prophet, he then walked proudly amongst the two armies. And when Prophet observed that, he said, ‘Walking in this manner is not liked by God, unless it is done in a war situation.’<sup>42</sup>

Once, when Abū ‘Abas ibn Jubar went to the Prophet and said, “I do not have enough money for my daily expenses,” the Prophet gave him a piece of clothing. Abū ‘Abbas sold it for eight dirhams, and bought some dates for himself with two dirhams, laid aside two dirhams for his family’s expenses, and bought a slave with the remaining four dirhams. One night on the way to Khaybar, the Prophet saw someone wearing striped clothing which was shining bright like the sun. He enquired, “Who is he?” He was told, “He is Abū ‘Abbas.” The Prophet ordered his companions to take hold of him. They held him, and he began to imagine he must have done something wrong and perhaps a verse of the Qur'an had been revealed about it. He said, “I have not committed any crime.” The Prophet said, “Why do you move in front of others and do not walk along with them? What did you do with the piece of clothing I gave to you?” He narrated what had happened, and the Prophet smiled and said, “O Abū ‘Abbas! If you and your poor friends remain healthy and live for a short time more, then your wealth will increase and you will leave much wealth for your family.” Abū ‘Abbas later said, “What the holy Prophet said, happened.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Maqḥāzī*, p. 187.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 483.

The Prophet was always smiling, even in difficult situations.<sup>44</sup> After the conquest of Mecca, Sa'd ibn Abī Surah would move away whenever he saw the Prophet. When the Prophet observed this, he smiled and said, "Does he not know that he can come and pay allegiance to us?" He was told, "He knows, but he fears when he remembers his own past sins." The Prophet stated, "Accepting Islam forgives the past sins." This news reached Sa'd and he along with other people came to the presence of the Prophet to pay him respects.<sup>45</sup>

Abū Dharr narrates: "We had slept in our tent after we had watered and milked the Prophet's she-camels. 'Uyyanah attacked us with forty mounted men and stood over us, shouting at us. My son resisted and they killed him. I distanced myself from them and they became unaware of me. I opened the camels' fetters and they began to ride the camels. I then went to the Prophet and told him what had happened, and he smiled."<sup>46</sup>

A woman named Salmā says: "I saw one of the milk-giving she-camels of the Prophet at the door of his home and went and told him: 'This is your she-camel.' He happily came out and I saw that the she-camel's head was in the hand of Ibn Akhī 'Uyyanah. The Prophet asked him: 'What do you say about this?' He replied, 'I have brought this she-camel as a present for you.' The Prophet smiled and took it from 'Uyyanah. After two or three days, the Prophet ordered that some silver should be given to him, but he was not pleased. Salmā says, 'I told the Prophet:

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol.1, p. 353.

<sup>45</sup> Wāqidi, *Maqḥāzī*, vol.2, p. 655.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 408.

'Do you give him money in return for your own she-camel?' He replied, 'Yes, but he is still dissatisfied with me.'"<sup>47</sup>

One of the other features of the Prophet was his forgiveness and mercy even towards the worst of his enemies. Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥārith says about the manner of the Prophet's forgiveness: "When I reached Abwā', I covered and hid myself, because Muḥammad had announced that I deserved death and I was fearful of being killed. When his horse appeared I placed myself in front of the Prophet, but when he saw me he turned his face to the other side. I went to the other side but he turned his face again. This act was repeated several times. I said, "I will be killed before he casts a look at me." When the Muslims saw the Prophet had turned his face from me, they did the same."<sup>48</sup>

Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥārith narrates: "When the Prophet descended at Adhākhir, he had reached the valley of Mecca. At that time, I went to the Prophet's tent. He suddenly looked at me gently, which was gentler than his first look. The women of the family of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib including my wife went to the Prophet and managed to make the Prophet to some extent kinder with me. The Prophet then left to go toward the Holy Mosque and I was with him, and I did not become separate from him."<sup>49</sup>

Regarding Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥārith, Umm Salamah said to the Prophet: "O Apostle of Allah! He is one of your relatives and if he has said anything then all of Quraysh have done so as well. Of course, the Qur'an has mentioned him, but you have forgiven those who had

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 415.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 617.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 618.

committed crimes more severe than Abū Sufyān and you are more worthy to forgive him than anyone else.” The Prophet responded, “I do not need any of those two people.” When Abū Sufyān heard this, he said, “I swear by God! If Muḥammad does not forgive me, I will grab my son's hand and go to the desert until I die of thirst and hunger. Whereas O Apostle of Allāh! You are more patient and generous than others.” When his statement was narrated to the Prophet, he forgave him.<sup>50</sup>

Before the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet's uncle, ‘Abbās, entered his tent. He had brought Abū Sufyān, Ḥakīm ibn Ḥizām, and Badīl ibn Wirqā' along with himself, and said to the Prophet, “I have given shelter to them and they want to meet you.” The Prophet agreed to meet them and they spent the night in the tent of the Prophet. He asked them for some news, and called them to Islam, stating, “Say: ‘There is no god except Allah’ and testify that I am Apostle of Allah.” Two of them testified, but Abū Sufyān said, ‘There is no god except Allah,’ and after that he said, “O Muḥammad! There is an upset in my heart about this subject, let it be for later.” The Prophet said to ‘Abbās, “I give them protection. Take them to your tent.”<sup>51</sup>

After some time, Abū Sufyān testified to the prophetic mission of the Prophet; he narrates: “The Prophet went to the Battle of Ḥunayn and I was with him. I wished to be killed defending the Prophet and he was looking at me. ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib had held the reins of the Prophet's horse and I was protecting him from the other side. The Prophet asked, “Who is he?” ‘Abbās replied: “He is your brother and

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 620.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 623.

cousin, Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥārith. Please be satisfied with him.” He said: “I forgive him, may God forgive him for all his enmity towards me.” I kissed the Prophet's foot on the horse and he said: “O my brother! For my sake, do not do such a thing.”<sup>52</sup> The Prophet did not like to despise people, even though they may have been his enemies in the past.

On the day of the conquest of Mecca, a thousand armed fighters along with the Prophet entered Mecca. When Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah passed in front of Abū Sufyān with the Prophet's flag, he shouted, “O Abū Sufyān! Today is the day of spilling blood, and God will dishonour and degrade the Quraysh.” When the Prophet reached Abū Sufyān, Abū Sufyān said to him, “Have you ordered your relatives to be killed? I implore you by God in the matter of your family members, and surely you are the most trustworthy and righteous.” The Prophet said, “Today is the day of mercy and kindness. Today is the day in which God will honour the Quraysh with faith.”<sup>53</sup>

After the conquest of Mecca, when the Prophet came out from the Ka'bah, and said, “Thanks be to God, Who has fulfilled His promise and assisted His servant.” He asked the people who were around the Ka'bah: “What do you say?” They replied, “We have no thought except goodness. You are an honourable brother and nephew, and now you have attained power.” The Prophet said, “There is no reproach on you today; may God bless you and He is the Most-merciful.”<sup>54</sup>

On the day of the conquest of Mecca, Hind, the daughter of 'Utbah and the wife of Abū Sufyān, Omm Ḥakīm, the wife of 'Ikrimah ibn abī Jahl,

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 618-619.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 628.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 639.

Bighūm, the wife of Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah and the daughter of Walīd ibn Muqayrah, Hind, the wife of ‘Amro ‘Āṣ along with ten women of Quraysh came to the Prophet to convert to Islam. Others were also present there such as Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter, his wife, and also some women of the family of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. Hind, who had a veil on her face, began to speak and after thanking God and asking His forgiveness, took off her face veil and introduced herself. The Prophet welcomed her. Then Hind said, “To make your family abject was my only wish, but now my only wish is to honour them.” The Prophet recited the Qur'an for them and accepted their oaths of allegiance. Hind requested to pay allegiance by shaking the Prophet's hand, who replied, “I do not shake hands with women.”<sup>55</sup>

Following the conquest of Mecca, ‘Akramah ibn Abī Jahl ran away, fearful that he would be killed for his crimes. He was second to Abū Sufyān as the most important and stubborn enemy of the Muslims. After the conquest of Mecca, he went to the Tahāmah coast to escape by ship. His wife asked the Prophet to ensure his safety. She reached her husband and asked him to become a Muslim, and returned to Mecca with him. The Prophet said to his own companions, “Now ‘Akramah comes to us to become Muslim. Never abuse him or his father who had passed away. To abuse the dead is the cause of annoyance to the living, and abuses do not reach the dead.”<sup>56</sup> He came to the Prophet who offered Islam to him and he accepted, saying, “You, even before inviting to Islam, were more truthful and generous than others.” After ‘Ikrimah accepted Islam, the Prophet told him, “I grant you what you wish, as I

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 650.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 651.

have granted others.” ‘Ikrimah said, “I want you to forgive me any enmity that I have done to you.” The Prophet declared, “O God! Forgive him any enmity he has displayed toward me and any act he has done to try and diminish Your light, and bless him.”<sup>57</sup>

After the conquest of Mecca, Ibn az-Ziba'ray had fled to Najrān. When he heard the news of the complete conquest of Mecca, he predicted that the Prophet may then attack Najrān. He therefore went to the Prophet in order to accept Islam. The Prophet was sitting among a group of his companions. When he saw Ibn az-Ziba'ray, he said, “The light of faith is clear on his face.” He came forward and greeted and testified to the unity of God, and the servitude and prophetic mission of the Apostle of Allah. He said, “I was your enemy and provided armies to fight against you. I attempted to fight with you on foot, horse, and camel. I fled and did not take a decision to become Muslim. God inspired in me love for Islam and I realised my depravity and knew that the worship of stones which do not understand anything and to make sacrifices for them is not a wise act.” Ibn az-Ziba'ray wanted to know if God had forgiven him or not. The Prophet said, “Islam effaces everyone’s past.”<sup>58</sup>

After the conquest of Mecca, Waḥshī, the killer of Ḥamzah [leader of the martyrs], escaped to Ṭā'if. The Prophet issued that he should be killed. The Muslims were seeking to kill him. Waḥshī, who had heard about the Prophet's mercy, came to the Prophet along with representatives of Ṭā'if. When the Prophet saw him, he asked, “Are you Waḥshī?” He replied, “Yes, and I have come to become Muslim.” The

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., vol.2, p. 652.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 628.



Prophet accepted his allegiance and forgave him, but said to him, “Keep yourself away from my eyes.”<sup>59</sup>

Hibār ibn Asrad was one of the obstinate enemies of Islam and Muslims. He hit the back of the Prophet's daughter Zaynab with a spear, causing her to have a miscarriage. The Prophet had issued an order that he should be killed, but forbade that he should be burned, because only God can punish anyone with fire. For a long time the Muslims were not able to arrest him even in the conquest of Mecca. One day, he appeared whilst the Prophet was sitting with his companions in Medina. He was an eloquent man and accepted Islam among his other statements and the Prophet accepted his excuses and prohibited any abuse or aggression against him and forgave him.<sup>60</sup>

The Prophet's behaviour would change his enemies. Abū Bakr narrates, “Suhayl ibn ‘Amr had joined the journey of Hajj. I saw him while he had stood near the slaughterhouse, and he brought his camel to the Prophet who sacrificed it with his own hand. When the Prophet asked someone to shave his own head, I saw Suhayl pick up the Prophet's hairs and put them on his eye. I recalled how he could not bear to accept the writing of “In the Name of Allah” and the title of “Apostle of Allah” in the peace treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah.”<sup>61</sup>

The Prophet would praise the women of Quraysh because of their kind manners. After the conquest of Mecca, some of the Helpers and Emigrants disputed with one another about the excellences and beauty of the women of the Quraysh. The Prophet spoke in favour of the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., vol.2, p. 660.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., vol.2, pp. 655-657.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 464.

women of the Quraysh, saying, "You are seeing these women while they are afflicted with the death of their own fathers, brothers, and husbands. The women of Quraysh are the best women because they are more merciful and generous toward their own children and husbands."<sup>62</sup>

The Prophet did not like the natural feelings of any person to extinguish through involvement in violent situations. In the Battle of Uḥud, when the Prophet was wounded by the pagans, Sa'd ibn abī Waqqāṣ was angered with his own brother who was among the pagan army, and wanted to kill him. When the Prophet was aware of Sa'd's intention, he deemed it better that Sa'd's brother was not to be killed. The Prophet dissuaded Sa'd by saying to him, "Do you wish to kill yourself?"<sup>63</sup>

The Prophet devoted special attention to the vulnerable strata of society and liked to compensate – through his own behaviour and by changing the culture – the historical oppression which had been imposed on them. Once, a slave from Banī Khuzā'ah who was dressed in old clothing had brought presents. The Prophet seated him in front of himself, and asked, "Where have you left your family?" He replied, "In Ḍajnān and lands around it." The Prophet asked, "What is the situation of those lands?" The slave replied, "The trees have given forth leaves, fragrant grasses have grown, and the land is full of water and grass." The Prophet was surprised by the eloquence of his speech and ordered that he be given clothes. He said to the Prophet, "I would like to take your hand in mine so that blessing and good are allotted for me." He took and kissed the Prophet's hand and the Prophet put his own hand on the slave's head and prayed for him. The slave lived many years and

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., vol.2, p. 663.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

possessed magnitude and merit among his own tribe. He died during the time of Walīd ibn ‘Abd al-Malik.<sup>64</sup>

In a sermon which the Prophet delivered at the end of his life in ‘Arafāt, he put forward his worry about slaves and the rights of women: “About women, fear God because they are His trusts to you. It is obligatory for you to provide their food and clothing properly.”<sup>65</sup>

Before the advent of Islam, when a man was dying and if he did not have a son, his brother would inherit his wealth, while his daughters would not inherit anything. When Maḥmūd ibn Muslimah was wounded in the battle and was passing the last days of his life, he said to his brother, “Do not let my daughters ever go to beg among the tribes.” Very soon after, the Prophet said, “Who wants to give good news to Maḥmūd that God has sent down the rulings of inheritance of daughters?” Jī‘āl ibn Surāqah went to Maḥmūd ibn Muslimah and gave the news him. After hearing the news, Maḥmūd attained martyrdom.<sup>66</sup>

Ṣafiyah, who was previously the wife of Kunānah ibn Abī al-Ḥaḳīq, was captured and the Prophet sent her along with Bilāl to a certain place. Bilāl led her and her cousin through the dead bodies of one of the battles. Ṣafiyah's cousin bitterly cried and the Prophet became upset at the act of Balāl and stated, “Do you have not any mercy that you pass an underage girl through the dead?” Balāl said, “I did not know this act disturbs you, and I wanted them to see the deceased of their own relatives.”<sup>67</sup> Later, Ṣafiyah became one of the wives of the Prophet. She

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 449

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 824.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 502.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 514.

narrates, "Some of the Prophet's wives were proud and sarcastically called me "Jewish woman". But the Prophet treated me with great mercy and kindness. One day, while I was crying, the Prophet came to me and said, "What has happened?" I told him about the teasing. He became upset and said: "From now, if they pride themselves or repeat this then say to them, 'My father is Aaron and my uncle is Moses.'"<sup>68</sup>

The Prophet did not like anyone to disturb or annoy anyone else, even in devotions. In the last Hajj and at the time of performing the rites of Hajj, the Prophet advised 'Umar, 'You are a strong man; if you see the area around the Black Stone is empty then touch it, and if not, then do not cause inconvenience to people and yourself.'<sup>69</sup> The Prophet appointed 'Uthmān ibn Abī Waqqāṣ as the prayer leader among the Banī Thaqīf and advised him, "If you pray alone then pray in any manner you wish, but when you pray in congregation then be attentive to the weakest of them."<sup>70</sup>

Overall, Prophet Muhammad took into consideration the duties of each citizen, eradicated idol worship, encouraged public participation, used wise management of war and peace-making strategies, and carefully dealt with opposition forces while bearing in mind the use of consultation and leniency and compassion with war captives. He also sought to eradicate differences based on social class, race, tribal differences, and gender for all people to have equal rights. The Prophet truly succeeded in his mission to establish a community based on moral principles in which he was the perfect exemplar for all people to follow.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 515.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 840.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 737.

## ALLAMAH AL-HILLI ON IMAMATE IN HIS *KASHF AL-MURAD*

TRANSLATED BY KARIM AGHILI

**ABSTRACT:** It is necessary for all people to have a leader, or *Imam*, who guides them towards morality and abandoning corruption. This type of leader is a blessing and grace of God. In Shi'i Islam, the concept of Imamate refers to the necessity of having a divinely-appointed leader who will lead the Islamic nation after the Prophet's death. This Imam surpasses all people in every venerable quality such as piety, knowledge, courage, and wisdom. The infallible Imam carries the role of both continuing the task of the Prophet in presenting true Islam as well as being a political leader. This is a chapter on the responses to objections raised against Imamate from prominent scholar Allamah Hilli's *Kashf ul-Murād*, expanded on from Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's *Tajrid al-I'tiqād* – the first treatise on Shi'i theology. *Kashf al-Murad* is one of the most widely read of Allamah al-Hilli's publications as it is the first commentary written on Allamah al-Tusi's work.

### Translator's Introduction

Jamal al-Din Abu Mansur Hasan ibn Yusuf ibn al-Mutahhar, called al-'Allamah (The Learned One) al-Hilli, was born in al-Hilla on 29<sup>th</sup> Ramadan in 648/1250. He was a nephew of Muhaqqiq al-Hilli who studied under Khwajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi<sup>1</sup>, Muhaqqiq al-Hilli, Ibn

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<sup>1</sup> b. 11 Jamadi I597/1201

Tawus, Ibn Nima (Shaykh Ja'far) and Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani, as well as a number of Sunni ulama. He was a resident of al-Hilli and responsible for the conversion of Uljaytu (Sultan Khudabandah) to Shi'ism after debating with Qadi Nizam al-Din al-Shafi'i in 709/1309. He was the author of numerous books particularly on *usul al-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence) and is specifically noted for his development of the role of the mujtahid. Among many of his students included his son Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqin (Pride of the Investigators) and Taj al-Din ibn al-Mu'ayyah. Al-Hilli died in Hilla on 21th Muharram in 726/1325 and was buried in Najaf.

Al-Hilli started to write his famous commentary on Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's *Tajrid al-i'tiqad*, called *Kashf al-Murad fi Sharh Tajrid al-I'tiqad* probably after he had already written at least some of his works. As he states in the introduction, he began composing this commentary after he had already written an array of theological works.<sup>2</sup> However, because of not mentioning there his latest work, *Niyat al-Maram fi 'Ilm al-Kalam*, it seems most likely that he started to write the *Kashf al-Murad* before beginning the latter work, given that he refers to the *Nihaya* throughout the first half of the *Kashf al-Murad* but only to the *Manahij* and the *Asrar*. However, because of referring to it in the second half of the *Kashf al-Murad*, he appears to have started to work on the *Nihaya* before having finished with the *Kashf al-Murad*. He completed the *Kashf* on either 15 or 16 Rabi' i 696/11 or 12 January 1297.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Kashf al-Murad fi Sharh Tajrid al-I'tiqad*, edited and annotated by Hasan Hasan-Zadah al-Amuli, Mu'assisah al-Nashr al-Islami, Qum, 1472 A.H., p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> According to Agha Buzurg al-Tehrani, (*al-Dhari'ah ila tasanif al-Shi'ah*, Tehran 1355-1405H., 18:60) it was completed on 15 or 16 Rabi' i 696/11 /12 January 1297.

The treatise is one of the most widely read of al-Hilli's works, since it was the first commentary written on Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's *Tajrid al-I'tiqad*<sup>4</sup> which served as a basis for understanding that work for future commentators. It was only in the seventh/thirteenth century that the first systematic treatise on Twelve-Imam Shi'i *kalam* (theology) was written by the celebrated mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, also known as Muhaqqiq Tusi.<sup>5</sup> This is perhaps the only instance in history in which the major theological text of a religious community was composed by a scientist like Nasir al-Din. The work of al-Tusi entitled *Tajrid al-i'tiqad* (*Abstract of the Doctrines*) quickly became the standard theological text, and more than a hundred commentaries written on it before this century. Perhaps the most notable commentary is *Kashf al-Murad* (*Disclosing the Intention*) by Jamal al-Din 'Allamah al-Hilli (d. 762/1326), the most celebrated Shi'i mutakallim after Tusi.

In this magnum opus, one will come to know that Twelve-Imam Shi'i *kalam* differs in various respects from Ash'arite *kalam*. The work is divided into seven sections, each section is subdivided into several chapters (*fasl*), and each chapter is again subdivided into several issues (*mas'alah*).

The first section is under the heading of general metaphysical concepts (*al-umur al-'ammah*), which are the essential properties of "being *qua* being" or being understood as being. The section is about existence and non-existence, the modes and grades of existence, and develops an elaborate ontology reminiscent of Avicenean (Ibn Sinan) ontology

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<sup>4</sup> Agha Buzurg, *Dhari'ah*, 18:60

<sup>5</sup> 597/1201-672/1274

rather than Asha'rite atomism. The work then turns to a discussion of quiddity, which complements that of existence, and proceeds to the relation between cause and effect and the discussion of causality in general where the reality of horizontal causality in direct opposition to the Ash'arite view is confirmed and thus Ash'arite occasionalism (i.e., the doctrine that God is the sole causal actor and that all events are merely occasions on which God brings about what are normally thought of as their effects) is rejected.

The second section is on substance and accidents, and in contrast to Ash'arism, all forms of atomism are rejected. The view of Ibn Sina holds that a body can be divided *ad infinitum* potentially, not actually. Tusi also confirms the reality of non-material substances which include both the intellect (*al-'aql*) and the human soul (*al-nafs*), which from the perspective of Shi'i kalam, are immortal substances. However, according to Ash'arism, the soul is not independent of the body; rather, the soul is recreated by God on the Day of Judgment along with the resurrection of the body.

In the third *maqсад*, Tusi turns to theology in its proper sense in contrast to metaphysics in its general sense with which he is occupied in the first two sections of the book. In the third, fourth, and fifth sections he turns to God and His existence, attributes and acts, prophecy (*al-nubuwwah*), and imamology (*al-imamah*) respectively where he deals with general Islamic doctrines.

In the fifth section, he turns to Shi'i beliefs concerning the Imam. And in the sixth and last section, he deals with the questions of eschatology (*al-ma'ād*), such as passing away and restoration, promise and threat, reward and punishment, the question of the Muslim grave sinner,



Divine Forgiveness, intercession and repentance, *al-iḥbat* (to have one's good deeds annulled due to one's sins) and *al-takfir* (to have one's sins forgiven and covered due to one's good deeds), punishment and reward, the bridge (*sirat*), and the scale (*mizan*).

The method used in dealing with theological subjects served as a model for many treatises as written subsequently, and many theologians and philosophers began to make a distinction between metaphysics in its general sense (*al-ilahiyyat bi'l- ma'na'l-a'amm*), corresponding to the first two sections of Tusi's work, and theology dealing with God and His Attributes and Acts, prophecy, and other specifically religious issues (*al-ilahiyyat bi'l- ma 'n'l-akhass*).

What follows is the translation of Section Five on the Imamate (*al-imamah*) of *Kashf al-Murad* (*Disclosing the Intention*) by 'Allamah al-Hilli, the most notable commentary upon *Tajrid al-i'tiqad* (*Abstract of the Doctrines*) by Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (d. 672/1273). It should be noted that the volume and page numbers as given in the endnotes are the same as those given in *Kashf al-murad fi sharh tajrid al-i'tiqad* (*Qism al-ilahiyyat*) (Part II: Theology] introduced and annotated by Ayatullah Ja'far al-Subhan.<sup>1</sup>

### **Imamate: Divinely-appointed leadership**

The existence of an Imam, or a divinely-appointed spiritual and temporal guide and leader, is a favour (*lutf*) of God. Therefore it is necessary for God to appoint him for the attainment of the main purpose,<sup>6</sup> which is to guide people in the direction of utmost dignity

<sup>6</sup> *Talkhis al-Muhassal*, p. 407; *Anwar al-malakut*, p. 202, *al-Lawami' al-ilahiyyah*, p. 262; *al-Shafi fi'l-Imamah*, vol. 1, pp. 36-39, 47-54, 144-154, 164-167; *al-Dhakhirah*, p. 190, *al-Iqtisad*, p. 183; *Risalah fi'l-imamah* of al-Muhaqqiq al-Tusi, p. 426.

and nobility and to the superabundant source of unity, justice, and purity.

**The First Issue: The appointment of the Imam is necessary for God.**

**Allamah al-Hilli:** People held different views as to whether imamate is necessary or not.

Those who hold that the appointment of an Imam is not necessary: Abu Bakr ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Kaysan al-Asamm,<sup>7</sup> the Mu‘tazilites, and a group of the Kharijites.

Those who believe Imamate to be necessary according to tradition (*sam‘an*) although not according to reason (*‘aqlan*): The Jubba’iyan,<sup>8</sup> the traditionists, and the Ash’arites.

Abu’l-Husain al-Basri, the Baghdadis<sup>9</sup> and the Imamites hold that it is necessary according to reason. However, then they disagreed on who should appoint the Imam. The Imamites held that the appointment of the Imam is incumbent upon God. However, Abu’l-Husayn and the Baghdadis hold that it is obligatory on rational people to choose a leader.

Al-Tusi argued that the appointment of the Imam is a divine favour, and this favour is incumbent upon God. And the reliability of this minor premise is known through reason because it is necessarily known that when people have a leader who prevents them from conflict, domination, and immorality, guides people towards the truth, and promotes justice and equity, they would move towards righteousness

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<sup>7</sup> d. 816/18

<sup>8</sup> Abu ‘Ali al-Jubba’i and Abu Hashim ibn al-Jubba’i

<sup>9</sup> The Baghdadi Mu‘tazilites

and away from corruption. As for the major premise, it has already been explained.

**Al-Tusi:** Imamate is free from all evils (harms; *mafsadah*), and that divine favour is exclusive to the existence of the Imam is known to rational people. His existence is a favour of God, his exercise of authority (*tasarruf*) is an additional favour, and his absence is because of us.

**Allamah al-Hilli:** The following are the objections raised against the doctrine of Imamate along with responses for each:

*First objection:* Imamate being a favour (*lutf*) of God is not a sufficient reason for its being compulsory upon God to appoint the Imam (unlike the necessity of knowing God for us which involves a sufficient reason that necessitates knowing God, because there is no evil that can be assumed by us to result from knowing God). However, it is not a sufficient reason that the existence of the Imam is a favour of God; therefore, it is incumbent upon God to appoint him as long as it is not known to us if imamate is free from all evils that can be assumed, and it is not sufficient just to assume its being free from evils. Since it is possible that the Imamate may involve an evil which is known to God and not known to us, it is not incumbent upon God to appoint the Imam.

*Counter-argument:*

- a) Imamate is evidently free from all evils. The reason is that all different types of the evils are specified and known, and this is why we are expected to avoid them completely. It is certainly incumbent upon us to avoid them when we come to know about them because being religiously responsible for that of which we have no

knowledge is absurd, and Imamate is free from all those evils known to us. Therefore, the Imamate as a favour remains free from evil, and for this reason it is incumbent upon God to appoint an Imam.

- b) If evil were an inseparable part of Imamate, it would not be separable from Imamate. The consequent is definitely false, because God says, “*I am making you the Imam of mankind*” (II, 124).<sup>10</sup> If evil were considered to be separable from Imamate, its being separable from it could be possible; therefore, the appointment of the Imam will be necessary assuming that evil can be separable from it.

*Second objection:* Imamate would be necessary if divine favour were specific to it. The question is why it is not possible that there can be another divine favour in place of Imamate as a result of which the Imamate cannot be specified as being a favour, and the designation of the Imam will not be incumbent upon God? In others words, there can be other ways in which God can protect mankind from committing sins, and the appointment of the Imam can be one of those divine favours.

*Response:* Divine favour (*lutf*) being exclusive to Imamate is known to reasonable people because there exist within man unbridled desires and destructive inner forces that are hostile to his struggle to develop and advance towards perfection. Therefore, Imamate as a rational necessity cannot be denied. For this reason, reasonable people, at all times and in all places, resort and hold fast to a leader to establish social order and avert harms resulting from the absence of one.

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<sup>10</sup> The Qur'an, 2:124

*Third objection:* The Imam is a favour of God if he exercises authority by commanding good and prohibiting evil, while Imamites do not say this. In other words, what you do believe to be a favour, you do not deem it to be necessary, and what you deem to be necessary, it is not a favour.

*Response:*

- a) The existence of the Imam as such is a divine favour for certain reasons, one of which is that he preserves the divine laws and protects them from undergoing additions, deletions, and alterations.
- b) The Imam's existence on the part of those who are religiously responsible (*mukallaf*) for obeying him and who deem his authority permissible at all times is conducive to preventing them from engaging in immoral practices. Moreover, it will be a means of bringing them near to righteousness, and this point is necessarily and evidently known.
- c) His exercise of authority is undoubtedly a favour, and it is not accomplished save through him himself; therefore, his own existence is one favour and his exercise of authority (*tasarruf*) is another.

Imamate as a divine favour that is accomplished by certain things: What is compulsory on God is to create the Imam and enable him to perform his functions by providing him with ability and knowledge, and to designate him by name and lineage. This is what has been done by God.

The duty of the Imam is to take over and accept the position of the imamate, and this is what the Imam has done.

The duty of people (*al-ra'yyah*) is to support and help the Imam, and accept and act upon his guidelines. Not doing so will deprive themselves of enjoying divine favour in its fullness.

**The Second Issue: It is necessary for the Imam to be infallible<sup>11</sup>**

**Al-Tusi:** One of the reasons for the infallibility<sup>12</sup> of the Imam is the impossibility of an infinite regress (*al-tasalsul*) which necessitates his infallibility.<sup>13</sup>

Another reason is because he is the protector of the Divine Law, and if he commits a sin, it will be necessary to disapprove of his action. Thus, his violation will be contradictory to the Divine command that he should be obeyed; thereby the goal of his appointment will not be achieved, and his degree and rank will be lower than that of the lowest of the laypeople.

**Al-Hilli:** The Imamites<sup>14</sup> and the Islama'lis<sup>15</sup> hold that it is necessary that the Imam be infallible; all the other sects disagree. The reasons for the infallibility of the Imam are as follows:

- 1) If the Imam were not infallible, it would necessitate an infinite regress. The consequent is false, therefore the antecedent will be also false. In other words, the prerequisite for the necessity of the

<sup>11</sup> *al-Iqtisad fi'l-i'tiqad* of al-Ghazali, p. 189; *Anwar al-Malaktut*, p. 204; *al-Shafi*, vol. 1, p. 300; *al-Dhakhirah*, p. 429; *al-Lawami` al-ilahiyyah*, p. 268; *Risalah fi'l-imamah* by al-Muahaqqiq al-Tusi printed at the end of *Talkhis al-Muhassal*, p. 430.

<sup>12</sup> Immunity from sin and error

<sup>13</sup> Translator's note: Because if an imam (a leader) commits a sin or an error, he will necessarily need another guide, and if the second one be like the first one, he will also need a guide, therefore, the non-infallibility of an imam will entail an infinite regress, which implies the necessity of the infallibility of the Imam. Therefore, the non-infallibility of the Imam would be void and invalid.

<sup>14</sup> i.e., the Twelvers

<sup>15</sup> i.e., the Seveners

appointment of the Imam is to deem it possible that an error may be committed by his subjects (*ra'iyah*). If the prerequisite holds true of the Imam, it will necessitate that he should be guided by another imam and an infinite regress would arise unless the end result ends in an Imam who is free from error; therefore, he will be the true Imam.

- 2) The Imam is the protector of the Divine Law; it is necessary that he be infallible. As for the first premise, the Imam is the guardian of the Divine Law on the grounds that the following are not by themselves guardians of the Divine Law:
  - a. The Qur'an and the Sunnah, because they do not contain all the detailed rulings.
  - b. The consensus of the Muslim community because each member, supposing there is no infallible Imam among them, is liable to error, as is the case with all the members, as their consensus is not based on a reliable proof, otherwise that proof would have become well-known and widely transmitted. Their consensus cannot be based on conjectural evidence (*amarah*),<sup>16</sup> because it is impossible for the Muslims living in various places to agree on a single conjectural evidence (*amarah*) as we know that people do not agree on having a specific type of food at the same time; and if there be no consensus based on reliable proof or a conjectural evidence, their consensus of opinion will be invalid.
  - c. The preservation of the Divine Law cannot be based on analogy (*al-qiyas*) either because of the invalidity of its authority as an

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<sup>16</sup> Translator's note: *Amarah* literally means sign or allusion.

acceptable proof based on what has been proven in the principles of jurisprudence, and even if its validity be accepted, it is unanimously agreed that it cannot be the preserver of the Divine Law.

d. It cannot be based on original freedom from liability (*al-bara'ah al-asliyyah*),<sup>17</sup> because had it been correct to apply it as a reliable proof, the prophetic mission of the prophets would not have been necessary, and it is unanimously agreed that it is not the preserver of the Divine Law.

Therefore, nothing will remain for the preservation of the religion except the existence of the Imam, and if he is liable to error, there would be no trust in the ritual practices as received from the Imam through which we serve and devote ourselves to God and that for which we are religiously responsible. This contradicts the purpose of religious duties (*taklif*) that display submission to the Will of God.

- 3) Should the Imam commit an error, it will be necessary to disapprove of his wrong action, and this is diametrically opposed to the Divine Command which requires obeying him as God says: "*Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you*" (4:59).<sup>18</sup>
- 4) Should he commit a sin, the purpose of the appointment of the Imam will be necessarily nullified. The consequent is invalid, and therefore, the antecedent will also be false.

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<sup>17</sup> Translator's note: Presumption of original freedom from liability (*al-bara't al-asliyyah*) means freedom from obligations until the contrary is proved.

<sup>18</sup> the Qur'an, 4: 59



To explain the conditional mentioned above, the purpose of his appointment is that the Muslim community should follow him and obey his instructions. Should he commit a sin, obedience to him would not be mandatory, and this is incompatible with the purpose of his appointment.

- 5) Should he commit a sin, he will be of the lowest rank among the laypeople, whilst as an Imam, his intellect should be fully mature and his knowledge of God and of His reward and punishment should be more than his subjects. Should he commit a sin, he will be in a lower state than that of his subjects. However, as described in the abovementioned responses, these assumptions are false.

**Al-Tusi: Infallibility is not incompatible with the power to commit a sin.**

**Al-Hilli:** Those who believe in infallibility (*'ismah*) disagree as to whether the infallible person is capable of committing a sin. Some hold that the body or soul of the infallible possesses a faculty (*malakah*) that prevents him from sinning, while others believe that the infallible is capable of committing a sin.<sup>19</sup>

As for the others who do not deny them [the Infallibles] the power [to obey or disobey], some of them interpret it [i.e., *'ismah*] as one of the favours which God, the Exalted, bestows upon His servant, as a result of which he is given an incentive to obey, and because of [the bestowal of that favour], He [i.e., God] knows that He does not commit a sin on condition that it is not done out of compulsion. Some others interpret it as being a spiritual faculty through which its possessor does not commit a sin.

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<sup>19</sup> As held by Abu'l-Hasan al-Basri

Some others say: 'Infallibility is a favour which God, the Exalted, bestows upon its possessor through which he has no motive for abandoning obedience and committing a sin. The causes for this favour are four in number:

1. One is that his soul or body possesses a characteristic which necessitates a faculty that prevents [its possessor] from committing a sin. Therefore, possessing this faculty is incompatible with committing a sin; in other words, possessing this faculty requires avoiding committing a sin.
2. He is divinely inspired and given knowledge of the harms of sins and the benefits of obedience.
3. The knowledge of the harms of sins and the benefits of obedience is reinforced through successive divine revelation or inspiration emanating from God.
4. He will be punished for neglecting the preferred course of action for refraining from doing what is best (*tark al-awla*) so that he may know that he is not left neglected. He also emphasizes on performing non-obligatory good acts.

Therefore, the Imam is infallible. Al-Tusi adopts the second belief, that infallibility is not incompatible with possessing the power to commit a sin; rather, the infallible Imam is capable of committing a sin, otherwise he does not deserve praise or reward for avoiding sins, and reward and punishment and being held accountable for religious obligations would be meaningless with respect to the Imam. However, to hold that the Infallibles have no obligation is invalid and rejected both by consensus of the Muslim community and by tradition as God says, "*Say, I am*

*only a human being like you. It has been revealed to me that your God is the One God.” (18:110).*<sup>20</sup>

**The Third Issue: It is necessary that the Imam should be superior to all people.**<sup>21</sup>

**Al-Tusi:** The ugliness of preferring an inferior to a superior is known and there is no preference for an equal [when an imam (leader) is of equal merit his subjects].

**Allamah Hilli:** It is necessary that the Imam be better than his subjects (*ra'yyah*), because he is either equal to them or inferior or superior to them, and the third [assumption] is what we are seeking (*al-matlub*). If the leader and his subjects are equally qualified, it will be impossible to prefer him over others for Imamate. Moreover, it is illogical to prefer an inferior to a superior.

Another argument can be found in the Qur'an confirms this: “...Say, ‘*Is there anyone among your partners who may guide to the truth?*’ Say, ‘*Allah guides to the truth. Is He who guides to the truth worthier to be followed, or he who is not guided unless he is shown the way? What is the matter with you? How do you judge?*’” (10: 35).<sup>22</sup>

The idea of superiority of Imam implies that the Imam must be the most qualified in every aspect of a person's physical appearance, knowledge, character, and spirituality.

<sup>20</sup> The Qur'an, 18:110

<sup>21</sup> *al-Shafi fi'l-imamah*, vol. 1, p. 326; *al-Dhakhirah*: 429; *al-Iqtisad*: 190, *Risalah fi'l-imamah*, p. 431, *Anwar al-malakut*, p. 206; *al-Lawami' al-ilahiyyah*, p. 261

<sup>22</sup> The Qur'an, 10: 110

**The Fourth Issue: On the Necessity of the Designation of the Imam<sup>23</sup>**

**Al-Tusi:** Infallibility and conduct (*al-sirah*) [of the Prophet] requires the Imam's specification (*al-nass*).

**Al-Hilli:** From among the Muslim sects, it is the Imamites who maintain that the only way to appoint Imam is explicit specification.

The Abbasids believe that the way to appoint the Imam is through either specification or inheritance, while the Zaydis hold that the Imam must be appointed by specification or by inviting people to himself. Others believe that the way to appoint an Imam is through specification or the decision of *ahl al-hall wa'l-'aqd* (lit. those who loosen and bind; technically, those qualified to elect or depose a caliph on behalf of the Muslim community.).

There are two proofs in support of what we believe.

- 1) It is necessary that the Imam be infallible. Infallibility is an inner faculty of self-restraint of whose true essence only God has foreknowledge; therefore, it is necessary that he be appointed by God because no one but He knows who is qualified for becoming Imam.
- 2) The Prophet is more compassionate towards people than a father towards his child to such an extent that he advises them on those things which are not comparable with the succession of the successor after him as, for example, he advised them on many recommended things with regard to relieving oneself. When the Prophet travelled out of Medina for a short time, he appointed

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<sup>23</sup> *al-Shafi fi'l-imamah*, vol. 2, p. 5; *I-Dhakhirah*, p. 429, *al-Iqtisad*, p. 194, *Anwar al-Malakut*, p. 07; *Risalah fi'l-imamah*, p. 430, *al-Lawami' al-ilahiyyah*, p. 272.

someone who dealt with the affairs of the Muslims. Therefore, how is it possible that he might neglect one of the most important, brilliant, valuable, and beneficial aspect, which is the function of being in charge of Muslim affairs after him without advising his people (the *Ummah*) in this regard. Thus, the nature of his conduct (*sirah*) necessitated that he appoints the Imam after him and designate and introduce him. This is a causal proof (*burhan limmi*); an inference made from the prophetic practice (the cause), and the specification of the Imam (the effect).

**The Fifth Issue: The Imam or successor after the Prophet is Ali.**

**Al-Tusi:** The immunity from sin and error (*al-'ismah*) and designation (*al-nass*) are specific to Ali.

**Al-Hilli:** Infallibility and designation are specific to Ali because the Muslim community hold two different views. One group does not hold specification and impeccability as two conditions for imamate, while the other stipulates them both as requirements for the imamate. The latter holds the correct view; anyone who stipulates impeccability and designation as two requirements for imamate believe 'Ali to be the Imam. [In other words, for no one other than Ali these two conditions are claimed.]

**Al-Tusi:** The explicit designation of 'Ali as the Imam is indicated in the Prophet's hadiths: "Greet 'Ali as the commander of the faithful" and "O 'Ali, you are my successor after me."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir, vol. 2, p. 260, no. 777; *al-Shafi fi'l-imamah*, vol. 2, p. 67; *al-Dhakhirah*, p. 437; *Anwar al-Malakut*, p. 209; *al-Iqtisad*, p. 196; *al-Ghadir*, vol. 1, p. 270.

**Al-Hilli:** This is the second proof of Ali's Imamate, an explicit specification made by the Prophet in various hadiths as narrated by the Imamate scholars at the highest level of authenticity and acceptance. It is also widely narrated by Sunni scholars.

For example, when the verse "*And warn your thy nearest relations*" (26:214) was revealed by God, the Prophet told Abu Talib to make a meal for him, and he gathered the sons of Abd al-Muttalib, saying to them, "Who amongst you will support me so that he may be my brother (*akhi*), successor, and executor (*wasī*) after me?" Ali said, "I will pay allegiance to you and will help you." The Prophet said, "This is my brother, executor, successor and heir after me, so listen to him and obey him. The Prophet also said to Ali, "You are my brother, executor and successor and the one who will discharge my debts."<sup>25</sup>

When the Prophet established brotherhood among the companions, Ali said, "O Apostle of God, you have established brotherhood amongst your companions, but you have left me alone without being the brother of anyone." The Prophet said to him, "Are you not pleased to be my brother and successor after me?" And he established brotherhood between himself and Ali.<sup>26</sup> In another occurrence the Prophet commanded the companions to greet Ali as the Commander of the Faithful,<sup>27</sup> and he said to Ali, "You are the master of Muslims, the leader of those who guard against evil, and the leader of the bright-faced people."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *al-'Umdah* of Ibn al-Batriq, pp. 121-122, 133-134; *Ghayah al-Maram*, p. 320; *Shawahid al-tanzil*, vol. 1, p. 420; *al-Ghadir*, vol 2., pp. 278-279.

<sup>26</sup> *al-'Umdah*, pp. 215-223; *al-Ghadir*, vol. 3, pp. 112-125.

<sup>27</sup> See *al-Ta'liqah*, vol. 1, p. 189.

<sup>28</sup> *al-'Umdah*, p. 418; *al-Ghadir*, vol. 1, pp. 50-52 and vol . 7, p. 176.

He also said concerning the status of Ali, "This [Ali] is the master of every believing man and woman." There are an innumerable number of narrations on the succession of Ali as reported by both the Shi'as and the Sunnis in this regard to such a degree that they have reached the highest level of authenticity (*al-tawatur*).<sup>29</sup>

In the next part, four more issues will be discussed: The proofs for the Imamate of Ali, his superiority to the companions, the Imamate of the eleven Imams after him, and rules concerning those opposed to Ali's Imamate.

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<sup>1</sup> Additional excerpt from the Translator's Introduction: Aside from other doctrinal and ritual differences between Sunnis and Twelver-Imam Shi'as, the main difference between the branches of Islam lies in Imamah. It should be noted that the Shi'a believe the Imam to be a divinely appointed leader, he is providently endowed with qualifications that distinguish him as a divine leader: a) superiority: the imam is a leader who, like the Prophet, excels all others in all virtues, such as knowledge, bravery, piety, and generosity. He is replete with comprehensive knowledge, excellence and blessedness and because of being aware of all the needs of the *ummah* (the Muslim community) and of all that is conducive to a felicitous life in this world and the hereafter. He plays a decisive role in securing their spiritual and material well-being. All these types of knowledge derive from the comprehensiveness of the Imam and his functions, because the Imamah is an extension or continuation of the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad, and b) Infallibility or inerrancy: being free from sin, error, negligence, and forgetfulness. Insistence upon inerrancy or infallibility as a condition for leadership is a salient feature of the Shi'a, according to whom inerrancy and extensive knowledge are two inseparable qualities of the Imam. Inerrancy, literally immunity from sin, technically means a high intellectual power in virtue of which he never commits any sins despite his free will.

According to the Shi'a, it is rationally necessary that the Muslim community should not be devoid of a divinely appointed leader whose main functions can be summed up in inner or spiritual guidance; and outer guidance, that is, social and political leadership and religious authority. Outer guidance concerns matters of law and the shari'ah.

It is in the nature of man to develop and advance towards perfection, and consciously or unconsciously, he struggles to attain the highest degree of nobility and dignity worthy of man. Since from within there are both positive or constructive forces as well as unbridled destructive forces that can lead him to the infra-human level, man needs a leader as an intermediary between the unseen world and the human race in order to guide and enable everyone to attain the highest degree

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<sup>29</sup> *Manaqib* of Ibn al-maghazali, pp. 65-66.

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possible of his ability and capacity. One of the functions of the Imam is to extend inner guidance to man. Inner guidance is a distinct and lofty rank bestowed by God upon a few select and precious among His creation; men who, themselves strongly drawn and attracted to God and are fully aware of the variations of human behaviour and the various degrees of faith and knowledge people possess can influence their thoughts and inner beings. Therefore, they can influence their inner beings and illuminate their hearts with inner knowledge and aid them in refining their souls and their inward journeying. As can be understood from numerous Qur'anic verses, the Infallible Imam, who is at the pinnacle of the spiritual life, is entrusted with inner guidance, for he is the channel of grace which comes to him from the supra-sensible, or the unseen world.

As for outer guidance, the laws as elaborated and combined by scholars over the ages always need intelligent interpreters when it comes to implementation. As is the case with the laws of Islam, which, in spite of resting on revealed norms and divine guidance, are no exceptions to this rule. Certain verses of the Qur'an, which is the primary source of Islam, are not clear in their purport and signification; therefore, it is necessary to have recourse to exegesis in order to clarify any ambiguous points. The Qur'an sets forth the main lines and general principles of action as proposed by Islam in various spheres; therefore, detailed knowledge of those programmes is required. It is necessary to have recourse to a fully qualified authority who is divinely protected against sin, having a comprehensive knowledge of the Book, the heir to the knowledge of the Prophet who can implement the commands of the Qur'an and who can distinguish right from wrong. Without fully qualified authorities and interpreters of the Qur'an, chaos will ensue and following incorrect interpretations will result in deviating from the genuine teachings of the Qur'an.

The existence of the Imam is a continuous necessary: society can never be without an Imam whether or not he is recognized.

The essential and primary qualifications of the Imam boil down to the following principles that form the essence of imamate: (1) a divine appointment by designation; (2) superiority; (3) al-isma (immunity from sin and error); (4) the miracles worked or performed by the Imam and (5) perpetuity of the imamate.

The Imams are the esoteric and exoteric representatives of the Prophet and that the Imam is the *axis mundi*, the universal pole without which the world cannot subsist because of there being a mysterious, sacramental bond between the presence of the Imam and the continuance of the terrestrial world. *Wilayah* (the esoteric aspect of prophecy) continues and will continue. The Imam is one who carries the 'Muhammadan Light' within himself and who, as a result of the presence of this light, possesses the quality of inerrancy. He fulfils the function of *wilayah*, is the sustainer and interpreter *par excellence* of the revelation, and the guarantee of its continuation. His duty is threefold: to rule over the community, to interpret the religious sciences, and to guide men in the spiritual life. The Imam is the Perfect Man, the *raison d'être* of the terrestrial world, and society cannot continue without his existence. This is precisely the meaning of the existence of the Twelfth Imam, hidden to the human eyes but present within the hearts of the believers.



# COMMON GROUNDS FOR UNITY BETWEEN ISLAMIC SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

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TRANSLATED BY MUHAMMAD JAMES

**ABSTRACT:** One of the main concerns of Muslim intellectuals in recent centuries has been integration among all Muslims. Amid all types of integration, ideological consolidation based on common principles is considered one of the most fundamental strategies for Muslim unity. In this article, the most important common principles and issues of Islamic schools of thought are examined. According to some Qur'anic verses, the authority of the Qur'an, prophetic traditions, love for those close to the Prophet, and the intellectual authority of the Ahlul Bayt are the most common principles of Islamic brotherhood in all areas and times.

## Introduction

The achievement of Islamic unity, integration, and harmony, and bringing about an effective and sustainable cohesion while eliminating existing divisions in the current age requires being considerate of commonalities and issues. Given the close relationship between these elements, the application and realization of each one will have a direct effect on the application of the others. This paper explores common elements accepted by all Islamic schools of thought.

## The Qur'an

One of the most unifying aspects among all Islamic schools is the Holy Qur'an, the eternal miracle of Prophet Muhammad. All sects and groups – with all the differences and contradictions that exist between them – persistently derive their beliefs from the Qur'an. They do not ignore any distinction with the Qur'an in their own system of thought. All Islamic schools regard and insist that their intellectual and ideological thoughts are derived from the verses of the Qur'an

A unifying and reconciling approach to the Qur'an is studied in two ways.

### *The origins of Islamic schools*

The Qur'an is the final divine book sent by God through the Prophet Muhammad for the guidance of humanity. Muslims of all Islamic schools of thought agree that the Qur'an is divine speech immune from any kind of distortion because God is its protector,<sup>1</sup> and includes all that is necessary for people to perfect themselves to eventually attain eternal happiness.

Moreover, monotheistic belief is a strong strand in the Qur'an which is intended to place all monotheists along one strand. By putting each person in his or her proper place, a single, powerful and great nation is created: *"Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord. So worship Me"* (al-Anbiya': 92); *"Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord, so be wary of Me."* (Al-Mu'minoon: 52)

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Hijr 9

The Qur'an, or the "*hablullah*" (cord of Allah), is that which the followers of Islamic schools are able to hold fast to. With the centrality of the Qur'an in areas such as culture, politics, and economics, believers can be aligned to each other and interact with one another:

*Hold fast, all together, to Allah's cord, and do not be divided [into sects]. And remember Allah's blessing upon you when you were enemies, then He brought your hearts together, so you became brothers with His blessing. And you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, whereat He saved you from it. Thus does Allah clarify His signs for you so that you may be guided. (3:103)*

Qur'anic commentators agree that one of the meanings of *hablullah* is the Qur'an and that God, in addition to mentioning Islamic unity in this verse, has ordered Muslims to hold fast to the Qur'an. Imam Ali also referred to the Qur'an as *hablullah*: "It is the strong rope of Allah."<sup>2</sup> Ahmad Qurtubi, a prominent Sunni commentator, Ibn Mas'ud, and 'Abdullah, who narrated from the Prophet, also refer to *hablullah* as the Qur'an.

In explaining the meanings of the term *hablullah*, Hasan Tabarsi, a renowned Shi'a exegetist, writes, "Hold fast to *hablullah*" ...and numerous meanings have been given for *hablullah*, one of them is the Qur'an.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon 176

<sup>3</sup> Tabarsi, 1415 AH, vol. 2, p. 356 and Shaykh Tusi, vol. 2, p. 545

### Approaches to religious discourse

Since the Qur'an places a special emphasis on Islamic unity, it also lays down logical and correct approaches to Islamic religious dialogue for Muslims, particularly Muslim intellectuals.

### Necessity of Dialogue between Islamic Schools of Thought

**No compulsion in matters of belief:** “*There is no compulsion in religion: rectitude has become distinct from error*” (Al-Baqarah: 256); “*And say, [This is] the truth from your Lord: let anyone who wishes believe it, and let anyone who wishes disbelieve it*” (Al-Kahf: 29); “*So admonish—for you are only an admonisher, and not a taskmaster over them.*” (Al-Ghashiyah: 21 & 22).

**Islam is the religion acceptable to God:** “*Indeed, with Allah religion is Islam*” (Ale-Imran: 19); “*Should anyone follow a religion other than Islam, it shall never be accepted from him, and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter.*” (Ale-Imran: 85).

**A comprehensive and complete religion:** “*He has prescribed for you the religion which He had enjoined upon Noah and which We have [also] revealed to you, and which We had enjoined upon Abraham, Moses and Jesus.*” (Al-Shura: 13).

**A religion of peace:** Sayyid Qutb, following the verse of no compulsion, writes about freedom of belief in Islam: “Faith issues in Islam are matters in which their acceptance is due to their expression and understanding and is not due to coercion. Islam has come to address the entire power of human thought and reason.”<sup>4</sup> Matters of belief are not

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<sup>4</sup> Sayyid Qutb, vol. 1, p. 291

part of those matters where imitation is necessary; people are expected to make the effort in dealing with ideological matters. In Shi'a Islam the principles of religion are not imitative although its branches do involve imitation.

Regarding freedom of faith, Ayatullah Mutahhari says, "A summary of the logic of the Qur'an is that there is no compulsion in the matter of religion. The truth is clear; both the straight path and the wrong path are clarified. People are free to make a choice. A series of verses in the Qur'an stipulate that religion should come by correct invitation, and not through force."<sup>5</sup> Thus, the only method of invitation and propagation in Islam to followers of other religions is the way of dialogue. Qur'an emphasizes this point and the methods of interfaith and interdenominational dialogue.

### **The Method of Dialogue between Islamic Schools**

In addition to the Qur'an's emphasis on dialogue, the mental conditions and method of discussion have also been addressed, as God is fully aware of the human condition.

Ayatullah Muhammad Ali Taskhiri writes: "The Qur'an is unsurpassed in its instruction for Muslims to engage in discourse; if the Qur'an becomes our eyes, tongue, ears, we would all be engaging in genuine dialogue."<sup>6</sup> Also, Qadrddan states: "The importance of dialogue in the Qur'an is so much that the use of the term for dialogue (*qul* and its derivatives) takes first place after the word Allah."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Mutahhari, p. 33

<sup>6</sup> Taskhiri, nos. 51 & 52, p. 22

<sup>7</sup> Qadrddan, p. 1

***Religious Commonalities***

One of the matters the Qur'an emphasizes on is religious commonalities. Religious dialogue must take place within a common framework:

*Say, 'O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we will worship no one but Allah, and that we will not ascribe any partner to Him, and that we will not take each other as lords besides Allah.' But if they turn away, say, 'Be witnesses that we are Muslims.'"* (3:64)

*And say, 'We believe in that which has been sent down to us and has been sent down to you; our God and your God is one [and the same], and to Him do we submit. (29:46)*

*Say, 'We have faith in Allah, and that which has been sent down to us, and that which was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus were given, and that which the prophets were given from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit. (2:136)*

In the case of division among Muslims, the Qur'an refers them to the principles of divine unity, the prophethood of Muhammad and to the Qur'an itself. The basis for unity is commitment to monotheistic belief and respect for the mission of the final messenger of God; and those who initiate conflict should be dealt with seriously.

*If two groups of the faithful fight one another, make peace between them. But if one party of them aggresses against the other, fight the one which aggresses until it*

*returns to Allah's ordinance. Then, if it returns, make peace between them fairly, and do justice. Indeed Allah loves the just."* (49:9)

*O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you. And if you dispute concerning anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle, if you have faith in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more favourable in outcome."* (4:59)

### ***Wise and reasonable dialogue***

The Qur'an as the richest source of reasoning and debate, emphasizes this approach to the internal and external dialogues of Muslims: *"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice and dispute with them in a manner that is best."* (16:125)

Allamah Tabatabai established that there is no doubt this verse refers to the etiquette of dialogue. The Prophet was appointed to invite in this manner, even though the meaning of dispute, in its narrow sense, does not indicate invitation.<sup>8</sup>

A positive outcome with a suitable framework for collaboration among all Muslims will take place when academic discussions and religious debates are conducted reasonably.

Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi stated in his *Nemuneh* exegesis regarding the above verse: "The first part '*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom*' refers to rational argument; the second part, '*and good advice*' refers to emotional discussions; and '*dispute with them in a manner that*

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<sup>8</sup> Tabatabai, 1374, vol. 12, p. 534

*is best*' refers to those who were previously misinformed, and through discussion, they rid their biases to accept the truth."<sup>9</sup>

*Do not dispute with the People of the Book except in a manner which is best, barring such of them as are wrongdoers. (29:46)*

According to Tafseer Qummi, '*Do not dispute with the People of the Book*' – refers to the Jews and the Christians, and '*except in a manner which is best*' – refers to the Qur'an."<sup>10</sup> The instruction is to not dispute with the People of the Book and the intent is the Jews and the Christians.

Tafseer *Majma' al-Bayan* refers to '*...except in a manner which is best*' to convince the opponent, and to debate in the best way with kindness and warmth. It refers to the best debate in which both the intellect and human nature will be compelled to accept. The calling of people toward the Lord should be in the best and most beautiful way to alert others of the signs God's existence and the kindling of their faith in Him should be done in a soft manner.<sup>11</sup> Even Prophets Musa and Harun were also asked to speak softly to Pharaoh: "*Speak to him in a soft manner; maybe he will take admonition or fear (20:44).*

The verses above explicitly forbid the Prophet from irrational and unwise propagation and dialogue; moreover, this command is not particular to him as the Qur'anic commentators have stated that these

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<sup>9</sup> Nemuneh Exegesis, Makarem Shirazi, 1373, vol. 10, p. 393; ibid, 1374, vol. 11, p. 455 & vol. 16, p. 229; Kareemi Hoseini, 1382, vol. 1, p. 402

<sup>10</sup> Qummi, 1367, vol 2, p. 151)

<sup>11</sup> Tabarsi, 1372, vol. 8, p. 450



verses were not delivered for a particular occasion or person. They include all Muslims in all areas and times.

***Respectful and ethics-centered dialogue***

Strategic dialogue is fundamental for relations and exchange of thoughts and ideas; prepares the ground for innovation, spiritual growth, social interaction, and coexistence. The Qur'an discusses the style, methods, and content of dialogue and has commanded Muslims to heed to these influential issues to clarify the truth:

*So give good news to My servants who listen to the word [of Allah] and follow the best [sense] of it. They are the ones whom Allah has guided, and it is they who possess intellect. (39:17-18)*

*Tell My servants to speak in a manner which is the best. (17:53)*

*...and speak kindly to people (2:83)*

*Speak to him in a soft manner; maybe he will take admonition or fear. (20:44)*

*...and speak to them honourable words. (4:5)*

*Do not abuse those whom they invoke besides Allah, lest they should abuse Allah out of hostility, without any knowledge. (6:108)*

Thus, Muslims are to engage in a courteous, friendly, and rational manner in dialogue; and in doing so, they are to refrain from shouting, defamation, or instigating violence.

### Prophetic Tradition

Another significant source for the proximity of Islamic schools, according to the Qur'an, is the tradition of the Prophet. Ayatullah Mutahhari said, "One of the sources of knowledge that a Muslim must see, correct, and complete his vision through it, is the conduct of the Holy Prophet."<sup>12</sup>

#### *The Status of the Prophet in the Qur'an*

The factors for the immortality of a school and the unity of a society are the provision of objective, certain, verbal and active models, alongside behavioral models. Islam is the only school that, with the provision of perfect models alongside excellent instruction and teaching, has combined speech and action into something eternally harmonious and it has introduced the Holy Prophet as the model of humanity:

*Nor does he speak out of [his own] desire: it is just a revelation that is revealed [to him]. (53:3-4)*

*Take whatever the Apostle gives you, and relinquish whatever he forbids you. (59:7)*

The above verses clarify the role and position of the Prophet for all Muslims and shows God's expectation of Muslims: that they should carry out all the Prophet's instructions and avoid anything he has prohibited. The Qur'an clearly states that the speech of the Prophet was revelation: his personal inclinations and intellectual and social presumptions did not affect it.

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<sup>12</sup> Mutahhari 1377, p. 37

The Prophet condemned division in the Muslims world and was concerned about – and indeed attempted to achieve – unity of all of Muslims.

In the verse “...and remember Allah greatly. In the Apostle of Allah there is certainly for you a good exemplar, for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day.” (33:21), God introduces the Prophet as the perfect role model for anything that underlies human perfection: an example in belief, ethics, and social relations, and his sustained focus and effort toward establishing brotherhood among Muslims:

*O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you. And if you dispute concerning anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle, if you have faith in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more favourable in outcome.*  
(4:59)

In the verses 53:3 & 4: “Nor does he speak out of [his own] desire: it is just a revelation that is revealed [to him],” the interference of the personal desires of the Prophet and its transmission has been negated in. This includes the Prophet’s commands and prohibitions and has no exception.<sup>13</sup> In the verse 33:21, the speech and conduct of the Prophet was also introduced as exemplary for all people. In the verse 4:59, it has been stipulated that in cases of any form of dispute, Muslims should refer to the Prophet.

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<sup>13</sup> Tabatabai, vol. 19, p. 353

## **The Ahlul Bayt**

With all their academic differences and various theological, judicial and narration tendencies, Muslims have always paid special attention to the Ahlul Bayt - the Household of the Prophet - and regarded them as better than the other companions of the Prophet, their successors, and Islamic religious scholars.

For this reason, this section expounds on the Ahlul Bayt. The following the members and authority of the Ahlul Bayt, the importance of love for them, and the Sunni viewpoint.

### ***The Members of the Ahlul Bayt***

One of the fundamental discussions concerning the Ahlul Bayt is on its members. The Shi'a and a group of the Sunnis hold that the Ahlul Bayt is Imam Ali, Fatimah, Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, and the Imams succeeding them. However, some Sunnis believe that in addition to these five members, the wives of the Prophet are included.

Considering these two views, and to prove their understandings, the Shi'a and a number of the Sunnis cite verses and narrations existing within Sunni and Shi'i exegeses, narration, and historical sources. The following examines a few:

In the commentaries on verse 33 of the chapter Al-Ahzab, known as the *tat-hir* purification verse ("Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification"), many narrations from both the Shi'a and Sunni that introduce the members of the Ahlul Bayt have been related and which regard them as being the Ahl al-Kisa (*People of the Cloak*). The narration below is one of them:

Umar bin Abi Salamah narrates that when the purification verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet in Umm Salamah's home, he called Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn and covered them with a cloak. The Prophet also covered Ali, who was behind him, under the same cloak, and then said, "Oh Allah! These are my Ahlul Bayt (People of the house); keep impurity away from them and purify them with a thorough purification." Umm Salamah said: "Oh Messenger of God, am I also among them?" to which he replied, "You have your own position."<sup>14</sup>

In another narration the Ahlul Bayt is introduced in which the *Mubahala* verse was explained: "*Say, 'Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls, then let us pray earnestly and call down Allah's curse upon the liars.'*" In this narration, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqas says, "When this verse was revealed, the Messenger of God called Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn and then said 'Oh Allah, these are my Ahlul Bayt.'"<sup>15</sup>

In a commentary of the *mawadda* verse – "*Say, 'I do not ask you any reward for it except love of [my] relatives'*" a number of the Prophet's traditions on the Ahlul Bayt were clearly mentioned. For example, Ibn Abbas says: "When the *mawadda* verse was revealed, they asked the Prophet, "Oh Messenger of God, who are those kinsfolk of yours whose love became an obligation upon us?" The Prophet answered, 'Ali, Fatimah and their two sons - Hasan and Husayn.'"

<sup>14</sup> Tirmidhi, 1403AH, vol. 5, p. 351; Neyshaburi, 1400AH, vol. 3, p. 158-159; Haythami 1408AH, vol. 7, p. 91 and Haskani, 1411AH, vol. 2, p. 20

<sup>15</sup> Neyshaburi, vol. 3, p. 163; Muslim, h. 2404 and Tabari, 1383, p. 161

In addition to these, numerous traditions are narrated from the Prophet, in which he explicitly stated Imam Ali, Fatimah al-Zahra, Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn to have as the sole members of the Ahlul Bayt.<sup>16</sup>

### ***The Knowledge Authority of the Ahlul Bayt***

Muslims agree on the Ahlul Bayt as the “Knowledge authority” and contentious issues between Muslims end at this point; particularly in ideological and legal matters, authority reveals the truths of the Qur’an and the tradition of the Prophet.<sup>17</sup>

God states in the Qur’an: “*And if you dispute concerning anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle*” (Al-Nisa 59) and “*We did not send down the Book to you except [for the purpose] that you may clarify for them what they differ about.*” (Al-Nahl 64)

### ***The Qur’an and the Knowledge Authority of the Ahlul Bayt***

Without doubt, the school of the Ahlul Bayt surpasses other Islamic sects and schools in the fields of commentary, interpretation, and expression of the meanings and concepts of the Qur’an. This distinction is due to their attachment to the Prophet and the connection of their teachings to revelation.

The references *Bihar ul-Anwar* and *Al-Kafi* regard the knowledge authority of the Ahlul Bayt as “the most knowledgeable in the interpretation of the Qur’an.”<sup>18</sup>

1. ***The Ahlul Bayt are the People of the Reminder (Ahl al-Dhikr):*** “*Ask the People of the Reminder if you do not know.*” (Al-Nahl 43)

<sup>16</sup> Haskani, *ibid*, p. 15; Neyshaburi, *ibid*, p. 173; Tirmidhi, p. 352 and Zamakhshari, *ibid*.

<sup>17</sup> Byazar Shirazi, no. 184, p. 14; Taskhiri, p. 13; *ibid*, no. 174, p. 29; Sobhani, p. 26 and Ayyazi, no. 37-38, p. 338

<sup>18</sup> Kulayni, 1388AH, vol. 1, p. 213 and Majlisi, 1360, p. 89-99

In the Tabari tafseer, Jabir al-Ju'fi narrated that when this verse was revealed, Ali said: "We are the People of the Reminder."<sup>19</sup>

Likewise, in reply to a question by Harith about this verse "*Ask the People of the Reminder*," Imam Ali said, "By God, we are the People of the Reminder, we are the People of Knowledge, and We are a mine of interpretation and revelation."<sup>20</sup>

## ***2. The Ahlul Bayt are firmly grounded in knowledge***

*But no one knows its interpretation except Allah and those firmly grounded in knowledge; they say, 'We believe in it; all of it is from our Lord.' And none takes admonition except those who possess intellect. (3:7)*

Imam Ali describes "...*those firmly grounded in knowledge*": "Where are those who falsely and unjustly claimed that they are deeply versed in knowledge, as against us, although Allah raised us in position and kept them down, bestowed upon us knowledge but deprived them, and entered us (in the fortress of knowledge) but kept them out. With us guidance is to be sought and blindness (of misguidance) is to be changed into brightness."<sup>21</sup>

## ***3. The Ahlul Bayt have the knowledge of the Book***

The faithless say, "*You have not been sent [by Allah]. Say, 'Allah suffices as a witness between me and you, and he who possesses the knowledge of the Book.'*" (13:43)

<sup>19</sup> Tabari, 1421AH, vol. 17, p. 5

<sup>20</sup> Haskani, ibid, vol. 1, p. 432

<sup>21</sup> Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon 144

Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri said, "I asked the Prophet about this verse, and he said, 'That is my brother, Ali ibn Abi Talib.'" <sup>22</sup> Additionally, there are tens of verses that refer to the knowledge authority of the Ahlul Bayt. <sup>23</sup>

### *Prophetic Tradition and the Knowledge Authority of the Ahlul Bayt*

Because the Ahlul Bayt are firm in knowledge and learned the interpretation of the Qur'an from the Prophet as they grew up in his house, they thereby have the ability to interpret and thus hold an exclusive position, a position which ordinary people do not attain. From the first days of his open invitation to the religion of Islam, the Prophet of Islam many times mentioned to the Muslims the knowledge authority of the Ahlul Bayt.

#### *1. The spoken Qur'an*

In the famous Hadith of Thaqalayn, the Prophet stated:

Indeed, I am leaving among you, that which if you hold fast to them, you shall not be misguided after me. One of them is greater than the other: The Book of Allah, which is a rope extended from the sky to the earth, and my family, the people of my house [Ahlul Bayt], and they shall not separate until they meet me at the pool, so be alert as to how you treat them after me. <sup>24</sup>

This hadith, narrated by more than thirty companions of the Prophet, is present within the reliable Sunni hadith books. Many leading Sunni

<sup>22</sup> Haskani, *ibid*, vol. 1, p. 400 & 422 and Shaykh Saduq, 1410AH, vol. 3, p. 453

<sup>23</sup> Al-Ahzab 33, Al-Ma'idah 55, Al-Nisa' 59, Al-Tawbah 110, Al-Waqi'ah 77-79, Al-i 'Imran 103, Al-i 'Imran 18, Al-Baqarah 23, Al-i 'Imran 61, Al-Mujadilah 12, Al-Bayyinah 7, Al-Saffat 130, and Al-An'am 153

<sup>24</sup> Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1873



scholars also hold that the Hadith of Thaqalayn affirms the knowledge authority of the Ahlul Bayt. Shaykh Muhammad Abu Zahra said with regards to his stance on the Hadith of Thaqalayn: "It does not denote their political authority; it denotes their judicial and knowledge authority."<sup>25</sup>

## ***2. Protecting the Islamic Ummah***

The Holy Prophet stated, "The stars protect the inhabitants of the earth from drowning; likewise, my Ahlul Bayt protect my Ummah from division."<sup>26</sup>

## ***3. The most knowledgeable on the Qur'an and Prophetic tradition***

Imam Ali stated, "We are the Ahlul Bayt; we are the most knowledgeable regarding the speech of Allah and His messenger."<sup>27</sup>

There exist many other hadiths on the authority of the Ahlul Bayt within Shi'a and Sunni hadith compilations, such as the hadiths of *Ghadir*, *Kisa'*, *Madinatul 'Ilm*, *Safinah* and *Manzila*.

## **The Knowledge Authority of the Ahlul Bayt and the Islamic Ummah**

The superior and unique role of the Ahlul Bayt in conveying Islamic knowledge, especially the exegesis of the Qur'an and explaining hadiths, is apparent to all fair-minded Muslims who have studied even some religious sciences and Islamic history. To document this, some of the statements of the companions of the Prophet and Islamic scholars regarding the knowledge authority and status of the Ahlul Bayt are quoted as testimony.

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<sup>25</sup> Abu Zahra, 1993CE, p. 199

<sup>26</sup> Neyshaburi, *ibid*, vol. 3, p. 162

<sup>27</sup> Ibn Sa'd, vol. 6, p. 240

On several instances, Umar Farooq pointed out the vital role of Imam Ali in his own life. He said, “Without Ali, Umar would be dead.”<sup>28</sup>

Many Sunnis in the past and present admitted to the superiority of the knowledge of the Ahlul Bayt. The following are some examples:

Ibn ‘Asakir, quoting Ibn Hazim, writes in description of Imam Sajjad: “I have not found any Hashimi man better than Ali ibn al-Husayn, and I have not seen anyone more knowledgeable in jurisprudence.”<sup>29</sup>

‘Abdullah ‘Ata says, “All scholars in knowledge terms were lower than Imam Baqir.”<sup>30</sup>

Fakhr al-Razi in his Qur’anic commentary writes, “Whatever we might forget, this we will not forget, and that is: The speech of Ali has priority over the speech of the other companions, because the Prophet stated, ‘Ali is with the truth and the truth is with Ali.’”<sup>31</sup>

Haskani, quoting Mujahid, says, “Verily Ali has seventy virtues which the companions of the Prophet do not have, and there are no virtues they have that Ali does not have.”<sup>32</sup>

Ibn Abi al-Hadeed says, “What should I say about a person whom his enemies have confessed to his virtues, not being able to deny them? He [Ali] is the source of all virtues.”<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Abd al-Barr, 1415 AH, vol. 3, p. 1103; Ibn Abi al-Hadeed, vol. 12, p. 179 & 204 and vol. 18, p. 141; Ibn Qutaybah, 1400AH, p. 152; Razandi Hanafi, p. 130 & 132; Iji, 1412AH, vol. 3, p. 636 & 637; Muttaqi al-Hindi (1405AH, vol. 13, p. 584; Mughrami, 1403AH, p. 71; ‘Ayyashi, vol. 1, p. 75; Qummi, 1366, vol. 1, p. 407; Baqlani, 1414AH, p. 476 & 502; Sam‘ani, 1418AH, vol. 5, p. 154 and Razi, 1398AH, vol. 1, p. 205) He also said: “You (Oh Ali) are the best of judges” (Muttaqi al-Hindi, ibid, vol. 8, p. 600; Muhammad ibn Sa’d, vol. 2, p. 339 and al-Baladhuri, 1974CE, p. 177

<sup>29</sup> Dhahabi, 1417AH, vol. 4, p. 3 & 9 and Ibn Abi al-Hadeed, vol. 15, p. 725

<sup>30</sup> Hafez Esfahani, 1407AH, vol. 1, p. 68

<sup>31</sup> Fakhr al-Razi, 1405AH, vol. 1, p. 111

<sup>32</sup> Haskani, ibid, p. 17

Ibn Khaldun regarding the knowledge status of the Ahlul Bayt says:

When extraordinary acts are possible for other people to perform, what can you think about the Ahlul Bayt? With that knowledge and religiosity and effects from prophethood that are within them and the attention that God, the Exalted, had toward the noble root of Holy Prophet and the fact that this attention follows to the pure branches of that holy root.<sup>34</sup>

Muhammad Farid Wajdi Misri writes, "There were traits existing in Ali that did not exist in the other caliphs."<sup>35</sup> Also, Shahrestani discredited the Ash'ari, Mu'tazilah, and other Islamic sects and schools and regards the Ahlul Bayt as the only knowledge reference for Muslims.<sup>36</sup>

Considering that, on the one hand, the status of the Ahlul Bayt has Qur'anic and traditional proofs and, on the other hand, some of the caliphs and leading figures of the Sunnis attest to their status, the question arises as to why throughout Islamic history, the Shi'a have not often viewed the Ahlul Bayt from this angle and instead have emphasized on their political leadership? Perhaps the reason for this view of the Shi'a toward the Ahlul Bayt is that, on the one hand, the first point of difference between the Shi'a and Sunni is considered to be the issue of leadership, to which the warning hadiths of *Manzilat* and *Ghadir* refer; on the other hand, these hadiths, from the aspect of issuance, had precedence over the Hadith of *Thaqalayn*, which denotes

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<sup>33</sup> Ibn Abi al-Hadeed, *ibid*, vol. 1, p. 6

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Khaldun, 1366, p. 334

<sup>35</sup> Wajdi, 1971CE, vol. 6, p. 659

<sup>36</sup> 'Irfan, nos. 11-12, p. 387

the knowledge authority of the Ahlul Bayt, and this itself had influence on the Shi'a view.

### **Love for the Ahlul Bayt**

Friendship and love toward the Ahlul Bayt is one of the principles of Islam and a common base for proximity among Islamic schools that has been emphasized in the Qur'an and Prophetic tradition. All Islamic sects share a love toward the family of the Messenger. The Qur'an has presented love and friendship toward the Ahlul Bayt as reward for the mission of the Prophet: "*Say, 'I do not ask you any reward for it except love of [my] relatives.'*" (Al-Shura 23)

Ibn Abbas says when the verse above was revealed, he said to the Prophet, "Oh Messenger of God, who are those we have been commanded by God to love?" He replied, "Ali, Fatimah, and their two children."<sup>37</sup>

The one meaning this verse requires is that the people establish a relationship with the Prophet's relatives. Distinguished commentators, hadith narrators, and literary scholars have not understood more than one meaning for this verse, which is love for the family of the Prophet.<sup>38</sup>

### ***Love for the Ahlul Bayt in the view of Sunni scholars***

Relating the virtues of the Ahlul Bayt in traditional, historical, and theological sources is not limited to Shi'a sources. For centuries, numerous writers of other Islamic schools have also related these

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<sup>37</sup> Haskani, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 189; Tha' labi, 1412 AH, vol. 8, p. 310; Suyuti, *ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 7; Qurtubi, *ibid.*, vol. 16, p. 22; Kufi, 1410AH, p. 390; Ibn Abi Hatim, 1419 AH, vol. 10, p. 3276; Zamakhshari, *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 219; Tastari, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 33; Tabarsi, *ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 43 and Nasafi, 1419 AH, vol. 3, p. 280

<sup>38</sup> Sobhani, no. 174, p. 26

virtues. The mentioned authors,<sup>39</sup> as well as hundreds of other writers who wrote about the uncountable virtues of the pure and immaculate family, display the Sunnis' love toward the Ahlul Bayt. Some researchers believe that Sunni references include more than 100 virtues of the Ahlul Bayt, their refined character and competence in Islamic matters, and various issues related to them.

It is important to note that Sunni scholars have written on the virtues of the Ahlul Bayt in their Qur'anic commentaries, hadith references, theology, history, and ethics, and not merely in books primarily about the Ahlul Bayt. There are more than 150 Sunni accounts that mention the virtues of Imam Mahdi and issues related to him and his governance alone; and more than 30 Sunni books are written primarily about the Imam.<sup>40</sup>

Ayatullah Khamenei, with the aim of uniting Muslims, stated at the Ahlul Bayt World Conference:

The issue of the Ahlul Bayt is one of the most important and greatest issues of Islam. Love of the Ahlul Bayt is an obligation that Muslims of the world from all sects and groups have accepted and take pride in. We, who are honored to follow the jurisprudence of the Ahlul Bayt and who have learnt the principles and practical matters from them, must not imagine that love of the Ahlul

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<sup>39</sup> Ahmad ibn Hanbal (164-241 AH) wrote in *Fadhail Amir al-Mu'mineen*, Baladhuri (279AH) in *Ansab al-Ashraf*, Nasa'i (303 AH) in *Khasa'is Amir al-Mu'mineen*, Mardawiyah (323-410 AH) in *Manaqib*, Abu Nu'aym Esfahani (334-430AH) in *Ma Nazala fi Ali min al-Qur'an*, Ibn Mughazili (483 AH) in *Munaqib Ali ibn Abi Talib*, Haskani (5<sup>th</sup> century) in *Shawahid al-Tanzil*, Khwarizmi (568 AH) in *Tarikh Dimashq*, Ibn al-Jawzi (581-650 AH) in *Tadhkirat al-Khawas*, Juvayni (644-730 AH) in *Fara'id al-Sam'tayn*, Suyuti (910 AH) in *Al-Qawl al-Jali fi Fad'hail Ali*

<sup>40</sup> Hakimi, p. 516 & 519

Bayt is particular to us; and we must not make the mistake and think that the Ahlul Bayt only belong to us. The Ahlul Bayt belong to the whole of Islam, just as their grandfather, the Holy Prophet belonged to the whole of Islam. The Ahlul Bayt belongs to the world and history, just as their grandfather, the Holy Prophet, belonged to humanity and history.<sup>41</sup>

### Conclusion

With regard to the issues discussed, Islamic schools possess the most fundamental common bases, such as the Holy Qur'an, prophetic tradition, the knowledge authority of the Ahlul Bayt and love for them. The Qur'an and prophetic tradition are the two main and basic sources for Islamic law. These two are common among all Islamic schools, and the authority of other sources is subject to them. The knowledge authority of the Ahlul Bayt is in fact a continuation of prophetic tradition. The Qur'an has reiterated the need for all Muslims to love the Prophet's family; all Islamic sects and schools have accepted this command and the experience of history has proven this to be true.

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<sup>41</sup> www.leader.ir

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## IMAM SADIQ: ROLE MODEL FOR HUMANITY, PART I

RASOUL JA'FARIAN

TRANSLATED BY FATEMEH SOLTANMOHAMMADI

**ABSTRACT:** Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sādiq, the sixth Imam, was celebrated by both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims for his piety, Islamic knowledge, and academic accomplishments. He was particularly most renowned as the initiator of Shi'a Islamic fiqh, called Ja'fari jurisprudence, as well as his extensive knowledge in a variety of fields which had a great academic impact on the people of his time. This article includes a brief biography of his life, his revered conduct, and his deep knowledge in jurisprudence; it also delves into the state of the Shi'as during his time as well as his political confrontations with the Ghulat, or extremists, who held ideas that resulted from overstating particular Islamic beliefs. To eliminate the Ghulat beliefs from pouring into Shi'a ideology and affecting its adherents, Imam Sadiq was compelled to confront them through refuting their ideology, declaring them as apostates, and demanding the Shi'a to avoid their presence.

Shi'a intellectual and ideological doctrines have mainly been based around Imam Sadiq, the sixth Shi'a Imam, as a large portion of narrations and teachings from the Ahlul Bayt have been spread through him. Imam Sadiq has been positioned as a median between the sects that arose in the Shi'a faith; he prioritized the protection and

preservation of intellectual and ideological doctrines in Shi'ism from distortions in his activities during that period.

Traditions (*hadith*) narrated in relation to the leadership (*imamah*) of Ja'far bin Muhammad al-Sadiq have been brought in many compilations of traditions and historical Shi'a books including: *al-Kafi* (Kitab al-Hujjah), *Kashf al-Ghummah fi Ma'rifa al-A'immah*,<sup>1</sup> *Ithbat al-Wasiyyah*, Shaykh Mufid's *al-Irshad*, and *Ithbat al-Hudat*.

Imam Baqir lived in Medina and Imam Sadiq lived in Iraq for a while considering how mainly the Imam's followers lived there.<sup>2</sup> During the time of the Imam, the Umayyid government had collapsed and taken over by the Bani Abbas. In comparison to the rest of the Imams, Imam Jafar spent the longest period of time propagating. He passed away in Shawwal of 148 Hijri and left the Shi'as in a deep and lasting sorrow due to his absence. Narrations indicating the fact that Imam was martyred have been reported by Sunni scholars as well. However, Abu Zuhrah has rejected them and to prove his viewpoint he cites Mansur's glorification of Imam Sadiq and his expression of sorrow upon the passing of the Imam, which Ya'qubi has narrated.

He also believes this act by Mansur was contrary to his methods in strengthening the foundation of his caliphate. However neither of these two matters proves that the Imam was not martyred. It is quite expectable that even if Mansur killed Imam he would still express his regret in order to hide his role. A similar scenario was seen regarding Ma'mun and Imam Rida. Moreover, Mansur's movement and his killing

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<sup>1</sup> *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 2, p. 167-173.

<sup>2</sup> *al-Milal wa al-Nahl*, vol. 1, p. 147, Cairo.

of mass numbers of Shi'a continued unceasingly and this is inconsistent with Abu Zuhrah's viewpoint regarding Mansur.

Contrary, Imam Sadiq's murder by Mansur's order was in accordance with his method of ruling, for his usual practice with the enemy was such, even though such acts were always behind closed doors and completely undercover so that he was not harmed by any adverse effects. Therefore, if there are historical reports regarding the Imam being poisoned by Mansur, the grounds for its acceptance is more than reports of Mansur's expression of sorrow.

### **Imam Sadiq's Moral Character and Jurisprudential Status**

There are many reports in regards to Imam Sadiq's academic personality. According to Shi'a, Imam Sadiq was appointed by God for Imamah, since the Imam possessed knowledge specific to Imamah. The Imam was highly qualified amongst the Sunnis in matters pertaining to narrating traditions, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and issuing Islamic rulings (*fatwa*), such that they documented him as the teacher of Abu Hanifa, Malik ibn Anas, and numerous great scholars of narration. Regarding the Imam, Malik ibn Anas said:

For some time I was honoured to visit Ja'far bin Muhammad. He was humorous with gentle smile across his face ... During the time I would go and come from his home, I did not see him in any state other than three: he either prayed, or was fasting, or was reciting the Qur'an. He never narrated a saying from the Holy Prophet without having made wudhu. He did not utter a word that was not needed. He was of the kind of pious scholars whom fear of God had encompassed his entire being.

There was never a time I went to see him and he did not place his pillow and backrest for me.<sup>3</sup>

Amr bin al-Miqdad also said regarding the Imam: "When I would see Ja'far bin Muhammad, I knew he was a descendant of the Prophets."<sup>4</sup>

Al-Jahiz, a renowned scholar of the third century, also said: "Ja'far bin Muhammad was a personality whose knowledge and jurisprudence encompassed the world. Abu Hanifah and Safyan al-Thawri were his students: these two figure's studentship under the Imam is enough to show his academic prominence."<sup>5</sup>

In praising the Imam's scholarly status, Ibn Hajar Haythami says that individuals such as Yahya bin Sa'eed, Ibn Jarir, Malik, Safyan al-Thawri, Abu Hanifah, Shu'bah, and Ayub Sajistani have narrated traditions from the Imam.<sup>6</sup>

Many sayings have been narrated from academics on Imam Sadiq's personality, in which Professor Haydar mentioned in his *al-Imam al-Sadiq wa al-Madhahib al-Arba'ah*.<sup>7</sup> The sheer number of students who attended the Imam's classes or narrated his sayings are indicative of his

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Manqib*, Zawawi, p. 41 narrated from Abu Zuhra; al-Imam al-Malik, p. 94-95; al-Imam al-Sadiq wa al-Madhahib al-Arba'ah, vol. 2, p. 53; al-Tawassul wa al-Wasilah, Ibn Taymiyyah, p. 52:

و لقد كنت آتي جعفر بن محمد وكان كثير المزاح و التيسم فاذا ذكر عنده التبي (ص) اخضر و اصفر و لقد اختلفت اليه زمانا و ماكنت اراه الا على ثلاث خصال: إما مصليا و إما صائما و إما يقرأ القرآن و مارأيت قط يحدث رسول الله (ص) الا على الطهارة و لا يتكلم في ما لا يعنيه و كان من العلماء الزهاد الذين يخشون الله و مارأيت قط الا يخرج الوسادة من تحته و يجعلها تحتي.

<sup>4</sup> *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, vol. 2, p. 104; *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 2, p. 18:

كنت اذا نظرت إلى جعفر بن محمد علمت أنه من سلاله الثيبين

<sup>5</sup> *Rasa'il al-Jahiz*, p. 106:

جعفر بن محمد ألنى ملأ الدنيا علمه و فقهه و يقال ان أبا حنيفة من تلامذته و كذلك سفیان الثوري و حسبك بها في هذا الباب

<sup>6</sup> *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah*, p. 120.

<sup>7</sup> *Al-Imam al-Sadiq wa al-Madhahib al-Arba'ah*, vol. 1, p. 51-62.



academic prominence. Hasan bin Ali al-Washshā says that he saw nine hundred people in Masjid al-Kufa who used to say, “Ja’far bin Muhammad told me...”<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the number of people who studied under the Imam and heard narrations through him are reported to be around four thousand people.<sup>9</sup>

Sufyan al-Thawri, who in Sunni sources is well-known for his piety and knowledge, studied under the Imam and advanced in academics and ethics through him.<sup>10</sup> During the pilgrimage season (*hajj*) he would go to the Imam and ask him for spiritual advice. The Imam then taught him a supplication.<sup>11</sup>

In the midst of this, there were people who intended to weaken Imam Sadiq through narrating false traditions. With regards to this, Sharik said:

Ja’far bin Muhammad is a pious and God-fearing man. However, there are ignorant people who are in contact with him who narrate false traditions from him. There are those who, in order to acquire and extort money from others, will attribute any fabrication to the Imam, including Bayan bin Sam’an, one of the famous Ghulat (extremists) who claims knowing the Imam compensates for praying, fasting, and all obligatory acts and religious practices. In his closing statements, Sharik says: Ja’far’s stature is free of all these falsifications. However, when

<sup>8</sup> *al-Imam al-Sadiq*, Fadlullah, p. 129, and refer to al-Imam al-Sadiq wa al-Madhahib al-Arba’ah, vol. 1, p. 67.

<sup>9</sup> *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 2, p. 166, Tabriz.

<sup>10</sup> *Aqd al-Farid*, vol. 3, p. 175; Tadhkirah al-Huffadh (The Memorial of the Hadith Masters), vol. 1, p. 167; *al-Ithaf Bahth al-Ashraf*, p. 147; and *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 2, p. 175.

<sup>11</sup> *Tarikh Jurjan*, p. 554.

people hear them, the Imam's standing diminishes in their  
eyes.<sup>12</sup>

During this period, the clergy and academics highly regarded the Imam. Abu Zuhra writes the following in this regard: "Islamic scholars, with all of their difference of opinions and variety in inclinations, do not have a consensus on any individual other than Imam Sadiq."<sup>13</sup>

And Shahrastani, the author of the famous *Milal wa Nahal*, wrote: "In religious matters and issues, he possessed an endless amount of knowledge; in wisdom he held a superior view; in worldly affairs and its glamor he had a powerful asceticism, and he stayed away from illicit desires."<sup>14</sup>

In addition to benefiting from Imam Baqir,<sup>15</sup> Abu Hanifa has also narrated traditions from Imam Sadiq, such that his narrations from Imam Sadiq are abundantly seen in his *al-Athar*<sup>16</sup> in which he wrote, "I did not see anyone more of an expert in jurisprudence (*fiqh*), than Ja'far bin Muhammad and he is undoubtedly the most knowledgeable individual in the Islamic community (*ummah*)."<sup>17</sup>

Islamic scholar Ibn Kallikan also said:

<sup>12</sup> *Ikhtiyar Ma'rifah al-Rijal*, Tusi, p. 324-325, published: Mashhad.

<sup>13</sup> *Al-Imam al-Sadiq*, Abu Zuhra, p. 66:

الصادق و علمه ما اجمع علماء الاسلام على اختلاف طوائفهم في أمر كما أجمعوا على فضل الامام  
<sup>14</sup> *Al-Milal wa al-Nahal*, vol. 1, p. 147, Egypt; al-Imam al-Sadiq, Abu Zuhra, p. 39:

و هو ذو علم غزير في الدين و أدب كامل في الحكمة و زهد بالغ في الدنيا و ورع تام عن الشهوات.

<sup>15</sup> *Jami' al-Masanid*, Abu al-Mu'id Muwaffaq bin Ahmad al-Kharazmi, vol. 2, p. 349, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah.

<sup>16</sup> *al-Imam al-Sadiq*, Abu Zuhra, p. 38.

<sup>17</sup> *Jami' al-Masanid*, vol. 1, p. 22; al-Imam al-Sadiq, Abu Zuhra, p. 224; and al-Imam Abu Hanifah, p. 70:

ما رأيت من جعفر بن محمد، و أنه أعلم الامة.

He was one of the twelve Imams of the Imamiyyah sect and was of the prominent scholars of the family of the Holy Prophet. Due to the truthfulness in his words, he became known through the title 'Sadiq,' and his virtue is more popular than it needing to be explained.<sup>18</sup>

And Shaykh Mufid says about him: "The number of traditions that scholars of Islam have narrated from him, have not been narrated from any other member of his family."<sup>19</sup>

Mansur, the Abbasid Caliph who fought the Alawis, struggled to belittle Imam Sadiq's jurisprudential personality by introducing Sunni jurisprudence, like that of Malik bin Anas. He would tell Malik, "I swear you are the most intelligent of men...and if my life was prolonged, I would write you rulings and views like a mus-haf (manuscript) and send it to all horizons and would force people to accept it."<sup>20</sup> This act of Mansur was not a reflection of his fondness towards Malik, rather through making Malik a symbol, he wanted to subdue the fire of hatred and jealousy he had towards Imam Sadiq.

Mansur would seek any means to tarnish the Imam's academic and jurisprudential position, such that he persuaded Abu Hanifah to stand before the Imam and debate with him so that if Abu Hanifah becomes victorious, he would have taken the Imam out of the realm of Islamic academia. Abu Hanifah has reported the story himself:

<sup>18</sup> *Wafayat al-Ayan* (The Obituaries of Eminent Men), vol. 8, p. 105:

احد الائمه الاثني عشر على مذهب الامامية وكان من سادات اهل البيت و لقب بالصادق لصدق  
مقاتله و فضله أشهر من أن يذكر.

<sup>19</sup> *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 2, p. 166:

و لم ينقل العلماء عن أحد من أهل بيته ما نقل عنه

<sup>20</sup> *Tadhkirah al-Huffadh*, vol. 1, p. 209.

Mansur told me the people have found a peculiar regard for Ja'far bin Muhammad and heaps of people are inclining towards him. Prepare a set of difficult questions and issues and ask Ja'far for their answers; and when he is unable to answer your questions, he will diminish in the eyes of the people; hence, I prepared forty very complicated and difficult questions.

Then Imam Sadiq and Abu Hanifah met in Hirah, in the presence of Mansur. Abu Hanifah describes his moment of arrival to Mansur's assembly as such:

When I entered the gathering, I saw Ja'far bin Muhammad whose awe and grandeur had even overshadowed Mansur himself. I greeted and sat in my place. Then addressing me, Mansur said: Present your questions to Abu Abdallah. I asked his holiness the questions I had brought with me one after another. In response he would say: In regards to this issue your opinion is such and the people of Madinah's opinion is such and my opinion is such. In some parts of the drafted questions his opinion was in accordance with ours; in other parts in accordance with the views of the people of Madinah; and in some aspects was in disagreement with both views. Thus accordingly, forty issues were presented to the Imam and the answers received.

After the end of the debate, Abu Hanfah spontaneously gestured his final words to Imam Sadiq: "The most knowledgeable of people is he

who is well versed in the different views and opinions held by scholars in various issues.”<sup>21</sup>

Not only regarding jurisprudence have we received valuable narrations from Imam Sadiq, but also narrations pertaining to exegesis of the Qur'an (*tafsir*), science, theology (*kalam*), and ethics (*akhlaq*). Through referring to the book *al-Kafi* (the *usul* section), the depth and vastness of the Imam's viewpoint will become clear to a certain point. *Tafsir al-Burhan*, *Tafsir Safi*, and *Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn* contain a large number of narrations from the Imam.

Abu Zuhra, a Sunni scholar, writes the following on this subject: “His knowledge was not limited to Islamic traditions and jurisprudence; he also taught theology.”<sup>22</sup>

We cannot mention the Imam's theological viewpoints in detail here, but can bring his famous statement regarding the issues pertaining to determinism and free will, where he says: No absolute determinism and no absolute free will, but a way in between.<sup>23</sup> It is the most beautiful, most comprehensive, and most precise interpretation that has ever been expressed regarding this issue.

In another section of his book, Abu Zuhra says about Imam Sadiq: “Above all these sciences, Imam Sadiq includes a great amount of valuable information in ethics and the causes and motives of its corruption.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Al-Imam al-Sadiq*, Abu Zuhra, p. 27-28; *al-Imam Abu Hanifah*, Abu Zuhra, p. 70-71:

إِنَّ أَعْلَمَ النَّاسِ أَعْلَمُهُمْ بِاخْتِلَافِ النَّاسِ.

<sup>22</sup> *Al-Imam al-Sadiq*, Abu Zuhra, p. 66:

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ عِلْمُهُ مَقْصُورًا عَلَى الْحَدِيثِ وَفَقْهِ الْإِسْلَامِ بَلْ كَانَ يَدْرُسُ عِلْمَ الْكَلَامِ.

<sup>23</sup> لَا جَبَرَ وَلَا تَفْوِيزَ بَلْ أَمْرٌ بَيْنَ الْأَمْرَيْنِ.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67:

### **The Shi'as of Imam Sadiq**

The large number of Imam Sadiq's companions, the immensity of the Shi'a movement, and the conflicts and disputes it carried with itself during that time did not allow all the students and followers of the Imam to set their ideas and opinions in one correct perspective and to obtain all their Islamic knowledge from the main source i.e. the Ahlul Bayt as Muhammad ibn Muslim and Zurarah did.

Many of them would also participate in sessions held by Sunni scholars, which in turn had its effects on their mentality. From another side, the range of Imam Sadiq's followers being outspread in lands near and far made it impossible for them to personally visit the Imam; hence, they would refer to other well-known Shi'as in matters pertaining to jurisprudence and doctrine. There were times when this naturally caused differences amongst them that would spread amongst the Shi'a. An additional issue lied in the throes of political conflict amongst a group of Shi'as when their interest in the newly established Abbasid government was displayed.

Moreover, the Zaydi movement became another factor in this division, and with the development of their revolutionary movements, many extremist Shi'as began to follow them. This left relatively deep effects upon the Shi'a sect.

At the same time there were the tireless and ongoing efforts of the true followers and companions the Imam who preserved his academic works and narrations. Regarding them, Imam Sadiq said:

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و فوق هذه العلوم قد كان الامام الصادق على علم بالاخلاق و ما يؤتى إلى فسادها.

Other than Zurarah, Abu Basir Layth al-Muradi, Muhammad bin Muslim, and Burayd bin Mu'awiyah al-Ejli, there was none who saved our wilayah (leadership) and my father's narrations. If it were not for them, no one would know of us or our narrations. They are the protectors of the religion; and in the eyes of my father, they are the chief of trustees of God upon his matters of halal (permissible) and haram (forbidden). Just as they have preceded us in this world, they will also precede us in the hereafter.<sup>25</sup>

He also said, "May God bless Zurarah bin A'yan; if it were not for him and his companions, my father's narrations would have perished."<sup>26</sup>

Amongst these people there were individuals whom Imam Sadiq would introduce as a reference for his followers, to such a point that in response to one of his Shi'as who asked, "When a question presents itself to us who should we refer to?" the Imam said, "Seek Asadi, meaning Abu Basir."<sup>27</sup> In another instance he said, "Why do you not refer to Muhammad bin Muslim al-Thaqafi for he was respected and approved by my father and had heard narrations from him."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Tusi, *ibid.*, p. 137, and refer to *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, vol. 18, p. 103-104:

ما احد احبى ذكرنا و احاديث ابي الا زرارۃ و ابوبصير ليث المرادي، و محمد بن مسلم و بريد بن معاوية العجلي و لولا هؤلاء ما كان احد يستنبط هذا، هؤلاء حفاظ الدين و اماناء ابي(ع) على حلال الله و حرامه هم السابقون إلينا في الدنيا و السابقون إلينا في الآخرة.

<sup>26</sup> Tusi, *ibid.*, p. 136:

رحم الله زرارۃ بن أعين لولا زرارۃ و نظراءه لا ندرست احاديث ابي. .

<sup>27</sup> *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, vol. 18, p. 104:

عليك بالاسدى يعنى ابا بصير.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105:

ما يمنعك من محمد بن مسلم الثقفى فإنه سمع من ابي و كان عنده وجيها.

Apart from these individuals, there were people who were somewhere in between the Zaydi and Ja'fari sect. One day, when Imam Sadiq asked Abdul-Malik bin Amr regarding why he was not present in battle lines, and the Imam responded: "The Zaydis say, "There is no difference of opinion between us and Imam Ja'far, except that he does not believe in *jihad* (holy war)."<sup>29</sup> After denying the accusations made about him, the Imam said, "Yes, I swear to God I believe in jihad for the sake of God, but I do not want to put a halt to my knowledge because of their ignorance."<sup>30</sup>

Sayyid Humayri, one of the famous Shi'a poets, fell into another form of deviation that the Bani Abbas had placed before the Shi'as. He found an inclination towards the sect of Kaysaniyyah, which was created by the Bani Abbas. However, later he changed his ideology when he met the Imam and became amongst his true followers.<sup>31</sup> In a poem that displayed return to the Imam, he said, "In the name of Allah who is a great and mighty God, I have returned to Ja'far bin Muhammad and am certain Allah will pardon me and forgive my sins."<sup>32</sup> Imam Sadiq then sent his blessing upon him and in regards to him having committed a sin said, "It is not important before Allah to pardon the sins of the lovers of Ali."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> فَإِنَّ الزَّيْدِيَّةَ يَقُولُونَ لَيْسَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ جَعْفَرٍ خِلَافٌ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ لَا يَرَى الْجِهَادَ.

<sup>30</sup> *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, vol. 11, p. 32:

بِإِلَى وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأُرَاهُ وَلَكِنِّي أَكْرَهُ أَنْ أَدْعِيَ عَلَيَّ إِلَى جَهْلِهِمْ.

<sup>31</sup> Tusi, *Ikhtiyar Ma'rifah al-Rijal*, p. 288, Mashhad; al-Ghani, vol. 7, p. 233, Abu al-Faraj after narrating the aforementioned he narrated a saying from Ibn Samirah, who says: He did not change his ideology. Abu al-Faraj himself also does not agree with him having changed his beliefs, however in Shi'a books his change in ideology has been mentioned repeatedly, refer to al-Ghani, vol. 7, p. 235.

<sup>32</sup> جَعَفَرْتُ بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَأَيُّقُنْتُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ وَيَغْفِرُ

<sup>33</sup> وَمَا خَطَرَ ذَنْبٍ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يَغْفِرَهُ لِحُبِّ عَلِيٍّ.



Mahdi, the Abbasid caliph struggled to fuel disputes among the Shi'a. In this regard, Kashi mentions an individual named Ibn Mufadal who has written a book on Islamic sects and has brought each of Imam Sadiq's students as the head and founder of a Shi'a sect.

### **Imam Sadiq and the Ghulat (zealots)**

In our account of Imam Baqir's life, the Imam's encounter with the Ghulat was discussed. Here the Ghulat's actions and Imam Sadiq's reactions towards them will be expounded. The way in which the Imam dealt with them is his most important effort in preserving Shi'ism, in keeping them in moderation thus forming its principles throughout history. Generally, a religion has two stages in its formation, growth, and expansion where in each of these two stages a very serious and threatening danger may lurk.

The Ghulat's opinions and beliefs were comprised of a set of ideas that ascribed some of God's divine attributes to some people and accepted a kind of divinity regarding them; at times the title of God and other times attributes at the level of God.<sup>34</sup> Since the Shi'a Imams introduced themselves as appointed by God, these labels were ascribed to them and their love and *wilayah* (governance) in an extreme form could have been the reason for these beliefs.

The most important aspect of Imam Sadiq's life in which played a critical role in the existence of Shi'ism was the Imam's undisguised

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al-Ghani, vol. 7, p. 242 and 277.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Abi al-Dunya, *Maqtal Amir al-Mo'minin*, Turathuna Magazine, number 12, p. 121, Hadith 92/ This was a threat that the Holy Prophet had told Amir al-Mo'minin about beforehand in advance: *سيهلك فيك رجلان*. He also told Ibn Abbas: *الغلو اثم هلك من كان قبلك بالغلو*. Tabaqat, vol. 2, p. 181.

struggle against the Ghulat and the issue of extremism in which in various areas led to the restriction of the Ghulat. If this was not the case, no sign of the true Shi'i faith would have remained as it would have been harmed by people of other faiths.

Before mentioning Imam Sadiq's encounter with the Ghulat, it is important to note that some of the resources on Islamic sects and schools written by Sunni scholars due to their failure in distinguishing between the true Shi'a and the Ghulat mislead their readers. If the authors of these books were familiar with the Shi'as' ongoing struggles with the Ghulat and knew the Shi'a Imams' standpoint against them, they would have never confused these two with each other. Unfortunately, the same mistake is repeated by some orientalists who have identified the true Shi'as with the Ghulat.

## **The Imam's stance on the Ghulat**

### ***1. Warning against the Ghulat***

Of the Imam's dealings with the Ghulat was to create space between them and the Shi'as. Naturally, any relation with them could lead to harmful effects upon the Shi'a.

Imam Sadiq said the following to Mufadhal bin Mazid, in reference to the companions of Abi al-Khattab and the Ghulat: "Oh Mufadhal, do not socialize with the Ghulat, do not eat or drink with them, do not extend a hand in friendship towards them, and do not have cultural and academic exchanges with them."<sup>35</sup> He also said, "Protect your youth, so

<sup>35</sup> Tusi, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 586, hadith 525, Aal al-Bayt Institution, all other information pertaining to this book is from the Mashhad print; Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 12, p. 315:

يا مفضل لا تقاعدوهم ولا تؤاكلوهم ولا تشاربوهم ولا تصاغروهم ولا تؤاثرهم

that the Ghulat do not corrupt them, for indeed the Ghulat are the most evil creation of Allah; they lessen the glory of Allah and delegate lordship to the servants of Allah.”<sup>36</sup>

## 2. *Refuting Ghulat ideology*

The Imam rejected Ghulat beliefs and introduced God's book as a tool for recognizing truth and falsehood. Through condemning Ghulat ideology, the Imam initiated an intellectual movement in rectifying narrations and the Shi'a belief system. According to Shahristani's report, Sudayr Sayrafi went to Imam Sadiq and said:

My dear, your Shi'a followers have fallen into disagreement and are persistence about it. The following statements have been made by various groups: a) “Whatever the Imam needs for guiding people is said in his ear”; b) “It is revealed (*wahy*) to him”; c) “It is inspired to his heart (*ilham*)”; d) “He sees it in his sleep”; e) “He gives fatwas from written text passed down to him from his forefathers.” Which of these viewpoints are correct? The Imam said none of them are. Oh Sudayr, we are God's proof and His trustees upon his servants and we say the permissible and forbidden acts based on God's book.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, with the penetration of exaggerated ideology, differences and groups formed amongst the Shi'as until it resulted in confusion; as a result, they referred to Imam Sadiq as ensuring refuge.

<sup>36</sup> Amali al-Shaykh, vol. 2, p. 264:

أحذروا على شبابكم الغلاة لا يفسدوهم، الغلاة شرّ خلق الله يصغرون عظمة الله و يدعون الربوبية لعباد الله.

<sup>37</sup> Tafsir Shahristani Makhtut, sheet (waraqa') 25; narrated from Azarshib, Magazine Turathina, Number 12, p. 17-18, Article “Ahlul Bayt fi Ra'y Sahib al-Milal wa al-Nahl.

Sharestani narrated:

Faydh bin Mukhtar went to the Imam and said, 'Oh my dear, such dispute has formed amongst the Shi'as. Sometimes I participate in their gatherings and in no time I become sceptical about you; after that I go to Mufaddal, and with some arguments, he reassures me.' Abu Abdullah [Imam Sadiq] said, 'Yes, people have found a tendency to lie as if God has made it mandatory upon them and does not want anything but lying from them. I would mention a narration for them, and the moment they leave, they interpret it in the unintended and wrong context.'<sup>38</sup>

The later part of the narration refers to the differences amongst the Shi'a in which we mentioned in the beginning as a factor in deviation, and clearly shows the penetration of the Ghulat's atheistic beliefs among those tied to the Imam; they forced them to misinterpret his reports and created a problem amongst the Shi'as in which only a few of the true and strong companions of the Imam like Mufaddal were capable of managing.

In another narration, it has been reported: Esa Jurjani said he told Imam Ja'far bin Muhammad: Should I say what I have heard from these people? He said: "Go ahead". I said:

A group of them worship you instead of God, and another group give you the attribution of prophethood...He says: 'When the Imam heard this, he cried such that his holy face became wet from the tears shed from his eyes', then he said, 'If God places them before me and I do not shed

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<sup>38</sup> Sharestani, *ibid.* book, sheet 26, Turathina, number 12, p. 18.

their blood, may God shed the blood of my children  
through my hands.’<sup>39</sup>

Imam Baqir’s messianism (*mahdawiyyah*) was one of the incorrect beliefs rejected by the Imam during the time of Imam Sadiq.<sup>40</sup> Believing in the Imams’ prophethood, which was also introduced by the Ghulat, was rejected by the Imams. Imam Sadiq said, “May God curse those who consider us to be God’s prophets and may God curse those who may have uncertainty in its regard.”<sup>41</sup>

Another extreme belief the Ghulat held was in using the term “إله” (God) in regards to the Imam, “It is he who is the God of the heavens and the God of the Earth, and said: we mean the Imam.”<sup>42</sup>

Imam Sadiq said those who hold this belief are worse than Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, and Polytheists.<sup>43</sup>

Another idea of Ghulat was to attribute a kind of deity to the Imams. To refute these claims, Imam Sadiq said:

May God’s curse be upon those who say about us what we  
do no say ourselves. May God’s curse be upon those who  
remove us from the state of servitude towards God who

<sup>39</sup> Al-Sahmi, Tarikh Jurjan, p. 322-323:

فإن طائفة منهم عبدوك واتخذوك إلها من دون الله و طائفة أخرى و الوالك بالتبوة... قال: فبكي حتى ابتلت لحيته ثم قال: ان امكنني الله من هؤلاء فلم اسفك دمائهم سفك الله دم ولدي على يدي.

<sup>40</sup> Tusi, Ikhtiyar Ma’rifah al-Rijal, p. 300.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 301:

من قال انا انبياء فعليه لعنة الله و من شك في ذلك فعليه لعنة الله.

<sup>42</sup> هو الذي في السماء إله و في الارض إله، قال هو الامام.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 300.

created us and to whom we return and in whose hand lies  
my forelock.<sup>44</sup>

### 3. *Apostasy of Ghulat*

Imam Sadiq declared the leaders and followers of Ghulat as apostates, and through this drew a line between his followers and theirs, paving the way for Shi'as to follow in the Imam's footsteps to free them of any deviation and corruption injected by the Ghulat.

Symbolism was one of the tools the Ghulat used in analysing religious issues. They would not apply religious concepts to their examples; instead, they symbolism for their assumed meanings. Imam Sadiq rejected this, as seen in his letter to Abu al-Khattab, one of the leaders of the Ghulat:

I heard you think adultery is a man, wine another man,  
prayer a man, fasting a man, and evil deeds also a man. It  
is not such that you may think; we are the root of truth.  
The branches of truth are obeying God, our enemy is the  
root of evil, and its branches are evil acts.<sup>45</sup>

And in another narration, he said to the Ghulat, "Repent towards God, for you all are corrupt and apostates and polytheists."<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 302:

لعن الله من قال فينا ما لا نقوله في انفسنا و لعن الله من ازالنا عن العبودية لله الذى خلقنا و اليه مآبنا و  
معادنا و بيده نواصينا

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 291:

بلغنى اتك تزعم ان التونا رجل و ان الحمر رجل و ان الصلاة رجل و ان الصيام رجل و ان الفواحش  
رجل و ليس هو كما تقول اتا اصل الحق و فروع الحق طاعة الله و عدونا اصل الشر و فروعهم  
الفواحش.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 297:

توبوا الى الله فاتكم فشق كفار مشركون.

The Imam's emphasis on condemning the Ghulat was because their influence expanded with large groups following them in Kufa. The existence and practice of concealing one's belief (*taqiyyah*) in the majority of societal interactions of the Shi'a during that time led many to assume the Imam was condemning them in public while covertly accepting them and responsible for their establishment. This view amplified the Imam's difficulties in working to free the Shi'a community of the Ghulat.

The Ghulat usually promoted such beliefs when influenced by specific motives. These motives included the following:

1. Freedom from performing obligations, in such a way that the Murji'ah had once fallen prey to. They would falsely narrate from Imam Sadiq, saying that whoever recognizes the Imam, can do whatever he desires.<sup>47</sup> To correct their misquotation, the Imam corrected them by saying: "I [actually] said: 'Since you have found wisdom (towards your Imam), do whatever you please from good deeds, whether few or many, for it will be accepted from you.'"<sup>48</sup>

Naturally, when practices such as avoiding wine, fasting, and prayer have been removed from their religious edicts, they would not be practically applied. The Shi'as knew who the Ghulat were by checking as to whether they performed their prayers during prayer time.<sup>49</sup>

The Ghulat were reported in a comprehensive narration from a letter written by Imam Sadiq to some of his companions. Judge Nu'man (al-

<sup>47</sup> Usul al-Kafi, vol. 4, p. 464.

<sup>48</sup> انما قلت اذا عرفت فاعمل ما شئت من قليل الخير و كثيره فانه يقبل منك.

<sup>49</sup> Tusi, ibid., p. 530.

Qadhi al-Nu'man) reported a detailed account of it<sup>50</sup> from Sharistani. The Imam continues his letter:

They have heard some things but have not understood its true meaning, because in understanding the truths of religion they placed their opinions as their source and resorted to their own intellect, they have not recognized the boundaries of these truths. And the reason for this is rejecting and slandering the holy Prophet and daring to commit sins.<sup>51</sup>

The Imam placed practicing God's commands alongside God, the Prophet, and the Imams' wisdom and said:

God accepts his servants' actions after recognizing Allah, acknowledging His oneness (*tawhid*), and confessing to his Lordship after recognizing His Prophet, after accepting that which the Prophet has brought from God, after recognizing the Imams after the Prophet, and that God has made obedience to them obligatory to all people in all eras. After acting upon that which God made obligatory upon His servants, including submitting to the apparent and hidden and after avoiding the prohibitions of God, including the apparent and hidden acts, likewise the relation between the root (*usul*) and branches (*furu'*) of jurisprudence is as such.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Abu Zuhrah, al-Imam al-Sadiq, p. 58-59 reported from Da'aim al-Islam.

<sup>51</sup> و اعلم ان هولاء القوم سمعوا ما لم يقفوا على حقيقته و لم يعرفوا حدود تلك الاشياء مقايسة برأيهم و منتهى عقولهم و لم يضعفوا على حدود ما أمروا به تكديبا و افتراء على رسوله و جرأة على المعاصي.

<sup>52</sup> Tafsir Shahrastani, refer to Azar Shab article, Torasna, Number 12, p. 18; Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 24, p. 286-289 reported from Shahrastani.



Materialism was another factor that led to the establishment of the Ghulat,<sup>53</sup> in which through the pretence of defending the true religion they managed to attract people to themselves so that through these means they could attain their goals. Imam Sadiq says the following in this regard:

People have gravitated towards us under false pretences...I narrated a tradition to one of them, and the moment he leaves, he interprets it as other than what it truly means. This is because they have not heeded to our narrations for the sake of God; rather, they have set this act as a means of reaching their greed for the world.<sup>54</sup>

The majority of Ghulat ideology ended up harming Shi'ism and created an unfavourable atmosphere against its adherents. Furthermore, Sunni animosity towards Shi'as increased to prevent the Ghulats and their ideologies from spreading to the point where Abu Hanifah told his followers not to report the narration of Ghadir.

Indeed, Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sādiq was notable by all Muslims for his virtue, understanding, and academic endeavours, particularly as the originator of Shi'a Islamic fiqh as well as his extensive information in various fields that had a great academic influence on his society. He also confronted the Ghulat, who held dangerous ideas, and sought to eliminate their influence by countering their erroneous dogmas, declared them as apostates, and demanded the Shi'a to avoid their presence.

<sup>53</sup> Tusi, *ibid*, p. 295.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136:

أَنَّ النَّاسَ أَوَّلَعُوا بِالْكَذِبِ عَلَيْنَا... وَأَنِّي أَحَدْتُ أَحَدَهُمْ بِحَدِيثٍ فَلَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ عِنْدِي حَتَّى يَتَأَوَّلَهُ غَيْرَ تَأْوِيلِهِ  
وَذَلِكَ أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَطْلُبُونَ بِحَدِيثِنَا وَبِحَبْتِنَا مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَ إِنَّمَا يَطْلُبُونَ الدُّنْيَا.



## THE CONNECTION BETWEEN IMAM MAHDI AND IMAM HUSAYN, PART II<sup>1</sup>

MOHAMMAD ALI SHOMALI

**ABSTRACT:** No doubt all the Imams are connected to each other and reflect the same light.<sup>2</sup> However, there is a special connection and affinity between Imam Husayn and Imam Mahdi, that is, Imam Husayn is very clearly connected to what will happen in the End of the Time (*Akhir al-Zaman*) when Imam Mahdi comes. Part I included verses from the Qur'an and hadiths to demonstrate this connection. This part explains why there is such a close connection between the two and why Imam Mahdi refers to Imam Husayn in his universal mission for establishing justice.

### **Imam Husayn as a central theme in Imam Mahdi's movement**

Imam Mahdi's universal mission will include Imam Husayn's case at the top of his agenda. Imam Mahdi is not only for the Middle East, Arabs,

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is the second part of a series of three papers on the subject, initially conceived as part of a series of lectures delivered by the author in London, at the Islamic Centre of England in Muharram 1433/November and December 2011, entitled, "Spiritual Struggle of Karbala."

<sup>2</sup> Of course, because of the kind of condition they were put in, Imams can give us different lessons. This is why we have the peace treaty of Imam Hasan and then the uprising of Imam Husayn. This does not mean that Imam Husayn is braver than Imam Hasan. They were put in different conditions and thus acted differently so that we have scenarios ready for all different conditions today. In addition to having the experience of twenty three years of life of Prophet Muhammad (s), the Shi'a the experience of leadership and guidance of the infallibles is extended up to 329 A.H, when major occultation if Imam Mahdi (a) started. So we know what we should do in different conditions. We also have our scholars who specialize in understanding the teachings of the Prophet and his Ahlul Bayt and lead the community when they lack direct access to the infallible leadership.

Iranians or people from subcontinents; he is going to lead humanity. The question is why does the demand for the blood of Imam Husayn stand out in the agenda of a leader whose mission is universal? If Imam Mahdi appeared today and asked for the revenge of both the killers of Husayn and those who approve of the murder, this discourse would not apply to a major part of the world. Many people have nothing to do with this. How many people today are either pleased with or involved in killing Imam Husayn? Most do not even know about him, let alone be for or against him, and therefore they have not made any position in favour or against him.<sup>3</sup> So what changes are going to happen in the world that would make Imam Mahdi's central reference to Imam Husayn's case relevant to the global community?<sup>4</sup>

Thus another question arises: What should be done today for Imam Husayn to become well-known so that almost everyone would take a stand either in favour or against him? That type of world is the world which is near to the time of Imam Mahdi's advent. The following is my humble understanding. Before I say what my understanding is, we should see how important it is in Islam to have justice.

### **The importance of justice in Islam**

Justice is not a value or virtue equal in merit to other values or virtues. In Islam, especially in the school of Ahlul Bayt, justice is the most

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<sup>3</sup> Perhaps this is one way of understanding why Imam Mahdi does not come today.

<sup>4</sup> It might be said that there are people today who seem to support Yazid. Either they praise Yazid today or, for example, they attack those who go for ziyarat of Imam Husayn. Thus, these are the people that are going to be the enemies of Imam Mahdi. However, I do not think this illustrates the entire picture. How important are these people? Although what these ignorant people who kill themselves to kill others do is wrong by any standard and in a sense they are supporters of Yazid and do like Yazid, this is not the main problem of the world today and these people are not the main forces of evil today. We must look at it in a way that can appeal to humanity.

important value and the central virtue. Divine justice is a principle of our faith, but it does not just remain as a matter of theology or something that we should know and believe about God; rather divine justice is to be translated into personal and interpersonal justice.

According to the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt, justice is a condition for every important social position. A political, spiritual, or prayer leader<sup>5</sup> – especially the Friday prayer leader<sup>6</sup> – must be just and knowledgeable. Judges and witnesses in a court must also be just.

It should be noted that Muslim and many non-Muslim ethicists hold that there are values that are always good and there are values that may have exceptions. For example, kindness is a virtue although there are cases in which it is unwise to display it, such as a parent showing kindness when his or her child is eating something which is harmful to his health or is watching a game instead of revising for a test. Constant kindness to children may result in spoiling them, thus harming their personalities. Though kindness is an admirable trait, it should be controlled, as with other good traits.<sup>7</sup> However, there is one value that

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<sup>5</sup> Normally we do not find this in other schools of Islam. They believe they can follow the lead of someone they do not know in their prayers.

<sup>6</sup> This is a distinction that many, if not all, scholars make. If you want to be the leader of a prayer it is enough if people believe that you are just, even if you are not sure about your justice or you do not believe that you are just. People can make the intention of congregational prayer and you make the intention of individual (*furada*) prayer. However, a Friday prayer leader must believe that he is just. If he does not find himself just then he cannot undertake the leadership.

<sup>7</sup> Another example is about telling the truth. Sometimes maybe to tell the truth can cause serious problems and you have to hide the truth. And if not possible to do that sometimes you may be required to tell a lie. For example, if by telling the truth I put an innocent life into risk then I have to hide it or if it is not possible tell a lie. Of course, this is to save an innocent life and not a criminal one who is going to see the justice. Or if two people like a husband and wife have problem with each other you should get involved to help and if it is only by telling lies that you can bring them together you can do so. For example, you can go to the husband and say your wife very much loves you and go to the wife and say something similar and bring them together. Normally our

all our scholars believe that has no exception and that is justice. Injustice and oppression is never allowed.<sup>8</sup>

In Islam, justice must be established within and without. Other schools of thought restrict justice to interpersonal relations: I have to be just with you, and you have to be just with me. The government has to be just. The leader has to be just. However, in Islam, it is both interpersonal and intrapersonal. People are to be just from within, with respect to themselves. If a person commits a sin, he has been unjust to himself: *"He who violates the boundaries that Allah has drawn and goes beyond them has oppressed himself."*<sup>9</sup> And this is why we say: *"Our Lord, we have oppressed ourselves";*<sup>10</sup> or in Dua Kumayl referring to our sins we recite: "I have done injustice to myself."

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jurists permit lying for reconciliation. This is different from what some people think and lie for everything and say it is allowed, because there was a *maslahah* or expediency involved. There must be something which in the sight of Allah is so important that it overrides the value of telling the truth, and these are very narrowly defined by jurists.

<sup>8</sup> Sometimes people wonder why we pray to Allah not to treat us with His justice like the following supplication:

الهيأ عاملنا بفضلك و لا تعاملنا بعدلك

O our lord, Treat us with your favour, and do not treat us with your justice.

This raises a question for them since they think this is an exception for justice while it is not. When we ask God not to treat us with His justice it does not mean that we want Him to treat us with injustice or be unjust to us. No one would want that. On the contrary, what is meant here is that we want something even more than justice. This is because justice has two levels. The first one is to give one exactly what one deserves and the second one is to give one what one deserves or more. In this phrase, the first meaning of justice has been used. Thus, when we say do not treat us with justice it means that do not treat us as we deserve because we are worried that what we deserve is not good. Therefore, we ask for more than what we deserve. Notice that it would have only been injustice if we had asked for less. So it became clear that this phrase is not an exception for justice where injustice is allowed. You do not find any case in Islam in which injustice is allowed. You always have to be just.

<sup>9</sup> Qur'an 65:1. The Qur'an also says: *"And they did not wrong Us, but they used to wrong [only] themselves."* (7:160; 2:57)

<sup>10</sup> Qur'an 7:23

We do not have the right to be unjust even to ourselves whether it is harming our bodies, wasting our talents, or damaging our own reputation. And then we are to refrain from doing any injustice to others, with unbiased treatment: “...*ill feeling for a people should never lead you to be unfair*” (5:8). For example, if the murderer of Imam Husayn were here today and put on trial, our responsibility is to be just with him, even if he is an enemy: “*Be fair; that is nearer to Godwariness*” (5:8).

In Islam, piety and justice are inseparable with respect to ourselves, each other, and even with animals. Imam Ali, who earned his status as an icon of justice, says:

وَاللّٰهُ لَوْ أُعْطِيَ الْأَقَالِمَ السَّبْعَةَ بِمَا تَحْتَ أَفْلَاقِهَا عَلَى أَنْ أَعْصِيَ اللَّهَ فِي نَمْلَةٍ  
أَسْلُبَهَا جُلْبَ شَعِيرَةٍ مَا فَعَلْتُهُ

If I am given seven continents and whatever is under their skies so that I would disobey Allah by taking the peal of wheat from the mouth of an ant I would not do it.<sup>11</sup>

When Allah speaks of the prophets' duties such as introducing religious practices such as praying and fasting, purifying people's hearts through character education and it comes to a universal value, Allah says that all the prophets have been sent to establish social justice: “*Certainly, We have sent all the messengers with manifest truths and gave them book and scale (which means law) so that people establish justice.*” (57:25)

As implied in the verse, messengers were not sent to miraculously establish justice; they were sent to guide people with specific instructions to establish justice. Allah does not want to establish justice by miracles;

<sup>11</sup> *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 224 and *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 40, p. 163, chapter 107, no. 57

miracles are to establish trust in people so that they believe in the Prophets, but then the believers have to strive to establish justice. It will not work in the way the followers of Moses expected, when they told him: “*Go ahead, you and your Lord, and fight. We will be sitting right here*” (5:24). We have to get involved. The prophets were sent for people to rise and establish justice. This is the central position of justice.

### **Dignity**

Another fundamental value is dignity. Although many believe the right to live is the highest right human beings possess – and even though the right to life is important – the highest right that we truly have is the right for dignity. A person’s dignity is more important than his physical life, since life has no value with constant humiliation, such as being caged up, treated like an animal, and merely accepting the food thrown to us. In this condition, the most important right is definitely not life. More important than just living is to be treated as a human being with honour and dignity.

Therefore, justice is to give people what they deserve, and on top of everything to give them their honour and dignity. This is the most important right. This is something that Allah has planned to be finally achieved. Without this, the world will not come to an end. Without having a day at least in which humanity can live with justice and dignity the world will not come to an end. That must happen in this world. The kingdom of Allah must be established in this world before seeing it in the hereafter.

### **The role model for establishing justice**

The one leader who will succeed in achieving a life of dignity for mankind is Imam Mahdi. Reiterating what was said before, rather than



miraculously establishing it, we are responsible, otherwise we wouldn't be waiting. Though he will certainly be the leader, he will need helpers, people who are ready to establish justice. These helpers will have first established justice in their own souls and hearts, then with their brothers and sisters within their community, then extend that justice to the larger social sphere, and finally to other living beings. Those who went out of their way to accomplish it can ask the Imam to include them in his movement, a movement that will establish worldwide justice.

When those who will strive for justice want to get inspiration and energy, when they want to realize that life has no value without justice and dignity, the best role model for them would be Imam Husayn. Those who want to help Imam Zaman and prepare for his appearance and then support him to achieve the justice that gives all people their honour and dignity cannot do this without remembering Imam Husayn. Imam Husayn has shown that although life is important, there is more to it than physical life. Concerning dignity, the Imam said the following part of a poem on the Day of Ashura:

الموت خير من ركوب العار      و العار اولى من دخول النار

Death is better than losing you honor

And losing your honor is better than going to hell.<sup>12</sup>

Yazid ordered the Imam to pay allegiance, and this could have saved the Imam's life and ensured him a decent living, that of security and the freedom to teach and worship. However, Yazid had one condition: the Imam was to pay allegiance to Yazid, to which the Imam said:

<sup>12</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 44, p. 192, p. 196, vol. 45, p. 49 and p. 50 and vol. 75, p. 128.

مثلى لا يبايع مثله

A person like me does not pay allegiance to someone like him.<sup>13</sup>

A person who dedicated his entire life to obeying Allah does not pay allegiance to Yazid, an openly immoral, unjust, and oppressive tyrant who was going to lead the society to adopt his ways. Imam Husayn believed that there is no value in one's life, even if one spends it worshiping Allah when one gives up one's dignity and honour by taking an oath of allegiance to a person like Yazid.

هيهات منا الذلة أبى الله ذلك لنا ورسوله و المؤمنون و حجور طهرت

Far from us is disgrace. God does not accept this for us. The Messenger and the believers would not be pleased with that. And those pure laps [on which Husayn was brought up].<sup>14</sup>

### Husayn: The best source of inspiration

Those who want to establish justice need Imam Husayn. No revolution or reform occurred in the Shi'a world unless they referred to Husayn. People and groups such as Mukhtar, the Tawwab, the uprising of the people of Fakh and to the overthrowing the Umayyad Caliphate all referred to Imam Husayn. Even non-Muslim reformers who knew Imam Husayn learned from him. Gandhi is quoted as saying, "I learnt from Husayn how to achieve victory while being oppressed."

The question arises: Why is it that other reformers do not use Imam Husayn as their source of inspiration? Because they do not know him. It is our fault that a few non-Shi'as and non-Muslims know Husayn only

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., vol. 44, p. 324

<sup>14</sup> *Al-Ihtijaj*, vol. 2, p. 300

by chance because there exists no systematic introduction of Imam Husayn's movement to all people. Many of us prefer to revel in our gatherings and do things we enjoy and keep him for us. Many of us think or at least act as if we have some kind of monopoly over Imam Husayn. And we are not serious in saying that we want to promote Imam Husayn. That is the last thing in our list. We first want to enjoy our mourning gathering in the way we are brought up with and we do not care much whether outsiders understand or not, whether it makes sense to them or not.<sup>15</sup>

Imam Husayn is always a source of inspiration for anyone who is concerned about justice. Husayn would be chosen over other role models as one who sacrificed the most for dignity and justice. If Husayn is not revered, it is because he is unknown. If you know who Husayn was and what he did, it is impossible to take anyone other than him as an exemplar of genuine struggle for establishing justice and dignity. Who sacrificed for justice and dignity more than Imam Husayn?<sup>16</sup> For

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<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, some of us have kept Imam Husayn in prison of our own community. We have not let the light of Imam Husayn go and reach everyone. When people want to know who Husayn was what can they do today? For example if you live in a neighbourhood and someone wants to know about Imam Husayn what would they do? He would probably decide to go to the gathering of the lovers of Husayn and see what they do. Do you think our gatherings are in a way that if an outsider comes would benefit or would understand what Husayn ideas are? Or if for example he wants to know what was Husayn's idea about family life, do you think by looking at our families they will realize what Husayn wants? If he wants to see how a child must respect his parents can he look at our children and find that out? If he wants to know how Imam Husayn was saying about kindness and mercy towards your neighbours, would he see that if he looks at the Shi'a neighbours? When we don't show the values of Imam Husayn and we say we are lovers of Imam Husayn we confuse people about Imam Husayn. We don't let them to have access to the true and original Husayn. They look at him through us and, instead of being mirrors to reflect the light of Husayn, we misguide people. Of course, this is not about everyone but some.

<sup>16</sup> For example, today people from all over the world respect Nelson Mandela because he struggled for a noble cause. He spent 27 years in prison calling for justice. We too have respect for him, but can we compare what he has done for justice and what Imam Husayn has done?

this reason, when Imam Mahdi wants to call for establishment of justice, he will refer to Husayn. This makes it clear what he wants and to what extent he is ready to sacrifice.

### **The requirement**

At this point, the following question arises: What needs to happen for Imam Mahdi to start his universal movement by referring to Imam Husayn? When can he stand between Rukn and Maqam of Ka'ba to say, "I am calling for the blood of Husayn to be compensated?" This will only happen when Imam Husayn becomes the central point of reference in the world, when everyone knows about him, when the conflict between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, and good and bad people will take form around Imam Husayn. In other words, the movement will start only when people of the world will be polarized around Husayn. There will be many non-Muslims whom due to their good-naturedness will take the side of Imam Husayn. There are many people in the west who will be among the best supporters of Imam Mahdi. Imam Mahdi would give everyone his right and would treat everyone with dignity; all people of good will would benefit, since Imam Mahdi will be establishing nothing but justice.

### **Sharing the real Husayn with everyone**

For Imam Mahdi's movement to start, Imam Husayn must become known to everyone. Everyone must develop an idea about him: either loving Husayn for his stand for justice and dignity, or disliking Husayn as a result of being unjust to oneself and desiring to humiliate humanity. Those who commit injustice or usurp or violate rights of people will not be in favour of Imam Husayn. When will this idea of people being either in favour or against Imam Husayn occur? Not until

the Imam is known to everyone. And it is not just a matter of publishing some books or booklets. We are to ensure that the true Husayn – not the Husayn that some of us currently show and represent – is exposed to press and eventually the people of the world. What is most important is to show the real Husayn in our actions, rather than in the form of propagation.

Imam Mahdi's mission to establish justice and equity is deeply connected to Imam Husayn's movement against injustice and humiliation by the oppressors. Before the advent of Imam Mahdi, almost everyone will know who Imam Husayn is and what he stood for; those who struggle for justice would refer to him as their role model, and those who fight against them would question Imam Husayn and his followers, and finally they would support and show their appreciation of what was committed by Yazid and his people and as a result associate themselves with the killing of Imam Husayn and his family members and companions.

In the next part, we will discuss how one can help Imam Husayn and through that help the Prophet and Imam Mahdi. What is the real challenge for us today is to see how can we help Imam Husayn and through that help Imam Mahdi as he himself quoted from the Prophet saying "Whoever helps Husayn has helped me."