

Inspirational Quotes

from

Grand Ayatollah Sadiq Shirazi

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English edition

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Contents

Foreword	v
Our Religion	1
Allah's Final Messenger	19
The Ahl al-Bayt	27
The Commander of the Faithful	37
Imam Husayn and Ashura	53
The Awaited Hope	75
The holy month of Ramadahn	85
Freedom	91
Peace and Violence	97
Politics and Governance	107
Women	115
The Youth	125
The Good Society	129
The Husayni programs	141
Knowledge	149
Ethics	151
History	165
Disseminating the Teachings of Islam	179
Seminary Students	185
Iraq	197
Worldly Life	219
Contemplations	223
Glossary	237
Endnotes	243

APPENDIX	265
The Fourteen Infallible (<i>ma ‘şoom</i>) Personages.....	267
Months of the Islamic Calendar	271
Transliteration.....	273
The Author	277

Foreword

The Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Sadiq Husayni Shirazi is one of the most illustrious scholars of the Muslim world today. He is known for his outstanding learning and intellectual distinction, but more so is he renowned for his humility and moral conduct and for his interaction with others especially with his foes.

These qualities are evident in his teachings, lectures to seminary students, and speeches to the public.

This work presents a concise collection of quotes and statements from those speeches and lectures, making it a source of guidance drawing on the teachings and experience of one of the most eminent authorities on Islam. These lectures and speeches cover a broad theme of topics, and thus these quotes address various issues and subjects.

This collection of inspirational quotes presents the cultural entity of the *marje'* or Authority on Islam, and therefore offers an opportunity for education and reflection on the true teachings of Islam, on various aspects; at a time when abhorrent atrocities and crimes against humanity are committed with impunity in the name of Islam, jihad, and the two sacred mosques.

This work represent a priceless collection of teachings, expertise and knowledge twined with a life time of experience in various aspects of everyday life, promoted by one of the most eminent scholars of the time, and mentor to hundreds of thousands of Muslims round the globe.

The point of this work is to disseminate “the good word” and promote the values of tolerance, cooperation, dialogue, respect, peace and development for the sake of humanity and its bright future, since, as Imam Ali, peace be upon him, puts it, “people are one of two; they are either your brother in religion, or your equal in creation.”

As to why this erudite scholar was chosen and this book translated – some ten years after it was first published – it's because of the significance of the thoughts and visions of such esteemed personalities from the well-known Shirazi family, along with his brother the late Grand Ayatollah Imam Muhammad Shirazi, and because of the insight they have about Islam, its history and teachings, as well as being well-versed with the history of the Prophet of Islam and his progeny the Ahl al Bayt, peace be upon them.

It is also because of their insight and comprehensive understanding of the Ahl al Bayt's numerous disciplines of learning which they - the Ahl al Bayt - facilitated for humanity.

Furthermore, it is also because of these personalities' adherence to the Ahl al Bayt's teachings, and their resolute belief that those various disciplines of learning - from Ahl al Bayt - are for the benefit of mankind, and that they are the only universal solution for all of humanity for all time.

However, these personalities do not stop at that.

Subsequently, these personalities have shown that they have spared no effort to put those teachings and disciplines of learning into practice, and relentlessly endeavour to disseminate them to the masses.

It is well established that this family, which is famous for its deep-rooted heritage in the various disciplines of Islamic learning, as well as for its strife and struggle, continue with its movement, which is nonetheless fraught with risks and dangers, but they press ahead regardless, because of their belief in the benefit of those teachings for humanity, despite the cost and consequences to their persons.

The least thing that can be said about them is that they are an independent Islamic school of thought which is distinguished for its thoughts, ideas and visions, and for its pragmatic approaches, as well as its various foundations and institutions throughout the globe – which has

not been extinguished despite the persecution it has been subjected to by various governments at various times for over a century.

This work consists of a collection of quotes and statements selected from speeches and lectures given by Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Sadiq Husayni Shirazi over some three years covering the period 2002-2005.

The quotes are grouped according to their topics in some twenty categories.

The original work was compiled and edited by Muhammad Talib al-Adeeb, entitled “*min abaq al marjaeyah*”, and completed in October 2005.

In the original Arabic work, there were some similarities between some of the quotes, and thus not used for the English version. Furthermore, the order of some of the quotes have been revised, and as a result of these, the numbering of the English version is not the same as that of the Arabic original.

* * *

Editorial notes:

The ﴿ brackets are used to indicate that the texts within them are verses of the holy Qur'an. The numbers that appear after the brackets indicate the relevant Qur'anic chapter or *surah*: *ayah*. For example, 4:25 refers to *ayah* 25 of the fourth *surah* of the holy Qur'an which is called “Women”. The Qur'an consists of 114 *surah*.

Texts within [] brackets are inserted by translator/editor for clarification.

The explanatory introductions given for some of the chapters are given by the English version editor. So too is the glossary provided at the end of the text.

Most explanatory footnotes are given at the bottom of the page, but those footnotes that are detailed – and thus long for a nominal footnote – are given in the endnotes. All footnotes and endnotes are by the translator or the editor of the English version unless otherwise stated.

22 February 2016

Z Olyabek

Our Religion

Introduction

Islam is a way of life for mankind; it is the sole means for the wellbeing and prosperity of mankind in this world, for the appropriate interaction with fellow human beings and with the environment, for the recognition and understanding of the creator, and for the preparation for the eternal hereafter.

Islam facilitates the grounds for sound politics, economy, justice, virtue, cultural and social order, all of which contribute and ensure mankind's wellbeing and prosperity. This is in addition to the added dimension of preparing for the hereafter which, in turn, is not without influence on the worldly material life here. Islam is a comprehensive system that safeguards mankind's success and advance in both worlds. Editors.

1

Religion is a way of life.

2

Falsehood comes in different forms and guises but the truth is always one.

3

As long as the different prophets are despatched by the one deity, then the path of all is one.

4

Unlike the sick, the physically fit lead a natural and active life. In the same way, religion would lack purpose and vitality if its role is distanced from day to day life. Almighty Allah directed His prophets to «uphold the religion»¹ as a dynamic force in life.

¹ In reference to the Qur'anic verse 42:13.

5

Our duty is to grasp the teachings of Islam, practice them, and teach them to others, irrespective of one being a man or a woman, a husband or a wife, offspring or parents, teachers or pupils, buyers or sellers, landlords or tenants, neighbours or relatives – we must practice the teachings of Islam under all circumstances and in all aspects of life.

6

Performing the daily obligatory prayers in ignorance [of the prayers' rulings] often constitutes a fault; because if the ignorant does not perform the obligatory prayers that would be a fault, and if he performs it in a wrong way, that would also be a fault. The fault is the same whether it is in terms of negligence and failure (*taqṣeer*) or mere ignorance (*quṣoor*).¹

7

If the individual who is ignorant of his religious duties, does not enjoin good and prohibit evil – while it is obligatory for him to do so – he would be committing a fault. Even if he were to do so, in all likelihood his “enjoining to good and prohibiting of evil” would be a fault, because he lacks the knowledge of how, when and in what circumstances he should do so. For example, he may prescribe that which is *makrooh* (i.e. discouraged) as forbidden, or that which is *mostaḥab* (i.e. recommended) as obligatory; thus advocating something contrary to what Allah has revealed.

8

The *qāṣir* (ignorant), i.e. the one who is not aware of his obligations, is not obliged to anything. This is because one of the fundamental principles of Islam is justice, and Almighty Allah is just, and as part of His justice He does not punish the *qāṣir*. Thus one who is born in a land

¹ In other words, one is obliged to acquire knowledge, at least to the extent of knowing his duties and obligations, and the way to perform and fulfil them.
Editor

or at time or in circumstances which render him *qāṣir* would not be subject to punishment.

9

It is imperative that alongside one's studies and education, one should learn [the rulings of Islam on] the *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* [the obligatory, permissible and prohibited], the Fundamentals of the Religion (*oṣool al-deen*),¹ and the Islamic Ethics and Etiquettes (*akhlāq & ādāb*).

10

We must seize every opportunity and waste no time – not even one minute of our lives – to seek knowledge. For example, we should carry with us the handbook of Islamic Law (i.e. *al-riṣalah al-amaliyyah*) which we read meticulously during our youth. It is possible that we do not remember many of its content, or there are issues that we did not pay attention to. Therefore, let each one of us always carry the handbook, so that if one gets an opportunity – even if it were five minutes – one would be able to read even one page of it. If one adopts this practice, one would discover some issues that one might have thought one knew.

11

From now on, let's begin learning and observing the Laws of Allah, and learn the *Shari'a* rulings. Even those that are not obligatory for us to learn, we should also learn in order to preserve and disseminate them. If we do this, our station in Allah's sight would be most esteemed, because in this way we have venerated Allah's Laws.

12

Let each one of us take a copy of the *riṣalah al-amaliyyah*, and resolve to learn and memorise a number of the rulings, concerning various

¹ The fundamental principles of the religion are five; the principle of *tauheed* or the indivisible oneness of Allah, the divine justice, the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad, the *imamate* or leadership of the divinely-appointed twelve Imams, and the resurrection on the day of judgement.

domains, every day. In this way one would learn about the Laws of Allah on various issues such as trade, agriculture, prayers, lands, and relationships with friends, relatives, neighbours, parents and offspring. Indeed the companions of the Imams, peace be upon them, were not all scholars and jurists dedicated to the task of preserving the hadith. Rather, there were amongst them those who were greengrocers, traders, businessmen, butchers, and those who traded in dates and wheat flour. But despite that they managed to memorise and preserve those hadith narratives and Islamic Laws for us today.

13

The Acts of Worship that we perform for the sake of the Almighty should not take the form of soulless cold rituals. Rather it is imperative that we engage with them, and through them, we should be aware that we stand before Almighty Allah, and we should relate with Him.

14

Those who perform the acts of worship as a habit and a ritual exercise – without paying attention and presence to Allah – will not reap any benefit from them; neither in this world nor in the hereafter. Rather, this conduct of theirs would have negative consequences for them, as mentioned in some hadith narratives.

15

From now on, we should gradually endeavour to give some spiritual substance to our acts of worship, by beginning to pay attention to their meanings.

16

Just as knowledge, understanding, and cognition (i.e. *maʿrifāh*) about Allah is a fundamental criterion of faith (*imān*), this would not be enough if it is not accompanied by *maʿrifāh* about the Prophet. Similarly, cognition about the Prophet alone would not be enough without recognition of the Imam. In other words, *maʿrifāh* about Allah and the Prophet would not be beneficial without *maʿrifāh* about the

Imam; rather, the former two would not really be considered *ma‘rifah* without the latter.¹

17

Those who died during the pre-Islamic era of ignorance would be considered to have died as disbelievers, polytheists or atheists, so too are those who die without knowing the Imam of their time. In other words, they too would be considered to have died as disbelievers, polytheists or atheists.

18

A believer always takes the side of Allah whenever there is a conflict between [the desire of] the self and [the command of] Allah.

19

A believer may amass great wealth and become a millionaire, but as soon as he realises that this wealth will lead him to Hell and to Allah’s wrath, he would relinquish and turn away from it with ease, and the same goes for women, children, and other worldly pleasures.

¹ This is in reference to a body of hadith which states that were it not for the *ma‘soom* Imams, people would not have been able to acquire true knowledge understanding and cognition about the Almighty, and that the Imams are the perfect guides to the Almighty. See for example, al-Kāfi, vol.1 p145, al-Kāfi, vol.4 p575, Biḥār, vol.23 p102, Ṣadouq’s *al-tawḥeed*, p152, Biḥār, vol.26 p260, (it is by us that Allah is recognised). See *al-ziyārah al-jāmi‘ah*. See also Imam Husayn’s *ziyārah*#1 in *mafāteeh al-jinān*, p439, and Supplication at the Time of Occultation, p588 of *mafāteeh al-jinān*, which states:

O Allah, make me have knowledge understanding and cognition (*ma‘rifah*) about Yourself, because if You do not make me recognize You, I will not recognize Your Messenger.

O Allah, make me recognize Your Messenger, because if You do not make me recognize Your Messenger, I will not recognize Your Proof and Authority (i.e. the divinely appointed *ma‘soom* Imam).

O Allah, make me recognize Your Proof and Authority, because if You do not make me recognize Your Proof and Authority (*hujjah*), I will stray off my religion.

20

Devotion to Allah is the single most important issue.

21

The point that should force you to focus in your prayers, to prevent you from eating *ḥarām*, looking at *ḥarām*, listening to *ḥarām*, uttering *ḥarām*, wronging people or hurting them, which the Holy Qur'an has emphasised upon, is «that ye rise up for Allah's sake».¹ This is a pivotal point which is imperative for us to pay attention to more than any other *mostaḥab* deed or conduct, because it encompasses all virtues.

22

In numerous instances in the Holy Qur'an, Almighty Allah has stated that He has sent prophets to various nations to convey His messages and rulings to them, but people killed the prophets, or ridiculed them, or tortured them. This means Almighty Allah offered His prophets, as well as the *ma'soom* Imams,² peace be upon them all, as sacrifices in the cause of His rulings and His messages to the nations.

23

The rulings of Allah are manifested in His *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*, in His Signs and Laws, in the Holy Qur'an and the credible hadith, in the *Sharia* rulings that are presented in the *al-riṣalah al-amaliyyah* (Islamic Law handbook), which scholars have worked tirelessly to deduce from the Holy Qur'an and the teachings of the *ma'soomeen*, peace be upon them all.

24

The greatest merit that we can acquire in the sight of Almighty Allah is directly proportional to the effort we make to defend the Laws of Allah,

¹ The Holy Qur'an, (34):46.

² The *ma'soom* Imams are Prophet Muhammad's divinely-appointed twelve infallible successors. Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Lady Fatima al-Zahra', and the divinely appointed twelve successors are referred to as the fourteen *ma'soom* (or *ma'soomeen* (plural)).

and to apply and practice them in our day to day lives. It is also proportional to the effort we make to observe and preserve them, in a bid to pass them on to the next generations.

25

Almighty Allah has no regard for those who have no respect for His Laws. To Him, His Laws are the most treasured.

26

To Almighty Allah, glorified be He, His Laws are of utmost eminence and beyond comparison.

27

The Laws of Allah are the most important in the sight of Almighty Allah.

28

Firstly, let's begin by revering Allah's Laws, and secondly, let's implement those laws in our daily lives, and endeavour to reduce our failure to adhere to them.

29

It is true that the beneficence of Almighty Allah is immense and His grace is universal, and embraces both the believers and the disbelievers in His sustenance and kindness in this world. This, however, does not mean that He is showing respect for the disbelievers. Rather, this is like a banquet one invites the public to. It is likely that it would be attended by people one does not wish to see, but one would not prevent them because the invitation is public, and being there does not constitute respect for them.

30

From now on, let's make a pledge with our Lord – and He witnesses what we say, hear, think, and resolve – to defend Allah's Laws; by promoting virtue and prohibiting vice, at home, with friends, neighbours, and strangers, to the extent we can. To realise this, we are

not required to brandish swords and battle, rather let our weapon be the wise word that we utter. If it was heeded, good, otherwise we would have fulfilled our responsibility and discharged our obligation.

31

The person who orders to have the hand of a thief cut off at the wrist would have committed a greater crime in the sight of Allah than the thief himself. This is because the thief has, on individual basis, defied a single Sharia law, but the one who executes a self-prescribed law and attributes it to Allah would have committed a very grave sin, compared to which the act of stealing itself is insignificant.¹

32

In the effort to implement the teachings of Islam we should not be selective. Rather, our effort should cover all aspects of Islam and its teachings. It is not permissible to implement the Islamic penal code, for example, and ignore the teachings of Islam in the fields of culture, economics, politics, society, and suchlike.

33

Some scholars are of the opinion that it is not permissible to apply the penal codes in Islam as long as the political and economic elements of its teachings are not adhered to.²

¹ The Islamic penal code concerning theft, as well as great many other offences, may only be executed when there is a true Islamic government in place; the Laws of Allah implemented, all freedoms, opportunities, and facilities are available to the masses. See for example *The Islamic System of Government*, by the late grand ayatollah Muhammad Shirazi, in which he has cited more than forty preconditions all of which should be met simultaneously before such a code may be executed. If it were to come to that, therefore, only the fingertips of one hand would be cut and not the entire palm of the hand. The palms of the hands are two of the seven places of prostration required for praying, and the Almighty's instructions on this are clear: ﴿And the places of worship are for Allah: So invoke not any one along with Allah﴾. 72:18.

² One of those scholars is the eminent jurist and distinguished writer the late Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Shirazi, who authored more than 1,100 books

34

It is unfortunate that some think that a government is defined as Islamic only if it implements the Sharia penal code; whereas that [i.e. penal code] constitutes a negligible portion of Islamic Law. If Islamic Law is partially or selectively implemented, a distorted image will be presented of Islam.

35

Almighty Allah considers changing or distorting His Laws to be the gravest crime, and all other sins and crimes are considered minor in comparison.

36

One of the cardinal sins is for an individual to claim “this is *ḥalāl* and this is *ḥarām*” – while ignorant about the teachings or falsely attributing them to Allah.

37

If we claim something or some action to be *ḥarām* or *ḥalāl* contrary to Allah’s laws, that would go against Allah’s revelation, and [one of the consequences of the gravity of] such conduct would be to deprive us of Allah’s blessings such as rain and earth’s treasures. The same goes for the *makrooh*, *mostaḥab*, and *wājib* aspects.

38

When an individual asks you whether a particular thing is *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām*, do not respond to him according to your own opinion. Ask a *mojtahid* for the answer before you reply to him. This is because Almighty Allah has not left His Laws in my hand or yours; rather He has put them in the hands of His prophet and has declared: ﴿he does not speak of desire﴾ i.e. he does not say something according to his own

on the teachings of Islam ranging from basic to specialised works for the Islamic seminary (*ḥawzah*) including the famous *fiqh* series which is in 160 volumes.

desire or opinion, but rather ﴿it is a revelation that is revealed﴾ to him by the Almighty.¹

39

If one is asked a question about a certain matter of which one is not an expert, then it is imperative for one to refer the enquirer to a fully qualified *mojtahid*, or seek the answer from a *mojtahid* and convey it to the enquirer. One does not have the authority or the right – not even the *mojtahid*'s representative – to respond to the enquirer according to one's own opinion; rather one must convey the opinion of a *mojtahid*, who is the ultimate authority. It is worth noting the considerable time and effort *mojtahids* spend to arrive at appropriate rulings according to the laws of Almighty Allah. It is also worth noting that sometimes they do not arrive at conclusive rulings and thus take the side of precaution (*iḥtiyāt*) and refrain from issuing a verdict (*fātwa*).

40

It is only the ignorant who issues verdicts arbitrarily. But the learned and the specialist is the one who appreciates the sanctity of these rulings, does not underrate Allah's laws and does not treat them arbitrarily, because he recognises their greatness, and that he would be held to account before Almighty Allah.

41

If the Laws of Allah were in the hands of every one to issue verdicts on according to one's desires and opinions, the Islam that we have today before us would have vanished, and after fourteen hundred years we would have been left with something completely different.

42

There is no deficiency in Allah's religion; thus when Almighty Allah promises happiness to its true followers, the true Muslim would no doubt attain happiness; contrary to other schools of thoughts that

¹ The Qur'anic verses cited are 3&4 of surah#53 (The Star).

promise happiness but do not honour their promise and sooner or later their inability would be exposed.

43

The devout believer in Allah would be grasping the most trustworthy handhold that will never break.¹ Conversely, those who adhere to *tāghut* (all false deities) and follow or adopt principles which deviate from true Islam would be clinging to a wavering handhold and would sooner or later come to realize their mistake.

44

Islam uproots all forms of difficulties and diseases, while other entities barely try to curtail them, with little success.

45

Islam eradicates poverty and anxiety for mankind, while other civilisations attempt to reduce them but they do not succeed.

46

Islam is not mere theories, but rather principles that are implementable in practice. Islam's teachings were indeed implemented during the Islamic Era and produced splendid results.

47

All trials and tribulations suffered by mankind are consequences of his own actions and conducts, since Allah does not wish any evil or suffering for anyone.²

¹ In reference to the Qur'anic verse 2:256.

² With the natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, hurricanes and volcano eruptions, mankind also has the intellectual ability and therefore the wherewithal to address the dangers or harms of the elements. In the same way that man is expected to manage against the elements, and various climate conditions such as hot or cold weather, or diseases and viruses, he is able to manage other forces of nature such as quakes, by designing and constructing quake-proof buildings. The same goes for other natural phenomena.

48

Whenever you suffer an affliction look for the cause, because Allah is just and does not hurt anyone, rather He is the epitome of goodness and kindness.

49

Those who do not refrain from committing sin or evil, will, sooner or later, harvest the ill effect of such evils.

50

A person who does not care about committing sin or evil should not be fooled by his arrogance. The Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mo'mineen*),¹ Imam Ali,² peace be upon him, said, "If you see your Lord continually blessing you with His favours while you are disobeying Him, be warned." Do you know why? This means that Almighty Allah has postponed his punishment to the Hereafter. And there lies the catastrophe!! Because this world would end one day, and one would be relieved from it, but there is no relief from punishment in the Hereafter.

51

[One should be sincere in every aspect of his endeavours.] But the allure of display of that sincerity should not be the motive for us in our effort and exertion; rather our effort should be purely for Allah alone.

52

Doing noble deeds and harbouring noble intentions in pursuit of reward will be futile if they are not solely and purely for Allah.

¹ On specific divine instructions, the title *amir al-mo'mineen* or the Commander of the Faithful was exclusively granted to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

² Imam Ali is the first of the twelve divinely-appointed Imams or leaders to succeed the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

53

One should always ask Allah's help in making the sole motive behind one's deeds to be Allah's favour and approval.

54

Almighty Allah has not created Paradise in order to make favours and give it to whomever and remind people about His generosity. Rather, He created it for the sincere and devout faithful.

55

Besides being a book of knowledge and culture, laws and rights, etiquette and manners, politics and economics, the Holy Qur'an is Heaven's eternal miracle; a book which has deep moral impact and profound spiritual influence.

56

The Inimitable Qur'an, this eternal and timeless book of Heaven, brings happiness and prosperity to mankind, infuses goodness and blessing universally to all, and spreads peace and tranquillity throughout the world.

57

[In an Islamic country,] no one has the right to legislate something as being permissible or prohibited [in contradiction to Sharia law]; rather one only has the right to implement these divine laws.¹

¹ For example, in an Islamic country's parliament, members of parliament do not have the right to pass a law allowing the government to levy Sales Tax (also known as Value Added Tax (VAT)) or Excise duty, or Inheritance tax, because these taxes are prohibited in Islam and they may not be made permissible. Another example, is that all the disused land in the country "belongs to Allah and whoever develops it" as declared by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, and it's therefore free-for-all. Thus no one in parliament or elsewhere has the right to declare the land of the country as "Crown Estate" or "Public Estate" or "government owned", something which is done in various Muslim countries today. Another example is that of alcohol. The production, promotion, sale and

58

Islam has blended knowledge with faith, and culture with manners and ethics.

59

The essence of the teachings and principles of Islam as a religion is that of human morality and the reality of the sublime social etiquettes; they are inseparable – one essence for one meaning. Thus anything that moral principles advocate, Islam has commanded, and anything that sublime etiquettes have urged, Islam has called for. In other words, all the laws of Islam and its teachings – ranging from acts of worship to those on dealings and transactions, and others – are built on sublime moral fundamentals, and equable ethical bases. Thus Islam has ordered the obligatory, forbade the prohibited, warned against the unethical, and called for the virtues and etiquettes.

60

It is obvious that Islam's teachings and laws are in concert with human nature. Equally, they are compatible with the human soul and spiritual values, and mankind's earthly and material aspirations at the highest standards of refined manners.

61

If one practices Islam in the way it used to be in the early days of the religion within one's family, then one's neighbours, relatives and family friends will gradually start to believe in the values of Islam's divine laws and teachings. Thus, if they were non-believers they would embrace Islam; if they harboured no love for Ahl al-Bayt,¹ peace be

consumption of alcohol is forbidden under Islamic law, and therefore no one in the Islamic country's parliament or government has the right to make legal or permissible any of the above mentioned categories concerning alcohol.

¹ Ahl al-Bayt literally means people of the house (of the Prophet). This is in reference to Lady Fatima al-Zahra', her father Prophet Muhammad, her husband, Imam Ali, and her sons, Hasan and Husayn, as well as Husayn's nine *ma'şoom* descendants. They are also referred to as the fourteen *ma'şoom* or infallible. In this respect, Allah Almighty has revealed about them, ﴿Indeed

upon them, they would start to love them; and if they were non-practicing, they would be observing the teachings of Islam. This is because the teachings of Islam, its laws and rules are grand and magnificent.

62

Islam does not concern the hereafter only ... rather Islam means living happily in this world too. Islam means peace and security, sound economy, sound politics, vice-free society, and it means everything that is good and proper.

63

There are certain attributes that are exclusive to Almighty Allah. No creature may be characterised by them, because they belong to the Holy Essence of Allah and no-one else.¹

64

It is not admissible to attribute even one of Almighty Allah's *exclusive* characteristics to the *ma'şoom* Imams, peace be upon them.

Allah wills to repel all impurity from you, O People of the House, and purify you a thorough purification. ﴿33:33﴾ Imam Ali, and his sons Imams Hasan and Husayn, along with Imam Husayn's nine *ma'şoom* descendants are the twelve Imams who have been appointed by Prophet Muhammad, on divine instructions, to succeed him and lead humanity after him. The first of the *ma'şoom* Imams is Imam Ali, and the twelfth is Imam Mahdi who is hidden from view and will reappear to fill the earth with justice after it is filled with tyranny and injustice. Prophet Muhammad used to say of the Ahl al-Bayt, "The example of my Ahl al-Bayt is that of Noah's Ark; whoever boards it is saved, and whoever abandons it drowns." Towards the end of his blessed life, the Prophet said, "I leave behind with ye two momentous entities – Allah's Book and my kin the Ahl al-Bayt – as long as ye adhere to them both ye would never go astray after me."

¹ Allah is the most generous. Some people might be generous to an extent, but no comparison, thus generosity is not an exclusive attribute of Allah. However, Allah is the *creator* and no creature shares Allah in this exclusive attribute whatsoever.

65

Excessive glorification or undue exaggeration is not the way to learn about the *ma‘şoom* Imam, peace be upon him.

66

Educate the youth about the quality of *‘eşmah* (infallibility), the issue of knowledge of the unseen (*ghayb*), and all other indisputable and irrefutable aspects related to the qualities of the *ma‘şoom* (infallible) Imams, peace be upon them.

67

Those who adopt the approach of excessively glorifying the *ma‘şoom* Imams beyond their real standing bestowed upon them by Almighty Allah may run the risk of being cursed by the *ma‘şoom* Imam or by Imam al-Ḥujjah, may Allah hasten his reappearance.

68

The soundness of one’s understanding and practice of religion is measured by the depth of one’s understanding of the teachings of the Holy Qur’an and the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and the degree to which one adheres to and practices those teachings.

69

Attaining soundness in [one’s] religion is a matter of individual determination and achievement through endeavour and choice.

70

Religion is a way of life, and it may be categorised in two aspects. The aspects of religion which concerns belief are called “the roots of religion” (*oşool al-deen*); i.e. the core, underlying doctrinal principles of Islam such as monotheism and resurrection. The aspects of religion which concerns its practice are called “the branches of religion” (*föroo’ al-deen*); i.e. the obligatory (*wajib*) duties such as the daily prayers and fasting, and the prohibited (*haram*) such as backbiting and slander, the recommended (*mostahab*), the discouraged (*makrooh*), as well as the moral conducts and the etiquettes.

71

Our predecessors did an admirable job as guardians by preserving the religion for future generations and handing it over to us before passing away. We, in turn, have a duty to guard and preserve the religion that has been handed over to us in its best manner for future generations.

72

Fundamentally, absolute submission and obedience should be solely to Almighty Allah.

73

If the world was to realise the triad of “a sound economy, fair politics, and virtuous morality”, appreciate its significance, and discern its boundaries that Islam has clearly defined, millions would rush to embrace the religion. This would be similar to what happened in the holy city of Medina when Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, presented Islam in its proper form without any shortfalls, and disbelievers and atheists willingly and eagerly embraced Islam.

74

Islam has the kind of laws the like of which, altogether, there is none in history, nor is there anything like it today. In most countries of the world there is no such law as “no inheritance tax”, no such law as “the government guarantees all the debts of the deceased”, and there is no law that “the government guarantees *all the needs* of families that have no breadwinner or income”.¹

75

The Holy Qur'an is a covenant between two parties; namely Almighty Allah and mankind.

¹ There is also the unique notion in Islam that states, as given by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, “The land belongs to Allah and whoever develops it”, so we do not have things like Crown Estate, government estate, or suchlike.

76

Almighty Allah has honoured mankind by elevating him to a lofty position; in that He made him a party to a covenant with Him. The instrument for this covenant – the Holy Qur'an – attends to mankind's entire needs in this world, be it societal, political, economic, familial, educational, psychological, and all others.

77

Islam is a complete intellectual and practical system.

Allah's Final Messenger

Introduction

Muhammad son of Abdullah was Allah's final prophet and messenger to humanity, who is also referred to as the Seal of the Prophets. He brought the Almighty's last revelation to mankind, the Qur'an, and adopted and enshrined a code of conduct, a system of governance, and a morality the like of which was never seen before him in human history, nor will be seen in the future. ﴿And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds.﴾ 21:107 Editors.

78

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, is the role model for all humanity and the perfect example of all manifestations of good and virtue.

79

It is imperative for the Muslims, or rather, for the entire world population – if they wished good for themselves – to follow the Holy Prophet's lead and emulate and uphold his morals and conducts.

80

In all situations, Allah's messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, was the finest example for trustworthiness and sincerity, truthfulness and loyalty, good manners, noble nature and magnanimity, knowledge and forbearance, forgiveness, generosity and bravery, piety and abstention from any sin or evil, asceticism and virtue, justice, humility, and tireless endeavour (or *jihad*).

81

Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, was the embodiment of all virtues and morality, the essence of honour and magnanimity, the home of knowledge and justice, piety and ethics, and the touchstone of the religion, the material world, and the hereafter.

82

Never did a similitude of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, come in the past, and there will never ever come one like him in the future.

83

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, is the greatest and the most distinguished and virtuous personality Almighty Allah has ever created. Even when the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, was asked "Are you a Prophet?" he said: "I am but one of the slaves of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family."

84

The Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his holy family, established a comprehensive *Sunnah*, or a system of rules, laws and teachings for the Muslims. Like the Prophet himself, these rules, laws and teachings are the best and the most perfect for mankind.

85

The Holy Qur'an is the living eternal miracle of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. This is because it is the only heavenly book that Almighty Allah willed to be immune from additions, deductions, changes and alterations; despite the concerted effort of those who planned and embarked on effecting such alterations. Thus it is the eternal book, and the permanent constitution for life until the Day of Judgement, and as long as mankind lives on Earth. This is because the Holy Qur'an contains superior laws and teachings that guarantee mankind's prosperity, progress and advancement.

86

Allah's messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, never pre-emptively started a war against an enemy. Rather, it was the enemy who used to attack the holy Prophet. Imam Ali adopted the same policy, as

did Imam Husayn;¹ Imam Ali's son and the holy Prophet's grandson. Even though the enemy had besieged him, Imam Husayn used to say, "I hate to be the one to initiate the attack." This indeed was always the stance taken by Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them all, in confrontation with their enemies.²

87

Islam lays great emphasises on human behaviour, and pays significant attention to social manners and etiquette, so much so that Allah's messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, made the ultimate goal of his blessed mission to be the perfection and dissemination of noble manners and ethical conduct throughout the land, by saying: **"Indeed, I have been sent to perfect and complete the noble morals."** Furthermore, when Almighty Allah praises His beloved messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, He commends his noble manners, by saying: **﴿and you are of sublime morality﴾**.³ When Allah reminds the Muslim nation of the mercy and blessing that have been bestowed upon them, He cites the most important of qualities of such mercy, which are the leniency and clemency of his manners; Almighty Allah states; **﴿by the mercy of Allah you have been lenient to them﴾**.⁴ These words allude to the importance of good manners and moral

¹ Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, is the third of the twelve divinely-appointed Imams to succeed the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

² And the same goes with Muslim ibn Aqeel, Imam Husayn's cousin and special envoy to the people of Kufah. Muslim ibn Aqeel never resorted to anticipatory or pre-emptive strike against the notorious Kufah governor Obaidullah ibn Ziyād, when the opportunity arose for him, even though if he had done so he would have saved his own life, prevented the slaughter of Imam Husayn and the tragedy of Karbala altogether. He refrained from resorting to such a conduct which ultimately resulted in a monumental cost to him and his master Imam Husayn, peace be upon him. However, **"In English law, you don't have to wait for the aggressor to shoot first – and the same principle is accepted in international law."**

³ The Holy Qur'an, the Pen (68):4

⁴ The Holy Qur'an, Family of 'Imran (3):159

conduct in Islam, and their significance for a Muslim individual as a way of life.

88

A great number of people were impressed by Allah's Messenger's well-mannered and courteous conduct, and were attracted to Islam as a result.

89

During the Prophet's time in Mecca – after the start of his divine mission – his teachings and policies did not become common knowledge. Thus most of his teachings were not implemented, because neither the environment was conducive to practise such teachings; nor did he have any other alternatives – in order to assess how the prophet interacted with people; during times of war or peace, and with his friends and foes. But all that became clear in Medina, when he began to lay the foundation for the blessed Islamic government; and when he and the Muslims found themselves unimpeded by the restrictions and sanctions imposed on them in Mecca. It was then that the real meaning and the ideals of the magnanimous Sharia and the pure prophetic Sunnah became evident to the Muslim nation. In this way Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, established a perfect example of the ideal model of government in existence. This was the same style of government which the Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mo'mineen*), Imam Ali, peace be upon him, followed during his five-year reign.

90

You only need to study the biography of the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his holy family, to see hundreds of examples [of his social and moral conducts and interactions with friends and foes, and his generosity].¹ If these examples were compiled and presented, every non-

¹ For example, when he conquered Mecca, the capital city of polytheism and idolatry, the Prophet did so without any bloodshed, he did not force anyone to accept Islam, and furthermore he did not pursue or prosecute those chiefs who had been attempting to kill him by waging wars against him for many years,

Muslim, even if zealous and fanatic – save the very stubborn ones – would get impressed by the Prophet's virtues and teachings, and would ultimately embrace Islam.

91

If today, or any other day, the teachings and policies of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and those of Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him, were implemented; say in our homes, places of work, and our countries, then what was achieved fourteen hundred years ago would be realised today.¹ People would attain prosperity and choose Islam as a way of life.

92

The fact that great number of people embraced Islam during the time of the Holy Prophet, was not a miracle or an extraordinary phenomenon. Rather, this was a natural outcome of the policies, approach and conduct of the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his holy family.

93

The life of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, is full of inspiring examples of superior social and ethical conduct that touch the mind and soul of the individual.

94

I urge you to study the biography of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and recount and present the great many of the sublime stances and intellectually persuasive arguments to the Jews, Christians and atheists, and you would undoubtedly convince them to embrace Islam as a religion of reason and ideals. Simultaneously, upon learning about these, Muslims will strengthen their own faith in their religion, and will encourage them to pass on their conviction to others.

and before that they had driven him and his fellow Muslims out of the city and confiscated all their properties, but the Prophet released them to be free.

¹ i.e. the prosperity and happiness that was achieved as a result of those policies then would be realised today.

95

The Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his holy family, introduced the system of social security and welfare as a gift to the world, with happy consequences for humanity. This will be achieved once again with the reappearance of Allah's greatest Authority, the Awaited Imam Mahdi,¹ may Allah hasten his reappearance, and thus the Divine Promise will be realised.

96

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, was the best human being and Allah's chosen messenger, and he brought the best law and policy that promised material and spiritual fulfilment to mankind. This begs the question: who wouldn't like to follow such a convincingly rational path and pride oneself of belonging to a superior system of justice and equality?!

97

The progressive laws which were put in practice by the Prophet Muhammad, and by the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon them, upheld human honour and dignity and provided social security to the masses. These laws have no similitude anywhere in the world and no laws measure up to the unparalleled laws of Islam.

98

Without doubt, Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, is matchless in creation, and commands the most distinguished stature in Almighty Allah's view. He is the most honoured in creation, rather, Almighty Allah did not create anything except for the sake of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family. On the night of ascension, Almighty Allah addressed the prophet by saying, "O Ahmad! Were it not for you, I would not have created the galaxies."

¹ Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, is the twelfth of the divinely-appointed successors to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, about whom the prophet said, "He will fill the earth with peace and justice after it has been filled with wronging and oppression."

99

If Almighty Allah had not commanded us to obey His Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, it would not have been obligatory for us to obey the Prophet.

100

Obedying the Prophet and obeying the Imam, peace be upon them, is part of the obedience of Almighty Allah, and if Almighty Allah were to order us to obey someone other than them, we would have done so in obedience to His command.

101

The disbelievers used to connive against Islam and the Muslims, show animosity towards Allah's Messenger personally, belie him, and attribute rude things to him. Yet, despite all this, they used to live in peace and harmony among the Muslims and enjoyed freedom and welfare under the rules of Allah's Messenger and of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon them. It is not reported that any one of the offending disbelievers was ever harmed in any way for their actions under the Muslim rule. Rather, history records that when a disbeliever activist, who used to harass the Prophet did not show up for a few days, the Prophet enquired about him, and it was said that he was ill. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, paid him a visit to wish him well, together with a group of his companions.

The Ahl al-Bayt

Introduction

Ahl al-Bayt, or People of the House (of the Prophet), is in reference to Lady Fatima al-Zahra', her father Prophet Muhammad, her husband, Imam Ali, and her sons, Hasan and Husayn, as well as Husayn's nine *ma'soom* descendants. They are also referred to as the fourteen *ma'soom* or infallible. In this respect, Allah Almighty has revealed about them, ﴿Indeed Allah wills to repel all impurity from you, O People of the House, and purify you a thorough purification.﴾ 33:33. Imam Ali, his sons Imams Hasan and Husayn, along with Imam Husayn's nine *ma'soom* descendants are the twelve Imams who have, on divine instructions, been appointed by Prophet Muhammad to succeed him and lead humanity after him. The first of the *ma'soom* Imams is Imam Ali, and the twelfth is Imam Mahdi who is hidden from view and will reappear to fill the earth with justice after it is filled with tyranny and injustice. Prophet Muhammad said of the Ahl al-Bayt, "The example of my Ahl al-Bayt is that of Noah's Ark; whoever boards it is saved, and whoever abandons it drowns." Towards the end of his blessed life, the Prophet said, "I leave behind with ye two momentous entities – Allah's Book and my kin the Ahl al-Bayt – as long as ye adhere to them both ye would never go astray after me." Editors.

102

Almighty Allah has put all the forces of the universe under the authority/command of the *ma'soom* Imam, peace be upon him, and this is evident from the declarations and words of the *ma'soomeen* themselves, peace be upon them all.

103

Almighty Allah has established only one path for the fulfilment of his

creation and legislation and that is the path of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them.¹

104

Everything that concerns our fate, or any changes to our fate; whether concerning us as individuals or the family, or the community, or nations at large, is reflected in the honourable hadith of Imam Ṣādiq,² peace be upon him, in which he states, addressing Imam Husayn, peace be upon him: “The ordinance of the Lord concerning His commands descend upon you, and are issued from your houses.”

105

It is evident from numerous hadith – as well as logical reasoning – that all aspects of existence and its forces are put in the hands of the *ma‘soom* Imam, peace be upon him, by Almighty Allah; whether relating to humans or to objects; in the past or in the future.

106

The Imams, peace be upon them, are Allah’s authorities upon the entire creation; they are the auspicious successors to His Prophet, and they are all from the light of Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, blessed with the same holiness as the Prophet’s.³

107

The Imams were like the Prophet, peace be upon them all, in their

¹ This is really a reflection of surah al-Qadr, in which it is stated that on the eve of al-Qadr the angels and Holy Spirit descend – on the *m‘aṣoom* – concerning every matter, and this is in order to seek acceptance/approval for those matters, and the Imam may, for example, intercede and beseech the Almighty to alter some of those fates or matters.

² Imam Sadiq is the sixth of the twelve divinely-appointed successors of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

³ Great many authentic and unanimously accepted hadith are reported quoting Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, saying, “The successors after me are twelve in number, until the day of judgement”, and in other hadith the Prophet mentions the twelve successors by their names.

knowledge, forbearance, virtue and piety, justice and infallibility, noble morals and magnanimous nature, and all other qualities and praiseworthy traits. How could it be otherwise, given that they are his divinely appointed successors, the leaders of the people and creation, and Allah's authorities over all mankind after the Prophet himself?!

108

There is no doubt that the *ma'ṣoom* Imam, peace be upon him, is the most superior and knowledgeable of Allah's creation, who has a lofty spirit which transcends all creation, yet he has a heart full of passion which surpasses that of all humanity, despite having the most superior and rational mind.

109

The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, have unparalleled qualities but regrettably there are those amongst us who do not fully understand and appreciate these unique attributes.

110

Obedience to the Messenger and the Imam, peace be upon them, are directly derived from obedience to Allah Almighty which is primary and central to faith.

111

Since obedience to Almighty Allah is mandatory, and as He has ordered us to obey Allah's Messenger, Muhammad, and his Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them; then their obedience is also mandatory upon us, as per His command.

112

If Almighty Allah, Glory be to Him, had ordered us to obey people other than Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib and his descendant Imams, peace be upon them, we would have complied with such order.

113

Since obedience to the Prophet and the Imam are, in essence, the same,

Almighty Allah did not differentiate between the two by using the word “obey” in the holy verse ﴿Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of authority amongst ye﴾ as opposed to His obedience. A distinction is made between His obedience and the obedience of the Messenger and of the Imam, by repeating the word “obey” to reveal the difference.

114

We believe in the *imamate* (leadership) of Imam Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib, peace be upon him, and the *imamate* of Hasan¹ and Husayn, peace be upon them, and also the *imamate* of the other Imams, the descendants of Husayn, peace be upon them, because Almighty Allah commanded us to do so.

115

As the Imams lived in different times, the actions and styles of each Imam differed according to his time. Also his conduct differed from that of the Imam who lived in a different time and under different circumstances. This explains the apparent difference in the conduct and style of the Imams, peace be upon them. However, this does not mean that there are differences between them individually, since “they are all one light”.²

116

The example of the Imam, peace be upon them, is not like that of twelve lanterns similar to one another, rather their example is like a single lantern.

117

The difference we observe in the conduct of our Imams, peace be upon them, reflect the instructions they received from Allah’s Messenger,

¹ Imam Hasan is the second of the twelve divinely-appointed successors of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

² The phrase in quotes is in reference to a body of hadith from Allah and His Messenger: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol.25/p24, 26/16, 27/131, 33/480, 35/10, 35/33-34, 36/222, 36/280, 36/301, 36/323, 37/81, 38/125,150,329.

peace be upon him and his holy family, who in turn received them from Almighty Allah, through Archangel Gabriel, each according to their respective prevailing circumstances.

118

It is obligatory for us to learn the biography and history of the *ma'ṣoom* Imam, peace be upon him, in order to be guided by it and follow his example.

119

What do we gain by merely professing to be following the Imams such as al-Sajjād, al-Bāqir,¹ and al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon them, if we remain ignorant about their biography and history?!

120

It is essential for us to study, even if briefly, the history and biography of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, so that our faith is underpinned by better knowledge and understanding about those blessed personalities Almighty Allah has commanded us to obey.

121

Our role models are our Imams, peace be upon them. The Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mo'mineen*) Imam Ali, peace be upon him, gave up his right [to succeed the Prophet as the head of state] for fear of the people turning back and apostatizing. If we claim to be followers of Imam Ali, peace be upon him, we should follow our Imam in this respect too.

122

However eloquent and knowledgeable one purports to be, one would not be able to grasp the deepest meanings of the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt,

¹ Imam al-Sajjad is the fourth, and Imam al-Baqir is the fifth of the twelve divinely-appointed successors of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

peace be upon them, because they are the mainspring of language and the masters of literature and eloquence.

123

It is one's utter misfortune and wretchedness to seek knowledge and understanding from other than Ali and his descendants, peace be upon them. And that knowledge, if gained, would be nothing like the one [gained from Ali and his descendants] because it would be devoid of moral and spiritual values, and removed from the spirit of the Sharia.¹

124

The struggle of al-Mostafā,² peace be upon him and his holy family, his sincerity in conveying the Almighty's instructions, and the blood of the Ahl al-Bayt that were shed in the cause of Islam were instrumental in preserving the laws of Almighty Allah. This helped the religion to endure and survive in the face of obstacles.

125

Our Lady Fatima al-Zahra', peace be upon her, was like her father in the way she devoted herself to worship, in asceticism, piety and ethics. Almighty Allah revealed many verses in the Holy Qur'an about her.

126

Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, gave our Lady Fatima al-Zahra' the title "*Sayyidat-o-Nisā' el-'Alameen*" meaning the "Chief of the Women of the Worlds", and the agnomen "*Umm-o Abeehā*" meaning the "mother of her father". The Prophet used to love her immensely, and revered her greatly such that when she used to come to see him he used to greet her by rising up for her out of respect, seating her in his place and kissing her hands. Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to say, "Indeed what pleases Fatima pleases Allah, and what angers her angers Him."

¹ And it would therefore be entirely false.

² al-Mostafā means "The Chosen One", and it is one of the titles of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

127

As we approach the anniversary of the birthday of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, I would like to recommend three simple courses of actions, which every one of us can do. In this way, maybe we can make up for our failure towards Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

1. Inform everyone you meet, whether in workplace or on your way home, or a friend you come across, that the 3rd of Sha‘bān is the birthday of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him. I would not be exaggerating if I said many of those you live amongst do not know that.
2. On the anniversary of the birthday of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, let’s give a gift to our children, to those in our custody, and those in our care, so that they grow up with the love of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.
3. Let’s express joy and happiness and give presents and sweets to our colleagues in our workplace and in our neighbourhood on the anniversary of the birthday of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

128

In our daily lives we spend a lot of money on various matters, and also we spend a lot of effort and time with the children and wife at home, and in the workplace and suchlike. Let it be known that whatever wealth is spent and effort made in the cause of Imam Husayn is of best benefit and outcome, because one attains a higher station and a greater value.

129

During the *ziyārah* of 15th of Sha‘bān, millions of pilgrims from around Iraq, and also from the continents around the globe, converge on the holy city of Karbala to visit the master of the martyrs Imam Husayn, and his brother Abul-Faḍl al-Abbās, peace be upon them, and the chosen pure ones from amongst the descendants of Ahl al-Bayt, and from amongst the loyal devout supporters who were martyred along with the

master of the martyrs Imam Husayn. By the blessing of this visit, these pilgrims will have the privilege to greet the souls of the one hundred and twenty four thousand prophets and messengers, and they all are the guests of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and the guests of the people of Karbala.¹

130

Imam Zayn al-‘Ābideen,² peace be upon him, had a great role in destroying the Umayyad rule. However, the role of Imam Zayn al-‘Ābideen was not like that of his father Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, because if he were to utter a single word against the regime, that would have guaranteed his extermination. Thus he adopted other ways.³

131

Imam Zayn al-‘Ābideen, peace be upon him, managed to demolish the Umayyad rule without engaging in a military battle against them, because it was not possible for him to unsheathe the sword under those extremely savage and harsh circumstances.

132

The primary principle of the existence of the Imam of the Time [i.e. Imam Mahdi], and the acknowledgement of him as the Imam whose

¹ Ibn Quoluwayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, chapter 38.

² Another name for Imam al-Sajjad, peace be upon him.

³ Imam Zayn al-‘Ābideen, peace be upon him, tirelessly worked to elucidate and spread the teachings of Islam in order to enable the masses to distinguish between the Holy Prophet’s Islam and the twisted version of Islam propagated by the Umayyad ruling dynasty. The Imam endeavoured to expose the Umayyad and the crimes they committed, by relaying the horrifying tragedy of Karbala. Imam Zayn al-‘Ābideen, peace be upon him, also adopted the strategy of leading the masses back to Allah after being misled by the Umayyad. This was through his well-known and unparalleled spiritual supplications.

Another policy Imam al-Sajjād is famous for is that of buying off slaves and freeing them after educating them. It is reported that the slaves the Imam bought and freed in this way over his life span runs into thousands.

obedience is obligatory [upon every Muslim] is deemed one of the fundamentals of Islam, and it is one issue that is undisputedly established and frequently reported. And when something reaches the level of frequent recurrence, then argument about it would be of the category of sophistry and denial of the obvious.

133

We need billions of books about the Imam of the Time, peace be upon him, since there are billions of souls around the globe. So from now on, let every one of you allocate an amount of money to publish a book about the Imam of the Time, and in doing so there is no objection to seeking help from one's family; one's spouse, offspring and siblings. It is not compulsory that the book is massive; everyone should endeavour according to their abilities. If you cannot give the sum in a day you may be able to give it in a month. This is a simple task and it is the least we could do for the service of the Imam of the Time, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance.

134

Let us make a covenant with Almighty Allah on the anniversary of the birthday of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, that we start to follow the path of Almighty Allah, so that we may attain the goal after a while, however long or short it may be, for whoever treads the Path will ultimately reach the goal.

135

We should try and make every effort to seek the contentment of the Imam [of our Time] for this is Almighty Allah's contentment; and the Imam's contentment is that we faithfully discharge our obligations according to our creed.

The Commander of the Faithful

Introduction

On divine instructions, Prophet Muhammad formally and publically appointed Imam Ali as his successor to lead the nation after him. That took place on the day of Ghadir Khumm. Reports state that there were some 120,000 people present on the day, and that the Prophet instructed them to pledge allegiance to Imam Ali as his successor and the leader of the Muslim nation after him. Also on that day, on instructions from the Almighty, the Prophet exclusively awarded Imam Ali the title *Amir al-Mo'mineen* or The Commander of the Faithful. The Prophet said no one has the right to this title other than Ali. Throughout his mission the Prophet used to state that the divinely-appointed successors after him are twelve in number. The first of these successors or imams is Imam Ali and the twelfth is Imam Mahdi. Prophet Muhammad used to say, "Ali is to me like Aron was to Moses". He also used to say "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate; so whoever wants to access the city, should do so through its gate." Imam Ali followed and implemented Prophet Muhammad's teachings and policies in every aspect of governance, morality and conduct. Editors.

[For a more detailed biography of Imam Ali, and to better appreciate the statements given below, it is strongly recommended to see endnote #1 in the endnotes section beginning on page 243.]

136

After Allah's Messenger, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon them, is the greatest sign of Almighty Allah, and he is matched by no other sign.

137

The obligation of obedience to *amir al-mo'mineen* (Commander of the Faithful), Imam Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib and his pure and chosen sons was revealed by Almighty Allah, and afterwards the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, departed this world.

138

The point that attracts attention in the holy verse ﴿It is on this day that I perfected your religion for you, completed My Grace and Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion﴾¹ is that Almighty Allah linked the completion of His favour and grace upon creation to the issue of *wilāyah* [authority and leadership] of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib, peace be upon him. Just as the realisation of the perfection of the religion [of Islam] is linked to the *wilāyah*, the completion of favour is also declared by Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. By [Allah's] favour it is meant all benefits and blessings – the manifest and the hidden – such as justice, equality, unity, brotherhood, knowledge, ethics, mental and spiritual tranquillity, freedom, sense of security; in a nutshell, all kinds of comfort and happiness.

139

The Islam of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, is the authentic Islam; in other words, it is the Islam in words and in practice, and it is not Islam in name only.

140

It is due to his compassion upon creation that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, gave his food – and so did his wife Lady Fatima and his young sons Hasan and Husayn, peace be upon them – to the captive, orphan, and pauper – on three consecutive days, and persevered with hunger as they did not have any food other than the bread they gave away to the needy on each day.²

¹ The Holy Qur'an, 5:3

² Imam Ali, his wife *Sayyidah* Fatima, and their young sons Hasan and Husayn, peace be upon them, had vowed to fast for three days, and on each of those three days, when they were about to break their fast after dusk, a captive knocked on their door asking for food, when duly Imam Ali, as well as *Sayyidah* Fatima, Hasan and Husayn gave their portion of bread to the visitor, and were left with nothing to eat, but a drink of water. A similar event took place on the other two nights, when an orphan and a pauper received the

141

If one were to be informed of one's time of death, and one was sure of the reliability of this information, most people would be sad about losing their lives, wealth and family. But when the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, was informed of his death by Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, he did not express sorrow or sadness, nor did he concern himself with anything; except one issue, and that was the soundness and perfection of his faith in his religion.

142

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, informed the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali of the wronging and injustice that would befall him (after the Prophet's death). The Imam was of a great and strong character, both in terms of knowledge and understanding as well as physique, and under the influence of one's desire to respond, a strong individual would, normally, aim for revenge, and his desire as such would make him forget his religion, and he would be subject to the temptation of revenge. But we see *Amir al-Mo'mineen*, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, choose silence for the sake of the interest of his religion.

Ghadir

143

Ghadir is the embodiment of all the sacrifices of the Holy Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and it is the depository for the teachings and etiquettes which Almighty Allah revealed to His Trusted Messenger.

family's dinner, and they ended up fasting with nothing to eat for three days, but breaking their fast with water only. It was on this occasion that the Qur'anic surah Mankind was revealed in honour of Imam Ali, *Sayyidah* Fatima, and Imams Hasan and Husayn, peace be upon them, where this event is cited: ﴿And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive﴾ 76:8

144

Ghadir is the garden of virtues, morality, merits and all the good traits – rather it is all the noble values.

145

All civilised and spiritual developments are completely indebted to Ghadir.

146

Ghadir is the most important factor for the preservation of Islam.

147

The denial of Ghadir is equal to the denial of all sublime Islamic values that have spread throughout the Muslim land.

148

The belief that does not scoop up from the fountainhead of Ghadir is of no value.

149

The essence and spirit of Ghadir means that the teachings of *Amir al-Mo'mineen*, peace be upon him, are fit for the prosperity of all humanity.

150

Eid al-Ghadir is not the day of *amir al-mo'mineen*, Imam Ali; rather it is the day of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family. In fact it should be said that it is the day of Almighty Allah. Indeed, Almighty Allah revealed the rulings and obligatory duties one after another until they were sealed with the ruling on *wilāyah*. This is because when the declaration of this commandment was made, Almighty Allah revealed the Qur'anic verse «It is on this day that I perfected your religion for you, completed My Grace and Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion»¹, and the people

¹ The Holy Qur'an, 5:3

understood that after the Messenger they are obliged to follow and obey Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib, and his pure and chosen sons, peace be upon them.

151

Wherever there is a mention of favours and blessings in the Holy Qur'an, they were meant to be the blessings mankind receives in this world. Thus there is a direct link between the authority (*wilāyah*) of *Amir al-Mo'mineen*, Imam Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib, peace be upon him, and the attainment of worldly benefits and blessings.¹ One of the important and fundamental prerequisites that enable us to attain the social order of freedom and development based on the principles of justice, ethics, and the sovereignty of values and human moral values is to comply with whatever Allah's Messenger conveyed on the Day of Ghadir. In other words, to accept the authority (*wilāyah*) of Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, in practice.

152

Upholding and adhering to the authority (*wilāyah*) of *amir al-mo'mineen*, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, has a natural/physical (*takwīnī*) effect; it brings about abundance in blessings and goodness upon the people – from the heavens and the earth.

153

The glory and magnificence of Ghadir are being manifested ever more, and the light of the values of the sublime teachings that it embodies radiate day after day; [they are] the values that Imam Ali practiced

¹ In the Holy Qur'an, Almighty Allah declares «It is on this day that I perfected your religion for you, completed My Grace and Favour upon you», and this was the day when Prophet Muhammad, on specific divine instructions, publicly appointed Imam Ali, peace be upon him, to be his successor and the leader of the nation after him, and called upon the masses to adhere to the *wilāyah* (authority) of *Amir al-Mo'mineen*. As the most learned about Islam after the Prophet, people would attain benefits and blessings under his leadership, just as they did during his brief reign of just over four years; hence the direct link cited by the author.

[during his reign], which ensure a healthy balance between the spiritual, intellectual, material and moral requirements of mankind. Thus prosperity for all is achieved; individuals and groups, the rulers and the ruled.

154

The school of Ghadir has vast and deep principles to a degree that no one is able to encompass all of them or comprehend their essence, save what little can be acquired from its abundance.

155

According to the Ghadir culture, the taking of the husk of a barley grain constitutes a sin, let alone killing people on grounds of suspicion. On the other hand, the Umayyad and the Abbasid used to persecute people on the mere suspicion of their love for Imam Ali, peace be upon him, and intellectual opponents used to be crushed for the slightest suspicion.

156

Amongst the blessings of Ghadir is for us to be able to appreciate the compassion of Imam Ali and his chosen sons whom Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, appointed to succeed him. The divine mercy upon creation is manifested in them, and they are the embodiment of Allah's beautiful names.

157

In order to know the nature and volume of responsibility Ghadir places upon our shoulders, we must first ask ourselves: how far has the contemporary world come to learn about Ghadir and explore its deep secrets? And, if the world is ignorant of Ghadir, who bears responsibility for that? And what is the nature of responsibility we must undertake vis-à-vis Ghadir towards Muslim communities?

158

In general, the current generation does not have a clear and correct picture of Ghadir, and the responsibility for that falls upon our shoulders to begin with. If we had fulfilled our obligation in explaining and

making clear the idea and teachings of Ghadir to the people, the situation would have been far better than it is now.

159

It is our obligation to make clear to the world that Ghadir means the realisation of wellbeing and expanding its scope, in order to attain progress and advancement in developing human societies. It also means equality between those who control the economy and wealth and the rest of the community, and to eliminate the culture of gangs and parasites.

160

According to the culture of Ghadir, those in charge of the economy are the trustworthy ones in whose hands are the lifeline of civil society.

161

Ghadir ... means the covenant between those in charge [i.e. the rulers] and Almighty Allah, who imposes upon them that they make the level of their lifestyle like that of the lowest of the individuals in society, and that they [the rulers] copy them in clothing, eating, housing, welfare, and suchlike.

162

We emphasise on the grave responsibility that has been placed on our shoulders vis-à-vis Ghadir, and on the necessity of adhering to it throughout.

163

One of the most important of responsibilities during the current time is the dissemination of the message and values of Ghadir, and to invite the people to benefit from this divine gift. Otherwise, there is not the slightest hope in lifting the tyranny of the despots from the oppressed in a bid to rescue humanity from this dire situation, and for humanity to reach the shore of security, welfare, justice, and freedom.

164

When we talk about Ghadir, the talk is about the meanings it carries,

which manifest the awesome spirit of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib, peace be upon them.

165

We ask: whether there will ever be a just ruler who would follow the footsteps of Imam Ali, peace be upon him, who used to live at a lower level than even the poorest citizen in his country.

166

If Ghadir only ruled the Ummah for the duration of thirty years of Imam Ali's life¹ after the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, we would have enjoyed its blessings even today, and would not have witnessed all the ordeals and tribulations from that time until today, and until the reappearance of the saviour of humanity, the Awaited Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance.

167

If Imam Ali, peace be upon him, had ruled and Ghadir had materialised, the people would have “eaten from above their heads and beneath their feet” – as the saying goes – in opulence and comfort until the day of resurrection.

168

If Imam Ali, peace be upon him, had been allowed to rule as the Prophet had instructed, and Ghadir had materialised, there would not have been a single pauper, sick, or prisoner in the entire world today, nor would a

¹ On instructions from the Almighty, Imam Ali was appointed by the Prophet as his successor to lead the nation after him. But Imam Ali was prevented from assuming the leadership of the nation by the leaders of the *coup d'état* that followed. After the twenty-five-year reign of the three rulers before him, for the first time in the history of the Muslim nation, Imam Ali assumed the office of leadership through unanimous allegiance from the nation, with the exception of a handful. The rule of Imam Ali lasted just over four years. Imam Ali was assassinated while praying in the Kufah mosque thirty years after the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family.

single drop of blood have been shed unjustly, nor would a married couple engage in dispute, nor a bond of kinship be severed, ...

169

The notions that are included in Ghadir are not found in the two Eids of Fiṭr and Aḏḥā or other Eids in Islam. Compare between all the Islamic Eids, including the Jum‘ah, and Eid al-Ghadir, and you would see that history confirms that it is greatest of all Eids.

170

The battles that Imam Ali, peace be upon him, fought would not have taken place if Ghadir had materialised as wanted by Almighty Allah and His Messenger but the battles were imposed on the Imam, peace be upon him, by those who were enabled by the preceding ones and who were not pleased by the materialisation of Ghadir. Thus we were made to witness – over the course of history – wars, destruction, oppression, corruption, and ravishment of sanctities, such that today we witness wars, explosions, killings, violence, in almost all parts of the world; one kills another, one wrongs another, abduction, genocide, and destruction everywhere. This is what our authority Lady Fatima al-Zahrā’, peace be upon her, warned against when she said, “then milk it (i.e. the *coup d’état*, but you will get not what you wish for, rather) you would only get fresh blood (i.e. continuous bloodshed and turmoil) and bitter deadly poison.”¹

¹ On another occasion, the holy lady Fatima Zahra’, declares to them, “so carry this luggage which would be of perpetual shame ...” Bihar, vol.43 p159. The luggage they carried and passed on to their ilk is a system which delivers nothing but murder, torture, persecution, imprisonment, poverty, corruption and all forms of injustice. This is the perpetual shame the holy lady refers to. Today we have all of these in the Muslim countries. This is because the Muslims opted out of the teachings and instructions of Allah’s messenger when he appointed Imam Ali as his successor on the day of Ghadir. Today the Muslim countries rank amongst the worst in the world. They carry the shame of being the worst in human rights, corruption, poverty, freedom, politics, economics, and the list goes on. They will continue to be so until they revert back to the Prophet’s

171

The world does not know the truth about Ghadir, because it has been ignored, and thus humanity has been deprived of benefiting from its values and rewards, and even some Muslims have not benefited from Imam Ali, peace be upon him, and have thus strayed from his teachings. What is then the responsibility of people like us who have some knowledge about the greatness of Ghadir and have recognised the loss and damage done to humanity as a result of concealment of Ghadir?

In other words, how can we revive the Ghadir?

After Allah's Messenger

172

The Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mo'mineen*), Imam Ali, peace be upon him, refused [to bow to tyranny and injustice and go against the teachings of Allah and His Messenger] and preferred for the leadership [that was bestowed upon him by the prophet] to slip through his fingers, and lose out on the world and let everyone turn against him, but he would not let go of his values and principles.

173

If Imam Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib, peace be upon them, had not been prevented from office, and was allowed to rule the nation right away for the thirty years he lived after Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, his government would have been a precise continuation of the government of the Prophet with one exception in that he was not a prophet; as the Prophet himself informed of that.

instructions, who said "I leave behind amongst you two momentous entities – the book of Allah and my progeny the Ahl al-Bayt – so long as you adhere to them both, you will never go astray." Editor

His Government

174

One of the attributes of Imam Ali, peace be upon him, especially during his reign as a ruler, was his compassion and sympathy with the people, and his compassion and sympathy with the poorest of the people manifested through his conduct.¹

175

Imam Ali, peace be upon him, never built himself a building, nor did he ever live in a spacious palace, rather he persevered with all the difficulties and pains so that there would not be an individual in the remotest part of his country suffering from poverty – not being able to find one course of meal to allay his hunger.

176

Assuming that there may be individuals in remote parts of his country who may go hungry, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, did not sleep on a full stomach, and he denied himself even the average food, clothing, housing, and other means of normal life.

177

By his stated policy of “being satisfied with his two ragged pieces of cloth and two round pieces of bread”, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, wanted to realise two objectives:

1. To distance all rumours from him, as an Islamic ruler, and deprive his foes – who stubbornly denied all his qualities and virtues – of the opportunity to condemn him.
2. To remind the Muslim rulers of their grave responsibility towards their people’s sufferings and poverty, and the necessity

¹ Imam Ali, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to say: “Shall I be satisfied I am called the Commander of the Faithful, and I do not share and sympathise with the people’s calamities or their adversities in life?”

of establishing and upholding justice, sympathising and sharing with their hardship and difficulties, and the endeavour to ensure and facilitate welfare, and a dignified life for them.

178

The mere probability of there being hungry individuals in the furthest points of the Islamic country is considered, in the dictionary of Imam Ali, peace be upon him, a responsibility of dire consequences. Thus he emphasises on the rulers that it is necessary that they make their living style and level the same as that of the land's poorest possible, and to share with them life's hardships.

179

Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, observed justice with citizens, by dividing the wealth of the state equally amongst the nation, but when it comes to himself, he was altruistic and ascetic with all worldly matters.

180

In the field of economy and welfare security for the minorities, *Amir al-Mo'mineen*, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, would not abandon even one individual from amongst the people-of-the-book [Jews and Christians] who could not fend for himself, and the Imam would ensure to secure his means of living.

181

Within less than five years of his reign, Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali ibn Abu Tālib, peace be upon them, took the country to a state that even one poor person was not known to exist in the farthest limits of the capital, to the extent that the sighting of even a non-Muslim beggar was an abnormal phenomenon.

182

During Imam Ali's reign, which was four years and a few months, one particular event took place, that history or other sources never reported something similar occurring again during his reign.

The report states: One day the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was walking through the streets of Kufah when he saw someone begging. In astonishment, the Imam, peace be upon him, said “What is this?!!” An individual, who did not seem to know the reality of Islam, responded justifyingly by saying, “Oh he is a Christian... he is old and frail, and not able to earn a living, so he is begging!!” Perhaps the respondent thought that things would be different for the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, if the beggar was a non-Muslim, while under Islamic Law it does not make any difference in this respect. Imam *Amir al-Mo'mineen*, peace be upon him, reproached his companions after seeing that Christian in that state, saying, “You used him until he grew old and frail, and now you deny him his right and abandon him!! Pay for his living expenses from *bayt al-māl* (i.e. the public treasury).”

183

During his reign, Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib, peace be upon them, brought equality before the Islamic judiciary between the supreme leader and the ordinary individual from the minorities.

184

Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib, peace be upon them, was the first to allow demonstrations against himself and give them their demands, even though the demand was false in itself [from the Islamic viewpoint].¹

185

Imam Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib, peace be upon them, gave all forms of freedoms to the people in an era when the entire world lived under the rule of despotism and authoritarianism. The Imam was the leader of the greatest state which is unparalleled even today from the viewpoint of

¹ Their demand was to be able to continue with *salāt-al-tarāweeh*, which was prohibited by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

strength and size; since the Imam used rule over the equivalent of fifty of today's countries.

186

There may be a government in the world today which rules over a billion people such as China but it is not the most powerful. And there may be a government which rules a powerful country such as the USA but it does not rule over the greatest number of people. However, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, used to govern the greatest stretch of land, and the greatest number of people, while the Islamic government was the most powerful then. So the Imam did not lack any power, and it would have been for him to say “No” to the opposition; but he did not. He practically announced to the world that «there is no coercion in religion».¹

187

The Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him, used to respond to those who sought to fight him by advising them and exhorting them as much as possible, and he used to endeavour to avoid combat and bloodshed; whether through individual counsel or group preaching. But if the other party opted for battle, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, would resort to defensive measures and no more. As soon as the enemy withdraws or is defeated, the Imam would desist from pursuing them, and he would not seek revenge from them. Indeed Imam Ali, peace be upon him, never pre-empted any battle with anyone, and this is evident in the history of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him.

188

Imam Ali, peace be upon him, never initiated any war pre-emptively – all his combats were imposed on him, the first of which became known as the battle of the Camel.

¹ The Holy Qur'an, (2):256.

189

In the battle of Şiffeen, Imam Ali's opponents [amongst his own side] used to shout their slogans in the face of Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful and the leader of the Muslim nation, but despite that the Imam did not prevent his opponents from expressing their opinions!... Where do you find freedom such as this? Do you find such freedom even with those who zealously call for freedom in this day and age which is known as the era of freedoms?

190

Those who revolted and fought against the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him, are the true hypocrites in reality, but the Imam's policy, which is that of the Prophet and of Islam, and their teachings in governance, is not to use the sword of threat and fear. Therefore, the opponents to the rule [of Imam Ali] are not called hypocrites, even though they are truly hypocrites. Thus, in order to manage the government, observe the principle of competing priorities, and show consideration for the state of the nation, and for the adversaries too, the Imam forbade that they be called hypocrites.

191

As part of his justice and mercy to them, when the war ended in the cases of each of the battles of the Camel, Şiffeen, and Nahrawān, the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him, did not pursue or prosecute those who instigated sedition, and campaigned and waged war against him, even though he became victorious over them and had control over them.

192

Imam Ali, peace be upon him, did not keep even one captive from adversaries, he did not confiscate nor did he allow his companions to confiscate anything from their wealth and properties, even if it were cheap or worthless.

193

During his reign, the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be

upon him, did not allow the welfare grants to those who waged war against him to be cut after they were defeated in the battlefield. Rather, the Imam, peace be upon him, even forbade anyone calling them hypocrites, even though they indeed were the most manifest examples of hypocrisy.

194

As part of his compassion to creation, the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him, instructed, while on his deathbed, for some of the milk he was being treated with to be given to his assassin Ibn Muljam. The Imam also instructed that he should not be denied his right even as far as suitable food, drink, and clothing for him. Rather he asked for Ibn Muljam to be forgiven, saying “If I forgive, then forgiveness is closeness for me [to the Almighty] and for you it is a good deed, so forgive. Do you not like Allah to forgive you?”

Imam Husayn and Ashura

Introduction

Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, set out to seek to reform his grandfather's nation, as he put it; "to promote good and prohibit evil; since good was not being promoted and evil not prohibited. And to uphold the policies of my grandfather and my father Ali bin Abu Talib." In this cause Imam Husayn, on the day of Ashura, sacrificed everything; it cost him the lives of his sons, brothers, nephews, devotees, including himself, as well as his six-month old son, and it resulted in his wives, sisters, daughters and other women taken captives, and paraded across towns and cities from Karbala to Kufah and from there all the way to Damascus.

Ashura – the most unspeakable day in human history, "the like of which there is none" as stated by Imam Hasan, peace be upon him. Not only Allah's most cherished were slaughtered on that day, but they were slaughtered in the most brutal way ever. Not only man and Jinn cried for Husayn, but even heaven and earth wept for Husayn. It is reported in numerous sources that on that day it rained blood, not only in Karbala but in other locations like Medina and Jerusalem. A report recorded in the Anglo Saxon chronicle alludes to this extraordinary phenomenon: **685 In this year in Britain it rained blood, and milk and butter were turned into blood.**

The tragedy of Ashura is also cited in the Old Testament "**For the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will offer sacrifice in the land of the north by the River Euphrates.**" Jeremiah 46:10

Imam Husayn embarked on this mission and gave the blood of his heart – with one goal in mind – in order to secure humanity's salvation, and rescue them from ignorance and straying, as stated by Imam Sadiq. And in the course of that endeavour, Imam Husayn showed the most exalted forms of compassion and humanity when he lavishly gave water to his own killers as well as the their horses, and sprayed them with water in the middle of the scorching desert – knowing full well that, very soon,

they would deny him water and kill him in the most ruthless manner. This is why Prophet Muhammad said about him, “al-Husayn is a torch of guidance and an ark of salvation.”

Were it not for his endeavour and his sacrifice, there would be no trace of Islam, morals, or human values today. We would instead have been in a totally different world; a world beyond recognition, a world that would have no resemblance to the one we live in today, despite all the tyranny injustice and evil there is today ... it would have been pure evil. We would probably be worshipping Yazid and the devil today. Editors.

195

The holy month of Muharram has such a distinction and a feature that at the onset of this season, and the sighting of the new moon of this month, one remembers and relates to the name of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, when he was wrongly and savagely slaughtered on the tenth day of this month.

196

The holy month of Muharram reminds us of our responsibility towards Imam Husayn's cause and the retribution of his blood. Amongst our responsibilities are two:

First: Introducing Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and his cause, such that every human being would recognise him throughout the globe.

Second: This is the more important, since the first leads to it; which is to pursue the goals of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

197

Promoting Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and his cause, through holding mourning programs and Husayni rites on the one hand, and through the endeavour to materialise the aim of Imam Husayn which is the salvation of the masses from the ignorance of disbelief and deviation of falsehood to the light of the Truth, Islam, and faith on the other hand, are amongst the responsibilities placed upon us all, with respect to the blood of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

198

With the onset of the holy month of Muharram, it is time to remember what Almighty Allah bestowed upon Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, who sacrificed everything in Allah's cause. The Almighty gave him merits that He did not give to absolutely anyone else, not even those who are superior to Husayn i.e. his grandfather Allah's Messenger, his father Imam Ali the Commander of the Faithful, his mother Fatima al-Zahrā', and his brother Imam Hasan, peace be upon them all.¹

199

Indeed, Almighty Allah has given al-Husayn, peace be upon him, that which He has given to no one else. The Almighty has linked his blood to the realm of creation; for He has placed the responsibility for his blood upon the entire Earth, and upon everyone who lives on it – as if the crime was committed by the entire earth and whoever on it. He then made them responsible to take his revenge.

200

We must roll up our sleeves during the months of Muharram and Safar; while having planned and prepared extensively beforehand, and utilise all our energies and resources in this cause so that ultimately Imam Husayn becomes a guide for all humanity. This may be achieved through the means of the Husayni rites and processions, movies, the internet, satellite television channels, seminars, and all other means available to us. This is part of our responsibility alluded to in Imam Ṣādiq's address to his grandfather Imam Husayn: "**Allah has made the Earth and whoever on it liable for your blood.**"

201

Let us carefully study the [various] *ziyārāt* of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and contemplate the notions therein; it is only then that one would attain great understanding through reflections on the content of these *ziyārāt*.

¹ For example, prayers under his dome are answered, and cure is achieved in consuming the earth of his shrine.

202

It is necessary to know why Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and his sons and followers chose the path of martyrdom, and in this particularly tragic way. There is a passage in the salutation of *ziyārat-al-arb‘een* that answers this question of ours: **“In order to bring about the salvation of Your servants [O Allah] from ignorance and from the confusion and perplexity of straying and perversity”**. Here the term “Your servants” is used; but this does not concern the Shi’a only but all human beings.

203

How great is the number of the people who do not know Husayn, his cause, and the objectives of his uprising! And how grave is our responsibility thereof!

204

Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, revived and upheld the religion of his grandfather, peace be upon him and his holy family, and were it not for Husayn, no pillar of the Islamic religion would have stood still.

205

By his sacrifice and martyrdom, Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, revived and upheld the religion and protected the Sharia.

206

Were it not for Husayn, there would have been no trace of the *ṣalāh*, fasting, and the hajj pilgrimage – because the Umayyad’s were about to annihilate the Islamic religion, but Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, protected the religion by [sacrificing] his blood and the blood of his Ahl al-Bayt.

207

Doesn’t Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, have a favour for the *ṣalāh*; every *ṣalāh* on the face of the planet?! Doesn’t his blood have a favour upon the Ka‘bah and the Grand Holy Mosque?!

208

Were it not for the struggle and jihad of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, his revolt and his blood, there would have been no fasting during the month of Ramaḍān, and there would have been no trace of the *zakāh*, *khums*, and all other laws of Islam.

209

The survival of the name of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, and its daily mention from the top of the minarets is by the blessings of Imam Husayn, and were it not for Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, Mo‘āwiyah, Yazid, and after them the dynasty of Marwān would have wiped any mention of the Prophet’s name, and the *jāhiliyyah* (the pre-Islamic era of ignorance) would have returned. This was the plan Mo‘āwiyah had drawn up.

210

Every mosque you enter today owes its existence to Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and every *ṣalāh* and fasting, and “bidding good and forbidding evil”, all kindness to parents, sincerity to Allah, and even the name of Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, every time it is raised in the *adhān* . . . all these are due to Imam Husayn, peace be upon him. This is the meaning of the prophetic hadith, “I am from Husayn.”

211

The Prophets, their loyal successors, and devout followers were killed in the cause of Allah’s Laws. Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, informed his brother Muhammad al-Ḥanafīyyah when the latter tried to convince him not to leave for Karbala, that his grandfather, Allah’s Messenger, said to him in his dream, “O Husayn! Go for Allah has willed to see you killed [in the cause of saving the religion]”. Muhammad al-Ḥanafīyyah responded by reciting the Qur’anic verse “To Allah we belong and to Him we return.” He went on saying to Imam Husayn, “Then what is the purpose for taking the women and children with you, given you are leaving under these circumstances?” the Imam replied, “He told me:

“Indeed Allah has willed to see them taken captive [to convey and revive the message of Karbala.]””

212

The Prophet said to his grandson Imam Husayn, “You have degrees and ranks in Paradise that you may not attain except through martyrdom”. What did the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, attain other than it preserved and protected Allah’s religion and His Laws from being eradicated during the reign of the tyrant Yazid ibn Mo‘āwiyah?!

213

It is absolutely not possible for us to imagine what the master of the martyrs, peace be upon him, endured on the day of Ashura. Occasionally some thoughts and ideas might occur to one, but it is absolutely impossible to imagine what actually took place on that day.

[For a brief account of some of the sufferings Imam Husayn faced on the day of Karbala, see endnote #2 in the endnotes section beginning on page 243.]

214

Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, depicts the state of Imam Husayn’s horse when it returns to the tents without its knight; as if it feels it had failed to succour its master Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and that it rushed to his family to inform them of a massive calamity.

215

The term “*nashirat al-sho‘ur*”¹ or “having spread their hair” may be envisaged as follows:

It was cultural tradition of the ancient Arabs that when a woman loses a beloved one, she would remain grief stricken for the rest of her life. In

¹ This is an extract from *ziyārat-al-nāḥiyah*, by the Imam of our time, Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him.

these circumstances she would untie her braid inside her hijab as a sign of her grief. This tradition is prevalent in Iraq and may be in other Arab countries. By this statement it is not meant, as some tend to believe, that the *‘alawiyyāt* ladies left their tents while their heads and hair exposed, God forbid.

The meaning of “*nashirat al-sho‘ur*” or “having spread their hair” is that the *‘alawiyyāt* ladies untied their tresses under their hijab given their immense grief, and wore their hijab on their heads firmly abiding by the instruction of *Sayyid al-Shohadā’*, peace be upon him, who ordered them to do so, and not let their immense grief make them overlook their hijab.

216

The polytheists gathered their forces to fight Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and they meant to kill him in particular. But when they were defeated and some of them taken prisoners, the prophet could not go to sleep because one of them was groaning. But in the case of the Umayyad savages, they took the Prophet’s family and descendants [captive on the day of Ashura], and they never showed pity to them.

217

The calamity of *Sayyid al-Shohadā’* and his family is an exceptional calamity.

218

It is Allah’s will that the calamity of *Sayyid al-Shohadā’* and his household remains unparalleled in all existence from eternity until the day of resurrection.

219

Look at the station of *Sayyid al-Shohadā’*’s little daughter, *Sayyidah Ruqayyah*. After the passage of more than one thousand, three hundred and fifty years, in the district of the Levant, that is the centre of the Umayyad dynasty seat of power, great many prayers are answered

through pleading to and the intercession of this honourable *Sayyidah*. This is in relation to this world, as for the hereafter, Almighty Allah is all-Knowing.

220

It is not for us to summarise the cause of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, by saying, “He is an Imam, and an Imam has the quality of patience and perseverance”.

221

In less than half a day, Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, experienced all those afflictions and endured such atrocities that no human being can possibly withstand. All that was in sight of Almighty Allah that never falls asleep; and the hour will come when in His absolute wisdom the time for patience will come to an end, and it will be the turn for Allah’s justice, of which retribution will be one of its consequences.

222

The battle of Karbala embodies the grandness of the *Sayyid al-Shohadā’* (Master of the Martyrs), peace be upon him.

223

When we speak about Imam Husayn and his merits and qualities, we may discharge some of our responsibilities towards him, and that may be not more than the amount of the wetness a needle can have from the sea. This is because talking about Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, is indeed talking about Almighty Allah, the Holy Qur’an, Prophethood, the Truth, and every merit and virtue there is.

224

Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, aimed at bringing about salvation of humanity from ignorance, straying and perversity.

225

If we want to attain closeness to Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, it is

imperative that we sacrifice all we have in the cause of the salvation of ourselves and of all humanity from ignorance, straying and perversity.

226

Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, was martyred for the sake of three goals: the fundamental principles of the Islamic religion (*oṣool al-deen*), the Islamic Law, and the Islamic ethics and morality.

227

The majority of what we have of ideals and values is from the blessings of the sacrifices of the Master of Martyrs Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

228

Ashura has implanted in our innermost the values of humanity, servitude before Almighty Allah, as well as favouring and serving others, compassion for the oppressed, and defence of those who have been wronged.

229

It is necessary to keep the embers of the slaughter of Ashura always burning, and to sacrifice the blood of our hearts for its sake. In this way we guarantee pride and prestige for ourselves and for the generations after us.

230

One of the goals for which Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, sacrificed the most precious on the face of the earth – himself and his family – and he emphasised that it be kept alive in words and in action, is to instil and uphold Islamic morality in the individual and in society.

231

Sound economy, just politics and morality were at the forefront of the goals of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, in his uprising against the Umayyad dynasty, who crushed all values, corrupted the country, humiliated the people, and imposed upon the nation detestable

economy, and oppressive rule, such that the outward look of the nation became other than what Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, had brought to the world, and had implemented during his blessed life.

232

Indeed Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, offered the greatest sacrifices in Almighty Allah's cause, when he sacrificed his honourable person, and his righteous family, even his infant son, as well as his devout companions.

233

Were it not for the blessed movement of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, the policies and practice of the Umayyad dynasty, and those of the earlier ones before them, as well as their likes, would have uprooted the Islamic religion, and wiped out Islam altogether.

234

The holy month of Muharram and the memory of Ashura continue to serve as a torch of light by which humanity is guided from the time of martyrdom of the master of the martyrs Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, until today.

235

It is a duty upon the faithful to follow Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, by adoring themselves with good morals, and adhering to them in all conducts of social life; with friends and relatives, with strangers and enemies.

236

The faithful enhance themselves with Ashura's rich lessons for their world and their hereafter.

237

Every time the Ashura anniversary is commemorated, Imam Husayn's

devotees acquire new values and understandings from the eternal Ashura School.

238

The massive slaughter of Ashura provides guidance and enlightenment for generations over the ages.

239

Ashura makes the reverend individuals bow their heads out of respect for the magnanimity of its owner.

240

Let's not forget that the commemoration of Ashura has passed through various situations and confrontations, and that the sacrifices which the predecessors and ardent devotees of the Master of the Martyrs, peace be upon him, have offered are indeed the ones which have conveyed to us this school of Ashura which stands up to tyranny and oppression, and legendry in its holy objectives.

241

It is not appropriate for us to claim we follow the school of Ashura if we do not give the precious and priceless in the cause of continuing its sublime goals, and to convey this divine Husayni trust to the forthcoming generations intact and without it being stained by any defect, while at the same time, being proactive and distant from any form of straying or distortion. This may be achieved when the intentions are sincere, and the personal interests are shunned and replaced by the objective of realising the content of Almighty Allah.

242

The duties of the devotees of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, are to promote and glorify the issue of Ashura, disseminate its culture and programs, revive the Ashura *majālis*, processions, and everything that is related to the rites of Ashura in order to eternalise its memory. Needless to say, this task is surrounded by hardship and difficulties – but they are worth it since the final outcome is great and abundant reward.

243

Our daily prayers, fasting, good conduct with the family and community, and every other good deed that we may do is accounted for by Almighty Allah. But the endeavour made in the cause of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, has a special status compared to the aforementioned deeds. It is Imam Husayn alone that Allah has given the authority to reward for such endeavours; so good for those who multiply their endeavours in this cause.

244

Let us consider what *Sayyid al-Shohadā'* Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, has presented us so that we track his path and follow his footsteps.

245

We must try to learn lessons from Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

246

One of the lessons of Karbala is to use our words and deeds for the good cause – always and with everyone without exception.

247

One of the lessons we have learnt from the Master of the Martyrs Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, is that if we are able to help someone out of difficulty, then we should not hesitate about that.

248

Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, teaches us that if it is possible for us to help someone we know – or even don't know – with our wealth, or words and deeds, or conciliation, then we should do so.

249

The Day of Ashura is not an occasion purely for mourning and lamentation, but it has always been the time for learning from its lessons, and following the examples of its heroes.

250

It is imperative that we follow the example of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'*, peace be upon him, and take him as a role model in all his conducts.

251

The movement of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, is distinguished by two features; the teardrop and the role-model, and these two features are always together.

252

The one who is privileged to attain a higher station and a greater sanctity in the sight of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'* Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, is one who is more capable in taking him as a role model and shedding tears for him. The rewards attained are according to the extent of the efforts made in these two respects.

253

By his martyrdom, Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, founded the school of guidance for all.

254

Great many non-Muslims, even fire-worshipers praised Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

255

Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, called upon the people to confront oppression and wrongdoing, and persevere with hardships and tribulations in order to experience happiness and prosperity.

256

Whoever wants to prove his loyalty to *Sayyid al-Shohadā'* Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and his sublime goals, should endeavour to realize the goals for which the Imam was martyred, which are embodied in the religion's fundamentals (*oṣool al-deen*), Shari'a rulings, and Islamic morals, and that one makes these goals his or her top priorities.

257

We have an exemplary role model in the stance of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, vis-à-vis al-Ḥurr¹ and his army of fully armed men. [When they were stranded in the desert without water] Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, gave them all water to drink, knowing full well that they, with the exception of al-Ḥurr, will kill him after a while. Their mission's only objective was to arrest Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and surrender him to Ibn Ziyād [the governor of Kufah]. They were the clearest manifestation of oppressors, hypocrites, enemy combatants, rebels, and hateful adversaries without any doubt or hesitation. They were fully armed in order to force the Imam to surrender, and if necessary they would resort to using force. However, it is the conduct of the Imam, peace be upon him, that kept the Shi'a faith alive.

258

It was imperative for Imam Husayn, given his moral code of conduct, to give water to his killers [even though he and his friends and family would be left without water, as it turned out to be], to the extent that he would dismount and personally shower their horses with water, as the narrations report, but the most important matter for the Imam was Islam and inviting the people to it.

259

Imam Husayn's exemplar and ideal may be embodied through relentless endeavour to exterminate ignorance and aberrance from humanity as a whole. This will not be realized except through unyielding efforts and

¹ Al-Ḥurr was one of the military elites and most formidable generals of the Kufah army, who was also known for his valour and bravery. With an army of 1000 under his command, al-Ḥurr was given the mission of arresting Imam Husayn, peace be upon him. However, on the day of Ashura, al-Ḥurr realised that he is on the side that is about to fight and kill the single most devout human being on earth – the Prophet's grandson – the son of Ali and Fatima. He said I have to a choice between hell and heaven. At the outset of the battle, he switched sides and came to Imam Husayn and sought forgiveness and asked to be given permission to fight. Al-Ḥurr was amongst the first to be killed at the battle of Karbala on the day of Ashura.

sincerity to Almighty Allah, great deal of sacrifice in the cause of awakening the masses, and spreading the light of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, to every country, city, village, and corner of the world, and to every house, man, woman, boy and girl.

260

It is essential that Imam Husayn's teachings are implemented when utilising Ashura to rescue humanity from the current wronging, killing and bloodshed, torture, and the indignity that many people face every day, and the Muslims in particular, in various parts of the world.

261

As we approach the Ashura of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, whom Almighty Allah made as a Torch of Guidance and an Ark of Salvation, it is necessary for us all to embark on what the Almighty wants us to do and would be pleased with us doing, and that which would realize the goals of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'*, peace be upon him.

262

One of the most important goals of Ashura that rests on our shoulders [and we must faithfully discharge of it] is to disseminate the teachings of Islam – whether *oṣool* or *fōroo'* (roots or branches) of religion – through all forms of mass media, communication and networking, and to propagate them in various aspects of life.

263

Amongst the goals of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, on Ashura was the instilling of: The roots of the Islamic faith such as *tawheed* [the indivisible oneness of Allah] along with Allah's attributes; the mission of the prophets; the mission of the Prophet of Islam, the seal of the prophets, peace be upon him and his family and all prophets; the *imamate* [the leadership of the nation after the prophet] and its discussions; the resurrection, and its details, consequences, rewards and punishments, and heaven and hell.

264

One of the most important goals of Imam Husayn's movement is to revitalise the fundamentals of the religion in the hearts and souls.

265

More than ever before, it is essential to use modern technologies to disseminate Imam Husayn's teachings, aims and objectives through the various means of communications such as books and newspapers, films and theatrical plays, satellite television channels, internet, and whatever means that the voice of Imam Husayn may be broadcast with honesty and integrity to all humanity.

266

The movement of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, determined the fate of the Islamic nation when it rescued it from falling into the abyss of deviation, distortion and disagreement, in which other nations fell, such as the Jewish nation, the Christian nation, and other nations before them.

267

The blessed movement of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, opened up the pathway for the nation to continue the mission in the same line that was drawn up by Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, for which the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali fought to preserve, and the Holy and the Truthful Fatima al-Zahrā' sacrificed herself in its cause.

268

The sacred month of Muḥarram is the month of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and the month of momentous sacrifices.

269

The sacred month of Muḥarram is the month of the Truth's battlefield – personified by the holy and chosen ones from Ahl al-Bayt and their righteous devotees – against the front of tyranny and falsehood –

represented by the oppressive Omayyad government and its materialists followers.

270

Karbala's unequal battle – both in terms of men and ammunitions – resulted in the victory of the Truth and the annihilation of falsehood. The signs of this victory are evident throughout all times and places, especially in the months of Muḥarram and Şafar.

271

Indeed Allah's promise of victory to Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, has been materialised. The holy hadith narrated this from Allah's messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and that lady Zaynab, peace be upon her, quoted this to Imam Sajjād, peace be upon him: **“a standard will be set up for this Ṭaff for the tomb of your father Sayyid al-Shohadā’, the mark of which will not be extinguished, and its print will not be effaced despite the recurrence of the days and nights. So let the leaders of disbelief and the followers of aberrance do their utmost to obliterate and eradicate it, for indeed this will do nothing but enhance the manifestation of its mark and magnificence of its affair.”**

272

Read the history to see how Almighty Allah's promise of punishment against the enemies of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, materialised in their ruin and perdition.

273

We must learn from Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, the lessons of relying on Almighty Allah, sense of honour, sacrifice, morality, and every virtue.

274

It is extremely important that the devotees of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, know that the more they learn from Imam Husayn the closer they get to him.

275

It is imperative for us to do our utmost to realise – to the greatest extent possible – one of the most prominent goals of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, in his blessed movement, is the “**salvation of humanity**” in every sense of the word.

276

Almighty Allah insists on nothing but loftiness and superiority for *Sayyid al-Shohadā'* Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and expansion and spreading for his blessed teachings, just as Almighty Allah insists on nothing but defeat and destruction for his enemies.

277

This year's Day of Ashura is over, except that the tribulation of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, are not, rather they begin from now on. We should not allow this day to pass over us except in the best manner.

278

Despite the numerous attempts of the enemies to extinguish the torch of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'*, peace be upon him, it remains shining over fourteen centuries, and it will remain shining until the Day of Resurrection.

[For a brief account of the recent history of some of the attempts against the shrine of Imam Husayn, see endnote #3 in the endnotes section beginning on page 243.]

279

The tomb of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, was in the vast stretch of the desert with no sign for it, and no one could find and visit it without a guide. On the other hand, spies and agents had orders to arrest

anyone attempting to visit the tomb, and this casted fear in the hearts of all, and no one would dare visit the tomb.¹

280

Look at what happened on the 10th Muharram 1425AH!² Did the pilgrims stop visiting the tomb of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'*, peace be upon him? Do the enemies believe that the people will abandon visiting *Sayyid al-Shohadā'*, peace be upon him?

281

There is no doubt that those killed on the day of 10th of Muharram 1425AH [and on all other occasions before and after] have gone to Almighty Allah's paradise, but woe onto those who wronged the devotees of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'* who had come to visit his shrine; those wicked individuals are amongst those who had lost both this world and the hereafter.

282

Good for those who were martyred while visiting the Ahl al-Bayt peace be upon them. Tomorrow we will envy them and we will see, by the will of Almighty Allah, their lofty station on the day of resurrection.³

¹ On the occasion of Arbreen (2015) the number of those visiting the shrine of Imam Husayn exceeded well above twenty-two million.

² On the occasion of Ashura 1425AH (March 2004AD) the pilgrims who were participating in the mourning ceremony in the city of Karbala – around the shrine of Imam Husayn, were targeted by a series of car bomb explosion as well as being shelled by mortar from distant locations outside the city. More than one hundred and seventy men, women and children were killed instantly, with many more wounded.

³ The despotic powers that ruled continued to persecute and murder those visiting the shrines of Ahl al-Bayt and in particular Imam Husayn, peace be upon them, beginning from the rulers of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties in the seventh century AD, through to Saddam's brutal Baathist regime in the late twentieth century, and the vicious Saudi-funded Wahhabi and Salafi cults today. But despite that millions visit the Shrines of Ahl al-Bayt and Imam

283

I met many of the victims and those who had been wronged in Iraq. One of them used to say: “I have lost my five sons, and I know nothing of what has happened to them.” and there are many other such cases, where many youths have been killed, the honour of women violated, scholars assaulted, but despite all that the devotees never abandon the issue of *Sayyid al-Shohadā*, peace be upon him, and they will never abandon it until the day of resurrection.

284

It was Allah’s will to make out of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn a tear of sorrows and a role model, not only for the generations that followed him, but even for the divine prophets and messengers, peace be upon them, who preceded Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

285

The trials and testing of the Ashura tragedy and its cause is not applicable to today only, nor was it on the day of Ashura 61AH, but rather it began before Almighty Allah created the Prophets, peace be upon them. So Almighty Allah trialled even Prophets Noah and Abraham, peace be upon them, with the case of Imam Husayn peace be upon him.¹

Husayn in particular, and every year the number of these visitors increases by the will of Almighty Allah.

¹ It is reported that when Prophet Adam arrived at the land of Karbala, he felt sad and distressed, and tripped and fell to the ground at the location where al-Husayn was later killed, and injured his foot such that it bled profusely. Adam raised his head and said, O Allah; Have I committed another sin that made me deserve punishment? Indeed I passed throughout the land but I did not face ill in the way I faced in this land. Almighty Allah revealed to him, “O Adam; You did not commit a sin, but in this land your son Husayn would be killed unjustly, so your blood is shed in sympathy with his blood.” [*Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol.44, p242]

Also it is reported that when Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, arrived at the land of Karbala riding his horse, it stumbled and Ibrahim fell to the ground

286

The affair of Ashura will remain a burning issue until the day of resurrection, and millions of individuals will be tested on that.

287

We will all be tested, and therefore it is imperative that we take necessary caution not to disrespect any aspect of the affair of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'*, peace be upon him. Indeed Almighty Allah will forgive a disobedience against Him quicker than forgiving an issue against the affair of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'*, peace be upon him. This is similar to the narration which states: On the Day of 'Arafah, Almighty Allah favours the visitors of the tomb of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'*, peace be upon him, before He favours the visitors of His Sacred House.

288

The responsibility of those of us who know about *Sayyid al-Shohadā'*, peace be upon him, is to convey the message of Imam Husayn to all humanity, by all means possible. In this way we can introduce *Sayyid al-Shohadā'* to the world, so that people of the world are guided to the truth.

289

The souls are created such that they would gather round the oppressed and defend the wronged. What would then be the response of the people

and broke his head, and he started bleeding. Ibrahim started seeking forgiveness, and said, "O Allah what [sin] have I committed? Archangel Gabriel descended and said, "O Ibrahim; You have not committed a sin. Here in this location the grandson of the Seal of the Prophets and the son of the Seal of the Successors would be killed, so your blood is shed in sympathy with his blood." [*ibid*, p.243]

Furthermore, it is reported that Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, was travelling on foot along with Joshua bin Nun, and when he arrived at the land of Karbala, his sandal was ripped, its strap severed and thorns pierced into his feet and he started to bleed. He said, O my God what have I done? It was revealed to him, "here al-Husayn would be killed, and here his blood will be shed, so your blood is shed in sympathy with his blood." [*ibid*, p244,]

when it comes to the calamity of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, his pure household, and devout companions?!

290

The movement of Imam Husayn, the calamity he suffered, and the great results that came out of that were and will continue to be the best source of aspiration for the generations and their approach in adopting the policy of defeating the oppressors.

291

The Husayni school has endless legacies and achievements that never fade away.

292

Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, is our leader and the most sublime role model.

[See also the chapter on “The Husayni programs”.]

The Awaited Hope

Introduction

On instructions from the Almighty, Prophet Muhammad, appointed twelve successors to lead the nation after him, with the first of these imams being Imam Ali, and the twelfth Imam Mahdi, peace be upon them. With the exception of the twelfth imam who went into occultation, every one of the imams were killed by the adversaries of their time. Imam Mahdi was born in the middle of the month of Sha‘ban, year 255 AH, is alive who lives amongst us, but is hidden from our views. By Allah’s leave, Imam Mahdi will reappear, when the world is ridden with oppression and injustice, and will fill it with justice and fairness. Imam Mahdi is the saviour who has been sought and awaited for many generations not only of Muslims but of the followers of other religions that have promised their followers of such a saviour. Editors.

293

Just as the Almighty has promised, Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, will accomplish and realize the ultimate goal that Almighty Allah sought from sending all His prophets and messengers, beginning from Adam to the final prophet, peace be upon them all.

294

Indeed, the Master, the Imam of the Time, will honour us by his presence, by the leave of Allah, and appear to all mankind, and will announce to the world that he is the Mahdi of the progeny of Muhammad, peace be upon them.

295

The Imam of our time is Imam al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, whose mention has filled the text sources and reference books of all Muslims in terms of hadith, narrations, and citations, all of which illustrate his distinguished lineage as well as his

merits and attributes, and that he is the descendant of Ali and Fatima peace be upon them, and that [today] he is the only one to whom the attributes of “the Imam whose obedience is mandatory” apply. By the will and command of Almighty Allah, he is alive and he witnesses the deeds and conducts of mankind, in particular the Shi’a, and more specifically the religious scholars and students.

296

The Imam of our Time, may Allah hasten his reappearance, sees us and sees our conducts, as it is reported in the exegesis (*tafsir*) of the Qur’anic ayah ﴿And say (unto them): Act! Allah will see your actions, and (so will) His messenger and the believers﴾.¹

297

The issue of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, is one of those deep and vast issues which are of various fields and numerous branches. The duty of every one of us is to carry out extensive studies in this important topic.

298

As reported in the hadith, Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, is endorsed and supported by the Holy Spirit,² and between him and Almighty Allah³ there is a column of light in which he sees the conducts of the people, and everything he needs [to know]; thus he hears our speech, and sees us, our conducts, and whatever we commit. He also sees beyond our speech and our writings. He sees our thoughts and our intentions. He sees the thing we think of when we speak or write; for example whether our thoughts and intentions were for Allah, or in order to show off. These matters are seen by the Imam too. He sees these in us in every hour and every moment.

¹ The Holy Qur’an, (9):105

² Support by the Holy Spirit is cited in the Holy Qur’an: 2:87, 2:253, 5:110, 16:102, and 58:22.

³ That is: the will of Almighty Allah.

299

If you want to know Imam Mahdi's conduct when dealing with friends and foes, then look at the conduct of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him; his glowing history is before you – compiled by the Shi'a, Sunnis, Jews, Christians, and others.

300

Do you want to know more about the government of Imam al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance? Then look at the history of the Holy Prophet [Muhammad] and the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon them and their holy families.

301

If you want to know Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, then look at the events that depict the life of the holy Prophet, and the *ma'soom* Imams amongst his household, peace be upon them; how they used to live, how they used to interact and mix with the people, and how they behaved in war and peace.

302

Imam al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, is a complete mirror image of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, in everything other than Prophethood. He is also a mirror image of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, with the exception of his superiority peace be upon him. So how beautiful life is under the auspices of the Imam of the Time, may Allah hasten his reappearance.

303

The policy of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, matches that of his grandfather the Prophet Muhammad; even his characteristics are entirely similar to those of the honourable prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family.

304

To love Imam al-Mahdi is to adore him and adore the beautiful life under his auspices.

305

If the minds of the people are perfected, their lives would be pleasant and comfortable; it would be the best life a generation can live. This would be the state of most people on the day of appearance of the Imam of the Time, may Allah hasten his reappearance, and not an exceptional case for some; most people would in that era lead a comfortable, prosperous, opulent, and honourable life.

306

It is our intense devotion for the Imam of our Time, Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, that propels us to strive and endeavour to adhere to the conducts that lead us to the honour of meeting him during the period of his occultation, which is indeed a very important goal and a great longing, and whoever succeeds in this has attained an exalted station and a lofty honour.

307

It is a great honour that one meets one's Imam and kisses his hands – and there is no doubt about that – but the question is that is this what the Imam expects from us? And is this our sole duty and responsibility?

308

It is the duty of every *mokalla*¹ to learn and know the obligations, as well as the prohibited acts and conducts; so that everyone fulfils their duties accordingly, teaches them to others and enjoins them to adhere to and practice such duties, to an extent that sufficiency is attained [in teaching and enjoining]. This is our duty, and this is what pleases Imam al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, and makes him content with us. Whoever fulfils one's duty in a correct and a precise manner would be contented with in the sight of the Imam, but one who does not fulfil one's duty would not be contented with in the sight of the Imam.

¹ *mokalla* literally means duty-bound, and in this respect it means one who has reached the age of adolescence when one is obliged to fulfil one's religious duties such as observing the five daily prayers, the fasting of the holy month of Ramaḍān, etc.

309

We beseech Almighty Allah that we stay alive so that we can realise the reappearance of the Imam, may Allah hasten his reappearance, and be in his service, but you should know that the degrees attained on that day would be based on our role and endeavour, and the fulfilment of our duty today.

310

If we, during the era of occultation, want to secure the content of the Authority and Imam of the Time, then this matter is strongly tied to the extent of our knowledge and understanding of the duty and obligation we have, and the fulfilment and practice of those two.

311

Sins are filth and dirt, snakes and scorpions, which cover us from head to toes, and these hinder us from attaining the honour of meeting the Imam of the Time, may Allah hasten his reappearance. In other words, we are not, because of them, worthy and befitting of meeting him, peace be upon him, and therefore we are deprived of that achievement.

312

The goal which Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, will appear for would have been realised by the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him, if the *Ummah* had stood steadfastly on the Prophet's religion and adhered to it.

313

If Islam is established – the Islam of Allah's Messenger, the Islam of *Amir al-Mo'mineen*, the Islam of Imam Husayn, and the Islam of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them all – in any part of the world, in a short space of time, poverty and injustice would disappear, and so too every kind of corruption and deviation. Instead of that, morality, prosperity, goodness and happiness would take place. This is what the Promised and the Awaited Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him and may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, would accomplish in the best possible way at the time of his blessed reappearance.

314

The concurrence of the occasion of the birth of our master and patron, the Awaited Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him and may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, with the 15th of the holy month of Sha‘bān, the eve of which Almighty Allah has designated as the night of allotment of provisions, blessings, and destinies for people, and also emphasis of the *ma‘soom* Imams, peace be upon them, on visiting the shrine of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, on this great occasion, is no coincidence, as there is no serendipity in Allah’s business. Rather, there is a strong concurrence and real connection between these three events.

315

Almighty Allah honoured and exalted the 15th of the holy month of Sha‘bān before the birth of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and before the birth of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance. Thereafter, with all prophets, including the senior prophets, and especially the master and final of the messengers, the honourable Prophet [Muhammad] peace be upon them, seeking Almighty Allah’s permission to visit Imam Husayn’s shrine every year. Furthermore, the birth of the Imam of the Time took place on this occasion too. These [three] events [did not take place by chance but] there is the strongest existential (*takwini*) connection between them. Almighty Allah revealed an aspect of this connection by making these three events to take place in one space of time.¹ The common factor that can be taken between these is the “setting of destiny”, for the eve of the 15th of the holy month of Sha‘bān is the night when the fate, destiny, provisions, and blessings for the entire humanity are determined.

316

It is the Awaited Imam, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, who by Allah’s leave will determine the fate and destiny of humanity,

¹ In that: three different occasions of different eras take place on one particular day and its night of the year, which is the 15th of Sha‘bān.

and will make Allah's light which was spread by the prophetic mission to reach every corner of the world.

317

[The significance of *imamate* or the leadership of the nation after the prophet is so great that] the honourable Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, put one's ignorance of one's Imam of the Time on a par with polytheism and disbelief such that [if one dies in that state] one would die the death of the era of ignorance [i.e. the pre-Islamic era].¹

318

Ignorance about Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, will lead the individual to deviation and straying from the right path, and thus as he proceeds further he will be more distant from the target, until he will end up in a state that the people of the era of ignorance were.

319

It is imperative for us to strive and do our utmost in learning about the Imam of our Time, so that we protect ourselves from the danger of falling into the abyss, muddle and confusion.

320

Without a correct understanding about Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, along with ignorance or misunderstanding about the analysis of some hadith which predict what his policies and code of conduct will be, not to mention the false and fabricated of the narrations, prompted some to imagine or even accuse the [*ma'zoom*] Imam, may Allah hasten his reappearance, of things which would not be fitting for an ordinary individual.

¹ Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: "One who dies and does not know the Imam of his Time, he has died the death of the era of ignorance." [i.e. he does not die a Muslim.] *wasā'il al-Shi'a*, vol.16, p246. *Musnad Ahmad*, vol.4 p96. *Sahih Muslim*, vol.6 p22. *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, vol.5 p218.

321

It is unfortunate that some are used to painting a harsh and violent picture about Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, arguing that he would establish his government through the use of sword against his enemies and shedding their blood, citing some [fabricated] narrations in this respect, thus fostering this notion in the minds of some of the people.

322

The mission of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, is to establish justice and eradicate wronging and oppression, and therefore it is unreasonable that he would accomplish justice through wronging and oppression; or revive the tradition of his grandfather the Chosen One and the Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mo'mineen*) Imam Ali, peace be upon them, through false innovations.

323

Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, will eradicate from the world anything that speaks in the name of Islam but inside it is against Islam; so that he would establish the true government for the real Islam.

324

As he executed the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, the Gracious Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, eliminated what was before [Islam] with kindness and leniency; using this approach with all the people including the infidels and not just the Muslims. The same will be with Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, who will use the same approach with the infidels let alone the Muslims.

325

If Imam al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, would treat the infidels with kindness, how would he then treat the Muslims?

326

Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, is like his grandfather the honourable Prophet, about whom the Almighty said, «It is by the mercy of Allah that you deal with them leniently», and thus he would follow the steps of his gracious grandfather, and would not diverge from them by an iota.

327

Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, fundamentally comes to establish the principles of justice – the justice that forms a natural dispositional demand for mankind. Therefore, it is not possible that the Imam would adopt a policy that would repel the masses from him; wishing they had never seen him, or doubt his lineage to the progeny of the prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, because of harshness and violence.

328

Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, would not establish the foundation of his rule on the basis of harshness and violence, but rather it would be on the basis of justice, lenience, mercy, and kindness.

329

When the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him, declares his magnificent statement: “Do you expect me to seek victory through tyranny and injustice?” No doubt that Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, would follow the same policy, for he is the pleasant fruit of the same blessed tree [of *imamate*].

330

When the Imam of the Time reappears, may Allah hasten his reappearance, the divine promise «that He may cause it to prevail over all religion» will be realised, and Islam will prevail throughout the planet Earth, and all will submit to Almighty Allah.

331

Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, would not follow other than the footsteps of his honourable forefathers.

332

Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, would make judgement between the people according to his knowledge and according to procedure of Prophet David, peace be upon him.¹

333

Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his honourable reappearance, will be merciful and compassionate with the people and the poor, while at the same time he will be strict and rigorous with his senior civil servants and government ministers.

¹ In the author's valuable work *The Aroma of Mercy*, p40, on the issue of judgement of Imam Mahdi peace be upon him, it is stated: "In numerous narrations it is reported that Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, would make judgement according to the judicial procedure of Prophet David, meaning that he would judge on the basis of evidence and oath. This is because Prophet David received the commandment from Lord the Almighty to judge by the Truth, and Allah Almighty said in the holy Qur'an, ﴿O Dawood! We have made you a vicegerent on earth, so judge between mankind in truth﴾38:26. Then Almighty Allah revealed to him, "judge between them on the basis of **evidence** and add My Name to them to **swear an oath to it**" [al-Kāfi, vol.7 p415] i.e. in the case where no evidence is available. Therefore, Prophet David was bound to make judgement on the basis of evidence ..."

The holy month of Ramadahn

334

The holy month of Ramaḍān is the month of Almighty Allah; it is the month that is specifically attributed to Him from amongst the rest of the months. It is the month during which the individual is meant to organise one's life, to change for the better, to cleanse oneself from every blemish or fault, and to devote oneself to Almighty Allah.

335

On the occasion of the virtuous month of Ramaḍān which Almighty Allah has favoured by revealing in this month the greatest revelation in the heavens' history to make humanity prosper forever. The holy Messenger has endowed it by stating, "in it you have been graced by the Almighty". Therefore, all faithful; male and female, in every part of the world, should prepare themselves for comprehensive utilisation of this great and extensive divine hospitality.

336

It is imperative that in the blessed month of Ramaḍān we study the honourable Prophet's Ramaḍān sermon, narrated by *amir al-mo'mineen* Imam Ali, peace be upon him. We should study it with comprehension and reflection, and we should endeavour to implement it in practice during the month of Ramaḍān, each one according to their ability.¹

337

There is a category of people who not only abstain from sins and prohibitions, but they refrain from thinking about them too. So when they fast, they abstain from the general conducts that break the fast, and their limbs avoid committing sins, as well as desisting from thinking about sins, and this is the fasting of the elite, which is the highest rank and category of fasting.

¹ The sermon was delivered by the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, shortly before the start of the month of Ramadahn.

338

No matter how far an individual may be from goodness, piety and righteousness, it is still possible for one to use the atmosphere of the blessed month of Ramaḍān to bring about change in oneself. This is because Almighty Allah has bestowed this aptitude and ability in mankind, and the blessed month of Ramaḍān is a very suitable opportunity for change.

339

From amongst the other months, Almighty Allah has exclusively favoured the blessed month of Ramaḍān with great features and qualities, and therefore this is a good opportunity for seeking guidance.

340

It is possible that one can change oneself step by step, and the blessed month of Ramaḍān is a very suitable occasion for change and reform.

341

It is essential that in the blessed month of Ramaḍān one holds oneself to account every day, even if it is for a few minutes at a time. One should assess what one has said and done. This should be done during the day or night.

342

It is important for us to recite the holy Qur'an and reflect upon it, for it is the criterion for prosperity for this world and the hereafter. So whoever follows it prospers in both worlds, and whoever abandons it will stray from the religion.

343

It is important that in the blessed month of Ramaḍān the faithful read and reflect on the *du'a* Imam Zayn al-ʿAbideen, peace be upon him, used to read at the nights of the month of Ramaḍān, which is narrated by the trustful Abu Hamzah al-Thumālī. If one is not able to read the entire *du'a* in one session, then one can read part of it every night – with

reflection and humility – for indeed it is one of the means of reforming the self, which is one’s staunchest enemies.¹

344

The blessed month of Ramaḍān is the month of self-building and self-reformation, and this is an obligation of all; whether religious scholars or others. And whatever achievement one attains in this process, there is still room for further rise and advancement.

345

Self-building and self-discipline is an individual obligation in itself (*wājib ‘ainī*) for the purpose of fulfilling the religious obligation and avoiding the prohibitions. Therefore it is imperative for one to endeavour in the blessed month of Ramaḍān to attain such an achievement that one can believe he or she has actually changed, and has improved to the better and has achieved a better state than before.

346

The daily obligatory prayers, as well as the supplications, *ziyārah*, and all conducts encouraged for the blessed month of Ramaḍān are all meant for the discipline of the self. It may be that one cannot find the time to do all of those, and thus, there is no easier way [to attain self-discipline] other than holding oneself to account [on a daily basis]. This is because [self-assessment] is highly indispensable and it has a great impact on the individual.

347

On every day of the month of Ramaḍān, one should take some time off and in seclusion from others, assess one’s performance over the past hours: one should look into what one did and what one said, what one heard and what one saw, what one gave and what one took, and how one conducted oneself with one’s spouse, with one’s friends, and with one’s

¹ This is in reference to the prophetic hadith which states, “The staunchest of your enemies is your self which is between your sides.” Bihar al-Anwar, vol.67 p64.

colleagues. In short, to scrutinise oneself on how one spent one's time. [Through such self-assessment] one can increase one's good deeds and reduce one's bad.

348

We are all in need of discipline and self-awareness such that when one enters the month of Ramaḍān and leaves it one notices that one had changed even if it is to a small degree. The criterion of change is the practice of the *mostahab* and avoiding the *makrooh*, and these are the second hurdles which we must surmount, if we were to call the obligatory duties and the prohibitions as the first.

349

In the blessed month of Ramaḍān the devils are chained, though the deed of an individual may unchain the devils, and he will overcome the individual once again. Thus we must be cautious, aware and attentive to the utmost.

350

The blessed month of Ramaḍān brings out passion, and tenders the emotions of the individual, because of its programs, and especially fasting makes the individual feel the pains of poverty, and also live, to a certain extent, the sufferings of the poor. Thus the honourable faithful should give extra concern and care about the poor and dispossessed throughout the world, especially in their countries, for poverty and dispossession has become widespread in many countries because of the execution of deficient and inappropriate policies, and moving away from the perfect and comprehensive teachings of Almighty Allah. Those measures will be a step in reducing those painful sufferings.

351

It is imperative for the believing men and women to embark on a serious and determined plan of action to increase the religious *majālis* and programs; such as promoting the Husayni rites, programs of reciting the holy supplications of the blessed month of Ramaḍān dedicated for its days and nights, congregational prayers, and circles of recitation and

tajwid of the holy Qur'an and reflecting on its meaning and exegesis. These should be held in every mosque, husayniah, college, school, and all public places, and the maximum number of the faithful should be engaged in these programs. Also, the faithful should endeavour to implement the tradition of the holy prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, of giving food in this holy month, and in this initiative even the poor and those who are not well off should partake.

Freedom

352

There are two types of freedom in Islam; freedom of thought, where the Almighty states «there is no coercion in Islam»¹ and freedom of action, given the principle accepted by the jurists “people are in charge of their own affairs.”

353

Islam adheres to the principle of «there is no coercion in Islam» in various aspect of life.

354

It is Islam alone that is the religion of freedom.

355

In Allah’s system and the Islamic regime, the freedom of thought is more holy than even the testimonies of faith; Islam wants people to be free.

356

The non-Islamic principles and schools of thought that have appeared over the past century, and continually chant the slogan of freedom, have no real substance to them.

357

Islam is the religion of freedom; in principle, in reality and in practice.

358

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, never killed any of the atheists or polytheists if they did not accept Islam, and never coerced anyone to accept Islam. Rather he left them to their devices, and to their religions, even though they were false and

¹ The Holy Qur’an, 2:256

fictitious, in order not to take away from them the freedom of thought and religion.

[For more on this matter see endnote #4 in the endnotes section beginning on page 243.]

359

The freedom of thought is embodied in Islam through Qur'anic verses such as:

﴿So let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve﴾,¹

﴿Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects false deities and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold﴾,²

﴿And We have shown mankind the two ways﴾,³

﴿We have shown mankind the way, whether he be grateful or disbelieving﴾,⁴

﴿For you is your religion, and for me is mine﴾.⁵

360

The way of Islam has neither pressure nor coercion in it.

361

Allah's messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, had a Christian friend and a Jewish neighbour; he never forced any one of them to accept Islam, even though he was the supreme leader of the Arabian Peninsula, and he had within his disposal the sword, and the necessary wealth and power.

¹ The Holy Qur'an, 18:29

² The Holy Qur'an, 2:256

³ The Holy Qur'an, 90:10

⁴ The Holy Qur'an, 76:3

⁵ The Holy Qur'an, 109:6

362

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, was continually confronted by some base individuals who used to deliberately interrupt him when speaking, dispute with him, and even insult him in the harshest manner, but the Imam would not have “their heads cut off”, even though he was the supreme leader, to whom the nation in its entirety pledged allegiance, not to mention that he was appointed to lead the Ummah by Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, on direct instructions from the Almighty. Imam Ali used to respond to their argument, if they had one, and leave them with their freedom of belief, as long as they do not resort to using violence and the sword.

363

Islam says to you: Do whatever you like, you have the freedom of action, as long as you do not harm others; for [the principle is that] one may not do harm, or see harm, in Islam.

364

Islam severely strikes the hand of the oppressor and the one who wants to do harm to others, and thus if you guarantee that [i.e. preventing harm], then you are free in your conducts.

365

There is no pressure, forcing, coercion, and suppression of freedom in Islam, save some directives and guidance to show you the best form of conduct, which state: this is right, this is recommended, this is preferred, and this is discouraged.

366

Take the freest countries in the world today such as France and the USA, you will find many restrictions such as those on travel, these restrictions prevail in all countries, including our countries, but in Islam, there is no such a thing.

367

Islam does not question you as to: “Where do you live?” or “where are you going?” or “when are you going?” Rather Islam says: Allah created you and gave you the intellect and intelligence, so do not be a slave to someone else who is like you.

368

You are not required in Islam to inform the government about when you leave or enter the country, your stay or departure, what you import or export – with the exception of what Allah has prohibited. However, Islam lays down some guidance for you and says if you adhere to them you will succeed and if not you will lose.

369

Islam provides guidance and draws a roadmap, and after that it is: ﴿there is no coercion in Islam﴾,¹ i.e. all kinds of coercions are rejected by Islam.

370

The freedoms that are available in Islam cannot be matched in history.

371

The freedom that Islam grants in the various fields and domains cannot be matched, and nothing comes close to it – throughout the history of the world – not even today which is called the era of freedoms.²

372

Just as the creator of nature created it according to a system and laws that suit mankind, the same goes for the laws of the Sharia system, but with the difference that Allah gave mankind the choice and freedom to

¹ The Holy Qur'an, 2:256

² The principle of “the land belongs to Allah and whoever develops it”, freedom from many taxes, including sales tax (VAT) and inheritance tax, minimal rules and regulations, minimal number of civil servants and public workers, flourishing economy as a result, such a list is beyond the scope of a footnote.

implement them, [as opposed to laws of nature where mankind has no choice but to accept and comply with.]

373

Why did Allah create the rain? So that it comes down to earth and goes in vain?! Or is it in order to irrigate the land and benefit mankind? Allah created the earth, the rain, and mankind and linked them together, and enabled mankind to acquire the blessings of the heaven and earth.

374

If the Islamic freedoms, the Qur'anic pluralism, the law of "land belongs to Allah and whoever develops it", and all other of Allah's laws, and teachings of Allah's Messenger, and the Commander of the Faithful are implemented in Iraq, and that for just five years, you will not find a foot's length of land not farmed, and you would not find a single individual who does not have a house. Five years may be too long, if the management took its cues purely from the Holy Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them.

375

Search all contemporary civilisations as well as the ancient ones, will you find a freedom like this? Like this ownership?¹ Rather, you will find hundreds of fetters, restrictions and legislations that deprive the masses from the great many boons which Allah favoured His people such as cultivating the earth and developing it.

[For more on this matter see endnote #5 in the endnotes section beginning on page 243.]

376

Even though Imam Ali, peace be upon him, is *ma'soom* and does not err and does not oppress, he provided freedom, pluralism, and freedom of

¹ This notion of ownership may be cited from the Qur'anic verse ﴿It is He Who created for you all that is in the earth﴾2:29

expression; imagine what [would be the outcome] if a non-*ma'soom* ruler practices dictatorship and usurping power.

377

We have in Islam the best kinds of freedoms, about which the world has never dreamt of within the realm of the world's finest civilisations.

378

Under an Islamic government everyone is free with his or her writings and ideas, speeches and books, forming associations and societies, political groups and parties, raising or giving donations, publishing newspapers and magazines, setting up broadcasting stations, etc.

379

Freedom is a grand divine blessing the use of which should be seized in the best manner.

Peace and Violence

Introduction

Islam is inherently based on peace and it does not resort to war unless it is absolutely necessary, it is in self-defence, and when there is no other alternative; just as one only undergoes a medical operation when it is absolutely necessary to do so. The last Prophet of Islam, Muhammad peace be upon him and his holy family, never engaged in any battle unless he was forced to do so – in self-defence. Even then, he never started a battle and always used to wait until his opponent attacked him first. Furthermore, the Prophet used to ensure the level of engagement was kept to an absolute minimum. He used to ask his companions to respect the defeated side and used to say: “Amongst the best moral values in this world and thereafter is to forgive he who did harm to you, speak well to him and be generous to him when you have power over him.” It is therefore a major duty of the Islamic government to do all it possibly can to put an end to “the arms race” and “military coup d'état” or any other form of regime change in which the world is trapped. As a result, wars and military coup d'état have become widespread and arms production and export have become the biggest money generators in the world. The end result is that humanity is trapped between the nightmare of war and that of poverty. From M Shirazi, “*al-Fiqh series*”, vol. 99, “*The Rule of Islam*”, pp 133-136. Editors.

380

The roots of violence lie in ignorance and fanaticism, in a twisted understanding of the religion, in despotism, dictatorship and social deprivation, oppression on behalf of governments and individuals, which result in violence and the restriction or shutting down of the channels of constructive dialogue and debate.

381

Violence is detrimental to the great sacred goals in the long term, even if it makes some quick gains in the short term.

382

Islam is the religion of peace and safety, and works to spread peace and security throughout the world, and endeavours to extinguish the flames of war, and eliminate its primer amongst the people, by uprooting the factors which cause wars, and by instilling the factors which promote love and harmony, peace and serenity, and to abandon wars, and to accept the truce even if the enemy calls for it in deception.¹

383

Islam prohibits violence and terrorism, treachery and assassination, and fights anything that leads to panic and fear, or horror and confusion amongst the people.

384

Islam is the religion of peace, but if anyone encroaches upon the people, or wages war against the Muslims, Islam would not stand idly by, but would fight for the sake of justice and truth, repelling transgression and alleviating oppression.

385

Islam considers it mandatory to restore security, at home and abroad; for the case of internal security, Islam eradicates crime, and for the external, it does not encroach on anyone, and would resist the aggressors.

386

Islam uproots crime and addresses its causes; for the causes of crime are: poverty, temptations, ignorance, complications, and suchlike, and Islam addresses them until they are eliminated. If these causes are eradicated crime would subsequently vanish.

¹ This reflects the tireless endeavour Islam makes to attain peace at all costs. This is based on the teachings of the holy Qur'an that state; ﴿and if they incline to peace, you incline to it and trust in Allah; surely He is the Hearing, the Knowing. And if they intend to deceive you, surely Allah is sufficient for you; He it is Who strengthened you with His help and with the believers﴾ 8:61-62

387

Islam considers no value for manmade law, and the real law is only the heaven's law. Therefore, many of the current legal crimes are not crimes from the Islamic viewpoint, for which those who commit them would be imprisoned. As for what Islam considers to be crimes – such as theft and adultery – it has set swift stern punishment for, and that is not imprisonment.

388

Islam never assaults anyone, and whichever countries incline to peace, Islam would incline to it too, and if it is attacked it would defend itself and the nation in an immaculate manner. If a country attacks it, Islam would respond to that aggression with the least means necessary to put a stop to that aggression.

389

Given the importance of human morals in Islam, the holy Qur'an follows up some of the rulings on punishments with forgiveness; describing forgiveness as being closer to piety.

390

It is possible to combat violence through the dissemination of non-violence culture in society, and through explaining that violence is a fire that incinerates all and does not exempt anyone, and by pointing out the harms of psychological, societal, and religious violence. This is also achieved through facilitating freedom for society, establishing the foundations of social justice, provision of opportunities for all, see to the needs of the needy and the impoverished, protecting the community from those who promote violence, and establishing channels for constructive debate and dialogue between members of the community.

391

Jihad is not aggression, and therefore it is not a manifestation of violence.

392

It is obvious that jihad and the penal code are not particular to Islam, but rather they are two notions that exist in all divine religions, and in manmade laws too, though the terms and expressions for them may differ.

393

Amongst the harmful effects of violence, it distorts the image of Islam; it gives the pretext to the enemies to label Islam with violence, barbarism and brutality, and therefore enables them to build a psychological barrier between Islam and the masses.

394

Islam takes into account most seriously the results and consequences of practicing violence, to the extent that Allah's messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, occasionally refrained from applying some of the penal codes to avoid negative publicity against Islam, because the standing of Islam is of greater importance [than punishing individuals].

395

There is no doubt that people are different, but the familial upbringing, the societal environment, and the governing regime have the greater influence on raising the stake of violence in individuals, and igniting the ember of violence in society.

396

It is not appropriate to use violence, which could be used as a pretext to attack Islam, even in order to confront violence.

397

Violence is to use aggressive force.

398

If one does not use aggressive force, that would not be considered violence.

399

It is permissible to use force if there was a necessity, like when a vicious enemy invades the country, for then there is no objection to resorting to use force to repel it, if other peaceful means such as mass strikes and demonstrations do not help. In that case, resorting to force is not considered violence, but legitimate and admissible defence, and thus all governments resort to that to confront the invader without being stigmatised by violence.

400

In the history of the Islamic nation we find shining examples of non-violence, seen in the biography of Allah's Messenger and those of the holy Imams, peace be upon them all.¹

401

The reason some of the Muslims pursued the policy of violence is because they had become distant from the teachings of Islam, and because of their ignorance of the history of Prophet Muhammad and the holy Imams, peace be upon them all.²

402

It is known that the word Islam means peace and non-violence, but today the acts of violence, killing, and assassinations are branded to Islam; so does the reason for that go back to Islam or the Muslims?

403

The reason that the acts of violence committed these days are attributed to Islam is because of irresponsible conduct of some groups, and the

¹ See for example *The Prophet Muhammad, A Mercy to the World*, by the late Imam Muhammad Shirazi.

² And because of the violence practiced by so-called Muslim rulers throughout the history and in the name of Islam. Indeed it began with extreme violence by so-called Muslim rulers against the Prophet's beloved daughter Fatima, who was pregnant only days after the passing away of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family. Mother and baby were killed as a result of that violent attack on her residence.

biased global mass media that try to distort the image and reputation of the Muslims and try to cause a barrier between the Muslims and the world that is proactively seeking salvation, and began to take Islam as the saviour from the psychological, spiritual, and social crises.

404

It is crucial to avoid conducts like skyjacking and abduction, violating human rights, suppressing the opposition's thinkers and intellectuals, arresting the writers, researchers, and academics, as well as spreading rumours of fear and terror, which are manifestations of violence.

405

The approach of debate and dialogue, firstly, and peaceful demonstrations and strikes, secondly, are the most useful and have the most praiseworthy outcome in the endeavour to achieve reform and change, and distant history, as well as near history, there are many examples that confirm this.

406

Submitting to one's anger signifies one's weakness vis-à-vis psychological impulses, and vindictiveness, whereas reining in on one's power of anger reflects one's strength and bravery in confronting the natural human weakness when in a state of agitation.

407

The culture of non-violence, the liberation from the force of anger and outrage, and the ability to control one's reckless impulses are fundamental constituents for non-violence.

408

The global notion of non-violence covers all the people, and it will for ever stay prevalent, and it will not be restricted to a particular geographic location or a nation, but rather it will include all humanity; because it provides the grounds for constructive debate between mankind and secure life free from all manifestations of violence and cruelty.

409

Islam preceded all in the call to non-violence.

410

Islam makes particular emphasis on non-violence both in terms of theory and practice.

411

All the battles in which Allah's messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, engaged in were in self-defence, and that the total number of all the casualties of these battles, which exceeded eighty, was only about one-thousand, and that was on both sides. Furthermore, when the holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, conquered Mecca, [which was achieved without any bloodshed] he pronounced a general amnesty, and declared: "Whoever stays put in his house is safe" and [when the warmongers and leaders of the vicious campaigns waged against the Prophet in the course of ten years were brought before the prophet, he said to them:] "Just go! For you've been set free!" In fact the Prophet went further and said; "whoever enters Abu Sufyān's house is safe", this is despite the fact that Abu Sufyān was the leader of the oppressive military campaigns against the Muslims and the Prophet for many years.

412

The shining Islamic history is flourished with many examples which allude to the principle of non-violence in Islam. Just as the most Honourable Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, forgave the killer of his vitally supportive uncle Ḥamzah, from whom the prophet received much needed help, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, also forgave those who fought him in the battle of the Camel, saying: "I showed the people of Basra favour just as Allah's Messenger showed the people of Mecca favour."

413

Violence is a culture, just as it is an influence, and perhaps the role of upbringing in violence is no less than that of culture.

414

It is not plausible to consider defence of the realm, religion, property, and lives as causes of violence, provided all other peaceful options fail to give results.

415

Extracting admissions from a suspect through torture is absolutely prohibited in Islam; it is not permissible to torture any suspect at any stage of interrogation.

416

In the process of issuing judgement practiced by the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him, in order to uncover the truth and the culprit without any resort to torture and suchlike, there are great many examples, and similarly, there are many such examples practiced by our sanctified scholars, Allah's blessing be upon them.

417

There are cases where it is not appropriate to overlook the criminals, as this would lead to chaos and corruption in the social order.

418

Non-violence, in general, has a positive output, but it should be noted that criminals do not manage to exploit the tolerance to spread chaos and corruption in the society.

419

Non-violence has a great role in curtailing the activity of violence.

420

Some of the means available for the struggle within the policy of non-violence are: spreading the culture of non-violence throughout society, explaining the outcomes for the individual and the community, organising seminars to debate the theory of non-violence – developing it into practice – and consecrating the essence of “consultation” in the community – theoretically and practically – setting debating channels

between individuals and groups. And finally, highlighting and fixing the spotlights on the shining Islamic history that is filled with leniency and forbearance, especially the history of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and the Commander of the Faithfull Imam Ali, peace be upon him.

421

Non-violence has a great role in stabilising the state of coexistence between members of the community, which in turn forms a steady foundation for the building of a consultative system of governance.

Politics and Governance

Introduction

Under secular systems the framework of political parties is the country, whereas the framework under the Islamic system is belief. In the so-called democratic countries, nationals from other countries are not allowed to form political parties and assume power in the country. Under the Islamic system, however, the framework is much wider than that of the secular system in that individuals are not judged by where they happened to be born or what "nationality papers" they are bound to carry, but the only criteria is their faith and belief. As opposed to only nationals of a particular country may assume power in that country, Muslims, of any country or nationality, may assume power under the Islamic system. From M Shirazi, "*al-Fiqh series*", vol. 106, "*Politics*", pp 98-212. Editors.

422

Democracy means majority's rule; if one gets 51% of the vote, one would be authorised to rule the country, and this is one of democracy's biggest blunder.

423

The system of governance in Islam is neither republic nor monarchy as per today's Western world definitions of the two terms. Rather, it is consultative, and therefore it is valid to be called this, given that consultative is equivalent to collective or communal. The system of governance in Islam is not hereditary.

424

Implementing Islam in an incomplete way gives a distorted image of Islam. This is the case with some of the Islamic governments today, which claim implementing Islam, but all they do is to apply the penal

code of lashing the adulterer and cutting the thief's hand. This is not what Islam is about.

425

When you review the Islamic jurisprudence, you will find there are fifty sections, with section fifty being on penal code; so it is one of fifty, and it is the last section, but why is it depicted that it is all Islam is about?

426

The non-Islamic government is the government that does not rule by Islam, i.e. it does not implement the rulings and teachings of Islam, even if it called itself Islamic; so label is not important, but it is the practice and implementation that matters.

427

Any ruling that is not in line with Allah's law is non-Islamic even if it is issued by a government called Islamic, because the essence is the reality and not appearance. If a human form is made out of cardboard, will it be a human being, even though it has no soul, does not see, speak, or think?

428

It is not sufficient for the ruler to say; I am an Islamic ruler. He must base his rule on the holy Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet. If it is not supported by the holy Qur'an, the teachings of the holy Prophet, and the *ma'soom* Imams, peace be upon them, it would in reality be non-Islamic even if it is labelled Islamic.

429

We should not march behind labels and slogans, but behind truth and reality.

430

The reason that we see so much troubles and deficiencies in Islamic countries today is because they are Islamic by name and slogan only, and nothing more than that.

431

The rulings issued by a ruler who is not appointed by the Almighty, or are not based on Sharia, are themselves not binding, rather they should not be obeyed, except in the context of necessity or fear of death or danger only.

432

There is no doubt that Islam has its own particular system of governance and management of social affairs. Furthermore, this particular Islamic system was – to some extent – implemented for the duration of thirteen centuries until the fall of the Islamic government a century ago.¹

433

The Islamic ruler's qualifications are that he should be a believing man, fully qualified jurist or Islamic scholar, who is learned about worldly affairs, adorned with full justice and piety. Thus whoever meets these credentials and that the majority of the people accept him, he would be the ruler. If he loses one of these qualities he would be dismissed from

¹ Some of the aspects of the Islamic system that were practiced during the thirteen centuries until the fall of the then considered Islamic government were:

1. The principle "Land belong to Allah and whoever develops it." People could freely use any plot of disused land for any development, whether for building the family home, a workshop, a farm, or any other project. For these people were not forced to buy the land from the government, as the land was not designated as "crown estate" or "public estate" or "government property", as it is these days.
2. There were no VAT or "sales tax", as it is prescribed as prohibited and illegal by Islam.
3. There were no "excise duty", as it is prescribed as prohibited and illegal by Islam.
4. There were no "inheritance tax", as it is prescribed as prohibited and illegal by Islam.
5. And various other such laws which facilitated countless freedoms to the people.

The above mentioned laws were first established and practiced by Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him and his holy family.

his position with immediate effect. Furthermore, if the nation does not want him as a leader [at any point or for any reason], they have the right to replace him with another one who is fully qualified and meets all the criteria.

434

There is no deficiency in the Islamic rulings of any sort that would make us require legislating for anything. We have in the hadith that Islam has given the rulings for everything including the compensation of a scratch.

435

Those who resort to making laws contrary to Allah's laws, will have an impoverished livelihood, just as livelihood is wretched in the Islamic countries today, and they will have shame and fire in the hereafter.

436

The Creator best knows mankind's interest, and the law that Almighty Allah has laid down for mankind in the holy Qur'an and in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad and his holy family, peace be upon them, is best for mankind in all aspects of life.

437

The law which the Islamic government acts upon is that which is derived from the holy book, the Prophet's teachings, consensus [between Muslim jurists and scholars], and reason.

438

It is permissible to have political parties that operate under the supervision of the *marāḥe*' scholars, if this is a prelude to a national assembly that would implement [the Islamic law]. However, the political party that is a prelude to an assembly that would lay down [*manmade*] laws – this would not be permissible – as devising and laying down laws is particular to the Almighty.

439

It is permissible to have political parties that strive to develop the country, as long as it is not opposing the Sharia.

440

There is no capitalism, socialism, communism in Islam as per these notions' definitions today.

441

In the Islamic system of government, the number of public workers and civil servants is very small; because many of the government departments [normally seen in today's governments] are not required under this system, and that many of the tasks that are taken up the government departments today are taken up by the people or the private sector under the Islamic system of governance. Therefore, the government will be in charge of very few assignments, and it discharges them quickly and efficiently.

442

Islam does not shock the nation with its reforms, but rather it gradually introduces them at a pace that suits the nation. Islam facilitates the opportunities for those whose businesses are permissible, and supports them if necessary, so that those businesses flourish. Those who engaged in businesses that are inadmissible will see they have ample opportunities and support in order to lead honourable activities.

443

Islam eliminates wine bars, gambling shops, brothels, and suchlike, while at the same time cares about the means of living of those who used to lead vile jobs, by providing opportunities for them to engage in honourable jobs, enabling them to earn a decent living.

444

Islam encourages everything that leads to awareness and promotes human culture amongst the nation, while at the same time prohibits

corruption and temptations in the media. Islam highly supports the media if they are free [from corruption and temptations].

445

The Islamic government is popular in the true meaning of the word. What would people want other than expressing their thought and vote, opulence, knowledge, freedom, security, health, and virtue, which Islam provides in the best manner?

446

Life flourishes in all its dimensions under the just Islamic government; land is developed, houses are built, farms are cultivated, the manufacturing industry advances and progresses, trades expand, wealth is accumulated, and people would settle in an environment in which there is no oppression or injustice, or violence, or terrorism, or burdens or restrictions, or torture, or poverty or difficulties, and suchlike. Therefore, during the time when Islam was implemented, development, progress, trust and respect was commonplace, such that the world does not find today even though the means are numerous.

447

Is there a country in the world today which is free from beggars? If you go to the richest country in the world you would find paupers and beggars... and of course there are countries with less beggars and there are those with more... nevertheless even in the most developed and advanced countries in the world, and with the most modern laws, you would still find beggars... whereas you wouldn't find such a phenomenon in Islam. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, was the ruler of the biggest country in the world, the territory of which spanned today's fifty countries, yet there was not one beggar.¹

448

Is there a country, even today, and in the richest countries of the world, where there is not even a single beggar?

¹ For more details on this matter, see quote 182 of this work.

449

In the Islamic country, when the correct Islamic rule governs, not even one pauper is found. The social welfare in Islam obligates the Muslim ruler to eradicate poverty completely.

450

In an Islamic country, even a disbeliever begging from the people is an anomalous phenomenon.

451

Why would there be poverty when the economy is sound, politics is fair, and society is virtuous?

452

Happiness in this world and in the hereafter depends on three aspects; sound economy, just and fair politics, and virtue.

453

On various occasions the wise Qur'an emphasised the necessity of sound economy, fair politics, and virtue; and Allah's messenger and the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon them and their holy families, have both pronounced them and practically exercised them throughout the entirety of their unique and ideal governments.

454

The new administration that will assume the government of Iraq should be inspired by the principles of Imam Ali's administration and Imam Husayn's management, so that it will be a just government, based on consultation, freedom, and pluralism, and built on the Islamic brotherhood and one Ummah, and that it would be elected by the majority, but the Sharia-based rights of the minorities are protected – completely without any shortfall – for if the government is improved and set right, the country and people would improve.

455

The reign of Allah's Messenger and the Commander of the Faithful

Imam Ali, peace be upon them and their families, proved clearly the authority and competence of the applied Islamic law, and its absolute superiority over any other law.

456

All the different groups of the nation must continue to emphasise the absolute necessity of all items of the constitution and its articles – permanent or temporary – to be compliant with Islam, and that Islam must be the sole source for legislation. This emphasise should be made via all means available; radio, television, books, newspapers, magazines, speeches, seminars, and suchlike. This is because the sovereignty and supremacy of the Islamic law leads to prosperity and happiness both in this world and in the hereafter.¹

457

The Islamic government is a consultative government.

458

The consultative regime is superior to the democratic regime; as the late grand ayatollah Shirazi, Allah's blessing be upon him, explained in his works.²

459

The Islamic government's duty towards the nation is to preserve justice and fairness between the people, where ever they are, to propel life forward, to facilitate sustenance and wealth for them, to educate and culture them, and to maintain their safety and security.

460

In Islam there are elections, voting, national assemblies, local municipal councils, and suchlike. We have all of these for our times, during the occultation of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance.

¹ Though this is a valid general statement, but in this instance the Sayyid was addressing the Iraqi nation after the fall the tyrannical regime of Saddam.

² See for example, "The Islamic System of Government".

Women

Introduction

The different tasks assigned to men and women are on the basis of biological/ physiological grounds and it is not a question of capability nor is it to reflect women's status and value vs. men.

Equality of the status of men and women before the Almighty and the absence of discrimination on gender grounds is evident in the holy Qur'an:

﴿And whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and he or she is a believer – they shall enter the garden, and they shall not be wronged by one iota﴾ 4:124

﴿Whoever does good whether male or female, and is a believer, We will most certainly make them live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did﴾ 16:97

﴿And whoever does good deed, whether male or female, and is a believer, these shall enter the garden, in which they shall be given sustenance without measure﴾ 40:40

The criterion is nothing but the individual's piety; regardless of gender colour race or background:

﴿O mankind! We created you from a male and female and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other, verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you﴾ 50:13.

For pragmatic purposes they have been allotted different roles, responsibilities and duties, as it is stated in the holy Qur'an:

﴿Men are the maintainers over women because Allah has given some of them more (authority) than the other, and because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore harmonious [with Allah's rule], guarding in secret what Allah has guarded...﴾ 4:34

And

﴿Allah (thus) directs you as regards your Children's (Inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females ... These are settled portions ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-knowing, All-wise.﴾ 4:11

Women are not responsible for any living expenses and maintenance even if rich, or have their own income, while the husbands are.

When she gives birth, a woman is not obliged – from the religious point of view – to breastfeed the infant. It is the responsibility of the father to find a woman to breastfeed the child if the biological mother unwilling to do so, as given in 2:233. Editors.

461

The rights of women over men are similar to those of men over women.

462

Pretence and misconceptions have altered the truth and reality about this world. When we look at the issue of women, for example, we see that the slogans that are raised for the causes of women's rights are nothing but empty rhetoric and misconceptions. Emancipation of women is a beautiful notion, but at the heart of the matter when you examine the reality of women's lives under the shadow of this notion today, you will find that this has brought about restriction and humiliation for her, and not freedom as they claim.

463

Life is a blend of intellect and passion. Life is neither entirely based on intellect, nor purely on passion. If intellect were to be removed from life, there would be chaos with no order in it. Intellect is the one that regulates passion.

464

The example of woman and man in life is like that of passion and intellect. This does not mean that a woman is all passion with no

intellect, and that man is all intellect with no passion. Rather, it is meant that woman is an entity in which the effect of passion outweighs, contrary to man, largely, who is an entity in which the effect of intellect overcomes the passion.

465

Woman is the example of passion in life; the matters that require passion should [in general] be delegated to the woman, whereas man is the example of intellect, and thus issues that require determination and assertiveness should [in general] be delegated to man.¹

466

If we were to place women in the heavy industries factories and place men at homes to see to the house duties, both scenarios would cause paralysis to life. And the evidence for that is what we can find in the Western life-style. Where did these problems come from, while human beings are the same human beings, man is the same man, and woman is the same woman? The answer: This is because the role and duties of the woman is taken from her and given to man, and the role and duties of man is taken from him and given to woman. That caused paralysis in the family life, and therefore problems; men began to feel increasingly alienated from their wives, and women began increasingly feeling alienated from their husbands, and the divorce rate began to increase day after day.

467

Science progresses mankind to space, but his problems lead him to divorce, collapse of the family, and the coming apart of its constituents, and marital problems. Why? Because both the man and woman relinquished some of their duties and took up the role and duties of the other, even though one is not competent for them – and success in life is based on the two parties' competence in their respective duties.

¹ Every case has its exceptions, and thus men should not be excluded from all the matters that require passion nor should women be excluded from all the issues that require intellect and determination.

468

They have risen woman on one aspect and have lowered her on another, and thus problems were created.

469

Islam has made woman's expenses as part of man's duties, irrespective of her being daughter, wife, or mother; even the makeup items come under this category, let alone accommodation, food, clothing, medicine, recreation, and the like; including the shroud required for the deceased, if the wife dies, as well as the grave and burial costs. All of these are man's responsibility even if the wife is rich and the husband poor; but within his ability or with consideration to his financial standing.

470

Were it not for Islam's leniency towards woman, it would have been necessary to make all the bequest go to the man.

471

If we were to abandon our intellect, as well as the teachings of Islam, it would seem logical that only man inherits the bequest. Why should we give woman part of the inheritance when man is responsible for all her expenses? However, Islam does not overlook the fact that woman may need something but would be considerate and not ask the man, and Islam does not want woman to be in this position, and thus made her a share of the bequest. This is in addition to the fact that in giving her a share of the bequest is a kind of "feel good" factor and a "condolence", given that she is grieved by the death of her relative. With this, does Islam's ruling about woman's share of inheritance still constitute denying her her right, or undermining her dignity? This issue, clearly and simply, goes hand in hand with Islam's relevant fiscal rulings, taking into account woman's passion, given that Islam takes passion into account.

472

Woman is more passionate than man, and this passionate nature may propel her to make a haste decision on the issue of divorce, for example,

but may come to regret it after cooling down. On the contrary, man's nature does not, normally, make him erupt quickly, and when he makes a decision he normally does not do so under the influence of passion. Thus if Islam had placed the divorce decision [primarily] in woman's hands, it would have been contrary to wisdom and her natural creation.¹

473

The wisdom of placing divorce in man's hands is to reduce the divorce rate, support the bonds of love between the couple, and help with the continuation of the married life.

474

Islam does not ignore woman's dignity and choice even in the case of divorce; Islam has given her the choice and will before marriage, and the freedom that she would not marry except with the condition that she has power of attorney on her husband's behalf in divorce. In this way she will have the right of divorce just as the husband. In its general policy, along with that, Islam encourages marriage, and declares to woman: I place before you the path of a happy life, even with the right of divorce in the husband's hand, but at the same time, and in order for you not to feel any pressure or coercion, I will not force you onto anything, and you have the choice to lay down this precondition before marriage.

475

Islam has obligated hijab for women; in order to lessen the vices, and to strengthen the bond between the husband and wife – the family would

¹ This is not to deprive a woman from her right to divorce. She has the right and option in a number of circumstances, for example:

- i. If the husband fails to fulfil his duties and responsibilities towards her.
- ii. If she no longer can live with the husband because of some issues then she can ask to be divorced by the *khul'* type of divorce.

Furthermore, she has the option to reserve the right to divorce at the outset of the marriage.

attain tranquillity, and settle in happy and carefree environment, charged with love, affection, and harmony.

476

Islam does not prohibit any skill, knowledge, or career for woman; rather on occasions it has obligated knowledge and work, and on occasions it has recommended others. However, Islam had prohibited her from immorality, indecency and going out without hijab. Islam has also prohibited her from engaging in acts which contravene her chastity and dignity.

477

Islam is the most merciful religion history has ever known or experienced. In the case of woman, Islam considers that the family life will not be complete except through toil and hard work outside the home, and solace and endeavour inside. It has divided the task between the couple in order to strengthen the bond of love and cooperation between them. Islam assigned the outdoor to man, and the indoor to woman. The fact that Islam has assigned woman to reside and work at home, it is because woman is better suited to manage the family home – especially so when it comes to upbringing and educating the children – for she is the best for the children's upbringing, and their physical, mental and emotional growth.

478

Islam considers that if woman takes up man's tasks outside the house, then man must take up woman's housework, and this will result in the wastage of competence and abilities of both; woman's passionate quality and ability, and man's practical and physical abilities. They will both be working, but with their roles swapped. If this happens, the result would be unsatisfactory. For this reason Islam favoured and

recommended the home work for woman, and external hard work for man.¹

479

Islam is particularly eager about society's health and happiness; and thus considers the mixing of the two sexes inadmissible; irrespective of that being in swimming pools, or schools, cinemas, factories, clubs and societies and suchlike. Islam considers that mixing causes corruption, and society must be protected against. Except if mixing takes place with complete observance of hijab, covering, chastity and modesty.

480

The husband's duty is to meet all the wife's expenses, and satisfy her bodily instinct – as per Sharia. The wife's duty is to obey the husband when leaving the house, and for intimacy. As for the housework, the wife is not obliged to do it; it is only recommended for her to do that, as a means to preserve cooperation and affection between them. Islam has made marriage conditional on her consent, and placed divorce, for social interests, in the husband's hand – unless at the time of marriage a precondition is made that it is in her hand too.

481

Woman is not respected in the manmade law, past and present, in the world today; there is no system that respects the woman like she is respected in Islam.

482

From the economic viewpoint, Islam has guaranteed woman's financial affairs in all cycles of her life; if she is a daughter, her expenses are met

¹ Of course there are exceptions and are acceptable; for example if man is more comfortable/feels more suited to housework or if woman is more comfortable/suited to having a paid job, for whatever reason, then that is acceptable and permitted. Needless to say problems may raise if there is no mutual agreement between them.

by her parents, if she is a wife, her expenses are met by her husband, and if she is a mother her expenses are met by her offspring.

483

The comprehensive social welfare and economic provision that Islam has mandated for woman facilitates great degree of comfort and sense of dignity and happiness, which is unheard of in any of the manmade laws past and present.

484

There is no economic honouring and social respect greater than that presented to woman by Islam.

485

On numerous occasions Islam stressed on and made recommendations about woman in particular and her interests and welfare, even though the rights of the husband and wife are reciprocal between them. Islam has [specifically] ordered the husbands to live with their wives on a footing of kindness and equity, whereas the holy Qur'an does not [directly] order the wives to treat their husbands kindly despite it being obligatory for them too.

486

Islam holds woman in an exalted station and a lofty rank, such that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, stated that the: "woman is a flower." It is imperative therefore that the Islamic society regards her as such, and deals with her on this basis in all aspects of life. This term from *amir al-mo'mineen*, peace be upon him, about woman is a precise and a beautiful term, reflecting woman's creation and akin to her physical, psychological, and passionate nature.

487

Woman enjoys a prominent station vis-à-vis the Islamic ruler, and the extent of this status can be appreciated from the biography and policy of Allah's Messenger and the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon them and their holy family, during the time of their reign.

488

Let's examine how was the Prophet's treatment of that disbelieving woman, Soffanah bint Ḥātām al-Ṭāi, who was taken captive along with the other disbelievers, who had come to fight and kill the prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family. He respected her and honoured her, gave her whatever she needed and sent her back to her tribe in the company of those she trusted most.

489

The Islamic ruler, during the reign of Allah's Messenger and the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon them and their holy family, respected woman and honoured her in such a way that has not been seen elsewhere in the history of the world, neither past nor present.

490

Islam honoured woman, highly cherished her, elevated her status, and allowed her to practice all the roles suitable to her, fitting and becoming to her honour, and appropriate to her nature as a female. Two things are exempt from this; one is that which does not fit her nature, for she is a "flower", and the other for her to be taken as a cheap commodity used for corruption and indecency.

The Youth

491

I stress on the youths everywhere to consult with and benefit from the scholars in particular in their endeavour to explain and present the teachings of Islam, and in order to address the issues raised and refute the allegations made against Islam. In this way the youths would be able to realise the goals of Imam Husayn peace be upon him.

492

By every means possible we must encourage the youths to join the Husayni groups, which form the rope of salvation from ignorance and deviation, and we must be relentless in this; we should keep trying until we succeed.

493

I call on my brothers the scholars and seminary students, to express and explain the essence of the fundamentals of Islam, and refute the doubts and suspicions raised about them for the forthcoming generation of the youths.

494

There are some accusations thrown at Islam, and some of the youth who do not know Islam repeat it, saying; Islam is all prohibitions and restrictions. In response to that we would say, it is completely the opposite, because we have freedom in Islam the like of which there is none anywhere else.

495

People at this day and age, especially the youths, as well as school pupils, university students and lecturers, are in the most need for someone to tell them about the obligatory duties (*wājibāt*) and the prohibited matters (*muḥarramāt*). They have tens or rather hundreds of questions about Islam but await someone to answer them. This requires

knowledge, studying, and scholarly enhancement. Not everyone can easily answer their questions, and expose oneself to replying, debating, and writing without the necessary knowledge. Rather this requires the background, preparation, and scholarly mobilisation.

496

The youth are more able to crush the Satan's head and go against him; so they should take the initiative before Satan overcomes them; this is because salvation from Satan would be more difficult in the future. Satan knows that, and knows that if mankind reaches forty, his abilities to fight Satan weaken, except those on whom Allah shall have mercy.

497

It is imperative for us to introduce the Prophet of Islam and his Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, to the male and female youths in the way they introduced themselves, and in the same way that the holy Qur'an introduced the personality of Allah's Messenger, and the reality of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and not through the extremists' expressions, which emanate from the deviant groups that want to elevate the Imams beyond what they are, or take them lower than that.

498

Whoever youth you know of, care for them in whichever way that is correct. Speak to them in a lenient way, come back to talk to them time after time, and if you speak to a youth for ten times and is not drawn unto you, speak to them for the eleventh, and the twentieth, and so on. The important thing is that you don't give up. Because whenever a youth goes astray, history itself will change, and whenever a youth becomes faithful and a truly practicing believer, then in all probability, thousands of youths will be guided through him in the future.

499

I cannot stress enough about the youths; protect them and correct their beliefs.

500

It is mandatory to pay attention to the upcoming youths. Special programs dedicated for them should be set up, they should be included in public or general programs, they should be taught the roots and branches of the Islamic religion, and its great moral teachings, and to train and educate them in the way that the Almighty Allah, His Messenger, and the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them would love them to be taught, for they have been singled out by Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, in his instructions to us.¹

501

The youths are tomorrow's men and women and builders of the future, and they have been singled out by the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, in their instructions to us.

502

There were pious, strong, and proactive young believers around the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, and all other Imams, Allah's peace and blessings be upon them, and it was through them that the facts and realities of faith and the rulings of the holy Qur'an were transmitted to the succeeding generations and the ensuing times. There is a marvellous example and role model in that.

503

If we pay particular attention to the youths, and show an appropriate care and dedication for them, in terms of good and virtuous training and education, wise guidance, and direction to virtue and righteousness; then

¹ This is in reference to the document the Prophet's sixth divinely appointed successor, Imam Sadiq, peace be upon him, wrote for his Shi'a, which he instructed them to study and reflect upon its content on regular basis, and adhere to and act upon on it. Therefore, the Shi'a of the time used to keep a copy of it in their dedicated prayer-rooms in their houses, and whenever they used to finish one of their daily obligatory prayers, they used to study the document and reflect upon one or more of its points and seek to implement it/them. Amongst other sources, this document is reported in al-Kafi, vol.8, book of al-Rawḍah, pages 2-14, *al-islamiyyah* edition.

out of them there will arise good, decent, and righteous leaders, and trustworthy reformers. But this requires a comprehensive determination on behalf of all parts of the community in order to give the best results.

504

It is a requirement for all; mothers and fathers, the family and the tribe, all men and women in general, to have complete and utter dedication to the young men and women, in order for them to grow into a pious generation, and in order for them to build the future civilisation on the basis of virtue, piety, welfare, goodness, justice and fairness.

505

It is imperative that the youths in Iraq today, who will be tomorrow's men and the future's hope, whether they are in the seminaries, universities, or other employment, to take as role models the youths of Imam Husayn, such as Ali al-Akbar and al-Qāsim ibn al-Hasan, peace be upon them, as well as his loyal companions, when facing life's challenges, adoring themselves with faith, patience, piety, sacrifice, and self-denial.

506

It is imperative for the youths in Iraq to do their utmost to rebuild and develop Iraq economically, politically, socially, and culturally; for it is their country, and love of one's country is part of faith.

507

During one's youth, one has greater ability to focus, greater opportunity, and, often, has less problems and difficulties. Thus the non-married has less problems than the married one, and the married one with no children has less problems than the one with children, etc. Therefore as one progresses in life, the opportunities one has lessen, but one faces more responsibilities, and thus one should take the initiative early on to develop one's abilities, talents, and experiences, such as public speech and writing, before it is too late.

The Good Society

508

The Islamic community is the community that adheres to human morality and societal etiquettes that Islam has brought forward.

509

It is incumbent for every one of us to examine what one's duties are towards oneself and towards others; what duties and obligations one is required to fulfil, and the prohibitions one must abstain from.

510

Every Muslim individual must convey the teachings of Islam through one's words and action; must be a patron for every member of the community and responsible for them; promoting virtue and prohibiting vice; calling for Islam and for global Islamic government, through wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue for that cause with that which is best.¹

511

It is incumbent for every one of us to know what one's obligations are, and what prohibitions are relevant to one. The husband must know his obligations towards himself, towards his family, and towards others. Similarly, the wife must know her obligations towards her husband, her children, and towards society. Similarly, the offspring must know their obligations towards their parents. And so too the siblings towards one another, the neighbours, the relatives, and work colleagues.

512

It is binding for every one of us; whether man or woman, young or old, a scholar or a layman to endeavour to acquire a *malakah* – i.e. second nature – that would protect us from the prohibited conducts, and from failure to discharge our obligatory duties. Subsequently, it is also

¹ In reference to the Qur'anic verse 16:125

binding for us to teach and encourage others to do likewise – according to one’s knowledge and abilities.

513

Behave in the right manner and make appropriate use of your life, and after that, it is not important whether or not others have benefited from you or from your interaction with them. Almighty Allah states: ﴿O ye who believe! Guard your own souls: If ye follow (right) guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who stray﴾.¹ There is no statement more candour about self-discipline and anger-management than this verse.

514

Let others criticise us, and indeed we should encourage them to do that. We can then develop our skills and abilities by using the valid viewpoints amongst them.

515

It is imperative that one uses one’s life and time in the best manner and by the maximum amount possible. You never know! Perhaps this illiterate person that you don’t value much today may one day become one of the eminent individuals in the sight of Allah. Or on the other hand, the educated whom you may consider important from the social or scholarly viewpoint – and thus concentrate on more than others – it may be that that individual may not have contributed any benefit, and might pass away without contributing anything that others may benefit from.

516

The majority of mankind are self-centred and comprise their interests at the cost of others, though all the troubles, afflictions, wronging and transgressions are the result of selfishness. This is because [almost] every one of us favour him or herself over Almighty Allah, virtues, morals and the society.

¹ The Holy Qur’an, 5:105

517

Most see themselves on a par with the Almighty, and see themselves on a par with society, and therefore you will find that most people crush everything for their ego.

518

Look at Islam's simplicity and grandeur, and look at the complication of other systems and their emptiness.

519

We have in the holy Qur'an and the honourable hadith the guidelines for properly addressing coexistence in the arenas of politics, society, economics, family, and [mutual] individual relationships; and we have no better choice but to go back to the teachings of Islam.

520

In every Qur'anic verse, and in every honourable hadith, there is salvation for us from a form of difficulties that we face. So let's return to the Qur'an and meticulously implement it according to our circumstances, so that Almighty Allah would bring down the blessings of heavens and earth upon us.

521

By nature, mankind thinks well of himself. In the hadith, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, says, "One of you will see the speck in the eye of his brother, but does not see the trunk in his own eye". In other words, one would see the tiniest faults in others, but does not see one's own faults regardless how big they may be.

522

One may do something bad, but its bad outcomes or consequences may not appear until ten or twenty years later, or it could be that the bad fruits of some actions may not appear until at the time of death.

523

When one is hit by a calamity one should not be surprised and say,

“Why am I hit by this calamity?” The cause of this may go back to [a conduct committed] fifty years before.

524

We do not have the necessary merits and abilities in order to be on the path taken by Imam Husayn, peace be upon him. Imam Husayn upheld the religion. However, we see in our environment that forbidden acts are widespread, our relatives do not observe the obligatory duties, but we are not concerned. If one of our children falls ill and has a high temperature, we will do everything to see to that, but when it comes to the fever of spiritual illness, weakness in belief and faith, and the cancer that devours all faith, we do not care. So let our endeavour be to disseminate the love of Husayn and the teachings of Husayn and thereafter to practice those teachings.

525

On the occasion of the anniversary of the birthday of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten this reappearance, let's make a pledge with Allah that on this occasion every year we will be in a better state than the previous year.

526

Let the occasion of the anniversary of the birthday of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten this reappearance, be the starting point for us; that every one of us will endeavour to reduce one's weak points and to reform oneself.

527

If we reform ourselves, then it will be Imam Mahdi himself who would come to us before we go to him.¹

¹ Observing piety, self-discipline, fulfilling all one's obligatory duties, and refraining from any haram or prohibited act or conduct are together essential pre-requisites for all faithful if they are to qualify for the honour to have an audience with the holy imam of our time, may Allah hasten his reappearance. When meeting the imam the faithful seek his grace, blessing and guidance.

528

Almighty Allah has set a certain limit and criterion for everything, and Allah's criterion does not change and nor is it contravened [thus, only complying with such a criterion guarantees happiness for mankind.]

529

What is of real concern for a person in a position of authority, is whether his attention was for the perks that come with the job; such as status, respect, distinction, or money and other materialistic benefits; and if these were his motivation to do the job.

530

Let us take heed before it is too late, and let's learn lessons from stories and experiences of others.

531

The behaviour of just one clergyman pretending sincerity, has a very damaging impact on truly sincere scholars.

532

Let us begin, from now on, the daily practice of assessing ourselves and holding ourselves to account. Each one in their own field of work. Let us purify the self before it becomes even more difficult for us to do so, and before we are inflicted by the veil which would prevent the light of certainty and knowledge reaching the depths of our hearts.

533

The most important issue that we should be aware of, and begin addressing, is the issue of sincerity, and that of eradicating posturing. At every stage we should carefully and meticulously assess our conduct,

Some may raise jurisprudential issues with the imam, while others seek his help and blessing with pressing personal matters. In all, it is the ultimate wish and dream for all the faithful who are prepared to do whatever it takes to achieve the honour.

and should established how much of it is for Allah and how much of it is for our selves.

534

One may manage one's speech, manners, and appearance, because someone will meet him, or someone may criticise him, or it would be embarrassing to appear improperly before this or that... however, when it comes to the "intention" it is very difficult to manage because no one will see or criticise it except Allah, [and He knows too well our inner intentions] but He may not expose us today... so it is possible to be cunning. On the other hand, training and disciplining the self, and the practice of honesty and sincerity in intention is possible to observe despite all that; because Almighty Allah promised success; therefore one should strive, and success will be granted by Allah.

535

[On the day of judgement] it will be said to the one who was in a position of power; "after much toil and hardship you went through all that for your personal gains and benefits such as status, distinction, money or other benefits, and you achieved them, you worked for fame and reputation, so you deserve nothing in return from us."

536

How is it possible for one not to complain, get angry, or for signs of resentment not to appear on one's face, given that in the environment one lives there are different manners and tastes, not to mention the hatreds, animosities, and bickering. One person envies you, another opposes you, another does not agree with you, and so on. Probably one friend makes a certain remark but the other party would not forget even after fifty years; who continues to feel the pain whenever they remember it. But what a great personality is the one who would deny oneself, and resists the self despite all that and continues to sport a smiling face.

537

It is of utmost importance for an individual to overcome one's self,

control one's nerve and temper, and meet the entire world with a smile and pleasantness.

538

The individual who meet others genially and pleasantly is one who has trained and disciplined one's self until it has achieved such a degree.

539

We should try to have pleasant friendly faces, not gloomy ones, such that an individual would regret meeting in the first place.

540

Having pleasant friendly faces means to conceal one's sorrows and worries, which result from the various troubles that one faces in life, and to meet the people cordially with a smiling face.

541

Let's keep our faces pleasant and upbeat such that if those who are troubled and anxious meet us, we would lessen their worries, not increase them. This kind of conduct impacts the people more than words.

542

You may try to help your friend to put aside his worries by talking to him for half an hour without much success, but meeting him pleasantly with a smiling face will have the decisive factor in improving his condition, though this may not take more than a minute.

543

If one finds out that the truth is not in one's favour but it's in favour of one's opponent – irrespective of the other side being one's tutor, student, friend, relative, colleague, or any other person – and one admits to that; then this is a quality that is not found except with an individual whose soul submit to reason.

544

It is rare that you find someone who would wholeheartedly accept a piece of advice.

545

Individuals do not, often, openly submit to the truth, and do not bow and accept that their stance is incorrect; rather, everyone would try to prove that their stance is correct; that he or she is not ignorant, and that he or she is aware of the truth of the matter. To agree that the other is right and accept their viewpoint is a very difficult thing.

546

It is essential that we do not tire or get fed up with the duty of promoting virtue and prohibiting vice, even if the response is little and the effect modest; for Almighty Allah would reward us for our endeavour whatever the result.

547

There is no doubt that an individual's duties and responsibilities are proportional to one's knowledge and understanding; with more knowledge comes more responsibilities and obligations.

548

It is incumbent that the present generation does not lose any opportunity to carry out any service or mission for the future generations' sake, provided this is not done in a way that the same problems and issues would surface for the future generation.

549

If our colleagues and those around us notice that we endeavour to perform our daily prayers on time, they will, often, endeavour to adhere to that too, even if we don't call on them to do so verbally. This does not mean there are no exceptions, but the point is that practicing what we preach, training, and invitation through practice is thousands of times more effective than verbal invitation. What's the use when you call on

your son to perform the daily prayers on time but you do not make the effort to do that?

550

People would believe in the virtue and good standing of those personalities when they notice that they earnestly endeavour to make sure that their conducts do not contradict their words. These people are normally better off than those who'd listened to thousands of exhortations without seeing practical examples to embody those exhortations.

551

We should endeavour to set practical examples for people, and this is what the holy Imams, peace be upon them, want us to do. This role should not be limited to ourselves only, but we must endeavour to avert people moving away from Islam and religious scholars. If, for example, a member of the clergy behaved in an unacceptable manner, we must try to redress and rectify it, and not simply say; "Oh it's a personal behaviour and we have nothing to do with it". We must try to redress it so that this will not lead people to move away from religion.

552

The holy Qur'an that used to lead the Muslims to honour, dignity, and sovereignty, can today be the leader for honour, dignity, and sovereignty that have been taken away from the Muslims.

553

How beautiful it is for the Muslims to set aside a percentage of what Almighty Allah bestows upon them for the poor and needy; for the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him, said: "whatever you do, for Allah's sake, be considerate about the poor and the needy – set aside for them a share of your livelihood."

554

It is necessary for the honourable people of Karbala, in all their various groups, as part of offering their services (on the various pilgrimage

occasions) to reflect to the honourable pilgrims the sublime morals of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, his great approach, and his guiding and brilliant biography. So that when the pilgrims go back to their families, they would do so while carrying with them the manners of virtue and sublime morals of the folks of Imam Husayn and al-Abbās, peace be upon them. That would therefore be a clear manifestation of the order of Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, who said; “invite the people through your conducts.”

555

It is imperative that male and female believers make a resolute determination to adhere to good manners towards other believers, relatives or strangers, young and old, men and women, friends and the enemy, etc.

556

Protect your youths; male and female. Endeavour to bring them up faithful and believers in Allah, His Messenger, and the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. However much Islamic belief they have acquired, endeavour to enhance their belief further.

557

Social manners are the ones that are linked to one's social life, like the manners and etiquettes of socialising and coexisting with the parents, offspring, relatives, neighbours, friends, students and teachers, and with all people, and indeed with all beings. In this respect Islam has brought forward the best teachings and manners which can be applied, and only by applying them we may guarantee peace and security, harmony and acquaintance, love and compassion between all people and humanity.

558

It is necessary to have a greater dedication to practically implement the Qur'anic verses that have been forgotten, such as:

The ayah of brotherhood: ﴿The believers are but brethren﴾ 49:10

The ayah of enjoining good and prohibiting vice: ﴿Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong﴾ 3:104

The ayah of freedoms: ﴿there is no coercion in religion﴾ 2:256

The ayah of easing the burden of toil for earning and adhering to coexistence: ﴿and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear﴾ 7:157

The ayah of the one nation: ﴿Verily, this nation of yours is a single nation﴾ 21:92

The ayah of spreading justice and kindness in all aspects of life: ﴿Allah commands justice, the doing of good﴾ 16:90

And many others ...

559

It is imperative to give our utmost strive and endeavour to educate the people and explain the doctrine and belief of the religion of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and refute all the doubts that are sprung up against them. This may be achieved through establishing Islamic centres, mosques and *Husayniahs*, and publishing books to disseminate the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt peace be upon them amongst the people.

The Husayni programs

Introduction

The Husayni *majalis* are commemoration programs in honour of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, which normally include lectures, recitation of *ziyarah*, eulogy poetry and *latm*, beating the one's chest as a gesture of grief.

When Imam Zayn al-‘Abideen and Lady Zaynab, peace be upon them, gave their speeches in Damascus introducing themselves and relating what happened on the day of Ashura, the people of Damascus began to realise who those captives were, what happened in Karbala, and they started to sympathise with the family of Imam Husayn, and thus the captives began to gain respect in the eyes of the masses. Yazid feared for his authority and his grip on power, and resorted to a charm offensive and eventually deciding to let those captives go back to Medina. Before going back to Medina they asked to be allowed to mourn and lament for Imam Husayn there and then. They were granted their wish. “Therefore, the houses and apartments in Damascus were vacated for them, and the mourning and lamentation for Imam Husayn went on for **seven days**.”¹

So the family of Imam Husayn – amongst them his sisters Lady Zaynab and his son Imam Zayn al-‘Abideen – organised a mourning and lamentation program (*majlis*) for Imam Husayn at the first opportunity they could have, and this they did at the enemy's heartland – at the Omayyad's capital city, and less a month after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn peace be upon him. Editors.

560

The name of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, reverberates around the world, and his standard flies high in every location. His teachings are

¹ Biḥār al-Anwār, vol.45, p196

those of Allah's Messenger and of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon them and their families, which spread further and further every day. The Husayni commemoration programs are held in his name around the world; thousands of speakers, poets, and writers recite his name, and millions of people are guided to the truth by his blessing.

561

It is imperative that the Ashura season is utilised – through every Sharia-permissible means – to facilitate guidance for people all over the world, through the Husayni commemoration programs, dedicated Husayni groups, procession, and suchlike. The Husayni commemoration programs held throughout the year should also be utilised for achieving the same objective.

562

According to the Shari'a, grief and anguish is disapproved of in afflictions in general, however, on the occasion of Ashura, this is praiseworthy, rewarded, and indeed it is recommended and commanded to do so for the sake of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'* Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

563

The real loser is the one who violates – in any way that may be – the sanctity of the mourning program of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'* and the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. Such individuals will not prosper in their lives, nor enjoy any aspects of their lives, not even a drink of water.

564

It is indicative of one's great honour if one holds a *majlis* for *Sayyid al-Shohadā'*, peace be upon him. Such a *majlis*, even if only a few individuals attend them and minimum refreshment served, such programs are of great value in the sight of Allah on the day of resurrection, not to mention that they repel misfortune of this world and the hereafter.

565

Those who do not succeed to hold the *majālis* for *Sayyid al-Shohadā'*, peace be upon him, from now on, let them make a resolution to hold them in their houses.

566

Pay particular attention to religious programs (*majālis*), promote them, also the programs and lectures about Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and the Qur'an programs. Furthermore, attention should also be paid to the literature and booklets on religious matters, which explains the roots and branches of the religion, the resurrection and the hereafter, and the attribute of Almighty Allah; so that the correct beliefs are conveyed to our sons and daughters.

567

The Imam Husayn commemoration programs (*majālis*) are the continuation of [presenting] Almighty Allah's rulings [on *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*], and the support and fortification for them, and for the Holy Qur'an, the Prophetic Sunnah, and the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt peace be upon them.

568

The *majlis* or gathering commemorating Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, has led to an abundance of successes and it will continue to do so.

569

Husayni mourning processions have lofty status and high prestige such that great scholars, dignitaries, and personalities would pride themselves in partaking in these processions.

570

Those who organize and run the Husayni *mātam* programs in fact offer their condolences and sympathy to Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family.

571

It is highly befitting to the faithful everywhere that every one of them – in any way they can – organise and run Husayni *majālis* and Husayni rites, which are the outward continuation of Almighty Allah's rites.¹

572

Amongst the things that please Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, for him to see the rites and programs that are upheld in his name are, in all aspects, accompanied with Islamic virtue and morals; even in the course of debating and responding to sceptics and those who do not observe virtue.²

573

We must make sure that the local youths are not deprived of the Husayni mourning programs, and if we know of youths who do not attend such functions, we should encourage them to attend these *majālis*.

574

We should not give up or lose hope if some of the youths do not respond positively in participating in the Husayni mourning *majālis*; we should persevere until they join the Husayni programs.

575

Participation and serving in the Husayni *majālis* have great rewards, but the issue does not end here.

576

Benefit from the blessings of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'*, peace be upon him, as

¹ «Whoever holds in honour the rites of Allah, it surely is from devotion of the hearts», the Holy Qur'an; (22):32.

² Just as there were those who, at the time, fought and killed Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, today there are those are fighting the rites of Imam Husayn trying to dispel them in any way they can.

much as possible, and that is achieved through participation in the mourning *majālis* and promoting them.

577

It is imperative that every one of you should do their utmost to uphold the Husayni mourning *majālis* and to participate in them throughout the year, for this blessed endeavour will never be in vain; not even by one iota; it will be reserved for you, and will be recorded in your good deeds, by Almighty Allah's Will.

578

It is possible for you to light the Husayni lantern of guidance in your homes; through holding public Husayni mourning programs, which would be of great honour. If one cannot do so, then they could hold private Husayni mourning programs. Failing that, one could hold Husayni mourning programs for one's family only, and possibly friends and neighbours.

579

Whoever holds Husayni mourning programs, whether public or private, he would be bestowed great blessings in this world, before the blessings of the hereafter.

580

Attending the Husayniahs and public *majālis* is of great significance, but it is better that one draws these blessings to one's home, and if one cannot bear burden of those *majālis* one should do the minimum. You will see for yourselves how Almighty Allah would shower His blessings through those *majālis*, and you would be able to give food too.

581

I emphasise on one advice; hold weekly *majālis* in your houses in the name of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

582

Whoever holds a *majlis* for Imam Husayn, peace be upon him; whether

man or woman, in the months of Muharram or Safar, on the day of Ashura or on other occasions, all of that will bring blessings for you.

583

You should endeavour that a week does not pass you by without the mention of tragedy of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, being made in your homes; in this is the blessings of this world and hereafter.

584

If one was poor and did not have much, let them do what they can afford; like light a candle or a lamp in the name of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, for a few minutes a week, amongst the family members at home. And if one can do more than that, one should invite one's neighbours, relatives, and friends for this.

585

After the end of the month of Şafar,¹ try to acquire the great honour of holding the Husayni mourning programs (*majālis*), and I hope that you would encourage others to do that too. That is, each one of you, whether the head of a family, or a young person, should allocate one or two hours of your time to disseminate the teachings and values of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

586

We should know that when we succeed in holding Husayni mourning *majālis* the credit for all that goes to our fathers and forefathers, and therefore we should always remember them. We should also know that we too could leave the imprint and influence upon our generations through our determination to serve the cause of *Sayyid al-Shohadā'* Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

¹ The Husayni *majālis* continue to be held non-stop all over the world for almost seventy days beginning from beginning of the holy month of Muharram, through the following month of Safar, up to 8th Rabi' I, after which they are normally held on weekly basis.

587

Just as those who serve the Husayni processions will achieve great rewards, in the same way those who hinder and oppose those processions will face misfortune and wretched consequences.

588

Whoever causes obstructions in the path of the Husayni processions, deliberately or unknowingly, he will see his punishment in this world before the hereafter.

589

Throughout history whenever the Husayni *majālis* and processions were subjected to repression and pressure, they radiated evermore and became stronger. And whenever the number of opponents of these *majālis* and processions increase, these programs harden and become more rooted.

590

The remembrance and commemoration of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, brings the blessings, amongst which is the health and safety of the offspring. So, whoever wants his offspring to be good and pious, he should attract the blessings to his house through holding the *majālis* of remembrance of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, according to his ability.

591

If one is able to hold the Ahl al-Bayt's remembrance *majālis* every day, that would be of great benefit, and if one is not able to do that, then one should do so once every week, or once a month, or at least once every year.

592

It is imperative to exercise great effort to revere the Husayni rites, build Husayniahs, and organize mourning programs and processions, set up Husayni groups (*hay'ah*), and to globalise the manifestation of sorrow and grief in all their forms in streets and public areas, towns and cities,

etc. This is the ideal means to attract the people to the religion in order to open their minds and free their selves, and, through this, to be inspired to every good, and in this way they would be enabled to attain happiness and prosperity in all their forms in this world and in the hereafter.

Knowledge

593

The admirable knowledge is the knowledge that its seeker may benefit from in this world and in the hereafter, as well as others benefiting from it too.

594

The knowledge that does not benefit its possessor would not advance him other than by distancing him from Almighty Allah.

595

You should know that by knowledge it is meant the fundamentals of religion, the rulings of Islam, its ethics and etiquettes, as well as guiding the straying.

596

The faithful who devotes his life in the cause of Almighty Allah and in His obedience, spends his time praying, fasting, reading the Holy Qur'an, going to hajj pilgrimage, should set aside the major part of his time in seeking knowledge (*'elm*), and by *'elm* I mean:

1. The Fundamentals of the Religion (*oṣool al-deen*),
2. The Rulings of Islam [on the *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*] (*aḥkām al-Islam*), and
3. The Ethics and Etiquettes of Islam (*akhlāq & ādāb*).

597

He who specialises in one field of knowledge and dedicates all his effort and endeavour for that, will attain the highest degrees therein, and will surpass the one for whom that field of knowledge was [only] one of his interests.

598

Let us read about Islam and about other religions too, and then compare them. In the middle ages a scientist would have been killed merely for

expressing his opinion on a certain subject matter, even though it was purely scientific, and had nothing to do with religion or divine laws.

599

The beneficial knowledge is not compared to the struggle and the extent of learning, even though these two are desired too.

600

Knowledge is essential, since one does not know what [situation] one would come across, how should one deal with it or react to it, such that one would not be one of those that ﴿becomes clear to them from Allah that which they never suspected﴾.¹ So he gives to charity thinking that his giving is a good deed, or writes [books and articles], gives lectures, assuming that these are good deeds, then it becomes apparent to him that they were [counted as] bad deeds. We religious scholars must pay attention to this crucial matter more than others.²

601

If knowledge is a Light, why doesn't Almighty Allah cast it in the hearts of all the people, even though it does not constitute a loss for Almighty Allah. When any one of us gives or donates something, this would definitely constitute a loss for him; even if one dedicates half an hour of his time to teach, then that would be a loss of half an hour from his lifetime. But in the case of Almighty Allah, it does not constitute a loss no matter how much He gives. Therefore, why doesn't He cast the light of knowledge in the hearts of all his servants? In reply we would say, because the donor is discerning. In other words, He distinguishes between the sincere and the non-sincere; thus He gives the sincere individual what he deserves.

¹ The Holy Qur'an; Throngs (39): 47.

² If one does good deeds, but the intention was to impress others, say, and not for Allah's sake, then one day one would reckon that they were not so good after all.

Ethics

602

Holding on to one's intention and resolve is the most difficult issue for the soul.

603

No matter how much success and sincerity one may have acquired, even if one sustained his sincerity for seventy years, one cannot guarantee against one's intention and resolve being shaken, because one is shackled by instincts, desires, whims, worldly and various other weird things.

604

The truthfulness of an intention is a difficult and an extremely significant matter. It is reported in great Qur'anic verses, divine hadith as well as prophetic ones that huge masses end up going to hell because of their ill intention, even though their deeds were as big as the mountains.

605

It is imperative that we beseech the Almighty to protect our intention from various dangers, from Satan, whims, desires, and all other effects.

606

It is not fitting for filthy souls to meet Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, nor do sinful eyes deserve to see him, or ears that are filled with sins and disobediences are worthy to hear his voice, and those lips from which thousands of disobediences have emanated will not have the honour to kiss his hands.

607

Why does Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, not allow us to meet him while he is the owner of kindness and generosity? Did he not allow Sayyid so-and-so for an audience with him, or sheikh so-and-

so, the so-and-so greengrocer, the so-and-so shop owner, and even illiterate individuals who cannot read and write? Why does he not allow you and me to meet him while we are learned? It is for nothing but our sins. [When appraising] The Imam does not look at our bodies but looks at our hearts, our souls, and our minds.

608

Let us plan for our souls and spirits before we plan for our stomachs, houses, and families, and let us move forward in this direction so that we may have the honour of meeting the Imam of our Time.

609

It is imperative that we acquire *‘elm al-akhlāq* or the science of morals. It isn't that all the Islamic morals and etiquettes are classified in the two groups of "recommended" and "discouraged" (*mostahab & makrooh*) deeds only. Rather, some of them are classified in the groups of "obligatory" and "prohibited" (*halal & haram*) too.

610

If you come to recognise the position and station of knowledge, and that some of the *akhlāq* constitute obligatory and prohibited duties, you would then know that *akhlāq* is part of the required knowledge too.

611

Magnanimity is a praiseworthy trait, so too are generosity, hospitality, giving; all of that is good and encouraged, but as long as it does not lead to abandoning an obligatory duty or committing a prohibited deed.

612

What is meant by giving up the "I" is not to humiliate oneself before others, nor is it meant to be arrogant; rather, it is meant that you intend your deed not for your own sake but purely for Allah's sake.

613

If one is hurt or suffers a pain, it would not be possible for him not to

say “ouch”, but if one trains oneself, it would then be possible for one not to say it, but instead say, “*la ḥawla wa la quowata illa billāh*”.

614

We are required to strengthen our relationship with the community, and that is through adhering to Islamic morals (*akhlāq*) such as humility, dignity, pleasantness, magnanimity, forgiveness, compassion, upholding kinship.

615

Try to oppose your desires in all affairs; so if you believe something is right but you don’t like it, submit to it with all leniency and forbearance.

616

If you had a dispute with your friend and were angry with him, try to maintain your relation with him by visiting him, or greeting him every time you meet him.

617

akhlāq requires commitment, seriousness, and perseverance in order to attain its higher levels.

618

‘*elm al-akhlāq* (the science of morals) is one of the challenging disciplines; it is even more demanding than *fiqh* (jurisprudence) which is considered to be one of the most difficult disciplines and has numerous case studies.

619

‘*elm al-akhlāq* is more demanding than *fiqh*, and we must not take it lightly, because *akhlāq* means producing a true human being.

620

Advancement to higher levels of *akhlāq* (morals) and *faḍā’il* (virtues) is more demanding than gaining *ijtihād* in *fiqh*, because its fruit and result is more distant and more challenging to attain than *fiqh*. One will not

touch the result of one's endeavour in this respect except when one will have a ﴿sound heart﴾,¹ and the morals and virtues (*akhlāq* & *faḍā'il*) become second nature (*malakah*) to the individual. It is only then that one would feel the delight of *akhlāq* and attaining its higher levels, and it is then one would recognise the value of self-discipline and opposing the whims and desires.

621

akhlāq does not become second nature for an individual until one combats one's self and opposes it, and opposes it, and opposes it vehemently and continually until that second nature of love of the good in all its dimensions grows within the individual.

622

If one acquires the second nature of love of the good in all its dimensions, one would feel the delight, and would begin to sense the result of one's exertions in the field of morals and virtues (*akhlāq* & *faḍā'il*).

623

Climbing the levels of *akhlāq* is difficult, indeed it is more difficult than *ijtihād*, and the best evidence for that is that the number of those who have attained the rank of the perfect human being is rare compared to the number of the *mojtahid* individuals.

624

By saying that *akhlāq* is difficult we do not mean it is difficult to receive lectures in *akhlāq* such as studying the book of *jāmi' al-sa'ādāt* or deliver lectures on *akhlāq* or listening to them; all these represent '*elm al-akhlāq*' or the science of morals. However, what is a required necessity of *akhlāq* is the practice of it, and what we mean by *faḍā'il* (virtues) is not having knowledge of but practicing them.

¹ See 26:89 and 37:84

625

By asserting that *akhlāq* is difficult it is not intended to put people off it, rather it is in order to make them pay attention to it more.

626

The fruit of *akhlāq* is not attained quickly, and the delight of feeling the spiritual elevation is not acquired except after much hardship and perseverance; and this is one of the differences that distinguishes *akhlāq* from other sciences and disciplines.

627

One of the many differences between *akhlāq* and other disciplines, is that mankind likes to be encouraged, and by it progresses in various fields, however, those who endeavour to advance in the course of *akhlāq* must expect no encouragement in the process, rather they should even expect dissuasion, as this is the state of the community in general.

628

Most people would dissuade those who take up *akhlāq* rather than encourage them.

629

When an individual shows perseverance, is truthful, or honours his promise even to the detriment of his own interests, in such circumstances most people would try to make him renege. It is for these that such an individual should observe patience, perseverance, and concentration in order to adhere to *akhlāq* and *faḍā'il* and advance in them.

630

Those who entice to renege, whims, satanic insinuations, and desires, make virtue resemble vice.

631

Magnanimity is a praiseworthy trait, which is opposed by profligacy which is blameworthy; however, one may embark on an action that

stems from magnanimity but others would depict it as an abhorred act of profligacy and extravagance.

632

If you wanted to practice an act of altruism or self-sacrifice or any other praiseworthy action, you should not allow those around you to make you hesitate, and ultimately discourage you.

633

We should concentrate on *akhlāq* so that we become experts and ultimately acquire a ﴿sound heart﴾ and the second nature of virtues and morals (*faḍā'il & akhlāq*).

634

With a sound heart we can combat people's dissuasion and the camouflage of the ﴿soul that continually enjoins unto evil﴾.¹

635

When we are certain that the path of *akhlāq* is difficult and barbed, and realise that in every instance we need to allocate this task enough time, patience and perseverance, we need Allah's support before all that, and must continually be wary of slipping. We would then know that we have begun observing the etiquettes of the journey, and that by relying on and trusting Allah we will arrive at the destination envisaged in Allah's Messenger's mission, peace be upon him and his holy family, when he declared: "I have been sent as a prophet to complete and perfect the noble traits."

636

Our interaction with those of weakest faith should be such that it would not leave them with the impression of us being haughty in anyway.

¹ See 12:53

637

Supposing that you are not haughty, but that alone would not be enough, it is essential that you do not leave an impression to that effect.

638

Qualities such as being personable, genial and humble, as well as having a pleasant expression, good listening attitude, and forbearance have a great impact on people, which surpass the influence of our speech.

639

Try to consort with anyone who asks you a question.

640

The one who commits a forbidden act, or takes usury, or wrongs the people do so for one's own self; seeking wealth, position, fame, leadership, and realising all its desires for one's self.

641

The one who does not perceive Allah and denies His existence, you will find him stamp on Allah's laws and couldn't care less, turns his back to Allah and His messengers, and takes one's self and desires as his god instead of Almighty Allah.

642

The cognition and understanding of [the attributes and oneness of] Almighty Allah, upholding His laws and religion, and self-discipline, is the basis of every virtue.

643

The one who disciplines one's self rises above all vices.

644

Imagine how the equation reverses if the self becomes the ruler; the thought of it alone would be enough for killing and oppressing people when self-discipline is non-existent, and the self declares "I am

everything”. Whereas, the one who practices self-discipline, states: Allah is greatest, and He is above everything.

645

Sincerity being a good and praiseworthy issue is one of the real issues. So anyone would be upset if told he is insincere in his deeds. Even the insincere would be delighted if told he is sincere, even though he is not so in reality. This is an evidence for sincerity being a good issue, like the reality of truthfulness, bravery, magnanimity and everything that is good.

646

Every individual has one's own weak points that one knows. If one of them surfaced and sought to overcome and deteriorate the individual, one should at that instance remember that there is Almighty Allah [who would hold one to account]. One should therefore concentrate on this attitude, and keep reminding oneself on this and similar issues, so that one can reform one's self bit by bit.

647

Disobediences do not emanate except from a vile soul or a soul with no control over it; its owner is a slave to one's desires instead of their master. It is natural therefore that such an individual may not have the qualities which would take him or her to paradise.

648

Donation is hard, and donation during hard times is even harder. The donor must therefore have a sublime soul, a control on one's self and desires, which will truly save the individual.

649

Donation during hard times is the highest degree of self-sacrifice.

650

Self-control and self-discipline require great determination and training.

651

Self-control and self-discipline is a challenging undertaking which should not be taken lightly.

652

It is not possible to tame the self easily and quickly, and without the need to much preliminary training and discipline. Rather, it needs continuous discipline.

653

If self-discipline is one of the individual obligations (*wājib ‘aynī*) for [each one of] us, this means one would be required to prepare for the ways and means to enable one not to disobey the Almighty. This is a matter which should not be underestimated. This requires preparations, time, and discipline.

654

Discipline of the self is much harder than the discipline of the body, since in the latter case, with an able body, there won't be any of the hindrances that will normally be faced in the course of the discipline of the self, which are extremely powerful, such as those depicted in the poem:

My self, my devil, my materialistic world, and my whims and desires

How can I free myself from them while they are all my enemies

We all face these hindrances, and they require powerful resolve and determination to overcome them.

655

The rein is in our hands and it is not in the hands of others... every one of us has one's own rein in his or her hands.

656

At whatever stage of piety, abstention-from-haram, and self-discipline we may be, there is still more room for improvement and progression.

657

One who finds Almighty Allah, would not then care about what one person or another achieves. Learn from those who are pious and those who point you to faith and source of good. However, after you find the source of good, which is the Almighty, strengthen your connection with Him, continuously seek His help, seek refuge with Him from the evils, Satan, and the evil-commanding soul so that you, your intention, and your sincerity are not affected by the changes in the states of others.

658

If an individual who, in our opinion, is the greatest saint or devotee, errs the greatest error, then our faith must not change, otherwise, this will prove our faith is superficial.

659

We should know that Allah scrutinises our hearts, and He gives us success, capability and happiness according to our merit; since it is not wise, and Allah is the wisest, to give to someone over and above one's worth and merit.

660

If we humans, with our limited intellectual capability, endeavour not to act other than in wisdom, how do we expect other than that from the Almighty?!

661

If the congregational prayer leader is not just (i.e. '*ādil*')¹ we would not

¹ '*ādil*' is the individual who adheres to and acts upon the obligatory duties and refrains from the prohibited acts, such that if his neighbours or colleagues were asked about him, they would report of his good nature, commitment, and piety.

pray behind him, and this is based on wisdom, before it being a jurisprudential ruling.

662

We do not give a wealth of millions to a feeble-minded, because it is not wise to do so, and thus the Almighty would not give us precious gems if we do not qualify for them.

663

Asceticism is not to abstain from food, drink, marriage or ownership; rather, true asceticism is not to grieve over wealth lost or opportunities missed whatever they may be, and not to rejoice for achieving them. One may not acquire this quality easily, except through continuous discipline and exercise.

664

People differ through the rate and magnitude of change; some can change quickly and some slowly. However, the more one realises the benefits gained or the harm repelled through the change, the higher the rate of change.

665

The love of prestige is one of the fundamental powerful traits in mankind.

666

If one is saddened for the loss of something, say one's health, this would be normal; and self-discipline would lessen the impact of this loss on the individual. However, if the psychological pain, regret and suchlike dominate one's life, then the solution would require training and practice to eliminate them. One relevant clue is to remind oneself that

everything that one owns, including one's health, body and soul, all are put in trust with him, and that one is not their real owner.¹

667

We should know that our health is a trust [placed with us which] we must take care of, and that we must not be saddened or depressed if it is taken back from us. The *qudsi* hadith states: "O Muhammad! Love whoever you like but you will separate from them, and do what you like, for sure you will meet it." This of course does not mean that one should not be saddened for the loss of dear ones, but there is a difference between that and that one gets sad and angry merely for the event to take place.

668

Since we face personal problems, we need to train ourselves to acquire the degree of agreeing with and accepting Allah's share and destiny for us. As a result of our response to what has happened to us we should not say or do something that angers Allah. We should continually remind ourselves that whatever good we achieve is from Almighty Allah, i.e. it is a trust with us, and it is inevitable that we will separate from it one day. We should not regret what we lose and nor exult for what we achieve.²

669

If one proceeds on Allah's path, one would certainly be supported by Him. Indeed the Almighty made that promise to the believers, when He promised them victory if they strive in His cause; whether combating an external enemy, or combating the internal enemy which is the self. Thus if the believer seeks help from Allah, and proceeds in the course of

¹ Whatever every individual owns has been given to by Almighty Allah and when something is taken from him or her is ultimately taken by Him. Thus, it would be in one's benefit, both physically and psychologically, to be thankful and optimistic under all circumstances for Allah knows the best for everyone.

² This is in reference to the Qur'anic verse 57:23.

combating his self, support and victory from the Almighty Allah will come to him.

670

The best evidence for the possibility of gaining victory against the self are Allah's devotees (*awliyā' Allah*) who reached those elevated stages, not to mention the *ma'ṣoomeen*, peace be upon them. For what is the difference between us and Sayyid Baḥr al-'Oloum for example, or Sheikh al-Ṣadouq, or Sayyid al-Raḍi,¹ Allah's blessings be upon them all? They used to be normal people, i.e. non-*ma'ṣoom*, and through self-discipline they became extraordinary devotees, about whom wonders have been reported. It is through them that the current Islamic heritage reached us. How did they become like that while they weren't *ma'ṣoom*? The answer: they took up the path of those who relied on Allah and sought His help, and the Almighty helped them and gave them victory against their selves until they attained whatever they attained in terms of knowledge and faith.

671

Through the continuous observance of holding oneself to account, it is possible for an individual to reach elevated levels and stations. Indeed, many reached such high levels that enticement would not boost their motivation any further, and discouragement would not weaken their resolve in any way, despite the fact that they are humans, have desires, and realise the meaning of enticement and discouragement, but realisation is one thing and being influenced by it is another.

672

Satan, desires and bad influence have their own negative impacts. However, if one becomes convinced that it is possible to reach [those elevated stations] and relies on the Almighty Allah, then this conviction in itself would help the individual reach them. One of the key factors for this [journey], which is easy to realise, is to hold oneself to account. To

¹ They are some of the most illustrious Shia scholars in history.

observe this, one should adhere to identifying a particular time of the day to hold oneself to account. The time should be appropriate, it shouldn't be at a time when one is hungry, or full, or one's mind is preoccupied with another matter, which might affect the process. It should be a time when one can isolate oneself, and assess one's conducts that day.

673

The process of holding oneself to account should not cease as long as one is awake. This is possible through some self-discipline in that one would assign some time of the day to do that, increasing the time a bit every day. One should review one's conduct and assess one's deeds and intentions. For every good deed one should thank Allah and ask Him for more of the same, and make the necessary effort for it. For every evil deed one should seek Allah's forgiveness and ask Him for help and success to eradicate such conduct.

674

It is essential for believing men and women to assign a particular time, every day, even if for a few minutes, for the business of holding oneself to account, and to carry out a quick review of the conducts over the previous twenty-four hours, and to resolve to continue the good deeds, and seek forgiveness for the sins.

675

It is imperative that one should pay attention to and direct others to observe and practice the Islamic morals such as truthfulness, patience, forbearance, loyalty, perseverance, and geniality, for this is the best means to gather all the goodness and happiness in this world and in the hereafter.

History

676

Have you ever seen any resemblance of the behaviour and conduct of our Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, throughout history? His people forced him out of his hometown and fought him mercilessly, despite knowing about his truthfulness, trustworthiness, magnanimity, and moral ethics. But when he overcomes them he sets them free and leaves them to choose whatever religion and way of life they wish.

677

Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to advise and guide his people, show them the right path from that of straying, and then leave them to make their own choice.

678

The honourable Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, repelled tens of assaults and battles which the people of the book [i.e. the Jews and Christians] launched against him, yet without coercing any one of them to accept Islam.

679

History records that not even in one instance did Allah's messenger, peace upon him and his holy family, coerce a *dhimmi*¹ to embrace Islam, and history is rife with the biography of the Chosen Prophet which has documented minute details about his life.

680

In his great hadith masterpiece of *Biḥār al-Anwār*, the distinguished scholar 'allāmah Majlisi,² Allah's blessings be upon him, has devoted

¹ A *dhimmi* is the non-Muslim who lives under the protection of the Islamic state.

² 'allāmah Majlisi, died 1111AH, is one of the most erudite Shia scholars, who is famous for his compilation of the hadith encyclopaedia of *Biḥār al-Anwār* which is in 110 volumes.

ten volumes of this work, which total more than four thousand pages, all of which are about Allah's messenger, peace upon him and his holy family, his battles, his ethics and conducts with the Muslims, the infidels and the people of the book... in all you would find not one instance in which Allah's messenger coerced a Christian or a Jew to accept Islam.

681

History narrates to us that Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, appointed a Muslim governor for the city of Mecca, who ruled it according to Allah's laws. Mecca, at that time, was the bastion of polytheism, and given the beauty of what they saw, the polytheists abandoned their own laws which they had inherited and had grown accustomed to, when they saw the benefits and primacy of the laws of Islam.

682

The absolute majority of the people pledged allegiance to Imam Ali, peace be upon him, but despite that he climbed the pulpit to see if there were objectors and if so what were their objections. Do you find anything like this in history?

683

For the first time in history, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, allowed people to freely march and demonstrate their vocal opposition, and also sanction them to express their opinions even in inadmissible matters. This was at a time when the entire world was suffocated by the darkness of tyranny and authoritarianism.

684

Read history for yourselves to find out what the Umayyad dynasty attempted to do with Islam, and what was Imam Husayn's role, and why Allah's Messenger said, "Indeed Husayn is the torch of guidance and the ark of salvation".

685

The salvation of Allah's religion depended on the blood of Husayn,

peace be upon him, and were it not for the martyrdom of Husayn and his family members, there would have been no trace of Islam today. Whoever wishes [to see the evidence for this] should refer to history.

686

Read the history and observe the way of Allah's Messenger and that of *amir al-mo'mineen* Imam Ali, and the history of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them all; whatever opportunity they had and the chance they were given, see what they did. The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was the greatest leader on the surface of the earth, and he ruled the vastest state of the time, but when he was assassinated he was in debt. Have you ever heard that a leader has died who was in debt?¹

687

The leader of the greatest country on earth, Imam Ali son of Abu Talib, peace be upon him, was in debt when he died, and Imam Hasan, peace be upon him, for a long period of time afterwards continued to repay the debts of the Commander of the Faithful. The same was in the case of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family; he used to receive millions and he used to distribute them amongst the people. Close to his demise, he said: "O Ali! you are the one to pay off my debt..." as Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, was in debt when he passed away, and his hauberk was put up as collateral – as it is well known. These issues need to be reflected upon, we must take these pure and divinely appointed leaders as role models.

688

The faithful men and women should not have their faith shaken by the events we see these days, which bring fear in the hearts of some of the faithful. They should refer to the Qur'an, and carefully study its verses

¹ Throughout history, when leaders passed away they would leave behind fortunes to their heirs. In our times, when leaders leave office or pass away, they normally do so having amassed fortunes. Certainly they wouldn't be in debt. For someone like Imam Ali to be in debt shows one or more of his qualities.

to see in what situations Almighty Allah succoured the Muslims, and how He gave them victory.

689

Almighty Allah succoured the Muslims in situations in which victory looked impossible according to rational calculations. But despite that the Almighty blessed them with victory; one of the most important of those situations, was the battle of the Confederates (al-Aḥzāb).

690

At the dawn of Islam, the Almighty promised the faithful victory, but the hypocrites and the sick-hearted belied Allah and His messenger when they saw the Confederates (al-Aḥzāb), and said: ﴿Allah and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusion﴾.¹ Today, we are being subjected to the same test; so do we doubt Allah's promise of victory to the faithful, or do we stand steadfast on our faith believing in Allah's promise, without a negative doubt?

691

Poverty almost became extinct during the reign of the Islamic government, to the extent that when the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, saw one poor man, he was shocked, as he considered that an unacceptable phenomenon which does not fit with the Muslim society and the Islamic system of government. Thereby, the imam orders that the pauper man receives salary to enable him to lead a comfortable life, even though he was a Christian. Therefore, Imam Ali ensured that there will not be even one instance of manifestation of poverty and destitution in the Islamic country. It is for the people, including the Muslims, to know that the government of Islam overcomes poverty, and elevates the standard of living for the poor and destitute – not only for Muslims, but also for the non-Muslims who live under the rule of the government of Islam.

¹ The Holy Qur'an, 33:12

692

The Islamic governments used to last longer, because of the mutual bond between the people and the government. The head of government never needed “secret service” and “presidential guards” and suchlike to protect him from the people.

693

Abu Dharr al-Ghifāri was a young polytheist, so what was it that made him embrace Islam? What did he see that made him become a Muslim and exemplary human being? And how great and numerous are the perpetual reverberations of his influence?

694

There are hundreds of eminent Shi’a scholars who are the fruit of the endeavours of Abu Dharr, Allah’s blessings be upon him, since they found Abu Dharr the most truthful, and became truthful like him, and henceforth they strived, progressed, and achieved great ends.

695

History does not register before Islam, nor do civilisations report since the dawn of Islam, until today, any social security system as comprehensive and wide-ranging as that practiced in Islam.¹

696

In the so-called “apostasy wars”, which were waged against some of the Muslims under the pretext of “fighting the apostates”, the conducts which Khalid ibn Waleed practiced were totally contrary to the teachings of the noble prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and the teachings of Islam. The conducts perpetrated by Khalid ibn Waleed included: killing the Muslims by throwing them from high palaces, burning them alive, mutilating them and cutting their limbs, and

¹ In his work, *Politics at the very heart of Islam*, ayatollah Sadiq Shirazi cited the declaration by Prophet Muhammad “whoever dies and leaves behind a debt, then I would be responsible for that.” This is the nature of the social security system in Islam that the author is referring to.

throwing them down the wells. This is when the noble prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, prohibited the mutilation of even a dog.

697

When Khalid ibn Waleed raided the Judhaymah clan of the al-Mostalaq tribe, [which was for no justification except for personal tribal revenge,] Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, despatched the Commander of the Faithful (*amir al-mo'mineen*) Imam Ali, peace be upon him, to address the issue and compensate them. For everyone killed in that raid, Imam Ali gave the compensation (*diyah*) of the killed to his heirs, the compensation for every foetus miscarried as a result of fear or physical blow, he compensated the owners of any property damaged and items or wealth lost, he also compensated the owners for any cattle foetus miscarried, with broken or lost harnesses and leashes also compensated for. Imam Ali, peace be upon him, made monetary compensation to the women who were frightened and distressed in the course of the raid, and so too the youngsters were compensated for terror they felt. Also those who did not know what they had lost in the course of the raid were compensated, even the dogs' drinking vessels which were broken or lost were compensated for. After all that, they were given money to be contented about Allah's messenger, peace upon him and his holy family. Does history, even in the world today, find anything like this humane conduct, in which even the fright of women and children are compensated for?

698

The Umayyad rejected everything that Islam brought forth right from the outset; beginning from their master Abu Sufian, who is well-known for his infamous declaration he made amongst his inner circle, [long after the Prophet] "I swear by that which Abu Sufian swear by, there is no Paradise and no Fire". Then came the turn of his son Mo'awiyah, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, who was relentless in character assassinating Allah's messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. On one occasion he confided to one of his companions when he heard the call-to-prayer (*adhān*) mentioning the name of the messenger

of Allah, saying, “I swear I would not rest until I bury that name”. Mo‘awiyah’s son Yazid went even further and expressed publicly by declaring:

*The Hashim were frivolous with the reign,
As there was never any divine revelation made ...*

And then he ordered for a table to be set for gambling and drinking wine, in full view of the public.

699

Yazid, son of Mo‘awiyah, used to drink wine and commit indecent and despicable acts, just as his father Mo‘awiyah used to do. Like his father Yazid used to do these discretely; for example he used to go to a village called Hawarin to indulge in his acts. However, after the killing of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, Yazid believed that he had eradicated all obstacles, and he had realised the aspirations of his father and grandfather, and so he started to practice those conducts in public, while at the same time claiming to be the caliph or successor to Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. In this way he attempted to distort the image of Islam, and this was the first of many steps the Umayyad took to oppose and undermine Islam in order to eliminate it altogether.

700

It is truly unfortunate that you see one who is viewed as a scholar considers Saladin as an “Islamic leader”, though even his admirers from amongst his religious sect admit that in one incident he burnt an entire city, and more than fifty thousand of its inhabitants, which included women, children and old men, perished.

701

Admirers of Saladin and those who promote and glorify his personality report that he killed nearly one million human beings for nothing other than that they were of a different viewpoint to him.

[For more on the criminal conduct of Saladin see endnote #6 in the endnotes section beginning on page 243.]

702

If we review and survey the shining aspects of human history, we will find that the law of Islam is the best one for quality society management in various domains. Islam has the wise politics, as well as the sound economics, and low crime-rate to an extent the like of which world's history has not seen from the time of the ancient civilisations until today, and indeed nothing close to that.

703

History records numerous examples of events that show Islam's mercy and humaneness. At a time when the pre-Islamic *jāhiliyah* wars brought destruction and death of tens of thousands of people, however, the total number of victims of all the eighty-or-so battles fought during the reign of Allah's Messenger's government was not more than fourteen-hundred, and that is on both sides. Needless to say, all the battles the Prophet engaged in were purely defensive.

704

Under the leadership of the commander of the faithful Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib peace be upon him, the greatest country on the face of the earth, which comprised tens of the countries according to today's map and had implemented the laws of Islam, was not accustomed to the existence of begging paupers. This was until the Imam, peace be upon him, noticed this odd phenomenon once during the entire of his reign. He was shocked to see this and denounced it by saying, "What is this?!" History never recorded such an event again until the end of his reign.

705

The shiny and radiant history of the biography of the Holy Prophet and the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon them, during their rule, is full of numerous examples, which indicate that they endeavoured to provide social justice for all, and not to wrong even one of the

minorities, even the enemies of the state, or the enemies of the Head of State, or the hypocrites.

706

At a time when the world throughout the east and west was being crushed with oppression and vice for centuries on end, the Muslims were the greatest and most powerful nation on the face of the earth – and this was according to the rate and prevalence of the teachings of the Qur'an amongst them and their adherence to them.

707

Observes of Islamic history recognise that there is something distinctly evident in the history of the *ma'ṣoom* Imams, peace be upon them, which is farsightedness and meticulousness in thought. Their teachings were not limited to their time alone, but they took into account the time and circumstance of hundreds of years ahead in providing direction and guidance for the Shi'a leadership and management and the roadmap for them.

708

[During the prolonged period of infighting between the Umayyad and the Abbasid dynasties, the persecution of the Shi'a and the Ahl al-Bayt were lessened to some extent, and thus] Imams Bāqir and Ṣādiq, peace be upon them, used the opportunity, as far as they could, to protect the lives of the Shi'a on the one hand, and, on the other, endeavoured to teach and disseminate the correct Islam, which ultimately reached us.¹

¹ The opportunity Imams Muhammad al-Bāqir and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq had to promote and disseminate the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, was greater than any other one of the divinely appointed *ma'ṣoom* Imams ever had. For example, it is reported that Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, used to have four thousand students attend his lectures at any one time. It is reported that more than ten thousand used to narrate from the al-Ṣādiq on various issues of the teachings of Islam. Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir is the fifth and Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq is the sixth of the twelve *ma'ṣoom* Imams divinely appointed to lead the Muslim Ummah after Prophet Muhammad,

709

If scholars make a careful examination of history, they will find that most of the Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and polytheists who embraced Islam during the era of the *ma‘soom* Imams, peace be upon them, were the students of Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir, or Imam Ja‘far al-Šādiq, or the *ma‘soom* Imams after them, peace be upon them all.

710

Imams Muhammad al-Bāqir and Ja‘far al-Šādiq, peace be upon them, brought about a massive scholarly tidal wave that preserved Islam intact.

711

Imam Ja‘far al-Šādiq, peace be upon him, trained and educated more than four thousand scholars and hadith narrators, and those four thousand scholars learned the real Islam from a *ma‘soom* Imam and went about teaching and disseminating it in every town and village throughout the vast Islamic country.

712

History has recorded that the judges who had been practicing law for many years differed in their judgement when issuing a verdict for a thief. This was because they had not come across a theft case before hand, so that they would be familiar with the Sharia verdict for it. This happened for the chief judge of the time Ibn Abu Dawood. He gathered the scholars, jurists and judges in the presence of Imam Muhammad al-Jawād,¹ peace be upon him, to address the issue.¹ This proves how

peace be upon him and his holy family. The Shi’a Islamic sect are also known as the Ja‘fari sect, as the Shi’a take the bulk of their jurisprudential guidance from the teachings of Ja‘far al-Šādiq. The leaders of the other four Islamist sects were direct or indirect students of Imam Ja‘far al-Šādiq, peace be upon him.

¹ Imam Muhammad al-Jawād is the ninth of Prophet Muhammad’s twelve divinely appointed successors.

perfectly the Islamic law ensures a happy and prosperous life for mankind in all aspects.

713

By the Grace of Almighty Allah upon the entire Islamic Ummah and the wounded Iraqi nation in particular, the “tyrant of the time” was removed and the masses have the great blessing of the freedom to visit the holy shrines, in particular the shrine of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, on the 15th of Sha‘bān. It was on the occasion of 15th of Sha‘bān [1410AH/1990AD] that the honourable nation of Iraq offered thousands of victims in the cause of visiting Imam Husayn, peace be upon him. It is imperative to commemorate the oppressed victims of the Sha‘bān uprising who stamped their support and succour for Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, with the blood of their hearts. They eternalised the ideals of bravery, chivalry, and sacrifice for Iraq and history. We also commiserate the victims’ grieved families, and this great nation, whose honour and magnanimity history has witnessed.

714

My elder brother, the late Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Shirazi, may Allah elevate his station, used to continuously emphasise through his lectures, writings and poems to pay particular attention to Allah’s laws that have been practically forgotten; on issues such as the one Ummah, brotherhood in faith – thus there is no difference between various races and nationalities – consultation on matters of concern such as management of the country, the Islamic freedom, pluralism, and suchlike.

715

My elder brother, the late Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Husayni Shirazi, may Allah elevate his station, was a manifestation of the holy hadith by Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him; “**scholars are the Prophets**”

¹ The scholars and jurists all had different and conflicting views on nature of the matter, and ultimately Imam al-Jawād, peace be upon him, presented the answer which convinced all.

heirs". One of the manifest qualities of prophets is that they employ all their energies and resources in Allah's cause, and do not care about any of this world's pleasures of life for that cause. Our late brother too, from his early age, adopted such policy; he devoted and dedicated all his energies and abilities to the cause of the Almighty Allah, and never cared about anything in the world which would be to the detriment of that cause – rather it was the complete opposite.

716

Amongst the things worth mentioning, as we observe the occasion of the anniversary of the passing away of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Husayni Shirazi, are the matters he used to be continually preoccupied with. These were the causes and tragedies of the Muslims throughout the world, whether they were in Muslim countries or in other than them, especially the dark decades the wounded Iraq went through, the tragedies of Palestine, Afghanistan and the like.

717

The late Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Husayni Shirazi, may Allah elevate his station, used to prepare for the day the oppressed Iraq would find a way out through his books, communiqués, meetings with various sections of the nation of Iraq such as scholars, academics, politicians, businessmen, and the like.

718

This is how another one of the many pages of continuous tragedies was turned, and Almighty Allah brought about some of the hopes, through the fall of Iraq's tyrant. The prayers of the tortured in the depth of the dungeons, and those of bereaved mothers, widows and children were answered. And the holy shrines that were desecrated throughout the dark history were avenged.

719

After the arrest of the tyrant Saddam, while I thank Almighty Allah for His Grace for this great blessing which has included the entire oppressed Muslim nation of Iraq, rather the entire Muslim Ummah, or

even all of humanity, I beseech Him to complete this blessing by eliminating all sequels of the great tragedy, which has lasted for many long decades, and end it with the bright and happy dawn for the future of this patient nation. I congratulate all, inside and outside the country, the seminaries, the academics, the loyal tribes, the professionals, workers, businessmen, and all others on the occasion of this victory for this oppressed nation.

720

The explosions which targeted the holy shrines and the innocent organisers of the Husayni rituals in the holy cities of Karbala and Kāḍimiyah, as well as others, in the holy month of Muharram [1425AH/2004AD], and on the day of Ashura in particular, and desecrated the holy sanctuary of the shrines of the holy Imams; namely Imam Husayn, Imam al-Kāḍim,¹ Imam al-Jawād, as well as the shrine of al-Abbās² peace be upon them all – the focal-point for the hearts of hundreds of millions of Muslims – represent a continuation of the movement of ﴿the cursed tree in the Qur'an﴾³ which is embodied by Yazid, Obaidullah Ibn Ziyād, Omar ibn Sa'd, Shimr ibn Dhil-Jawshan, and their ilk.⁴

¹ Imam Musa al-Kāḍim is the seventh of Prophet Muhammad's twelve divinely-appointed successors.

² al-Abbās is Imam Husayn's half-brother who showed utmost devotion to his leader and brother Imam Husayn, who was killed in Karbala along with all other companions and supporters of Imam Husayn, peace be upon them. In the holy city of Karbala, the shrine of al-Abbās is in the vicinity of the shrine of Imam Husayn, peace be upon them, and is the Mecca for the Shia devotees throughout the world, who annually converge on the holy city in tens of millions.

³ The Holy Qur'an, 17:60

⁴ Yazid, the son of Mo'āwiyah, was the tyrannical ruler of the time who ordered the killing of Imam Husayn because the latter did not pledge allegiance to Yazid. Obaidullah Ibn Ziyād was Yazid's governor in Kufah, Omar ibn Sa'd was the head of the army despatched to Karbala, and Shimr

721

The martyrs and the injured in the explosions which targeted the holy shrines, and the organisers of the Husayni rituals in the holy cities of Karbala, Kādimiyah, and others locations, in the holy month of Muharram, represent the movement of the «goodly tree»¹ which is embodied in Imam Husayn, al-Abbās, Ali al-Akbar, al-Qāsim ibn al-Hasan, and their likes peace be upon them all.

722

The wrongful attacks in the holy month of Muharram against the innocent participants in the mourning procession in the city of Quetta in Pakistan, and others like it, represent a continuation of the movement of the Umayyad «the cursed tree in the Qur'an».

723

History has proven that sectarian commotions have all ended in failure for all sides, and have resulted in the waste of energies, loss of golden opportunities, and they give the common enemy the chance to hunt in murky water.

ibn Dhil-Jawshan was the one who beheaded Imam Husayn, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

¹ The Holy Qur'an, 14:24

Disseminating the Teachings of Islam

724

There is no doubt that the most honourable mission in the world is the task of conveying the teachings of Islam (*tableegh*). This is because it is the mission of the prophets, peace be upon them, and the Almighty did not commission them – the most honourable in creation – with any other mission other than conveying the teachings of Islam. Thus, if one is able to convey Allah's religion, this means one is following the footsteps of the prophets, peace be upon them.

725

The brethren who take up *tableegh* should know that firstly their mission is the mission of the prophets who used to dedicate the utmost of their time for, and [secondly] by doing so, they reduce the burden of the collective obligation from others who did not get the opportunity to do *tableegh* outside the seminary.

726

Today we are in most need for a scholarly mobilisation to advance the learning and understanding of many of the Islamic rulings which we are confronted with and in need of, either those concerning our personal conducts or those in aid of facilitating guidance or teaching the rulings. The case of guiding those who have strayed, or those of false sects and religions, and of deviant thoughts is deemed part of every individual's personal obligations (*wājib 'aynī*).

727

The brethren who embark on conveying the teachings of Islam by going to various villages, towns, cities, and countries, to provide guidance and directions to the masses, during the holy month of Ramadahn, or at other occasions, should know that the sacred aim and the supreme goal of their studies at the seminary is conveying the teachings of Islam.

728

Disseminating the teachings of Ahl al Bayt is necessary, and one may need to address the intellectuals differently from the laymen. It is imperative that one does not limit his task to a particular group of people, while excluding others, rather he should target all groups of the community.

729

As long as the preacher does not know which “plot of land” will the good word produce more fruits, he should try to sow the good word seed everywhere and with everyone.

730

Tableegh or disseminating the teachings of Islam is of great importance and massive effect. Iran and Iraq, which today are amongst those following the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, with overwhelming majority, did not used to be so in the past. They changed because of the preaching and dissemination of the teachings of Islam and Ahl al-Bayt embarked on by unique men who dedicated themselves for this task in a resolute manner.

731

If you investigate history, biographies and the ancestors of many of the faithful you would find that many of their ancestors were not followers of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, but they changed [and became followers of Ahl al-Bayt] because of *tableegh*, and this transformation continued in their progeny until today.

732

It is essential for the brethren who go for *tableegh* to prepare for various kinds of questions that may be thrown at them, and that they should not tire even from naïve questions they may be asked.

733

It is essential that preachers open their hearts and mind to the people; for people are not all the same.

734

The preacher's style and conduct has the greater effect in *tableegh*; it is natural that the impact on the people is related to our conduct, behaviour, truthfulness, and that we practice what we preach.

735

It is essential that the preacher is pleasant and cordial, but this does not mean he should be laughing out loud for trivial matters. Just as the preacher must not be frowning, he should also be dignified, and not tacky.

736

The individual conveying and preaching the teachings of Islam should be aware that if one of the audience used unfitting terms in his expression, he should not frown, as this may cause him to leave. On the other hand, he should not go along with him laughing and thus changing the session into an inappropriate meeting.

737

My preaching brethren should note that ... you might meet a person today who might not have the education or quality, whom Allah guides him through you. But there might come a day where you would see a mosque or a religious school or seminary that scholars graduate from, which was founded by that person you had met with, influenced and guided.

738

If a person comes to you, whose father used to be a deviant individual or a tyrant during his lifetime; you should not refuse to meet him; perhaps he might be guided through you. It has never been reported that Allah's messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, ever refused to meet anyone. Even Wahshi, the killer of Ḥamzah – the prophet's loyal and

supportive uncle – was not refused by the prophet, except that he said to him, “Now, go away.”¹

739

Try to use the opportunity of *tableegh* through the best style and word, in order to achieve the best results.

740

It is imperative that the speakers and preachers do not forget sincerity. Satan might come to one and say: if you become a good preacher and succeed in your task, you will have devoted fans; kissing your hands and chant loud invocations when you arrive. That may be the case if you truly succeed, but it is imperative that you should not embark on *tableegh* for that reason; try to make sure this notion never crosses your mind, because Satan tries to induce this idea as an aim in your mind. Try to get rid of it... you will win.

741

The speaker should look at his speech when he attracted the audience; ... did he strive, pay particular attention to phrases, and improve his style, all in order to be said about him that he is a good speaker, or was it all for Allah? Or was it partly for Allah and partly for himself? The same goes for the writer, teacher, preacher, and the *mojtahid*...

¹ In the course of the battle of Ohod, Wahshi was charged with one mission; to kill Hamza. After targeting and killing Hamza, Wahshi did not suffice by the murder of the Prophet's uncle, but went on to mutilate Hamza's body, cutting him open, taking out his liver, and offering it to Hindd – the mother of Mo'awiyah and the wife of Abu Sufian, some of the ringleaders waging war against the prophet. The killing and mutilation of Hamza caused much pain and heartache to the prophet, he did not set out to prosecute or punish Wahshi, or revenge his beloved uncle in anyway. After the battle, Wahshi came to the prophet to apologise. It is said that the prophet said the above to Wahshi in order to save him the feeling of guilt and embarrassment every time he sees the prophet.

742

Self-discipline is one of the most important individual-obligations (*wājib ‘aynī*) for every Muslim individual. This is especially so for us – the speakers, preachers, and religious scholars. This is because many people would learn from us, and they would be influenced by our words, deeds and any other conduct.

743

Even though you the speaker are a single individual, you are not so in the case of your role. This is because many find you to be their guide and mentor, and follow your conduct, whether you are a speaker or a scholar.

744

We are not ordinary individuals as far as our role is concerned. But every one of us is a source of emulation to a certain degree – with no difference between seminary student, speaker, a scholar in a city or village, each act according to their level and ability.

745

No matter how much knowledge we have, there are thousands of questions for which we know no answer, and it is necessary for us to prepare.

746

There is no doubt that reading the Holy Qur’an is the first step to understand it, understanding it is a prelude to practicing it and teaching it, which is a gateway to guide and direct the people to the Qur’an.

747

Guiding the people is currently one of the individual obligations (*wājib ‘aynī*), and is inherently one of the collective obligations (*wājib kifā’ī*), because the Islamic scholars unanimously agree that the collective obligation becomes individual, if the collective is not sufficient, each person fulfilling it according to their ability.

748

Thousands of grand scholars, and scholars from amongst the polytheists, Christians and Jews, were guided through Holy Qur'an's eloquent expression.

749

Beauty is important and indeed required for the guidance of people. It is not sufficient that the subject matter is correct and beautiful, rather it is necessary that the style and expression is beautiful and eloquent too.

750

Put the correct content in a beautiful container so that the people would readily accept it from you.

751

If the Christians realise that Islam is right and true; it is not just abstract words, but it is deeds and functions too, just as was the case with the noble Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him, wouldn't they become Muslims? The same for the Jews, if they come to believe that that is the truth about Islam, wouldn't they end up becoming Muslims?

752

There is no way out of the need for a continuous comprehensive and in-depth mobilisation programs for understanding and dissemination the culture of the Holy Qur'an and the teachings of the holy Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. These are the two grand and momentous entities that the greatest Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, left behind as his heritage in the Ummah, and he commanded all to follow and adhere to them two, and announced that adhering to them two is the only guarantee for guidance, and salvation from straying and deviation.

Seminary Students

Introduction

Amongst the *maraja*'s principal duties is to mentor and educate fully qualified scholars jurists and *mujtahids* in order to continue promoting and disseminating the teachings of the holy Qur'an, Allah's messenger, and the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and to research and investigate matters concerned in order to respond to modern and developing issues. So, it is important to know the advices and recommendations the *marja*' makes to his students so that they are competent, from various standpoint, to address the issues that will face. Editors.

753

If you wish to become a scholar and a preacher, you must be an exemplar and a role-model in observing the truth, forbearance and control one's wrath; and not that you would outburst for trivial reasons.

754

The word, behaviour, conduct, history and biography of the seminary student encourages the masses to observe virtue if he observes virtue. However, for merely not being so would propel others towards vice.

755

It is imperative for the seminary students to be serious about their mission, to strive tirelessly, and to dedicate all their energy and abilities in the cause of seeking knowledge.

756

It is imperative for the seminary students to strive as much as possible in the process of studying and seeking knowledge. They should not be lazy or sluggish, but rather they should dedicate all their energy. They should know that in return for all these endeavours and efforts they make for

seeking knowledge, the Almighty would single them out for His favour and patronage. Without this favour, there would be no benefit in the great amount of knowledge obtained. This is not to mean to abandon studies, but we want to say that studies alone is not enough; it is only one of the pillars for one's knowledge, with the other being the Almighty's grace and favour.

757

My brothers! You have put behind you great many number of issues concerning financial, familial, societal and other needs, and you have turned a blind eye on various matters all in favour of seeking knowledge. And what a good thing you have done! I congratulate you on this honour and success, which is indeed a great honour and success. Most people are deprived of this success that Almighty Allah has honoured you with. However, you must make sure to reap the benefit of this strive and sacrifice... you should know that this does not come about from knowledge alone...; it is not through acquiring knowledge alone that those elevated stations are attained, but rather it is with the real knowledge which is the Light that Almighty Allah shines in the heart of whoever He wishes to guide.¹

758

At the outset, we caution the seminary students about the hardship and the long road ahead; ... so that they are well-prepared for this mission, and have taken into account all the necessary measures.

759

It is imperative for the seminary students to give high priority to adhering to virtues and morals; rather, to give it the highest priority so that they would excel in it. This is because the more they excel in it the more the people would subsequently adhere to it. This is one of the aspects which distinguishes morality (*akhlāq*) from other skills and sciences such as *fiqh*, *osool*, oratory, philosophy, wisdom, and suchlike.

¹ The last phrase is paraphrasing a hadith to this effect, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 67 p140.

760

If the seminary students take the attainment of moral perfection lightly they would not make the first step given the difficulties they will face.

761

Have you ever wondered why the number of seminary students is insignificant when compared to the number of college and university students? Is it because the Ummah does not need more preachers than the present number? Or is it because the promotion and encouragement for the religious sciences is less than that for modern sciences? The encouragement for the modern schools and colleges is prevalent, while on the other hand there is discouragement for the religious schools.

762

If you want to know the reasons that distinguished Sheikh al-Anṣārī¹ from others, look at the terms he uses in response to those who differ from him in opinions, as this is evident in his works such as *al-makāsib* and *al-rasā'il*,² and compare them with those used by others, such as scholars of Arabic, *fiqh*, and *oṣool*. The Sheikh, Allah's blessings and mercy upon him, responds with complete politeness and humility, even though he is totally convinced of the correctness of his opinion and the erroneousness of the other side's opinion. You won't find him using terms like "incorrect", "wrong" or "misunderstood" and suchlike, but rather he uses terms like "this is what he came to understand" or "in response to that opinion" and thus he does not talk about the author, but addresses the opinion.

763

It is imperative that you do not boast if you enhance your knowledge; rather, you should be what you are when you used to study *jāmi' al-*

¹ Sheikh Murtaḍā al-Ansari, 1214-1281AH (1781-1864AD), was one of the most illustrious jurist and Shia scholar of recent times, whose works continue to be used and taught at the various Islamic seminaries today.

² These works are used and relied upon today in the seminaries (*ḥawzah*) for teaching the advanced levels, and will continue to be so.

moqaddamāt,¹ and that you should be what you are when you become a *marje'*,² or an eminent teacher in the *ḥawzah* (seminary).

764

Relying on the teacher/mentor, using his expertise, guidance, and the books he recommends, and training at his hands, will enable the individual to attain the goal in the best and quickest manner.

765

In reality we notice that more than 60% of those who started with enthusiasm, honesty, and good faith never finished the course to the end; and that less than 40% managed to overcome the great many difficulties on the road to seeking knowledge.

766

If there were too many problems facing the seminary student, and a student did not want to waste one's life, by studying for thirty or fifty years, and then realising one has not achieved the desired result, what is the solution to overcome these difficulties? The fundamental solution is embodied in the holy ayah ﴿indeed it is with Allah's remembrance that the hearts find rest﴾.³ Commentators have stated that by "Allah's remembrance" it is meant remembrance by tongue and heart together, and by "heart's remembrance" it is mean devotion to the Almighty.

767

The seminary students should spend the appropriate time for their studies, but the important thing is the quality and not the quantity, and by quality I mean meticulousness and diligence. If you study the biography of the great amongst the scholars such as Sheikh al-Mofeed,

¹ These works are used in the seminaries for teaching elementary levels.

² A *marje'* is a fully qualified Islamic scholar or a religious authority on Islam and an expert of Sharia law, and thus able to issue Islamic ruling or fatwa. A *marje'* has followers who seek of his fatwa and opinions on various matters of concern.

³ The Holy Qur'an, 13:28

Sayyid al-Murtaḍā, *moḥaqqiq* al-Ḥilli, ‘*allāmah* al-Ḥilli, Sayyid Baḥr al-Olum, and Sheikh al-Anṣārī,¹ Allah’s mercy upon them, you will find their dedication to work quality and meticulousness was greater than their care about quantity of work.

768

In pursuing material gains one’s success is typically proportionate to the effort one expends in obtaining them. So if one pursues wealth, for example, one can double such wealth if one is prepared to double up the time and effort one expends in amassing such wealth. The same goes for those seeking leadership or superiority. Their chances of achieving such aspirations will be greater the more they toil toward such goals. This is different in non-material, moral or spiritual matters where intangible and qualitative aspects such as relationships are concerned. For example, someone may try to be favoured or liked by another, say a scholar, and over-reaches him with the purpose of getting close to him or for the purpose of gaining his attention. This behaviour may have the opposite effect and may result in the scholar’s resentment of him. One might think that had he spent less time with the scholar, it would have been more effective in gaining his attention. Thus one might conclude that intangible, non-material and moral gains are not measured in terms of the intensity of the effort expended as in material gains.

769

From the outset, seminary students should pay particular attention to the two issues of lecturing and authoring; because these two are amongst the necessary aspects of successful scholarly and leadership traits. All prophets, leaders, and reformers enjoyed the talent and capability of

¹ The works of these grand scholars continue to be amongst the most important heritage and sources for the teachings of the Holy Qur’an and the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. Sheikh al-Mofeed, 336-413AH (948-1022AD). Sayyid al-Murtaḍā, 355-436AH (966-1044), *moḥaqqiq* al-Ḥilli, 602-676AH, ‘*allāmah* al-Ḥilli, 648-726AH, Sayyid Baḥr al-Olum, 1155-1212AH, Sheikh al-Anṣārī, 1214-1281AH (1781-1864AD).

public speech, while you would rarely find an eminent scholar who had not paid attention to writing.

770

One of the issues concerning us the clergy who consider ourselves to be associated with Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, is that we do not know whether or not our affiliation is accepted. This issue is particularly important for us, and it deserves ample time and effort in order to arrive at a conclusion, otherwise we are up to nothing, and no matter how much knowledge we have, it would be equal to nothing, if not worse.

771

The calibre that the moralist, and especially seminary students, attain has a particular significance in fulfilling their role in society and in encouraging the masses to observe moral virtues and refrain from vices.

772

Seminary students should not engage in *makrooh* acts on the grounds that the *makrooh* is permissible, and should not forgo the *mostaḥab* deeds on the grounds that it is permissible to forgo the *mostaḥab*; because this kind of attitude would lead members of the general public to begin to take lightly the obligatory and the prohibited deeds (*wājibāt* & *muḥarramāt*).¹

773

If the seminary student sets about to observe the virtuous approach, i.e. refrains from the *makrooh* and observes the *mostaḥab* deeds, and that he would not suffice to observing the obligatory and refraining from the prohibited deeds (*wājibāt* & *muḥarramāt*), this would lead to the general public to being ‘*odool*, i.e. they adhere to the Sharia framework

¹ The deeds or conducts are grouped into five categories. These are: *wājib* (obligatory), *mostaḥab* (recommended), *mobāh* (permissible), *makrooh* (discouraged), and *ḥarām* (prohibited).

in its entirety [by observing the obligatory and refraining from the prohibited deeds].

774

A seminary student should not say, “Having good manners is good but is not mandatory, so why should I observe it?” or “harsh manners, to a certain extent, is [merely] *makrooh* so why should I refrain from it?” and “performing prayers at the onset of its time is a virtue but it is not mandatory, and it would not prejudice my credibility and integrity if I was lenient about it.” and suchlike... Then he will try to justify his conduct by misusing the hadith “the most pious of the people is one who discharge one’s duties and obligations.”¹

775

If the conduct of the scholar or seminary student was entirely based on “the most pious of the people is one who discharges one’s duties and obligations”, then the environment they live in and people who see their conduct and behaviour would not even reach this minimum level (of discharging their duties) because they are normally less trained and educated than the scholar, and in that position there is nothing but entanglement in sins and abandonment of the duties and obligations. This is because if the layman sees, for example, his model or mentor performing his morning prayers a few minutes before sunrise, he would altogether trivialise the obligation itself, and if he sees him committing a *makrooh*, the layman would tolerate the prohibited. It would be as if the layman says, “If this scholar or holy man does this and that, what do you expect from me, the mere mortal?”²

¹ This is in reference to a prophetic hadith, al-Kāfi, vol.2 p82

² The prophetic hadith is meant to state that the most pious is he who doesn’t compromise when it comes to fulfilling his duties and obligations meticulously, and it is certainly not encouraging to commit the undesirable (*makrooh*), nor is it discouraging the recommended (*mustahab*).

776

Allah's respect for knowledge and scholars is part of the Almighty's respect for His Laws – as they are the Laws' protectors.

777

Almighty Allah values His Laws' protectors and those who observe them more than others.

778

We, the seminary students, are confronted with the issue of sincerity more than others; because – as a result of our education – we may get to a position in society that Satan would attempt to lure us. This is because, if one of us is lured and made to stray, a great proportion of the masses would stray too, as a result.

779

Given our position, we, the seminary students, face many various temptations in the course of our professional lives. If one of us assumes a leadership position, and gains people's respect, or if one is a *marje's* representative, or a speaker, or has an eminent social position... these circumstances involve many great temptations, which requires us to be continually vigilant right from the outset.

780

We, the seminary students, should realise that our challenge is greater than anyone else, because Satan targets us more than anyone else, and the temptations we face are many. It is for these reasons that the sincere are few, and the chosen ones are even less.

781

There is no objection for one to study in order to become *marje's*, or preacher, or a lecturer, or a religious scholar, but that should be for Allah's sake and reward. And if this is one's goal, then one wouldn't care what others say about him one way or another.

782

There were scholars in the past, some of whom I had met, that one could tell of their sincerity from the signs manifested in them by Allah's grace and help. They used to study truly for Allah's sake, teach for Allah's sake, and work purely for Allah's sake.

783

It is imperative for us to train ourselves so that our studying is for Allah's sake, our teaching is for Allah's sake, and our endeavour is for Allah's sake. We must discipline ourselves so that we become like that in the future if we are not so now, and through that [attitude and discipline] we will rub Satan's nose to the ground.

784

It is imperative that we, the seminary students, pay attention to the danger of insincerity in our midst more than others. This is because our sincerity has certain signs that reflect on us and on others; it affects others and shines the path for them. On the other hand, insincerity in us will have the worst impacts, and perhaps its effect will remain in history, and many may follow the deviant path because of us due to our insincerity, or due to what they deduced from our conduct. It is therefore binding for us to pay particular attention to the issue of sincerity more than anyone else.

785

Satan is more proactive amongst us, the seminary students, and shows us ways to present ourselves as sincere ones while we are not one of them.

786

Our education and seeking knowledge should not be purely for the purpose of teaching, preaching, and providing guidance to others and replying to their queries. Rather, we should also study and continue research and debate for the benefit of ourselves, because discipline and purification of the self is obligatory just as enjoining good and prohibiting evil is an obligation.

787

One of the most important issues for us is that our knowledge seeking should not be purely for the purpose of removing ignorance from others, rather, it should also be for the sake of removing our own ambiguities.

788

Satan may creep in the seminary student's mind via his knowledge [and thus overconfidence] and it presents his deeds appealing, so he ends up committing the prohibited act, arguing that the prohibition needs to be proven, and gradually committing the prohibited becomes the norm for him.¹

789

We, the seminary students, are more likely to think about paradise and endeavour to book a place in it than others, and that is because we, supposedly, abandoned everything for the sake of Almighty Allah, or that we did not own worldly things to begin with.

790

The seminary students should think more about paradise than others; because if they were amongst those who did not have much worldly things and opted for this field they would care about their share in the hereafter and earn their place in paradise. On the other hand, if they had worldly things and despite that they forwent that for the sake of Allah and the hereafter, then they would qualify for paradise more than the rest.

791

Most of us, if we were not seminary students, would have done well

¹ There is a general rule in jurisprudence (*fiqh*) that states: everything is permissible (halal) unless it's proven otherwise (haram). And that proof needs to be based on the Qur'an or hadith. However, this rule may not be taken for granted; thus if one didn't know enough, or misunderstood that certain things are halal, but the more knowledgeable scholars would have the proof for it being haram.

financially. Now that we have forgone the world and have sold it off, even to a certain extent, let's concentrate a bit and make sure the price of this would be paradise.

792

We, the seminary students, have willingly covered the first half of this course, let's finish the remaining half. We have endured half of the hardship, so let's endure the remaining. The opportunity is before us to try our fortune, so let's try our fortune, and begin with the simplest qualities; let's begin with a friendly and pleasant attitude to the people, which is easier than giving while in need, or being honest and observing justice even at our own cost.

793

Let's look at the prohibited conducts that we might come across. Because every individual will come across certain of those proscribed acts, and let him resolve not to commit those forbidden acts he will come across. There might be some illicit conducts that one will not be able to do them, or come anywhere near. For example, a seminary student will not normally resort to drinking alcohol, because he will not be in a position to do so; rather he would not even think about it, and would not imagine himself doing it. Similarly for the case of stealing, or defrauding when giving measure for example. However, he might commit backbiting, or hurting or insulting others. So let him identify the prohibited acts he might come across and resolve to refrain from them.

794

Amongst the obligation of the seminary students are self-discipline, giving guidance, and pleasantly expressing themselves.

795

We, the seminary students, not only are responsible for our own selves, but also for those under our tutelage; for they monitor us for everything, every conduct, even minor, casual, or spontaneous acts.

796

You shouldn't say, we are seminary students, we pray, fast, read the Qur'an, study, teach, give sermons, and write books [and so we are ok]; because Satan concentrates on you more than anyone else, and it [Satan] does not need anyone else while it itches for you; you are its first and greatest priority.

797

It is imperative that you, the seminary students, are always busy studying, teaching, and writing books.

798

You, the seminary students, who have, mostly, forgone most of life's pleasures for Allah's sake, why don't you complete the task by dedicating everything purely to the Almighty? You need to begin and try, and the Almighty will help you step by step until you achieve your goal. As for the hardship in that, it is something natural, and one needs to train and continue with the endeavour, and seek help from the Almighty.

Iraq

Introduction

Amongst all other Muslim countries that face particular difficulties such as Palestine, Afghanistan, etc. Iraq is singled out because of absolutely horrendous fear, terror and persecution that afflicted the people of this land – and in particular the Shi'a population of this country – which is unprecedented anywhere else in the world today. After the fall of Saddam's vicious and sectarian regime, countless mass graves were found containing thousands and thousands of victims whose sole crime was being Shi'a. Mass graves continue to be found to date. During Saddam's reign of fear, the Shi'a were systematically subjected to the most brutal tortures known to mankind. The best thing that could happen to the detainees was to be shot dead. As a minority, the Kurds were also subjected to persecution by the regime, but the irony is that the Shia are the overwhelming majority in Iraq. Furthermore, Iraq is also singled out because of the pivotal nature of this country to the followers of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, with the shrines of six of the *ma'soom* imams being in that country, in addition to other religious heritage entities, as well as the religious seminaries – the *hawzah*.
Editors.

* denotes quotes prior to the fall of Saddam's Baathist regime

799*

The Iraqi nation is suffering a great tribulation. This faithful nation – oppressed and persecuted, including women and children in the wounded Iraq – has for centuries, and in particular for the decades under the Baathist reign of terror, lived severe tragedy and hardship.

800*

We the Iraqis, wherever we may now be – in Muslim countries or other countries – have, one way or another, suffered this horrendous ordeal.

801*

My dear people of Iraq... while Iraq is a country for all, it is your country and our country, and it is the country of everyone who lived in it, and was born in it.

802*

Iraq is a land of plenty, and it is a rich country, and Almighty Allah has blessed and favoured this region and this land both materially and sacredly. But despite all that, these wrongdoings and problems still took place, and the country was taken over by this tyrant gang that you see, and thus Iraq was turned into a poor country that must import everything.

803*

Today, inside Iraq, the oppressed nation of Iraq suffers the most severe hardships and tragedies, and especially at a time of this war. Therefore it is incumbent on every one of us, as much as one can, to help these people, ranging from prayers for them, to sending material help to them, in any way one can. Whatever you can send to your brethren in Iraq, they are in need of.

804*

Why should we expect the non-Muslims to give aids to our dear ones in Iraq? And why should we let others help them? It is incumbent for every one of us – according to their ability – to endeavour in this respect; if one is able to offer material help he or she should do so, and if not, one should encourage and lead others to help. We must all discharge our duty since, “you are all guardians and all are responsible for their flock.”

805*

We must endeavour in our duty of offering a helping hand to our dear ones in the oppressed Iraq, and by doing so we will have gained the honour of fulfilling this duty.

806*

Iraq has lived through decades of the severest kinds of oppression, injustice and tragedies.

807*

We must not forget, and everyone must take notice and pay attention to what is happening in Iraq.

808*

There are people – other than you and us, and other than the Iraqis – who are preparing to be the ones to take over Iraq's economy, culture, and activities. But are they doing this out of their love for Iraq and the Iraqis? Not at all. It is out of love for their own selves. They are after what they want. They are coming to Iraq in the future with corruption and with the intention of corruption. They are coming to Iraq in the future to seduce the youth, deviate their thoughts from the beliefs and practice of the religion, and from the Islamic morals and etiquettes.

809*

It is incumbent for all believers to mobilise all energies, exert endeavours and utilise the opportunities, and work seriously – within the Sharia framework – in all aspects to rescue the Iraqi nation from these injustices and oppressions that have inflicted upon this nation for decades, and it is facing the most severe hardships.

810*

The state of affairs of the oppressed and persecuted Iraqi nation has turned to such a tragedy the like of which can rarely be found in history.

811*

I call on my Iraqi brothers of all factions to join forces, close ranks, and adhere to Allah's strong rope,¹ in order for *them* to liberate Iraq, and not through any [foreign] violation or transgression against the oppressed nation or the pure land or its goodness and wealth.

¹ The Holy Qur'an, 3:103

812*

I call upon all the faithful to offer all the help they can to the honourable Iraqis in these difficult circumstances.

813*

It is essential that all the faithful throughout the world rise up and mobilise all their energies and abilities to help the oppressed nation of Iraq with all its humanitarian needs, and should not let others beat them to it; for it is more fitting for the faithful – wherever they may be and at whatever level – to do that than others.

814*

It is essential to direct all forces and energies of all the believers everywhere to the cause and full care of the Muslims' difficulties throughout the globe, such as Palestine, Afghanistan, and especially the cause of Iraq and its oppressed nation.

815*

It is imperative to extend the helping hands to those nations afflicted by the tyranny of their oppressive regimes such as Iraq and Afghanistan, by providing them with moral and material support. To provide them with copies of the holy Qur'an, *nahj al-balāghah*, *al-ṣaḥīfah al-sajjādiyah*, as well as all other books of supplication, exegesis, hadith, *akhlāq* and suchlike. These should reach mosques and husayniah, universities, schools, scholarly clubs, hospices, and all villages and rural areas.

816

O people of Iraq wherever you may be; now that the despotic regime has gone – the regime that began its dark era with bloodshed and murder of the innocent, and continued its reign with terror, killing, assaults on people's honour, scorning the principles and values, and desecrating the sanctities, has ended in this bloody manner which the world witnessed. Now that Almighty Allah has allowed the eradication of that nightmare, which drained the country materially and morally over the long pitch-black decades, now it is the time to seize the opportunity – today before

tomorrow – to build Iraq anew in all aspects and dimensions, and restore the shining history and glorious splendour.

817

Iraq possesses all the ingredients of success and welfare; and on top of all that it houses the shrines of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, which the hearts of the world yearn for – and not just the Shi’a, or the Muslims – but the hearts of humanity yearn for them. Secondly, Iraq houses the historic Islamic seminaries in the holy cities of Najaf, Karbala, Kāḍimiyah and Samara. Thirdly, there are the thousands of the pious and the godly, as well as Iraq’s faithful tribal people, who under the leadership of the religious scholars achieved what no one could imagine, which was the victory of Iraq’s 1920 revolution led by the late grand ayatollah Muhammad Taqi al-Shirazi, Allah’s blessings be upon him.

818

Iraq possesses all the ingredients for progress and development, comfort and welfare; since it has wealth, oil, and fertile land.

819

Iraq – *the land of blackness* – I am not aware of nor have I heard of a land in the world known as the land of blackness;¹ meaning it is a land full of goodness and blessing.

820

Iraq needs the administration and management of the holy Qur’an, and those of Allah’s messenger, the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, and Imam Husayn, peace be upon them all ... Iraq needs a management that would not even abandon a begging old Christian man... it needs a management that would not abandon an enemy armed to the teeth dying of thirst... we need such an administration. And any future administration in Iraq not up to this standard would also be a prelude to

¹ Iraq used to be called *the land of blackness* because to the onlooker from far afield it used to look black, because of the numerous and continuous cultivated and farm land.

a sequence of problems for the upcoming generation and future generations Allah forbid.

821

It is compulsory for us to take up the responsibility of rebuilding Iraq anew. Our responsibility is massive and vast, and in need of great endeavours. Every one individual may be a force and a leading light in this respect... every single word or action has its worth, just like drops of rain; when there are many drops the result would be torrential flood.

822

Iraq needs a torrent of help; material, intellectual, scientific, medical... today it needs all of these and tomorrow it would have a greater need for them.

823

Iraq needs the freedom which the holy Qur'an spoke of and Imam Ali, peace be upon him, implemented during the reign of his government.

824

Iraq needs pluralism and not dictatorship; as much as Iraq suffered the pains of dictatorship, today it equally needs pluralism.

825

Today in Iraq there is an urgent need for guiding and educational programs; the Iraqi youths are yearning for religious identity but lack the means to reach and acquire religious knowledge as well as books, schools and universities.

826

A country like Iraq requires a considerable amount of endeavour, organisation, seriousness, continuous work, sincerity, investment, as well as much prayers – because this country suffered isolation, terrorism, oppression and the nation was deliberately kept ignorant and uneducated for many decades – and that was in the shadow of the most evil dictatorship in the world.

827

An Iraqi who lived for many years in pitch-black darkness is today surrounded by many needs from all angles.

828

In the future, Iraq would need millions of religious books and magazines, and schools and seminaries (*hawzah*), speakers and educators in this field. Iraq would also need hundreds of clinics and hospitals.

829

It is necessary for us all to endeavour to build a new Iraq by taking charge, and work with stern responsibility to ensure Iraq's future.

830

Iraq needs hundreds of banks and funds which give interest free loans to help millions of the needy. This matter requires planning and swift action. This is because, in our beloved Iraq, carnage and destruction reached everywhere – the bodies and souls, as well as buildings and properties.

831

Every one of us should ponder on what they can do for Iraq's future.

832

It is essential that groups and forums are set up with the aim of planning for Iraq's future; studying the state and circumstances of the Iraqi nation, and specialist committees should be set up in various aspects, in order to address the needs of this nation. This should be done despite the fact that others have set up such groups and committees.

833

Whatever planning and preparation we make for Iraq's future, it would still be insufficient, given the scale of the task.

834

All towns and cities in Iraq are in need of mosques, husayniahs, schools, and seminaries; because devastation and destruction covered everything. Many of the religious centres are dilapidated, with some being in complete ruins.

835

We emphasise the importance of the faithful setting up committees with the responsibility of planning, raising funds, and swift action, in order to rebuild Iraq that is free and prosperous with goodness, faith and urban development.

836

It is of utter importance that the country is not given up to non-Iraqis to rebuild Iraq, for otherwise the calamities would be renewed for us for another thirty or forty years.

837

We the Iraqis have the first priority over others to rebuild Iraq.

838

We must pay attention to one important issue, and that today in Iraq we have millions of young men and women who are not married. It is imperative to contemplate on their affairs, establish marriage committees, before others come with their nightclubs and set up corruption centres. We must take the initiative and act swiftly.

839

There are millions in the world who are passionate devotees of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali and Imam Husayn, peace be upon them, who will come to Iraq, and will readily contribute in the grand social project for marrying the unmarried young men and women. Thus we should not let others to take the initiative in this respect.

840

Iraq is the land of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them.

841

The wounded Iraq is the Iraq of Ali and Husayn, peace be upon them, the Iraq of the shrines of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, the Iraq of the blessed seminaries, the Iraq of culture and the cultured – of education and the educated – the Iraq of the faithful and the religious, and the Iraq of civilisation and ancient history.

842

It is incumbent that we do not allow the Wahhabis to make Iraq contrary to what the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, would wish. This necessitates us to be proactive and take immediate action, because the land is ours and the property is ours too. We have reports that the Wahhabis are in the process of preparing plans and programs for Iraq's future.¹

843

I call upon the honourable faithful in Iraq to unify their word and ranks, continue their endeavours with wisdom, statesmanship and perseverance, and renounce anything that may lead to complacency or extremism.

844

We wish to build an independent and unified Iraq on the bases of pluralism, consultation, justice, and freedom within the Sharia framework.

845

The tyrant has vanished from Iraq...I call on my brethren the great religious scholars in the seminaries, and in the various cities in Iraq, whom Almighty Allah made them the prophets' inheritors, and a continuation of the *ma'şoom* Imams, peace be upon them, the defenders against Satan and his soldiers, to embark on directing and guiding the people to the right path, more than ever before, to disseminate calmness and tranquillity in the community, to bring about the spirit of hope and

¹ See the endnote on Saudi/Wahhabi crimes.

endeavour in the people, to shake off their hopelessness and despair, and to sharpen their resolution to endure hardship and overcome difficulties.

846

The tyrant has vanished from Iraq... I call upon my brethren the honourable speakers, notable preachers, the faithful writers and journalists who are the voice of the nation, inside the country or outside, to fulfil their mission in directing the nation, at all levels, and guiding them and reminding them of their huge responsibilities at this critical juncture, through radio, television, newspapers, magazines, podiums, seminars and the likes.

847

In the course of building a new Iraq... great hopes are laid on universities, through their lecturers and students, to fulfil their principal mission which is to enrich the nation and make it self-sufficient with devout experts and professionals, in all fields of expertise, so that this proud nation would not need others, rather, it would be in a position to help others with expertise, and to advance the nation forwards.

848

In the course of building the Iraq of values, love, brotherhood, chivalry and gallantry ... I call on the tribes of Iraq which used to and continue to be a protective shield for Iraq and its people ... to restructure and organise themselves now that the impediment that prevented them fulfilling their important duties has vanished. This will boost coherence and harmony within the Iraqi society, and help the nation towards piety and cooperation in all dimensions.

849

After Iraq's salvation from the tyranny of the tyrant... it is imperative for businessmen, who have been favoured by the Almighty with wealth and opulence to see to the needs of the nation and facilitate self-sufficiency, through setting up companies, activating production lines, employing workers, therefore contributing to raise the nation's standard to the highest level, and to contribute in rebuilding the wounded Iraq

which has been devastated by the oppressive regime, and its consecutive wars over tens of years.

850

It is imperative for the women of Iraq, who bring up and educate the future generations, to take as role models the women of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, Zaynab al-Kubrā, Umm Kulthoum, al-Rabāb, and Sokaynah, peace be upon them, in chastity, sacrifice, adornment with virtuous manners, enjoining good and prohibiting evil, and helping throughout life.

851

It is imperative for authentic political parties and organisations which embark on projects that concern Iraq – present and future – to endeavour, as it is expected of them, to bring together the various sides of this nation, which has suffered terrible pains, through focusing on the positive and discarding the negative aspects – under any label or slogan – and to cease personal infighting; since Iraq is in a new era, and any negativity does not go with the aspirations of this proud patience nation.

852

It is imperative for the general public, men and women, young and old, students or workers, public servants or traders, businessmen, farmers and others, to realise, and they do realise well by the grace of Allah, that Iraq is from them and for them.

853

It is imperative for the general Iraqi public, men and women, young and old, that they set themselves to build Iraq anew; that any achievement would be for all, and any problem or grievance would be for all. Let them fulfil their duties and responsibilities, each according to their own position. They must embark on stopping the bloodshed, and protecting the honour, wealth and properties. You should set up a committee in every city, town, village, and even mosque, husayniah, school, college and university to help the needy; for helping the masses is considered as

one of the most beloved deeds by Almighty Allah, His messenger, and the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them.

854

The bulk of the tragedies and sufferings that befell the Iraqi people were due to the absence of a good (government) administration.

855

It is incumbent that the government in Iraq adopts, as a role model, the policies of Allah's messenger and the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon them and their holy families, in governance in the holy cities of Medina and Kufah. They departed this world while they were in debt, and did not set aside for themselves one dinar or dirham.

856

It is essential that the government in Iraq considers itself as a compassionate father for every single member of this bereaved nation.

857

This oppressed nation was, for decades, deprived of observing the Husayni rites – which are amongst Allah's rites – and Iraq and the holy city of Karbala in particular is the axis and pillar for those rites. It is therefore necessary for the government and the nation to cooperate in order to observe these rites in a fitting way suitable to the lofty status of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, so that these would be taken as an example in other parts of the world.

858

After the fall of the oppressive regime in the wounded Iraq, the hope was to see the survival and salvation of many of the imprisoned faithful in Iraq, especially the grand ayatollahs, the esteemed scholars, lecturers of the seminary, and other dignitaries from those terrifying prisons, the like of which can rarely be found in human history, so that the nation could once again benefit from their scholarly merit, and from their blessed presence, in the various fields of religious, intellectual, societal and suchlike. Except that despair replaced hope, severe pains were

renewed, and the wounds began to bleed once again, after numerous mass-graves began to be discovered, and the search for the living didn't yield the desired results – we lodge our complaint with the Almighty Allah.

859

While the nation was deprived of the likes of those elite faithful prisoners in Iraq, especially the grand ayatollahs, the esteemed scholars, seminary lecturers, and other dignitaries who died [or were killed] in the former tyrant's prisons, however, their examples are present in the hearts, and they will continue to be the symbols for the noblest values of faith throughout history.

860

Iraq is the country of Islam from the ancient times, and it is the land of the sacred and of the mausoleums of the Imams of the Muslims, and the land of the faithful, of the religious scholars, and of the seminaries, over many centuries, and therefore it is more befitting for it to be ruled by the laws of the holy Qur'an and Islam, especially that the overwhelming majority of its people are the Muslims.

861

For various reasons, it is evidently necessary to write the constitution according to the rulings of Islam, and under the supervision of the nation's Islamic jurists, who are the authorities of religion and experts in the matter of Islamic rulings and legislation.

862

It is obligatory for the Muslims in Iraq, and everywhere else, to demand that the Iraq constitution be written according to Islamic law, and under the supervision of the nation's Islamic jurists, and urge everyone for that cause. Otherwise, if this is ignored or abandoned, a great evil will overcome the nation, and it will open the gates for corruption which may not be shut for a very long time.

863

The holy Qur'an, the holy *sunnah* of the prophet and the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, should be the sole and only source for the Iraqi constitution.

864

It is obligatory that drafting the Iraqi constitution – with all its articles and clauses – must be made on Islamic bases and according to the Sharia criteria taken from the holy Qur'an and the teachings of Allah's messenger and the *ma'soom* Imams, peace be upon them.

865

It is imperative to stress on the unity of Iraq – with all its provinces, denominations and ethnic groups – including the Arab, Kurd, Turkmen, and that is in preparation for comprehensive Islamic unity.

866

It is imperative that the criterion in elections, government, and all other legal matters is the majority, while at the same time the minorities are awarded their Sharia rights completely and in their entirety; for this is the most important clause of the four clauses in democracy that the world recognises, which in our wounded Iraq today is in harmony with the divine law.

867

The honourable nation of Iraq must enlist all its forces in order to follow Allah's messenger's *sunnah* using this relative freedom that is available today, to disseminate the teachings of Allah and the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and to lay the foundations of faith, freedom, pluralism, consultation, non-violence, and suchlike.

868

The steadfast people of Iraq suffered during the pitch-black decades for maintaining their faith and Islam, and for its adherence to Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. It is therefore absolutely essential to preserve that adherence in the course of forming Iraq's future; through the

constitution which will apply to all for decades to come, so that it will be a shining episode in Iraq's long history, by Allah's leave.

869

The fitness and integrity of Iraq's future is dependent on that which was fit and appropriate in its past.

870

Building Iraq will materialise when all the Iraqis; scholar and academic, teacher and student, young and old, trader, worker, civil servant, men and women, assume the burden of responsibility to "pick up the pieces" and "fill in the gaps"; to activate all forces and abilities, mobilise the talents and competencies, and awaken all sectors of the community. This may be done by forming committees groups and organisations – public or private, large or small – in every village town or city, and in every tribe and family, to strive to fill in the gaps, and to see to the needs therein. It is through this endeavour that the Iraq of tomorrow will be the Iraq of goodness, welfare, and blessings.

871

It is mandatory to see to the needs of the needy in Iraq in all aspects; in order to eradicate despair, poverty, unemployment, celibacy and suchlike from this proud rich nation, whose wealth and bounty have been plundered over the dark decades.

872

The faithful around the globe are more fitting and worthy than others to fill in the gaps and to see to the needs of those in Iraq. Furthermore, it is essential to pay utmost attention and dedication to the issue of uniting the different factions and renouncing division, the only beneficiaries of which are the enemies, while the great loss will be this nation's share.

873

It is obligatory to embark on a concentrated mobilisation effort to rescue the country of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, and Imam Husayn, and all other Imams, peace be upon them, from the tragedies

that is going through now; having suffered the harshest forms of cruelty and tyranny over many dark decades. This salvation may come about by preparing the ground and suitable environments for carrying out true, fair, comprehensive and immediate elections, so that all will benefit from true Islamic freedom, and its humanitarian values and principles, which the holy Qur'an emphasised upon, and Allah's messenger, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Husayn, and all other Imams, peace be upon them, were the practical embodiment of those teachings in various aspects of life: scientific, political, economic, cultural, educational, societal, military, and suchlike.

874

It is imperative for the builders of the new Iraq to adopt the principle of non-violence, to demand the Sharia rights through peaceful means, and to strengthen the constructive dialogue and lenient and frank understanding.

875

It is essential that all Iraqis, men and women, cooperate and support one another for the sake of building a "faithful and pious" Iraq; which enshrines all its forces and energies with faith, and enshrouds all denominations and groups with the garment of piety.

876

It is essential to make a concerted effort to establish a **majority** government according to the law; derived from the holy Qur'an and holy *sunnah* taken from the Prophet and the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. Indeed this colossal tragedy which lasted for decades was the result of a **minority government** and **being distant from the divine law**.

877

Over the course of their long history, the good-natured people of Iraq were, and will continue to be a nation of steadfastness, patience, perseverance, and sacrifice; especially in these last dark decades. It is a nation that will not be deterred by evil attempts from its resolute

determination, and the deviant and the hypocrite will not deprive it of its patience and forbearance, coexistence and unity in ranks, and its demands for the just rights enshrined in the Islamic principles, and endorsed by man-made laws.

878

It is obligatory to be cautious of the sworn enemy who lies in wait for the oppressed nation of Iraq, and, with all means, tries to ignite a sectarian conflict between its people. And such sectarian conflicts [if succeed] will not end except with the failure of all concerned, just as they will prepare the way for domination of deviation and misguidance, oppression and corruption.

879

It is necessary for all in Iraq, at this critical and difficult stage, to adhere to patience and forbearance; just as it is necessary for the wise to curb the conflicts that others want to inflame, and to snip them in the bud.

880

One of the most important obligatory tasks today for all the people in Iraq, is to unite the aims and objectives of the faithful people, and this is achieved through renouncing the likes of tribal and ethnic divisions, closing ranks, reunifying the Iraqi people, and not allowing divisive views which bring about division and splitting up the union of ranks and goals. The latter would hinder the progress of the faithful towards achieving the lofty Islamic goals.

881

If the just Islamic system brought forth by Allah's messenger and the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon them and their holy families, is implemented in Iraq, by Allah's leave, it would be paradise for all even for the non-Muslim minorities.

882

Holding free and fair elections in Iraq would, by Allah's leave, be a

prelude to the end of occupation, a means to the restoration of peace, and for people to obtain their rights.

883

Delaying the elections is not in the interest of the Iraqi people, because it would mean continuing with the status quo established by the occupation forces from the time of the regime's fall until now.

884

Holding elections are the means for the Iraqi people to express their views.

885

The demands for some corners to delay the elections have sectarian motives, in a bid to prevent the majority getting their rights.

886

The elections will be valid if conducted within the legitimate controls, and under the supervision of the religious, political, and tribal forces to prevent any manipulation and fraud.

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At the current time, the Iraqi people would only attain their legitimate rights through elections, and therefore it is incumbent for all to participate in these elections.

888

One of the positive outcomes of the elections is for the Iraqi people to attain their legitimate rights. Furthermore, they will prevent the establishment of dictatorial systems which persecute the nation, just as being the prelude for the exit of the foreign forces, the independence and sovereignty of Iraq.

889

We emphasise on the necessity of the honourable Iraqis partaking in the

elections. They must register to vote, and must prepare the environments to hold fraud-free elections.

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It is not permissible to sell the voting slips, because this would result in the loss of the Iraqi people's rights, and this will facilitate the enemy of the people – who has a colossal amount of money – to buy its way to positions of decision making.

891

Holding free and fair elections is in the Iraqi people's interest, and thus it is imperative for all to earnestly partake in these elections, and they must choose the truly trustworthy nationalist or Islamic groups. The necessary environments should be created so that the elections are held in peace.

892

The faithful in Iraq should know that taking revenge under current circumstances may ignite civil war, the greater beneficiary of which would be the imperial powers, as per “divide and rule”. Furthermore, this war, Allah-forbid, would give a negative image of the Islamic Ummah in general and of the followers of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, in particular.¹

893

Our dear brothers should know that death retribution is restricted to murder only, and thus it is not permissible to take revenge randomly. It is also not permissible to apply retribution without identifying the killer definitively, and without carrying out a fair judicial procedure according to legitimate criteria.

¹ Tribalism is a prevalent system in Iraq, and taking revenge is almost common, and sometimes the whole tribe would help embark on taking revenge. So the *marje'* here is directing the people on the urgency of not dragging the country to the abyss, because the circumstances are sensitive and the socio-political situation is critical.

894

It is incumbent on the faithful in Iraq to discipline and strengthen themselves, and to arm themselves with religious and political education, to close their ranks, renounce divisions, unify their stance, and demand the majority's legitimate rights, through peaceful means, and never compromise on any of those rights whatever the pretexts or excuses may be.

895

We demand the cancellation of the unjust and wrongful sectarian quotas system, which gives the majority less than its rightful dues. Therefore it is essential that elections are carried out without setting sectarian quotas, and if quotas are temporarily necessary, it is imperative that all the Shi'a denominations with their various ethnic groups, such as Arab, Kurd, Turkmen, Shabak and others are all given according to their actual ratios, who in total are about 80% of the honourable nation of Iraq.

896

Take the oppressed nation of Iraq for example, despite all the harassment and persecution, and the flood of calamities which poured on this nation [by the former regime], when many of those who organised and participated in the mourning programs for Imam Husayn in their houses were executed, as well as the mass graves which were later discovered are best evidence for those atrocities, the nation of Iraq continues to adhere to the loyalty of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him.

897

Today, after the people of Iraq got rid of the tyranny, the enemy is back to perpetrate its oppression against the Iraqis once again. Today – the tenth of Muharram 1425AH (March 2004AD) – the enemy committed another atrocity in the vicinity of the shrines of Imam Husayn and his brother Abu al-Faḍl al-Abbās, peace be upon them.¹

¹ On the day of Ashura 1425AH (March 2004), the mourning processions in the holy city of Karbala, as well as the holy city of Kāḍimiyah, were targeted by

898

The tyrants would not idly stand by after the deliverance of the Iraqi nation from the oppression of the fallen regime. The tyrants came back with their evil atrocity against the pilgrims of Imam Husayn in Karbala, and simultaneously against those of Imams al-Kādim and al-Jawād peace be upon them.

899

It is imperative for our dear ones in Iraq to observe patience, piety, putting their trust in Allah, and to strive to earn a living. Similarly it is imperative for the believers and charity groups to endeavour to see to their needs.

900

Today, the people of Iraq are afflicted with multiple crises; for the last fifty years, this nation has been swapping one crisis for another, from one difficult situation to a more difficult one, and at the current time, this crisis has multiplied for every single Iraqi, and all know, whether through the mass media or through personal experience, that Iraq is going through a very complex situations indeed, and no one knows how far this is going to go on except the Almighty Allah.

901

Do any of us really think we are unable to do anything about Iraq's future?

mortars and car bombings where more than two hundred pilgrims were instantly killed, with many hundreds more injured on that day.

Needless to say, millions of the faithful from inside and outside Iraq visit the shrine of Imam Husayn and his bother al-Abbās, peace be upon them, on the occasions like the day of Ashura, the day of Arbāeen, and at the same time, the loathing and atrocities of the Wahhabis against the defenceless pilgrims who come to visit Imam Husayn also increase. On the occasion of the day of Arbāeen, and in a unique phenomenon, tens of millions of pilgrims visit the shrine of Imam Husayn, many of them walk their way to Karbala, which can take up to three weeks for those walking from distant areas inside Iraq.

902

The people of Iraq today are the ones who will build tomorrow's Iraq.

Worldly Life

903

It is stated in the hadith that, as far as Allah is concerned, the world in its entirety is not even worth a wing of a mosquito. It is interesting that it does not say, “the two wings of a mosquito” because the insect uses both wings, but it states, “a wing of a mosquito” alluding to the worthlessness of the world and its low status with Almighty Allah.

904

When the individual’s mind and intellect are perfected, one would then not crave the world’s wreckage, because it is the mind’s weakness that would make one long for the perishable world.

905

The one who abnegates oneself [through self-discipline] would not favour wealth over Allah, nor favour desires, food, lust, and business over Allah. This does not mean one should abandon material life, however, since Allah created the world for the believers, and they take precedence to use it over the oppressors and Allah’s enemies.

906

The world is Allah’s creation, and the faithful are Allah’s devotees, and thus it is essential that the faithful are not owned by the world, rather they should own the world, and take of it as much as they can, while at the same time they should be prepared to abandon it if they find themselves in a situation that they have to choose between it and Allah’s law.

907

This worldly life that we live is like a house which has columns, walls, a roof, along with decoration and adornments. The columns, walls, and roof that are made of iron, wood, cement and bricks are the essential pillar of the building which it cannot do without. As for the decorations, lighting, painting and suchlike they are adornments for the house, and it

is possible to do without. Thus an individual who is healthy and able bodied, content with what Allah has allotted for him, but is poor, then his life is complete in terms of essentials, and lacks nothing but adornments. The same goes for the one who does not have children, for they are life's adornments and not its pillars.¹

908

The one who lives life contently and confidently, would enjoy life even if one lacks wealth and offspring;² since wealth is not more than inclination and desire, which has no credibility, and it parts company with the individual at death. Similarly, offspring are adornments too, and they part company at death, if they were caring.³

909

The money you give in Allah's cause is good from two viewpoints. First you would be rewarded for it in the hereafter. Secondly, it is a good hope you count on in your life; since when one does a good deed, one would look forward for a good return.

910

It is easy for an individual to write in one's will that one's wealth to be spent in Allah's cause, but it is more important that one does that in one's own life, because it is fundamental to embark on this task, which is difficult.

911

Let's roll up our sleeves and donate some of our wealth to good causes,

¹ In reference to the Qur'anic verse ﴿Wealth and children are an ornament of the life of this world. But the good deeds which endure are better in thy Lord's sight for reward, and better in respect of hope.﴾18:46

² ﴿Whoever does good whether male or female and he is a believer, We will most certainly **make him live a happy life**, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did.﴾16:97

³ In other words, they may maintain contact and would not part company during their lifetime only if they wish to do so.

and one who cannot do it on one's own, should give whatever one can, for these are the ﴿good deeds which endure﴾.¹

912

Whatever emanates from an individual is either a good deed which one would see the benefit of, or a bad deed which would harm the individual.

913

We might face problems, the roots or causes of which we may not be aware, because we are inattentive; maybe we wronged someone or usurped their right, even though we were not aware of it. The consequences of our conducts in the material world are not changed by the intentions or ignorance about them – conducts leave behind their consequences – irrespective of whether or not one knows about them.

914

1000

The plant obtained is according to the reality of the seed; if one plants wheat, one would get wheat, and if one plants thorns, one would not get anything but thorns, even if one thought it was other than that.

915

1001

The problems that one faces are from one's own conduct, and as one rectifies one's conduct in life, one would face fewer problems.

¹ i.e. the good deeds that survive the passage of time. This is in reference to the Qur'anic verse, 18:46

Contemplations

916

The thing which is considered valuable by the Almighty, and that He has graced humanity with, is knowledge, cognition and understanding of Him (*ma'rifah*), and for mankind to understand why they were created, where they came from, why they came into existence, and where will they end up.

917

If one's intellect is perfected, one would not go after one's desires; therefore will there be injustice, poverty, or misery? Of course not.

918

If one's intellect is perfected, one's belief and faith are perfected, rather even one's life would be perfected.

919

Duty is one thing, and desire is another, and it is essential to ensure to distinguish between the two.

920

There is no doubt that the one who contemplates about the consequences of one's affairs many times over would be able to perfect them, and would normally not err in them, just as the one who repeatedly practices something would master it and excel in it.

921

Productive discussion is a pathway to augmenting scholarly ability.

922

It is imperative that an individual has a strong resolve, robust guidance, and a will of steel in order to succeed in Almighty Allah's obedience in the highest levels, and thus attain the highest ranks.

923

Whenever Truth and Falsehood battle it out, and a group of brave faithful emerge vowing themselves to Allah, He will guarantee them victory just as He did for the believers in [the battle of] the Confederates. This is Almighty Allah's tradition and ﴿you will not find any change in Allah's tradition﴾.

924

A human being, whoever one may be, will surely transgress the bounds,¹ or is potentially liable to transgress; it is therefore mandatory that no one may bully their way in holding on to power, and it is mandatory that no individual assume all power to himself excluding others.

925

To advance the various levels is like climbing the mountain; if one falls from a height of one meter one would have superficial injuries, but the fall from increasing heights would result in increasing severity, giving worst results.

926

Time is very; so if one of us lives one hundred years, then this would be insignificant compared to what needs to be done, and our lives fall shorter than that.

927

There are many stories and many lessons to learn from, but the important thing is to take heed and learn even from one lesson.

928

We may succeed to swindle someone who is not aware of our intentions and what goes on in our minds, but how impossible it is to cheat the Almighty Allah.

¹ In reference to the Holy Qur'an verse, 96:6: ﴿man will transgress all bounds – when he sees himself free from want﴾

929

When we deal with others according to our own personal persuasions, we would not equal between those who are honest to us and those who cheat us. So why wouldn't we expect this approach from Almighty Allah towards us?

930

If I swear a thousand oaths to you that I am an honest person, you wouldn't be convinced of my honesty given the conduct you've seen from me or my intentions that you know of. In this case, would you deal with me like you would with a truly honest person? Of course you wouldn't. You may pretend to do so, or even be courteous, but when it matters, and in critical circumstances, you would deal with me according to your own convictions. Therefore, if you are suspicious of me, you wouldn't tell your secrets, and if I ask you the reason for this, you may change the subject, or you may even deny the secrets, but the real reason is that you don't trust me. If these are the criteria in dealing with one another, and we deem them to be right and proper, why don't we give Almighty Allah the same right, and still expect Him to deal with us like He deals with the honest individuals, although our intentions are not true towards Him?

931

There is no doubt that Almighty Allah does not equate the honest and the dishonest. Does the one who strives for material goals – whether for fame or wealth – equal the one whose endeavour is purely for Allah alone?

932

By Allah's grace, we know our duties and if someone asks us about them we would be able to respond, but it is incumbent for us to apply and practice [our duty].

933

Whoever accomplishes the aim one has been aspiring for will feel the sense of achievement.

934

By nature, an individual is hasty in attaining the results.

935

Misinterpretation, mix-up, and concealment is the root cause for great many inventions, and thus disputes, that exist between the faithful.¹

936

There is no severance nor discontinuity in Truth, and in contrast, falsehood, sooner or later, fails its perpetrator.

937

If one is able to deceive one's fellow human being with one's appearance, one would not be able to do so with the Almighty, because Almighty Allah knows all too well what goes on in the consciences, and what the hearts conceal.

938

Amongst the faithful, do you think that the different parties involved know what they are doing when they dispute? And that they know it is disobedience [to the Almighty]? Not at all. Rather, the conduct of each party is made to look good, and each thinks they are right.

939

If the principal criterion in our conducts is to take the *ma'şoom* Imams as our role models, and that "the one who goes ahead of them is a renegade, he who lags behind them is in falsehood, and he who adheres to them is following in their footsteps", then we should open hearts and minds to all people and encourage them to say whatever goes on in their

¹ Mixing up between truth and falsehood causes much dispute amongst the believers, for example those who follow the religions of Irfan, mysticism, or Sufism think they are ok because things have been muddled for them, because the promoters of Irfan, mysticism and/or Sufism disguise their teachings with those of Islam.

hearts and minds; for this was the policy of the grand Prophet and the *ma'soom* Imams from his family, peace be upon them.

940

There is no doubt that the advices and exhortations of the holy Prophet and the holy Qur'an are many; rather most of the holy Qur'an is advices and exhortations, and no doubt, all that the prophets brought forth or was revealed to them are summarised in the holy Qur'an, for it is the essence of the all the divine messages in their entirety.

941

Prophet Muhammad's advices and exhortations are the essence of those of all the prophets before him, i.e. the one-hundred-and-twenty-four-thousands of them. However Almighty Allah instructs His messenger to summarise all the advices and exhortations into one expression. He instructs His gracious messenger: **«Say: I exhort you only to one exhortation»**.

So what is the exhortation that Allah instructs His Messenger to admonish the people with, and nothing else? The holy verse continues: **«that you rise up for Allah»** i.e. your rising, your intention, your dedication, and your contemplation be purely and sincerely for Allah. By "rising for Allah" it is not meant to perform the daily prayers or other acts of worship, but it is intended to be the contemplation, dedication, and sincerity of one's intention when doing any deed. In other words, it is "self-discipline" and "distancing [from the ego]", and that only Almighty Allah be the goal, intention, and direction, and not the self and its interests in any way.

942

When in solitude, especially when others are asleep, let every one of us reflect and contemplate, and to say to oneself; "Who am I to wrong or hurt others? Or to commit the prohibited? And what will my destiny be? Where are my father, grandfather, friends and relatives who have passed away? Will I forever stay, or will I pass away in the same way? Is death and reckoning for them only and not for me, or will we all have this

fate?” This line of thought is the essence of the holy Qur’an’s admonishments and exhortations. Indeed if one has such scruples, and thinks along those lines, it would be impossible for an individual to embark on committing a sin.

943

The one who takes one’s desire for one’s god, in that case, one’s self and ego becomes more important [for him] than anything else, and thus one wouldn’t care about committing disobedience of Allah in the process. The important thing for such an individual is to provide for one’s self and to see to its wishes [at any cost, and that’s the crux of selfishness].

944

Do we value and respect Allah’s laws as much as some of us do for money? There are some who, if told about money or gold to be found somewhere, would endeavour to find it, but if told about that a particular thing being prohibited, would reply; “is this all that matters?” They do not value Allah’s laws even by as little as ten coins; who would chase them and strive to find them, though he is not even certain those may be found.

945

How can it be right to compare nothing with abundance? It is necessary that there is a number to compare the great with. This is why it is said that whoever favours Ali over Mo‘awiyah has disbelieved. This is because Mo‘awiyah has no merit so that one may say Ali is better than him.

Rather, not a single one from this nation – nor indeed from any other nation – may be compared with any one of Prophet Muhammad’s

progeny; for they represented the holy Qur'an through their conduct and way of life.¹

946

Both encouragement and dissuasion have their effects on the soul of the individual, but for the one who has attained the level of sincerity, these have no effect on one's endeavour.

947

An individual's deeds and conducts emanate from one's soul or self. Therefore, the good deeds and praiseworthy traits either emanate from souls that are likewise, such as the souls of the *ma'soomeen*, peace be upon them, and Allah's devotees, or from souls that their owners have taken them under control [through self-discipline].

¹ ﴿Verily Allah only wishes to keep away the uncleanness from you, O Ahl al Bayt (people of the house) and purify you a thorough purifying.﴾ 33:33 Prior to the revelation of this Qur'anic verse, Prophet Muhammad had gathered Fatima, Ali, Hasan and Husayn, and declared "O Allah! These are my Ahl al Bayt, my closest family, and my protectors."

Noah's ark *hadith*: Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: "The example of my Ahl al-Bayt is like that of Noah's ark, whosoever boards it is saved and whosoever abandons it drowns."

﴿It is on this day that I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Grace and Favour upon you, and have chosen Islam for you as your religion.﴾

5:3 This Qur'anic verse was revealed on the day of Ghadir, when, on instructions from the Almighty, Prophet Muhammad appointed Imam Ali, in a public ceremony, as his successor, to lead the nation after him. Reports state that there were some 120,000 people present on the day, and the prophet instructed them to pledge allegiance to Imam Ali as his successor and the leader of the Muslim nation after him. It took more than three days and nights for all present to pledge allegiance to Imam Ali, peace be upon him.

The Two Mighty Entities *hadith*: Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: "I leave behind amongst you the two mighty entities, the Book of Allah, and my kin the Ahl al-Bayt – as long as you adhere to them both, you will never, after me, go astray."

The City of Knowledge *hadith*: Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate; whosoever wishes to access the city, should access it through its gate."

948

If an individual is in Almighty Allah's Light, then one would not slip, or deviate, or transgress, nor would one's evil-commanding ego control him. One would not allow Satan to seduce him, and the world would be the least of all in his view. This is because with this Light one sees the realities of things, just as with physical light one sees various things and distinguishes one thing from another, and takes what one wants and refrains from what one does not.

949

If an individual is not in Almighty Allah's Light, he would be lost in darkness, bewilderment, and go astray, even if he did not realise this, and imagined himself to be aware of his status and surrounding.

950

The utterance of **﴿to Allah we belong and to Him we return﴾**¹ makes the individual in Almighty Allah's Light; that is, Allah bestows the Light and vision upon the individual to recognise what is beneficial to him and what is detrimental, for what [purpose] he should spend his life, how to interact with people, how to control his self and desires, how to escape from the love of the world and its adornments, and indeed how to be able to discern what is appropriate and thus accept it, and what is dispraised and thus refrain from it. This is the state of the individual who is in Almighty Allah's Light.

951

Let there be an example and a lesson for us in the case of Owais al-Qarani. This devout servant was never honoured to meet Allah's Messenger even though he lived at the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family. He used to live in Yemen, and when he came to Medina to see Allah's messenger, he did not see him, as he had been martyred. Owais was rather saddened by that. But do you realise that this Owais is preferred over many of those who had accompanied the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family?

¹ The Holy Qur'an, 2:156

952

A scholar's sleep is never considered a mere abandonment (of duty), rather it is preliminary to it; because when a scholar sleeps this would constitute rest for him, and this rest is a prelude to serving, guiding, and directing the people, and transferring them from darkness to light, and from fire to paradise. Therefore a scholar is rewarded for sleeping.¹

953

One of the consequences of being distant from Allah's laws in life in Western civilisation is the number of mental hospitals there, which are far greater than other hospitals – contrary to our countries. It is evident that 90% of psychological illnesses are due to problems. But where do these problems come from? Does the Almighty descend them on mankind with the sun's rays? Or do the seas flood us with the problems? No... these come from our own thoughts, when we assume the wrong role or put ourselves in the inappropriate situation.

954

Almighty Allah is mankind's creator and He knows better what suits mankind; both in terms of creation and legislation (*takwini* and *tashri'i*); thus the Almighty laid down the laws for the benefit of mankind and his life system; some of them creationist (*takwini*) to which a human being is coerced, while others are legislative (*tashri'i*) which one has the freedom to uphold. If mankind adheres to Allah's Sharia laws, his life would improve and blessings would descend on him; otherwise, mankind would lead a hectic and wretched life.

955

There is a difference between one who is proactively-sincere (*mokhlis*)

¹ Conducts are classified in the five categories acts of: *wājib* (mandatory), *mustahab* (recommended), *mubāh* (permissible), *makrooh* (discouraged) and *harām* (prohibited). Thus, one is not rewarded for doing a *mubāh* (permissible) act, nor is one held accountable for not doing it. However, the fasting individual will be rewarded while sleeping (a *mubāh* act) as if he is engaged in worshipping, and the same goes for the scholar.

and one who is inherently-sincere (*mokhlās*). The proactively-sincere is one whose conducts and deeds are purely for Allah – they are done for Allah only and share it with no one else... while the inherently-sincere is the one whom Allah has chosen, made his natural disposition sincere, and approved his sincerity.¹

956

If we explore [our knowledge] we would find out that there are many things that we do not know of, and would discover there are numerous issues that we never thought of their details or possibilities. In other words, we would discover we were ignorant of many issues, and we will not be excused for our ignorance as long as we have the ability to learn and explore.

957

It is good to recall that there were people who were sinful and disobedient, but at some stage they upturned, because of the readiness of their hearts, through one or two admonishments to good and devout individuals.

958

We will be regretful and sorrowful on the day of resurrection, when there is no chance for one's reform or development, when we learn that an individual who was remote from religious matters and discourses, reversed to become a good and devout individual and acquired a better status with Almighty Allah than us while we did not manage to reform and develop ourselves, while we knew the religious matters better than him.

959

There are some who give the impression that they lead their lives while

¹ The inherently-sincere include the Prophets, Imams, and some chosen devout and pious individuals. It is meant to say that if one is not amongst the chosen ones, then one should endeavour to be proactive in acquiring the sort of sincerity associated with the chosen ones.

observing religion soundly, but their destiny at the end of their lives would end up bad, and the opposite is also true.

960

It is truly unfortunate that some people sell their faith for the insignificant. Even though one may not be working as an agent for the secret service, is not on their pay role, or receive any payment from them, but one gives all one has to the oppressors for nothing in return, and makes one's neck a bridge for them, and therefore such an individual will be one of those about whom the Almighty declares: ﴿And when the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, say: Allah and His messenger promised us naught but delusion﴾.¹

961

Today the Western politics is devoid of faith, morality, and virtue; and as a result, knowledge, which is the best means for advancement and development, and culture, which is the best tool to realise understanding, coexistence, security, and peace in the nation, or rather in the world, have become the means for decadence and disownment, for disseminating fear and panic, chaos and turmoil, war and destruction throughout the world.

962

The life and body of a human being move towards death and conclusion, but on the contrary, his metaphysical and his spirit move towards ascension and transcendence instead of decline and disappearing.

963

There is nothing in Allah's Beautiful Names that prompt or inspire fear or repulsion.

¹ The Holy Qur'an, 33:12

964

Almighty Allah's mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and all His names and attributes do not carry anything of the meanings of fear or dread.

965

Why shouldn't one fear the Almighty Allah's justice when one knows that there is no pause in Allah's punishment [for the oppressor] on the day of resurrection, that it is eternal, and that the means of perdition and destruction – of every kind – pour on to the sinner on that day, and despite that he does not die, but continues to taste the severest punishment.

966

If one contemplates the holy Qur'an's description of hellfire and its torment, one would have no peace of mind.

967

The wretched is not the one who sleeps while hungry, or languishes in the depths of dungeons and suffers the severest of torture, because all that are for a set time, and after that the hungry would be filled, and the prisoner released. But the wretched is the one who is met with Allah's justice and reckoned for his evil deeds, on the day when the creatures' deeds are presented before the Almighty, and nothing is left out; small or big.

968

The Almighty attributed the Ka'bah to Himself, and so it is called Allah's House, which is to sanctify its station and honour its standing. Since Almighty Allah does not actually have a house, and He is in no need for a place. He elevated this piece of land from the depths of the earth to the peak of the heavens, and honoured it by attributing it to Himself.

969

The reality is that we are slaves to Almighty Allah, whether we like it or not, but some motives propel us to be inattentive to this reality. As a

result, this leaves us in a state of denial about the reality and the relation between us and our creator.

970

The one who admits to servitude to Allah, and make oneself recognise this, the Lord will not evict one from His mercy, even if some disobediences emanate from the individual, because soon one would realise this, apologises for them and decides not to repeat such conduct.

971

A simple slip or a small deviation due to some negligence might lead to suffering anguish and hardship for decades. For example, when working with a needle and due to inattentiveness one pierces one's eye; the same goes for spiritual matters. Thus a simple mistake or a slip will make the individual to live with regret and sorrow for millennia in the hereafter.

972

A human being normally tries to smarten up his appearance, rather, he is wired to do so and to cover up his faults and deficiencies; therefore he tries to cover up his reality and interior so that others would not discover there is disagreement between his inward [reality] and outward appearances and whatever he pretends to be. This is because it is normally supposed that there is agreement between one's inward and outward appearances, and this is the first impression of any individual, unless proven otherwise.

973

Almighty Allah did not take the lives of our ancestors because He had a negative view of them, and He did not give us life because He viewed us positively; neither all of those individuals did bad things which made them deserve death, nor did we all do good things which made us deserve life. Rather, Almighty Allah gives each an opportunity in this world to reveal how we perform.

974

There is a wrong phenomenon in society, where many people would

say, if so-and-so who has such a societal, scholarly, or religious status and yet commits bad things, or there are slips in his life, then what do you expect from us mortals? There is no doubt this attitude is not right, it represents a wrong phenomenon, and proves that the heart of he who says such a thing is not linked to Allah, but to other than Him – as if he has forgotten that Almighty Allah assesses our hearts and not our appearances.

975

We follow our leaders and scholars and learn from them, but if any one of them deviate by a fingertip, then it is imperative for us not to deviate with him, even if he was the means for our guidance [to begin with]. This is because the heart should relate to Almighty Allah, and Allah witnesses our hearts as to whether or not they are linked to Him. If they are linked to Him alone, then this is the required quality for which we have been created, otherwise none of our deeds would benefit us.

976

This nation's common practice must – always and forever – be the endeavour that is emphasised upon by the Holy Qur'an, so that all affairs run accordingly with ease and simplicity, and distant from tragedies and hardship.

977

It was the will of Almighty Allah to take martyrs from this nation to be beacons for the faithful and role models for generations throughout history – in patience, perseverance and sacrifice.

Glossary

‘ <i>ādil</i> (plural)	‘ <i>ādil</i> is the individual who adheres to and acts upon the obligatory duties and refrains from the prohibited acts, such that if his neighbours or colleagues were asked about him, they would report of his good nature, commitment, and piety.
‘ <i>alawiyyāt</i>	Female descendants of Imam Ali and Prophet Muhammad
‘ <i>allāmah</i>	Learned, erudite scholar
‘ <i>eid</i>	Festival, happy returns
‘ <i>elm</i> <i>akhlāq</i>	The science of morals
‘ <i>eṣmah</i>	Immunity from error, sin and forgetting
<i>adhān</i>	The call to the daily prayers
<i>aḥkāṃ al-Islam</i>	The Rulings of Islam [on the <i>ḥalāl</i> and <i>ḥarām</i>]
<i>Ahl al-Bayt</i>	Members of the household of Prophet Muhammad
<i>akhlāq & ādāb</i>	Ethics and Etiquettes
al-Moṣṭafā	The Chosen One – one of the titles of Prophet Muhammad
<i>amir</i> <i>mo’mineen</i>	The Commander of the Faithful (the title exclusively given to Imam Ali by Prophet Muhammad on divine instructions)
<i>awliyā’Allah</i>	Allah’s Authorities or the prominent and pious personages

<i>bayt al-māl</i>	the treasury
<i>dhimmi</i>	The non-Muslims who are in the care of/under the protection of the Islamic government
<i>diyah</i>	expiation/compensation
<i>du‘a</i>	supplication
<i>faḍā’il</i>	virtues
<i>fiqh</i>	jurisprudence
<i>foroo’ al-deen</i>	“Branches of the Religion”; acts of worship, obligations and duties to be practiced by every male and female Muslim individual. For example the daily prayers, fasting the holy month of Ramadahn, etc.
<i>ghayb</i>	the unseen
<i>ḥalāl</i>	Approved/permissible
<i>ḥarām</i>	prohibited
<i>hay’ah</i>	group
<i>hijab</i>	
<i>Husayniah</i>	religious centre dedicated to the programs of imam Husayn
<i>iḥtiyāt</i>	
<i>ijtihād (in fiqh)</i>	level of expertise attained to become fully qualified to deduce and make judgement and issue verdict (fatwa)

<i>imān</i>	faith
<i>jāhiliyah</i>	the era of ignorance – in reference to the pre-Islamic era
Jum‘ah	Friday
Ka‘bah	the symbolic house of Allah situated in the sacred mosque in the holy city of Mecca
<i>ma‘rifah</i>	The concept of cognition and understanding (of Allah’s attributes)
<i>ma‘soom</i> (plural <i>ma‘soomeen</i>)	Infallible – the one who is immune from error, sin and forgetting. These are Allah’s prophets and applies to the fourteen <i>ma‘soom</i> , namely Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Lady Fatima, and the twelve divinely-appointed Imams.
<i>majlis</i> (plural <i>majālis</i>)	The gathering commemorating the martyrdom of any of the thirteen <i>ma‘soom</i> .
<i>makrooh</i>	discouraged
<i>malakah</i>	“second nature” or the disposition acquired through practice and observance certain conducts or merits
<i>marje‘</i> (plural <i>marāje‘</i>)	The point of reference or the source of emulation. This is the term to the jurist or Islamic scholar who is fully qualified in all aspects of Islamic law as well as those the human society needs to address. He is an expert of Sharia law, and thus able to issue Islamic ruling or fatwa on any issue of concern, and is therefore considered as authority on Islam. A <i>marje‘</i> has followers who seek of his fatwa and opinions on various matters of concern.

<i>mobāḥ</i>	<i>mobāḥ</i> [neutral] is referred to anything that is not categorised as either obligatory or prohibited
<i>moḥaqqiq</i>	Learned/competent researcher
<i>mojtahid</i>	The jurist or Islamic scholar who is fully qualified in all aspects of Islamic law, and thus able to issue Islamic ruling or fatwa on any issue of concern, and is therefore considered as authority on Islam.
<i>mokallaf</i>	literally means duty-bound, and in this respect it means one who has reached the age of adolescence when one is obliged to fulfil one's religious duties such as observing the five daily prayers, the fasting of the holy month of Ramaḍān, etc.
<i>moqaṣṣir</i>	Deliberate negligence, in reference to the individual being capable of learning or enquiring about his obligations but not attempting to do so.
<i>mostaḥab</i>	Recommended, encouraged
<i>oṣool al-deen</i>	The roots/fundamentals of the religion, the principle beliefs every Muslim individual should recognise and adhere to
<i>qāṣir</i> (ignorant)	The person who is not held accountable for his deeds due to him being ignorant of his religious duties and/or not having access to religious teachings and guidance. [see <i>moqaṣṣir</i>]
<i>Qudsi hadith</i>	divine hadith, Allah's words other than the verses of the holy Qur'an
<i>quoṣoor</i>	mere ignorance [see <i>taqṣeer</i> , <i>qāṣir</i> , <i>moqaṣṣir</i>]
<i>risalah amaliyyah</i>	Islamic Law handbook

<i>seerah</i>	The conduct and way of life or biography of a notable individual
<i>Sharia</i>	Islamic Law
<i>Sunnah</i>	the Prophetic teaching or tradition
<i>tāghut</i>	false deity
<i>tableegh</i>	conveying and disseminating the teachings of Islam
<i>tafsir</i>	explication exegesis
<i>tajwid</i>	particular format of recitation of the holy Qur'an
<i>takwini / tashri'i</i>	natural or physical aspects / legislative aspects
<i>taqseer</i>	negligence and failure (see <i>quoṣoor</i> , <i>qāṣir</i> , <i>moqaṣṣir</i>)
<i>tawheed</i>	monotheism, the concept of oneness of Allah
<i>ummah</i>	the Muslim nation
<i>wājib</i>	obligatory
<i>wājib 'ayni</i>	individual obligation; every Muslim individual is obliged to observe such obligation
<i>wājib kifā'i</i>	Collective obligation; that which if adequate number of Muslim individuals in the community fulfil such an obligation, then the rest of the community is not bound to fulfil.
<i>wājibāt</i> &	obligatory duties & prohibited conducts

<i>muḥarramāt</i>	
<i>wilāyah</i>	Authority (of Prophet or Imam over followers of the religion)
<i>ziyārah</i> (plural <i>ziyārāt</i>)	Pilgrimage to the shrine of a prophet or an imam
<i>ziyārat-al-arb‘een</i>	Visiting the shrine of Imam Husayn commemorating the fortieth day of his martyrdom

Endnotes

Endnote #1

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali son of Abu Talib

Abu Talib was the chieftain of the Hashim clan and also of the most eminent leaders of the Quraysh tribe. When his brother Abdullah died, (or rather was killed,) Abu Talib took responsibility for the care and upbringing of his nephew, Abdullah's only son, Muhammad. Muhammad was born in Mecca in 570AD.

Abu Talib's fourth son, Ali, was born in 600AD in Mecca too – and more precisely – inside the holy Kabah, the symbolic “House of God” in the city's Sacred Mosque (*masjid al-ḥarām*), something that is unprecedented. Muslims throughout the world pray their obligatory daily prayers towards this very Kabah, the direction of which is referred to as the Qiblah. When his pregnant mother, Fatima *bint* Assad went to the Kabah to pray and beseech Almighty Allah for help, before her eyes, a large crack appeared in the wall of the Kabah, and so she went inside the holy Kabah, and the crack sealed again as soon as she was inside. Many witnessed this extraordinary phenomenon, and they attempted to go inside through the door of the Kabah, but without success, as all attempts to open the door failed. In all, Fatima *bint* Assad remained inside for three days and while there, on her own, she had labour and gave birth to Ali inside the holy Kabah. [Needless to say, the marks of the sealed crack have continually been repaired over the years to eradicate the patterns of the sealed crack, but they always continue to reappear again. They are clearly visible today despite many attempts to cover them up.]

Ali was ten when Prophet Muhammad began receiving divine revelations at 610AD. Ali and the Prophet's loyal and devout wife Lady Khadijah were the first to believe in him as a messenger from Allah and in his divine message as a faith. Three years later Prophet Muhammad was instructed to make public his mission and to invite others to Islam beginning with his close family. He invited his relatives – some forty of

them – for a banquet and call upon them to accept Islam and asked for their support in his mission. No one volunteered to help – except for a teenage boy called Ali.

For the next ten years in Mecca, the Prophet faced much torment and persecution – but all along Ali was always with him. Ultimately, his opponents decided to eliminate him once and for all, but not one person or even one clan would volunteer. One cunning plan was put forward which all accepted. The plan was that one warrior from every clan would take part in the Prophet's assassination. A group of forty was formed. The forty warriors prepared to storm his abode and kill him while he was asleep in his bed. The Prophet was informed of the plan, through divine revelation, and instructed to leave Mecca for Medina. The Prophet needed a decoy. He asked Ali whether he could be that. Without any hesitation, Ali agreed and he stayed in the Prophet's bed while the Prophet made his way of Mecca. But spies were everywhere that night stationed by the plotters. One of them managed to spot the Prophet, and the Prophet spotted him and went forward and spoke to him. The spy was an acquaintance. He asked the Prophet what he was doing in the middle of the night, and the Prophet told him he was leaving Mecca. In order to stop him from reporting back, the Prophet asked him to accompany him on the journey, and took him along with him, and they hid in a cave outside Mecca until things settled. Meanwhile, the warriors went ahead with their mission and stormed the house, only – to their horror – to find Ali instead.

Once in Medina, the Quraysh began waging full-scale wars against the Prophet in order to exterminate him and his religion. Just one individual had a pivotal role in defending the Prophet and defeating his enemy, and were it not for him, the Muslims stood no chance against the odds. He was Ali. It was such that the Prophet used to say, "Were it not for Khadijah's financial support and Ali's sword, my religion would have not been established." It was in the battlefields that Ali – the son of Abu Talib – showed his courage and absolute loyalty to the Prophet. Ali showed that his bravery and chivalry is second to none in the history of Arabia – or rather in human history. But above all else, he showed his

magnanimity in battle too. It is reported that Archangel Gabriel made the revelation to the Prophet that “there is not a young man like Ali, and there’s not a sword like Dhul-Fiqār.”

However, combat skills and morals were only some of Ali’s merits. Knowledge, humanity, selflessness, self-discipline, and suchlike are the qualities Ali endeavoured to excel in. Ali made sure to learn all the Prophet’s teachings relating to all aspects there is.

Ali eventually graduated from the Prophetic school with distinction. Prophet Muhammad used to say, “Ali is to me like Aron was to Moses.”

The Prophet also used to say “I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate; so whoever wishes to access the city, should access it through its gate.”

Imam Ali used to say, “Allah’s messenger taught me a thousand principle of knowledge, each principle opened up one thousand gate of knowledge.”

But Ali was no ordinary individual. He is one member of the Prophetic household (*Ahl al Bayt* as known in Arabic). To show the status of the Ahl al Bayt, the Almighty Allah revealed in the holy Qur’an:

﴿Verily Allah only wishes to keep away the uncleanness from you, O Ahl al Bayt (people of the house) and purify you a thorough purifying.﴾
33:33

Prior to the revelation of this Qur’anic verse, Prophet Muhammad had gathered Fatima, Ali, Hasan and Husayn, and declared “O Allah! These are my Ahl al Bayt, my closest family, and my protectors.”

It is reported that Husayn fell ill and in aid for his recovery his parents vowed to fast for three days for his recovery. After his recovery, Fatima and Ali began fasting as per their vow. Hasan and Husayn fasted also. On the first day when they about to break their fast at dusk, there was a knock on the door - someone asking them for some food. Ali gave his portion of bread, and so did Lady Fatima, followed by Hasan and Husayn. They were left with nothing to eat, and broke their fast with water only. On the second night when they were about to break their

fast, someone knocked on the door asking for food, and response from this household was the same as the previous night. They had to suffice with water for that night too. They had to fast for the third night as per their vow. And on the third night there was another person at the door asking for food, when each one of the household gave their portion to. They ended up fasting for three days with nothing to eat, but breaking their fast with water only. This degree of self-sacrifice is acknowledged in the holy Qur'an. It was on this occasion that the Qur'anic surah Mankind was revealed in honour of Imam Ali, *Sayyidah* Fatima, and Imams Hasan and Husayn, peace be upon them, where this event is cited: ﴿And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive.﴾ 76:8

On the merit and virtue of the Ahl al Bayt, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to say: "The example of my Ahl al-Bayt is like that of Noah's ark, whosoever boards it is saved and whosoever abandons it drowns."

These events, Qur'anic verses and Prophetic hadith point to the merits and qualifications of members of Ahl al Bayt for leadership of mankind.

On specific instructions from the Almighty, Prophet Muhammad formally and publically appointed Imam Ali as his successor to lead the nation after him.

﴿O Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord – for if you do it not, you will not have conveyed His message – and Allah will protect you from the people (who mean mischief.) Surely Allah guides not the disbelieving folk.﴾ 5:67

That took place on the day of Ghadir Khumm, when Prophet Muhammad appointed Imam Ali, in a public ceremony, as his successor, to lead the nation after him. The Prophet delivered a detailed sermon addressing the issues of his succession, and the leadership of the nation after him. The famous quote of the Prophet's Ghadir sermon is "Whomever I am his authority, then Ali is his authority too." Numerous narrations report this momentous event in some detail, along with the script of the sermon. Reports state that there were some 120,000 people

present on the day, and that the Prophet instructed them to pledge allegiance to Imam Ali as his successor and the leader of the Muslim nation after him. It took more than three days and nights for all present to shake hands with and pledge allegiance to Imam Ali.

Also on that day, on instructions from the Almighty, the Prophet exclusively awarded Imam Ali the title *Amir al-Mo'mineen* or The Commander of the Faithful. The Prophet said no one has the right to this title other than Ali.

After the appointment, the Almighty revealed:

﴿It is on this day that I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Grace and Favour upon you, and have chosen Islam for you as your religion.﴾ 5:3

According to this holy verse of the Qur'an, Islam is not complete without the *imamate* of Imam Ali; indeed Islam would not be Islam without the authority, leadership and guidance of Imam Ali.

Prophet Muhammad used to state that the divinely-appointed successors after him are twelve in number, which he reconfirmed on the day of Ghadir. The first of these successors or imams is Imam Ali and the twelfth is Imam Mahdi, peace be upon them all.

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to say: "I leave behind amongst you two mighty entities, Allah's Book and my kin the Ahl al-Bayt – as long as you adhere to them both, you will never go astray, after me, ever."

However, there were those who used to accompany the Prophet who did not like what the Prophet was doing, and therefore embarked on a mission to put a stop to all that, once and for all, so

Eventually, they assassinated the Prophet, many companions went astray, and they took over the helm. They violently prevented Imam Ali from taking office – despite the Prophet's numerous instructions in this respect and the people's allegiance to Imam Ali as the Prophet's successor on the day of Ghadir.

The assassination of the Prophet and the companions' reneging on the allegiance they'd given to the Prophet and Imam Ali are depicted in the holy Qur'an, and the Almighty describes their conduct as "leaving the religion of Islam" by using the phrase "turn on heels." The Almighty states ﴿Muhammad is but a messenger, many messengers have passed away before him. **Will it be that, when he dies, or rather is slain, ye will turn back on your heels? And whoever who turns back on his heels does no harm to Allah, and Allah will reward the thankful.**﴾ 3:144

Imam Ali refused to recognise the authority of the self-imposed rulers, and

After twenty five years of denial, when the people experienced the injustice of the rule of the three self-imposed rulers, they solidly came to Imam Ali and asked him to take office as the leader of the nation.

Imam Ali followed and implemented Prophet Muhammad's teachings and policies in every aspect of governance, morality and conduct – during his rule and at other times.

He governed for four-and-a-half years, during which he implemented Islam's teachings and policies in the same way as Prophet Muhammad had done.

He lived the life of the poorest in the land, sufficing with bread and water throughout the year – the cheaper barely bread that is; he never ate wheat bread, that was too posh for him. Just may be – he used to say – a poor person may exist in a distant part of the land he ruled who had not eaten to his fill. There was no evidence for that; this was just a precaution. He used to eat meat once a year, on the day of the hajj when people sacrificed sheep and gave to the needy. There was a good chance the poor would receive a portion of meat on that day. So he could allow himself to eat meat. Equality, wealth distribution and social justice were absolute paramount for him and amongst his top priorities.

When he took office, he ascended the pulpit and amongst the things he said was "today I arrived with these two pieces of clothing I'm wearing;

on the day I leave office, if I leave with more than these two pieces then I would have betrayed the nation.”

Imam Ali was assassinated while he was praying in the Kufah mosque, through a plot orchestrated by Mo‘awiyah bin Abu Sufian.

On the issue of Imam Ali’s knowledge it is simply beyond the scope of this note to give any indication of the depth and spectrum of his knowledge in the various disciplines. The breadth of these are reflected in his teachings and speeches which have reached us. The most famous collection of his speeches, letters and teachings is the compilation known as Nahj al-Balaghah, but this does not include all his hadith. Other compilations also contain significant amount of his teachings.

Prophet Muhammad spared no effort to make clear to the nation the virtues of Imam Ali – the divinely-appointed successor to the Prophet – and his perfect qualities to succeed the Prophet and lead the nation after him. The Prophet used every occasion to allude to his station as viewed by the Almighty, and reveal some of Imam Ali’s numerous merits, which he did on divine instructions and not out of his wishes and desires, as the holy Qur’an states, ﴿he speaks not out of desire, it is a revelation that is revealed.﴾ 53:3-4

To show the pivotal nature of the *imamate* of Imam Ali to Islam and the Muslims, on one of those occasions, the Prophet said to Imam Ali, peace be upon them:

“O Ali! You are the Commander of the Faithful and the Leader of the Pious.

O Ali! You are the Master of the Vicegerents, the inheritor of the Prophets’ knowledge, the best of the Truthful, and the most superior of the foremost pious individuals.

O Ali! You are the husband of the Chief of the Women of the Worlds and the successor to the best of the Messengers.

O Ali! You are the Master of the Believers and the Authority after me over all the people. Whoever follows you deserves paradise and whoever opposes you deserves to go to the hellfire.”

The Prophet then went on to say:

“I swear by He who sent me with the mission of Prophethood, and chose me over the entire creation, if one worships Allah for a thousand years, Allah would not accept that from him except if it is accompanied with your recognition and authority, and those of the Imams from your descendants. Indeed, even the recognition of your authority would not be accepted except if it is with the denunciation and disownment of your enemies and those of the Imams from your descendants. Gabriel has informed me of this; so let him who will believe it, and let him who will, reject.” [*Bihar al-Anwar*, vol.27, p199; with the last phrase paraphrasing the Qur’anic verse ﴿so let him who will believe it, and let him who will, reject.﴾ 18:29. This particular hadith, with minor a variation, and other similar hadith to this effect are also frequently reported in Sunni references, such as Ibn ‘Asaakir’s *Taareekh Dimishq* vol.42 pp65-66, 328, *Taareekh Baghdad* vol.13 p124, al-Haakim al-Haskaani’s *Shawaahid al-Tanzeel* vol.1 p554, to name a few.]

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Endnote #2

On some of Imam Husayn’s Sufferings

In the intense heat of the desert of Karbala, they were denied access to water, the nearby Euphrates, three days before the day of reckoning, the day of Ashura.

Everyone was suffering from intense thirst in that heat, not only the women and children, but also the warriors.

On the day of Ashura, the battle began, Imam Husayn’s loyal supporters were being killed one by one.

With the heat intensifying as midday approached, more and more of the friends and supporters were killed before his eyes.

After that all brothers, sons, nephews, cousins and other relative were killed one by one, as they excruciatingly suffered the thirst.

When every male was killed, Imam Husayn's sister Zaynab brought his infant son, little Ali, six months old, and told him he is dying of thirst! See if you can get them to give him some water. Imam Husayn made that request – proposing that they take the infant to give him some water. As he waited for a reply from the other side, little Ali's throat was rent asunder with an arrow fired by them.

Then came the turn of Imam Husayn.

As if all the pain of seeing loved ones killed before his eyes were not enough, and the unimaginable thirst he had to wrestle with, Imam Husayn was the subject of a barrage of the strikes of swords, spears, arrows and even rained by stones. When they drew near to him, they subjected him to repeated strikes by swords and daggers.

Towards the end, one of them came forward to Imam Husayn, sat on his body, drew his dagger to ... Imam Husayn who was breathing his last breath, and he would have died if he left alone given the colossal injuries he had sustained, tried to save that the awful fate he was heading to, and told him, leave me alone and I will intercede for your forgiveness. I guarantee you that. But nevertheless he went ahead and beheaded Imam Husayn, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad.

But that was not enough for them.

After the decapitation, they robbed him of his personal belongings. They could not remove the ring he was wearing, so they cut off his finger to remove the ring.

But all that wasn't enough. They had to do one more thing; they had the army trampling on the headless body of Imam Husayn with their horses, such that his body was ripped to pieces.

They then set upon the campsite where the tents were erected and the women and children were housed. They torched all the tents and gave chase to the fleeing women and children.

They all knew he was their Prophet's beloved grandson, yet they did to him what they never did to any of their enemies – not even during the

savagery of the pre-Islamic era, when they used to bury alive their own female infant because girls were deemed to bring shame to them.

Imam Husayn's wives, sisters, daughters and other women were taken captives by the victorious army, and paraded across towns and cities from Karbala to Kufah and all the way to Damascus.

When some of the close confidantes asked Imam Baqir, and on a separate occasion asked Imam Sadiq, to inform them of afflictions and sufferings Imam Husayn faced on the day of Ashura, Imam Baqir responded by saying, "If we were to relate to you what happened, you would have not be able to bear the pain and anguish." Imam Sadiq said, "Were it not for our concerns for our Shia, who would die if they were to learn of them, we would have related to you about some of the things that happened to Imam Husayn."

* * *

Endnote #3

On the attempts to eradicate Imam Husayn's shrine

Imam Husayn's enemies do not suffice to opposing him during his lifetime, or to opposing his mourning rites, but they manifest their animosity even towards his grave and mausoleum too. In the course of history, on numerous occasions the gravesite of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, has been desecrated or demolished by the tyrants of the time with the aim of eradicating any trace of the gravesite, and ultimately his mention and memory.

For over two centuries now the House of Saud has the absolute dishonour and immense shame of being the vile standard bearer of open enmity and hostility to the Ahl al Bayt – or the Prophet's family peace be upon them – about whom the Almighty makes a Qur'anic declaration to show their exceptional and unique status ﴿Verily Allah only wishes to keep away the uncleanness from you, O Ahl al Bayt and purify you a thorough purifying﴾ 33:33

The most recent of the attacks on the mausoleum of Imam Husayn were perpetrated by the Wahhabi cult headed by the infamous highwayman of

the time, and of the region, Saud bin Abd-al-Aziz Āl Saud, the founder of House of Saud; the current rulers of Arabia Peninsula which they named after themselves; Saudi Arabia. Saud with his gang of vicious thugs went on to attack the holy Karbala, Iraq, and ransack the shrine of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, looted the ornaments of the shrine and destroyed all they could. It is reported that they used the shrine as the stable for their horses, which was soiled and defaced, adding insult to injury – to the Prophet’s family. The Saud-led Wahhabi militia did not stop at that, but they went on to kill scores of the pilgrims of the shrine and then went on a rampage in the holy Karbala, where the shrine is situated. They directed their blood-thirsty assault against the civilians of Karbala. Some reports put the figure of those killed in that foray around 5000, while other reports put the figure close to 20,000. The overwhelming victims of the civilians of the holy Karbala were the elderly, women and children, as the majority of the adult male had gone on a pilgrimage to the holy city of Najaf, Iraq, on the occasion of ‘Eid al-Ghadir. This attack by the Saudis on the holy Karbala was in 1216AH/1801AD. After the death and destruction, Saud and his thugs left the holy Karbala taking with them whatever they had looted. The Saudi-sponsored Wahhabi militia embarked on a second major attack on the holy Karbala in 1220AH/1805AD. This time the people of the holy Karbala were somewhat prepared and thus the number of those killed this time were in the hundreds rather than the thousands of the previous time! But this second attack on Karbala is further evidence of the animosity of the Saudis towards the Ahl al Bayt and it also reveals their evil aggressive nature against others who had nothing to do with them.

Furthermore, the shrines and mausoleums of other members of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, suffered similar fates to those of Imam Husayn at the hands of the House of Saud. Closer at hand, at the holy city of Medina, the House of Saud and their Wahhabi mercenaries attacked and indeed razed to the ground the shrines of the four *ma‘soom* Imams or the Prophet’s divinely-appointed successors; namely Imam Hasan, the elder brother of Imam Husayn, Imam Zayn al-‘Ābideen, Imam Bāqir, and Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon them. This was the second Saudi-Wahhabi assault on the shrines in the holy city of Medina, which

took place on 8th Shawāl 1344AH (21st April 1926AD). These shrines were located at the city's Baqie' cemetery, close to the mausoleum and mosque of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family. The Saudi-funded Wahhabi militia also set about to demolish the shrine of Prophet Muhammad if it were not for the threat of attack from the then Egyptian government given the public outcry by the Egyptian people against the actions of the house of Saud. After more than ninety years of being in a state of ruin, the House of Saud continue to ensure that the shrines of the Baqie' remain destroyed to date, and have stubbornly prevented all attempts to rebuild those holy shrines.

However, the Saudi aggression continues to go on unabated.

Not being satisfied with all those destructions, the enemies of Ahl al-Bayt added another masterpiece to their barbaric history of death and destruction; this time targeting the shrines of Imam Ali al-Hādī and Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (the tenth and eleventh of the twelve divinely-appointed successors of Prophet Muhammad) in the holy city of Samara, Iraq. On the morning of Wednesday 22nd February 2006AD (23rd Muharram 1427AH) the enemies of Ahl al-Bayt detonated a set of powerful explosives in the said shrines and caused near total destruction of the shrines. The Wahhabi leaders in Saudi Arabia openly rejoiced this “achievement” and congratulated themselves and the perpetrators “for this heroic act” calling them “our brave fighters”.

If any more evidence was needed to reveal the murderous nature of the House of Saud and their utter enmity towards the followers of Ahl al-Bayt peace be upon them, a senior member of House of Saud makes their savagery very clear indeed. In a speech on 7th July 2014 at RUSI, former Director of MI6, Sir Richard Dearlove recalls what “Prince” Bandar bin Sultan the then head of the Saudi Intelligence Service told him in a working meeting attended by the then British prime minister. Bandar bin Sultan said to Sir Richard Dearlove: **“The time is not far off, Richard, in the Middle East when it would be literally “God help the Shi’a” ...** Sir Richard added: “And that was a chilling comment which I remember very well indeed.” This threat by Bandar was “pre nine-eleven”, recalls Sir Richard, referring to the Saudi-

Wahhabi heinous terrorist attack on the twin towers in New York. The Wahhabis have committed crimes against humanity with impunity and unparalleled savagery, which Sir Richard referred to that threat against the Shi'a as "**bloodcurdling**."

<https://www.rusi.org/events/past/ref:E539EC3CF6F5A4/#.U7rENDzGvIJ>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeFFtiEtriA&list=UUkPv5___jXTEGQ6VE0a1gdA

Bandar bin Sultan Al Saud openly boasts about planning to commit genocide against the Shi'a – and that is to the face of the British prime minister and other senior figures of the British government. They started their massive bloodthirsty campaign against the citizens of Karbala in 1801, and more than two centuries later the House of Saud continues their genocidal campaign against the Shia and crimes against humanity.

Sir Richard's concluding remarks were, "How much Saudi and Qatari money is being channelled towards ISIS? For ISIS to be able to surge into the Sunni areas of Iraq in the way that it's done recently [the capture of Mosul, northern Iraq] has to be the consequence of substantial and sustained funding; such things simply do not happen spontaneously." **

Wahhabi-linked media reported that the former congregational-prayer leader at Mecca's Grand Mosque, and one of the leading figures of the Wahhabi cult, Sheikh Adel al-Kalbani, said: ISIS executions of western hostages were "not outside Salafist [aka Wahhabi] framework". He made these remarks in his interview with the Dubai-based channel MBC, broadcast on 22 January 2016.

The Wahhabi cleric confirmed "We follow the same thought as ISIS." "They draw their ideas from what is written in our own books, from our own principles." "We do not criticise the thought on which it (ISIS) is based."

Kalbani was refused a visa to visit the UK in 2013. Although no official reason was given for the refusal, it was reported at the time that it may

have been linked to televised comments he made calling Shia Muslims apostates.

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/top-saudi-cleric-says-and-saudi-arabia-follow-same-thought-626782255>

When they did not have the oil, they wrought havoc death and destruction to the local and region on horseback using the sword.

Now that they have the petrodollars, their outreach has become global, and using technology to modern weaponry to spread their evil.

It was the followers of this evil school of thought, the Wahhabi religion – funded by the House of Saud establishment – who carried out the murderous terrorist attack on the twin towers in New York on September 11th 2001.

Saudi-funded Wahhabi followers embarked on other atrocities throughout the globe.

After the fall of the Baathist regime of Saddam, the dictator of Iraq, in April 2003, a campaign of an almost daily car bombing against Shi'a population in Iraq was started by the Baathist-Wahhabi terrorists, which continue to be are funded primarily by Saudi money.

Furthermore, in 2014, the Saudis embarked on funding their new heinous next generation Sunni-extremist death cult *daesh* (ISIS) to bring about fear, death and destruction throughout the region, and beyond.

Not being satisfied with the colossal death carnage and misery they have caused in Iraq and Syria, the Saudis, March 2015, turned their evil to the Yemen to the same effect; yet more death destruction and misery.

Evil does not know borders, and it cannot stay put in one place; it wreaks havoc wherever it reaches.

A United Nations panel investigating the Saudi-led bombing campaign in Yemen has uncovered “widespread and systematic” attacks on civilian targets in violation of international humanitarian law.

The final 51-page report by a panel of experts on Yemen, January 2016, has been sent to the UN Security Council.

In one of the key findings, the report says: “The panel documented that the coalition had conducted airstrikes targeting civilians and civilian objects, in violation of international humanitarian law, including camps for internally displaced persons and refugees; civilian gatherings, including weddings; civilian vehicles, including buses; civilian residential areas; medical facilities; schools; mosques; markets, factories and food storage warehouses; and other essential civilian infrastructure, such as the airport in Sana’a, the port in Hudaydah and domestic transit routes.”

The report adds: “The panel documented 119 coalition sorties relating to violations of international humanitarian law. Many attacks involved multiple airstrikes on multiple civilian objects. Of the 119 sorties, the panel identified 146 targeted objects. The panel also documented three alleged cases of civilians fleeing residential bombings and being chased and shot at by helicopters.”

It says: “The coalition’s targeting of civilians through airstrikes, either by bombing residential neighbourhoods or by treating the entire cities of Sa’dah and Maran as military targets, is a grave violation of the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. In certain cases, the panel found such violations to have been conducted in a widespread and systematic manner.”

The report adds: “Alongside ground-led obstructions to humanitarian distribution, the panel documented 10 coalition airstrikes on transportation routes (both sea and air routes), four road supply routes and five storage facilities for holding food aid (including two vehicles carrying aid and three warehouses and facilities storing food), along with airstrikes on an Oxfam warehouse storing equipment for a water project funded by the European Union in Sana’a. The panel also documented three coalition attacks on local food and agricultural production sites.”

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/27/un-report-into-saudi-led-strikes-in-yemen-raises-questions-over-uk-role>

This latest report shows that the House of Saud has not changed one iota in its evil and murderous nature. The house of Saud goes to great lengths and costs to wreak havoc, death and destruction and systematically commit widespread murder of the civilians in Yemen – just as what they slaughtered thousands of civilians in Karbala. In the sleepy town of Karbala there were absolutely no combatants of any sort, nor were there any military presence of any kind whatsoever – in fact most if not all able-bodied men had gone on the pilgrimage to Najaf on the occasion of the day of Ghadir. Yet the Saudis invaded this small town, more than a thousand miles north of the Saud's base, and mercilessly slaughtered old men, women and children and committed despicable crimes against humanity – just like their offspring *daesh* embarks on its murderous campaign. The house of Saud has not changed one bit over the course of two centuries. They're the same evil today as they used to be yesterday.

If one says; “Today the House of Saud is the embodiment of evil”, it probably won't be an exaggeration.

* * *

Endnote #4

Prophet Muhammad never pre-empted attack against any enemy

Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him and his holy family, never started a war or initiated military combat except in self-defence after the other party took the initiative for military strike.

In the event of combat, when the enemy embarked on the military assault, Prophet Muhammad used to give a number of directives to the Muslim soldiers – all aimed at minimising loss and destruction.

The underlying principle being “yours is your religion and mine is mine”.

Before the start of combat the army in chief, mostly the Commander of the Faithful, invited the other party to Islam. By accepting Islam they would have all the rights, benefits and protection that a Muslim enjoys.

On objection, they were given the option to come under the protection of the Islamic state, not having to join the Muslim army to fight for their lives and properties against possible aggressors. As opposed to the religious dues the Muslims pay (i.e. khums and zakah), the non-Muslims would pay the tax called *jizyah*.

On objection to that, the Muslim army would wait for the other party to wage the first attack before starting their first move, complying with the battle code of conduct:

- If the enemy changes his mind at the outset or in the middle of the battle, and decided to fight no more – then let it be,
- Do not attack non-combatants,
- Do not kill old men, women, or children,
- Do not attack women even if they curse you or swear at you,
- Do not kill women even if they were nursing enemy combatants,
- Do not handcuff or tie up prisoners,
- Do not adopt treacherous means,
- Do not mutilate,
- Do not plunder,
- Do not kill their livestock,
- Do not burn crops,
- Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees,
- Do not set fire to date palms or flood them,
- Do not destroy property, etc.

On the other hand, in Deuteronomy 13:15-16 it is instructed:

“15 Thou shall surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.

16 And thou shall gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shall burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the LORD thy God: and it shall be a heap for ever; it shall not be built again.”

[Reproduced from “**War peace and non-violence – an Islamic perspective**” by Imam Sayyid Muhammad Shirazi]

* * *

Endnote #5

On the Freedoms in Islam

For example see the work (in Arabic) “*The Freedoms in Islam*” by the late grand ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Shirazi, in which the author lists more than one hundred freedoms in Islam which either do not exist in the West or it does but to a very limited extent.

Freedom in the Islamic system is like the heart to the body, and from its dawn, Islam’s first priorities were to eradicate despotism, subjugation, and oppression and this may not be achieved except through freedom.

The freedoms in Islam are considered to be the most far-reaching freedoms that religions or statutory laws have presented or produced. Islam is a religion of freedom, and in every issue the fundamental principle is freedom with the exception of the prohibited ones which are very few.

The different categories of freedom in Islam are beyond count or enumeration; some of which are: the freedom of trade and business, farming and agriculture, manufacturing, acquisition of permissible resources, freedom of building and development, freedom of travel and residence, freedom of expression, writing and publication, freedom of careers, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, and religious freedoms and suchlike. The Muslim enjoyed all of these freedoms in the reign of the Islamic government. By default everything is permissible unless it is specifically prescribed to be forbidden by Sharia law. It should be mentioned that the freedoms in these activities come without any restrictions, leave, or permission.

The government has no right to suppress freedoms; and if the government banned something it is not obligatory to obey or follow it; except if the governor is a just Muslim ruler who has been authorized and approved by the fully qualified jurists or religious authorities (*maraaje'*) – in which case it is permissible if the ban is only temporary, it is in an emergency and under exceptional circumstances, and in the interest of Islam, or if in the event of practicing a particular freedom it would result in harm to the public. For example, building and running a factory for hazardous chemicals in a residential area.

If the government declared a restriction on one of the freedoms, for example a travel ban, and the government is qualified to be obeyed – i.e. it implements the teachings of Islam in all aspects of life – then it is mandatory for one to abide by that ban. For example, if the *just* Islamic government declared a ban for a reason which was more important than the interest of the right and notion enshrined in the hadith “authority of the people over their affairs”. However, if the government is one that is not “mandatory-to-follow”, i.e. it does not fully adhere to the teachings of Islam, it is not mandatory for one to obey the government, but rather it is permissible to pursue and practice one’s Islamic freedom.

[Reproduced from “***Islamic Law, a handbook of rulings on Islamic duties and practices***” by grand ayatollah Sayyid Sadiq Husayni Shirazi]

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Endnote #6

On Saladin’s war crimes and crime against humanity

Saladin committed some of the most heinous atrocities against civilians primarily in Egypt when he took of the country through treachery. Just like his idols did some five centuries earlier, he embarked on killing, crucifixion and burning the civilians but the scale in which Saladin committed those crimes were on a massive compared to those of his idols.

For example, in Egypt, in the city of Qift, some three thousand were crucified and hung on the trees around the city.

In another incident, people were locked up in their houses, and the houses set ablaze.

Furthermore, Saladin is infamous for burning Egypt's libraries when, according to some accounts, some two million manuscripts were burnt.

As the renowned historian Hasan al-Amin puts it, he is an opportunist and power grabber, who resorts to anything to get what he wants, with all baseness and villainy, in order to satisfy his ego even if by means of treachery and betrayal.

In brief, Saladin is the role model for terror network *daesh* (ISIS) today to whom they look up to commit their barbarous atrocities and crimes against humanity.

The most outstanding attribute is his bloodthirsty nature and his hate for anyone who differed from him or opposed him. This was particularly so for the Shia.

As part of the Egyptian government drive to eliminate references to and glorification of extremism and terrorism, Saladin's name has been removed from school textbooks.

For details see the following references – all of which are in Arabic:

Hasan al-Amin, “*Saladin: the Abbasid, Fatimid, and the Crusaders*”

Hasan al-Amin is a renowned historian who specialises on Saladin and he's done a number of works the most famous of which is the title given above.

For further works see also:

On the biography of Saladin: <http://www.aqaed.com/faq/201/>

Research by Mohammed el Baradei on Saladin: [Dr Mohammed el Baradei is an Egyptian law scholar and diplomat who was the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) 1997-2009. He is winner of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.]
<https://ar-ar.facebook.com/NEWA.ELBARADEI/posts/547653385315449>

Saladin the War Criminal:

<http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=239733>

The mention of Saladin – an extremist terrorist is expunged from school text books in Egypt: <http://www.dotmsr.com>

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APPENDIX

The Fourteen Infallible (*ma‘soom*) Personages

Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Tomb location
The Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah (s)	17 Rabee‘ I 53BH/570CE	28 Şafar 11H/632CE	Medina, Arabia
Fatima al-Zahrā’ <i>bint</i> Muhammad ibn Abdullah (a.s.)	20 Jamādi II 8BH/615CE	3 Jamādi II 11H/633CE	Medina, Arabia
1. Imam Ali ibn Abu Tālib, Amir al-Mo’mineen (a.s.)	13 Rajab 23BH/600CE	21 Ramaḍān 40H/663CE	Najaf, Iraq
2. Imam Ḥasan ibn Ali, al-Mujtabā (a.s.)	15 Ramaḍān 3H/624CE	7 Şafar 49H/669CE	Medina, Arabia
3. Imam Ḥusayn ibn Ali, Sayyid al-Shuhadā’ (a.s.)	3 Sha‘bān 3H/624CE	10Muḥarram 61H/685CE	Karbala, Iraq
4. Imam Ali ibn Ḥusayn, Zayn al-‘Ābideen, al-Sajjād (a.s.)	15 Jamādi I 36H/656CE	25Muharram 95H/713CE	Medina, Arabia
5. Imam Muhammad ibn Ali, al-Bāqir (a.s.)	1 Rajab 57H/676CE	7Dhil-Ḥajjah 124H/742CE	Medina, Arabia
6. Imam Ja‘far ibn Muhammad, al-Şādiq (a.s.)	17 Rabee‘ I 83H/702CE	25 Shawwāl 148H/765CE	Medina, Arabia
7. Imam Musā ibn Ja‘far, al-Kāḍim (a.s.)	14Dhil-Ḥajja 128H/745CE	25 Rajab 183H/800CE	Kāḍimiyyah, Iraq
8. Imam Ali ibn Musā, al-Riḍā’ (a.s.)	11dhil-qa‘da 148H/766CE	30 Şafar 203H/818CE	Khorāsān, Iran
9. Imam Muhammad ibn Ali, al-Jawād (a.s.)	10 Rajab 195H/811CE	30dhil-qa‘da 220H/836CE	Kāḍimiyyah, Iraq
10. Imam Ali ibn Muhammad, al-Hādi (a.s.)	2 Rajab 202H/818CE	3 Rajab 254H/868CE	Sāmarrā’, Iraq
11. Imam Ḥasan ibn Ali, al-Askari (a.s.)	10 Rabee‘ II 232H/846CE	8 Rabee‘ I 260H/873CE	Sāmarrā’, Iraq
12. Imam Muhammad ibn Ḥasan, al-Mahdi (a.s.)	15 Sha‘bān 255H/870CE	Alive and in occultation	-

The twelve Imams, and Fatima al-Zahra', peace be upon her – the chief of the women of the worlds (*Sayyidato-Nisā' al-Ālamin*) – the daughter of the Prophet, are all like the grand Prophet Muhammad as regards to knowledge and wisdom, virtue and morals, purity and inerrancy, and all other virtues and perfections; all except the station of prophethood which is particular to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family. “They are all one light”¹ and “whoever adheres to them will be saved and whoever lags behind them will drown and perish”.² Sayyidah Fatima al-Zahra' is the wife of the Imam, mother of the purified imams, but she is not an Imam.

On instructions from the Almighty, the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, appointed twelve *imams* (or leaders) to succeed him, and said: “**The successors (*khulafā'*) after me will be twelve.**”³ The hadith to this effect are reported frequently and found in abundance in various sources and references.

The Prophet named them one by one, of whom three were alive at the time; namely Imam Ali, Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn, peace be upon them all.

¹ Biḥār al-Anwār, vol.26 p16.

² This is an allusion to the tradition related that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: ‘The similitude of the people of my house is the example of Noah’s Ark; whoever boards it will be saved and whoever abandons it will drown.’

³ See for example:

Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim: vol.3, p.1452, 1453

al-mustadrak ‘alaṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn of al-Ḥākim: vol.3, pp.715-716

sunan of Abu Dawood, vol.4, p.106

musnad of Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, vol.5, pp86-93, 100, 101, 106, 107

Faṭḥ al-bāri of al-‘Asqalāni, vol.13, p.211, 213

Majma‘ al-zawā'id of al-Haythami, vol.5, p190

Mu‘jam al-awsaṭ of al-Ṭabarāni, vol.1, p263, and vol.6, p268

Mu‘jam al-kabir of al-Ṭabarāni, v2, pp195-199, 206, 208, 214, 232, 253, 255

Commentary of al-Nawawi, on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim vol. 12, p210

tafsir of Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, p33, and vol.3, p303

[To show the critical nature of *imamate* to the Muslims] Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to say:

“Whoever dies without knowing the Imam (leader) of his time has died the death of the age of ignorance.”¹

There are numerous hadith that report that these twelve successors and imams were named by the messenger of Allah.²

The last of the twelve successors of these pure personages is the Imam who is al-Muntaḍar (the Awaited) al-Mahdi (the Guided) who is alive in this world, but hidden from sight, and who will reappear when Allah Almighty grants him permission; so that he can fill the earth with justice and equity after it having been filled with wrongdoing and oppression. At that time the servants of Allah will unite under his banner in a single Islamic government which will flourish by the will of Allah.

There are widespread and abundant traditions and narrations about Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, reported from the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.³

One of the final but concise teachings of the Prophetic heritage to humanity was particularly emphasised upon by the prophet. This was to ensure that people are left in no doubt as to which path to follow and which guidance to adopt. By adhering to this hadith alone would ensure that people are on the right course, and they are guaranteed they are following the teachings of Allah’s final messenger to mankind.

In the last days of his blessed life in this world, Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to say:

¹ See for example: the *musnad* of Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal vol.4, p.96

² See for example:

Yanābi‘ al-mawaddah of al-Qanduzi al-Ḥanafī, p. 529;

Farā'id al-simṭayn, vol.2, p.132, trad.431;

Ghāyat al-marām p.743, trad.57

³ See the book *al-mahdi fi al-sunnah* by Ayatollah Ṣādiq al-Shirazi

“I am leaving behind with you the two weighty entities (*thaqalayn*) – the book of Allah and my family; the people of my house (*Ahl al-Bayt*) – as long as you adhere to these two you will never go astray after me ever.”¹

¹ See for example:

Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim: vol.2, p.362 (‘Isā al-Ḥalabī’s edition); and vol.15 p.179-180 of the Egyptian edition with al-Nawawī’s exposition

Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Tirmidhi, vol.5, p328, hadith 3874 and 3876, (dār al-fikr, Beirut; vol.13, pp199-200 al-Ṣāwī library, Egypt; and vol.2 p308, boulāq, Egypt)

musnad of Ahmad, vol.3, pp17, 26, 59; and vol.4, p366, 371; and vol.5 p181 (al-Maymaniyyah edition, Egypt)

yanābee‘ al-mawaddah of al-Quonduzi al-Ḥanafī: pp 29-31, 36, 38, 41, 183, 191, 296, 370 (Istanbul edition)

tafsīr of ibn Kathīr: vol.4, p113 (dār ihyā’ al-kotob edition, Egypt)

jāmi‘ al-uṣul of ibn al-Atheer, vol.1, p187, hadith 65, 66 (Egypt)

al-mu‘jam al-kabir of al-Ṭabarānī, p137

al-durr al-manthur of al-Siyuṭī: vol.2, p60, and vol.6, pp 7, 306. Dhakhār al-‘Uqbā, p16

al-ṣawā‘iq al-muḥriqah, pp147, 226 (Muhammadiyah edition), p 89 (al-Maymaniyyah edition, Egypt)

al-mu‘jam al-ṣaghir of al-Ṭabarānī, vol.1, p135

osud alghābah fi ma‘rifāt al-ṣaḥābah of Ibn al-Atheer al-Shāfi‘i: vol.2, p12.

muntakhab tārikh ibn ‘asākir, vol.5, p436 (Damascus edition)

majma‘ al-zawā‘id of al-Haythamī, vol. 9, pp 162-163

al-jāmi‘ al-ṣaghir of al-Siyuṭī, vol.1, p353 (Egypt edition)

al-manāqib of al-Khawārizmī al-Ḥanafī: p223

farā‘id al-simṭayn, al-Ḥamwīnī al-Shāfi‘i: vol.2, p143, section33; and p272, hadith 538

al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā of ibn Sa‘ad, vol. 2, p 194 (dār ṣādir, Beirut)

tārikh dimishq of ibn ‘Asākir, vol.2, p36, hadith 534, 545

ansāb al-ashrāf of al-Balādhiri, vol.2, p110

kanz al-ommāl, vol.1, p158, hadith 899, 943-947, 950-953, 958, 1651, 1658, 1668, etc.

Months of the Islamic Calendar

The Islamic calendar is based on the occasion Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, emigrated from Mecca to Medina. The Prophetic emigration took place on the 3rd of Rabee‘ I – thirteen years after the start of the holy prophetic mission.

It is reported that after his arrival in Medina, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, ordered that the date system [to be based on the hegira.]¹

Furthermore, al-Ṭabari also reports that when the second ruler Omar wanted to order the date system, he asked, “From which day should we start the calendar?” Imam Ali, peace be upon him, who was the most knowledgeable about the Prophetic teachings said to him, “[we should start the calendar] From the day Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, emigrated, and left the land of polytheism.”²

Of course, according to the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, it was none other than Archangel Gabriel – on instruction from the Almighty – who cited the beginning of the Islamic hegira calendar as the day the Prophet emigrated from Mecca to Medina. This is given in a hadith from Imam Sadiq, peace be upon him.³

In this way, as can be seen from the above, the first month of Islamic calendar should be Rabee‘ I.

However, the rulers who had strayed from Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, acted against the teachings of the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and, in this case, set the first month of the Islamic calendar as Muḥarram – two months earlier than the emigration month of Rabee‘ I.

And the die was cast.

¹ Tāreekh al-Ṭabari, vol.2 p110

² Tāreekh al-Ṭabari, vol.2 p112

³ Biḥār al-Anwār, vol.55 pp350-351

Therefore the order of the months according to this calendar is as follows:

1. Muḥarram
2. Şafar
3. Rabee‘ I
4. Rabee‘ II
5. Jumādi I
6. Jumādi II
7. Rajab
8. Sha‘bān
9. Ramaḍān
10. Shawwāl
11. Dhil-Qa‘dah
12. Dhil-Ḥajjah

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Transliteration

In the Arabic language, there are a number of letters that do not have a corresponding equivalent in the English language. As a result the sound or pronunciation of those letters would be unfamiliar to the English reader who has not come across them before. Some of them may easily be pronounced by the English reader, whereas s/he would find others difficult to pronounce, unless he has already been exposed to the sounds of the Arabic alphabet.

The Arabic consonant characters are given below along with their equivalent English characters or sounds.

b = ب	z = ز	f = ف
t = ت	s = س	q = ق
th = ث	sh = ش	k = ك
j = ج	ṣ = ص	l = ل
ḥ = ح	ḍ = ض	m = م
kh = خ	ṭ = ط	n = ن
d = د	ẓ = ظ	h = ه
dh = ذ	‘ = ع	w = و
r = ر	gh = غ	y = ي

This presentation is an effort to describe the sounds of these letters, and endeavour to explain how their sounds are generated, so that the reader may obtain some idea about these particular characters, when they appear in some Arabic terms used in this work.

To distinguish these letters, either a combination of two letters is used or, in the case of the majority of the difficult letters, a normal Latin letter is used in association with a diacritic – dot or a line above or below the letter as shown in the table above. Furthermore there are also a couple of letters in the Arabic alphabet which are represented using the symbols: ’ and °.

Beginning with the easy ones, there is the letter that is symbolized as:

th, which sounds like the ‘th’ in the word ‘three’. The other letter is:

dh, which sounds like the ‘th’ in the word ‘there’.

As for the more difficult ones, they are as follows:

Gh or **gh**, the nearest sound for this is that of the French ‘r’.

H or **h**

The sound of this letter resembles the sound of ‘strong, breathy’ H. The sound for **h** is generated from the proximity of the throat that the normal **h** is, but from an area slightly further up the throat, with more tension in the local throat muscle, with the back end of the tongue closing in against the roof of the throat immediately before the uvula.

Kh or **kh**

The sound for this is perhaps somewhere between that of ‘h’ and ‘k’, as far as the location of mouth where it is generated is concerned. It is generated at the back of the mouth, by pressing the back end of the tongue against the soft palate whilst forcing the air through in the outward direction, causing the uvula to vibrate.

The example of the sound of ‘kh’ found in English or that the English reader may be familiar with is *Loch*, the Scottish for lake, where the ‘ch’ in loch is pronounced as the designated ‘kh’ in Arabic.

Ş or **ş**

The sound of this letter resembles the sound of ‘strong’ S. It is generated by involving the main trunk of the tongue, by slightly curving the centre of the front half of the tongue in the downward direction. In aid of pronouncing the sound of the ‘strong’ S, it would be helpful if you consider saying the normal letter ‘S’, when the front upper and lower teeth are brought closer together reducing the airflow, thus producing the sound of the letter ‘S’. The opposite process is used to generate the sound of the ‘strong’ S, i.e. the sound is produced when slightly moving apart the upper and lower teeth, thus pronouncing the ‘strong’ S.

D or ḍ

The sound of this letter is somewhere near the sound of the normal D. Whereas the sound of a normal D is generated by placing the front end of the tongue at the front end of the hard palate or the roof of the mouth adjoining the top teeth, the sound of ḍ is generated by touching, to the same location, more of the front trunk of the tongue while caving in the middle part of the tongue.

D or ḍ

The best description of this sound is that it could be the strong version of the sound of ‘dh’ as in the word ‘*there*’. Whereas ‘dh’ is generated by placing the tip of the tongue between the upper and lower front teeth, whilst pressing against the upper front teeth, the sound for ḍ is generated by pressing more of the front end of the tongue between the upper and lower front teeth, whilst pressing against the upper front teeth, and the centre of the tongue is curved downwards.

T or ṭ

The sound of this letter resembles a ‘strong’ T. Whereas a normal T is generated by involving the front end of the tongue; the ‘strong’ T is generated by pressing the front end of the trunk of the tongue against the front end of the hard palate or the roof of the mouth. Also when the normal T is pronounced, the lower jaw does not move, whereas in the case of pronouncing the strong T, or ṭ, the lower jaw moves outwards.

Q or q

The sound for this letter is a short and sharp version of the letter ‘gh’ or the French R. Whereas in the process of generating the sound of ‘gh’ the back end of the tongue is pressed slightly against the uvula, allowing some air to flow, in the case of the sound of the Arabic alphabet represented by Q, the same process takes place with the difference that the passage is completely blocked, and the sound is actually generated by the sudden release of the passage.

’ or the *hamzah*; which is the character representing the glottal stop.

This symbol is used to characterize an Arabic alphabet that represents the sound of a strong ‘throaty’ A. Just as the sound for A is generated at the back of the throat, in the same proximity, the sound for ^ع or ‘ is also generated with the difference that the entire throat back is engaged in the process by a stroke of contraction in the muscle there. In this process more of the throat is blocked, which also involves the back end of the tongue, than when pronouncing the normal A. Just in the case of the normal A, the sound is actually generated at the time of the release of the contraction of the muscles involved.

‘Long’ a

There are also cases when there is a diacritic or a small horizontal line above the letter, like ā: this is to represent ‘long’ a, an alternative to writing aa. The nearest example for the long a, or ā, in English words is case of “far” as opposed to the word “fat”. In the case of “far”, the ‘a’ is elongated in the pronunciation, whereas in the case of “fat”, the ‘a’ is short.

‘Double’ consonant letters

In the Arabic language, there are many instances where a letter in a word has double pronunciations with a very slight pause between the two. The first pronunciation is always the sound of the letter itself, and the second is the sound of the letter together with that of the following letter. For correct pronunciation of the word, it is important that there is a very slight pause between the sounds of the double letters. Some examples are as follows:

Allāh, where the presence of ‘ll’ indicates the requirement of the double pronunciation of the letter ‘l’. It may help if the word is considered as Al-lāh, with the pause due to the hyphen being very slight. Another example is Muhammad.

N.B. Diacritics and other transliteration characters are avoided where it is assumed that the reader is familiar with the pronunciation of those words, and that such characters are only used for less common and unfamiliar words only. So for such words as Allah, Qur’an, Muhammad, and ayah no diacritics are used.

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The Author

A brief biography of the eminent Islamic authority Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Şādiq Shirazi:

He was born on the 20th Dhil-Ḥajjah 1360 H, *circa* January 1942 CE, in the holy city of Karbala, Iraq. He was raised and cultured in a family that was renowned for its history of learning, striving, sacrifice, and morals.

He received his specialist education of Islamic sciences at the hands of eminent scholars of the ḥawzah until he acquired a distinguished degree of ijtihād.

Through his relentless endeavours he developed in himself the quality of continually seeking knowledge along with unremitting observance of piety; tirelessly promoting the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, disseminating their culture, and defending their sacred laws and Sharia.

He has written numerous works in various fields and on different levels, ranging from politics, economics, history and ethics to specialist works for ḥawzah studies on such topics as Fiqh and Oṣool (jurisprudence) that total more than eighty.

Sayyid Şādiq has been teaching at the ḥawzah for more than 40 years.

He is distinguished for being accessible to the people; directly dealing and meeting with various sectors of members of society, listening to diverse views from different spectrum of the community.

Equally, he is distinguished for his humility; respecting the young and old, and also for his tolerance in responding to insult or evil with kindness and courteousness.

He is renowned for his independence and for his policy of boycotting despotic governments.

He over observes hundreds of organisations and institutions throughout the globe; for example those that address social issues such as marriage services and social reforms, those that address humanitarian matters such as clinics, orphanages, financial organisations giving interest-free loans (*qarḍ al-ḥasanah*), intellectual institutions such as centres for research and studies, seminaries, *ḥawzahs*, libraries, as well as religious centres such as mosques and *ḥusayniyyahs*.

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