

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Sadiq Shirazi

Politics

The very heart of Islam

Translated by

Salim Rossier



In association with

Rasul Akram Foundation

www.shirazi.ir

and

Teachings of Islam

www.ImamShirazi.com

English edition, 2015

ISBN 1-903323-42-8

© *fountain books*

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of *fountain books*.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Content

Foreword	v
Author's introduction	1
Chapter One Islam and Politics	5
Passages from the Sharia	7
Two types of politics	13
Firstly from Islamic Politics	14
Secondly from Modern Politics	28
Chapter Two Prophet Muhammad's Wise Policies	31
Policy of Steadfastness and Forbearance	32
Policy of Courage	34
Policy of Great Forgiveness	36
Hospitality towards delegations	43
A Winning Policy	54
Policy of Keeping Promises	55
Policy of Universal Mercy	58
Giving Gifts to Friends and Foes alike	63
Mingling with the community to teach them	72
Throughout His History	80
Conclusion	82
Chapter Three Imam Ali's Enlightened Policies	85
The policy of his personal life	87
His policy in dealing with relatives	103
His policy with his civil servants	109
Freedom under Imam Ali's government	115
Imam Ali's Equality Policy	142
Imam Ali's Forgiveness	148
Always among the people	156

Precise implementation of Islam	161
No to nationalism.....	163
Some other policies of Imam Ali.....	165
Chapter Four On Some Key Islamic Policies	171
Islamic Policy on Freedom.....	171
Islamic Policy on Economics Affairs.....	178
Islamic Policy on Social Security	187
Islamic Policy on Urbanisation and Agriculture	193
Islamic Policy on Education and Culture.....	198
Islamic Policy on Health.....	203
Islamic Policy on Procreation	209
Islamic Policy on Fighting Crime	212
Chapter Five Islam’s Policy on War and Peace	215
Chapter Six On Islam’s Foreign Policy and International Relations	237
Islamic Foreign Policy	237
Globalising Justice.....	237
Rescuing the oppressed.....	243
Islam takes precedence	244
Muslim Unity.....	248
Islamic Policy on International Relations.....	257
Chapter Seven Islamic Policy on Leadership.....	261
Chapter Eight Imam Ali’s Guiding Principles on Governance.....	273
To al-Ashtar al-Nakha’i	279
Chapter Nine Muslim Scholars and Politics	303
Sources.....	327
Endnotes	337
Appendix	357

Foreword

The Islamic religion consists of a set of teachings designed for the well-being and prosperity of mankind in this world and in preparation for the hereafter. It does not only aim for the spiritual dimension but also for the material world. Therefore, one of the Prophet's priorities was to address people's material needs and bring about their worldly prosperity and progress. The holy Qur'an describes one of the Prophet's objectives as follows:

﴿... and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear...﴾ 7:157

After he settled down in the city of Medina, and the wars waged against him had abated, Prophet Muhammad introduced – amongst others – three laws, which are significant even by today's standard, fourteen centuries later.

When people at the time, particularly non-Muslims, learned of these laws and saw their practical implications, those very enemies who had waged wars against him and his followers showed respect and honour for Allah's Messenger. Not only Jews and Christians, but even pagans and polytheists converted.

People had much awe and admiration for this Meccan prophet and his laws; and everyone could see their own success, security and peace of mind in these laws. One of these was a set of three laws, set out by Prophet Muhammad fourteen hundred years ago, that cannot even be matched in its entirety by any twenty-first-century civilised system of governance today.

People throughout the land embraced this Prophet's religion and its teachings, because they could see they had nothing to lose and everything to gain.

The scale of this convergence was massive and unprecedented, such that a *surah* was revealed in this respect to honour and allude to this noticeably great event.

﴿In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. When Allah’s succour and the triumph comes, **and you see people enter Allah’s Religion in troops**, then hymn the praises of thy Lord ...﴾ 110: 1-3

The three laws which captivated everyone’s imagination, and relieved them of their burden, to which they were subjected, were simple, fair, and humane. Prophet Muhammad said:

1. Whoever develops a disused land, it is his. For the land belongs to Allah and whoever develops it.
2. Whoever dies and leaves behind dependants or a family without financial support, they would be my responsibility as head of state.
3. Whoever dies and leave behind a bequest, it is his heirs’.

In other words, land belongs to all to develop and is not “public estate”, thus laying down the foundation for unrestricted economic activities and flourishing progress and development, the state provides welfare system for the needy, and there is no inheritance tax as per the teachings of Islam.

It is unfortunate that not only is such a package incomplete in developed countries – insofar as they only provide some limited welfare support, and the government owns disused land and imposes inheritance tax – but also in Muslim countries, because Muslim countries do not implement the teachings of Islam, adopting instead ‘modern’ laws and systems imported from outside, and as a result the suffering of the masses goes on relentlessly in this world today. It is only when the three laws are implemented together that they work.

﴿Those who follow the Messenger – the Meccan Prophet – whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit for them only the foul; and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear. Then those who believe in him, and honour him, and help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him: they are the successful.﴾ 7:157

Furthermore, the Meccan Prophet also prohibited VAT – value added tax – which was prevalent at the pre-Islamic time of *jahiliyah*, or era of ignorance, too. At that time VAT was known as *maks* and the *maks*-collecting official was known as the *makoos* officer.

Some might ask; how would we pay for public services such as the NHS which annually costs tens of billions – or may even be hundreds of billions – of dollars?

The answer to that is that if people followed the teachings of the Prophet, which also include dietary, hygiene, and other practices which contribute to and affect personal health, there would be no need for such colossal budget for the NHS.

﴿He will make lawful for them the good things and prohibit for them the foul﴾

By observing Allah’s Messenger’s teachings, one of the outcomes would be that many of the diseases and illnesses would be avoided to begin with, and a healthy body and soul would be attained. The subsequent result is that by observing the teachings of the prophet, as far as health matters are concerned, the national healthcare budget would be a fraction what is in developed countries today.

Another massive drain on the wealth of the nation is today’s colossal military budget of a country, which makes it necessary to tax the nation for. This results in impoverishing the nation in the long run.

A responsible government should not allow itself to be fooled and accept the burden of such unnecessary expenditure. Instead of arms race, a responsible government should promote coexistence, dialogue, understanding, and advance the cause of peace and its dominance. And this should be done along with refraining from greed or those whose agenda is dominated by greed.

Responsible governments should proactively promote peace by peaceful means. Instead, what we see today is that governments proactively promote the arms race, and bring about death and destruction through various means.

In his bid to avoid death and destruction, Allah’s Messenger also prohibited chemical weapons. Prophet Muhammad prohibited the Muslims from hurling poison powder at the polytheists land. If there were to be a battle, in self-defence, it should be with minimum cost on humanity, irrespective of creed or religion. As far as Prophet Muhammad and his teachings are concerned, nothing could justify the use of weapons of mass destruction, such as “chemical weapons”, against humanity.

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, would invite the infidels to Islam, telling them this is the only path to prosperity in both worlds. If they refused, he would tell them “*have it your way*”; ﴿unto you your religion, and unto me my religion.﴾ 109:6

As part of his call to refrain from arms race and promote peace, the late grand ayatollah Muhammad Shirazi proposed that the arms race should cease, weapons manufacture and production minimised, and that eventually the only weapons allowed under international law and treaties should be – in any event of war – swords and arrows. A further aspect of the theory explored by the author in this book is the rules of engagement and strategies designed to ensure humaneness and prevent atrocities.

In this way, war casualties will be far fewer than in today’s “conventional” weapons-based wars, and war would be more tedious to engage in. With today’s weapons humanity is killed on a massive scale simply by pressing a button or pulling triggers.

As part of his call to non-violence, in the 1990’s, he called on the Palestinians during the *intifada* to refrain from throwing stones at the Israeli soldiers even when the latter were shooting at them. In this way, this abstention from hurling stones at the Israeli soldiers will in the long run, the late Shirazi said, produce the desired outcome the Palestinians seek.

Similarly in this book, the author Sayyid Sadiq Shirazi quotes numerous examples of the Prophet’s and Imams’ forgiveness of insult and injury attracting people to the religion and ultimately converting.

This work has been chosen to be translated, even though it was first published five decades ago, because of its relevance, and indeed importance, to today's global situation that humanity is facing. The teachings of Islam provide a complete and a perfect way of life for mankind, and the some contemporary Muslim scholars have endeavoured to present these teachings to the masses. The most prominent amongst those scholars are the late Imam Muhammad Shirazi, and the author of this book Grand Ayatollah Sadiq Shirazi, who through their prolific writings have tirelessly presented the teachings of Islam and their applicability to human issues today.

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 surah: verse. For example, 4:25 refers to verse 25 of the fourth surah of the holy Qur'an which is called "Women". The Qur'an consists of 114 surahs.

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

Explanatory footnotes are given at the bottom of the page, and references are given in the endnotes. All footnotes are by the translator or editor unless otherwise stated. The vast majority of the endnotes are translated from the Arabic original, which means that they were either by the author himself or inserted by the original publisher.

Z. Olyabek

June 2015

Author's introduction

Praise be to Allah alone.

Blessings be upon him after whom there is no other prophet, and upon his sinless vicegerents whom Allah appointed as rulers over His earth after His Prophet.ⁱ

Peace be upon the trustworthy *ulema* (religious scholars); the deputies of Imam Mahdi– the last of the *awṣiyā'* (Prophet Muhammad's divinely-appointed successors) – may Allah hasten his noble reappearance – whom the infallible leadership appointed as:

The Judges,

The Rulers,

and the Authority...

Politics is an enormous subject with many facets and is a wide deep sea the bottom of which and the edges of which are reached by oh so few ...

It is the way to manage people's affairs in times of war and peace, dealing and trading, hard times and prosperity, unity and discord, and so on.

If we realise that just as people differ in form, colour and language ... they also differ in taste, intellect and feelings ... and differ in their level of understanding, awareness and analysis ... differ in their backgrounds, their views and the things they take for granted.

And as such, there is no trust among the youth in the way the old think.

There is no trust among the old in the robustness of the young.

ⁱAllah's vicegerents on earth is in reference to Prophet Muhammad's twelve divinely appointed successors; the first of whom is Imam Ali peace be upon him, and the last is the imam of our time, Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him.

It is at this point that fancies, tendencies and trends each have a part to play; ranging from envy to aspiration to equal others, competing over advancement and many, many other things ...

Given all this, we can open a small window or aperture between our minds and the world of politics with its vast and wide open subject matter ...

All of this is in the purely materialistic policies as employed by most politicians in the world today, in the west, east and everywhere else.

However, Islamic politics is based on managing people in all their material and spiritual affairs; in addition to complete commitment to justice and charity, virtue and high morals, humanitarianism and benevolent emotions, and integrity of thought and belief in all roles and at all levels. This mix of matter and spirit in all dimensions is for both of them.

This is within the realm of impossibility in materialistic politics; but Islam is what makes the impossible possible – not just [theoretically] possible; in fact, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his holy family, and also the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, put it into practice.

This vast horizon known as “the politics of Islam” requires thorough research, running into several large volumes, to cover the following:

First: All aspects of Allah’s Messenger’s biography and that of the holy progeny from his Household whom the Messenger, upon Allah’s command, appointed as “administrators of the servants and pillars of the lands.”¹

Second: Analysis of this great and rich history, study of its circumstances, background, outcomes, truths, facts, and all its aspects and dimensions ...

Third: Holding our situation today up against this history to learn from its turning points and observe the differences between that day and today.

Fourth: Determining what is the most appropriate from then and now ... and so on.

Fifth: Drawing on profound experience from the Qur'an, *hadith*, Prophet's biography and history.

This is what we hope Almighty Allah will grant a group of our great jurists the success to accomplish; scholars who are characterized by accuracy, depth and complete objectivity, not deviating from the truth by playing favourites with one or the other. This is what qualifies them for this great and serious task – to present a clear, living, authentic picture of the politics and philosophy of Islam, its horizons and reality, so that its beauty and greatness can be seen manifestly... all that, to be a bond between the hearts of the believers and reinforcement of their ideas in all aspects of Islam, while also being a powerful incentive for non-Muslims to embrace Islam ... just as both [the philosophy and incentive] prevailed when Islam began, and what worried all non-Muslims in the world that they would see an immediate disregard to their history, thoughts and ideas to such an extent that it prompted a non-Muslim priest to say a Muslim scholar words to the effect that:

Non-Muslims throughout history owe such a great debt to Mo'āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyānⁱ that they ought to erect gold statues of him in the

ⁱ Abu Sufyān was one of Prophet Muhammad's leading adversaries, who orchestrated opposition campaigns against the Prophet while the latter was in Mecca, and who waged wars against him after the Prophet migrated to Medina. Abu Sufyān's wife Hindd rivalled her husband in her animosity towards the Prophet, proactively inciting others to fight the Prophet, to the extent that at one of the battles, the battle of Uḥud, she ordered the targeted killing of Ḥamzah, the Prophet's loyal and supportive uncle, and had Ḥamzah's body cut up and mutilated. She then tried to eat his liver raw on the spot. Mo'āwiyah, the son of this couple did not let them down in notoriety and followed in their footsteps in his unquestioning loathing of the Prophet, the Prophet's mission, and his divinely appointed successors who had been assigned to continue the Prophetic mission. Mo'āwiyah had sworn that he would stop at nothing in his bid to eradicate and *bury* every trace of Muhammad's teachings. As the self-appointed "Caliph" of the Levant,

squares of European cities, because he kept Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib [Prophet's first divinely-appointed successor] busy with internal conflicts, leaving Ali no time to spread Islam throughout the world. Otherwise, there would not be a single non-Muslim on the face of the earth today.²

And matters such as this can best be addressed by such eminent jurists.

As for this book, it is the closest thing there is to an overview of this great wide open expanse and an index summary of this subject area.

Allah is beseeched to grant Muslims the success to have an objective and comprehensive understanding of the politics of Islam, and its application to the whole world, so that Muslims and non-Muslims alike can be blessed with Islam and its wise and rightly guided policies, thus putting into effect the Almighty's saying:

﴿And if the people of the cities had believed and been Allah-fearing, We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth.﴾³

The Powerful said about the People of the Scripture:

﴿If they had observed the Torah and the Gospel and that which was revealed unto them from their Lord, they would surely have been nourished from above them and from beneath their feet.﴾⁴

That is no great matter for Allah. He is the Benefactor and the Most Excellent Disposer of Affairs.

Ṣādiq Mahdi al-Husayni al-Shirazi

The holy month of Rajab 1386 AH (1965CE)ⁱ

Mo'āwiyah orchestrated wars against the Prophet's appointed successor Imam Ali, peace be upon him, the most important of which was known as the Battle of Ṣiffēen.

ⁱ Given the ideas presented in the book, and Islam's policies on governance, it is evident that these ideas are still valid fifty years on from when this work was first compiled, and they are still applicable, and indeed are required today in this troubled world of ours both in Muslim and non-Muslim countries.

Chapter One

Islam and Politics

﴿... and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear﴾

Politics is defined as “organising people’s life affairs in the best and most comfortable fashion”, which in turn is what the Almighty means when describing His Greatest Messenger as follows:

﴿... and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear.﴾¹

Politics is therefore at the heart of Islam – it is one of the pillars of the religion. Thus it is the duty of every Muslim individual to endeavour to implement [this politics] throughout the world, and to strive – by all the various ways and lawful means – to strengthen it, putting into effect what the Almighty said:

﴿He has ordained for you that religion which He commended unto Noah, and that which We inspire in thee (Muhammad), and that which We commended unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying: Establish the religion.﴾²

Careful scrutiny of the long, shining Islamic history through the centuries – especially the history of Allah’s Messenger, and the history of his Executor the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib,ⁱ and

ⁱ On specific instructions from Allah Almighty, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, appointed his successors to lead the nation after him, over time, until the day of resurrection. Prophet Muhammad spared no effort explaining the merits of his successors, and in particular Imam Ali, and he did so methodically and relentlessly. Similarly the Prophet, on numerous

his descendants, the Holy Imams, peace be upon them – gives us a full idea of the place of true politics in Islam.

Perusal of the Wise Qur'an and books of exegesis and *hadith* places us before the great intellectual and political legacy left by Islam to the Muslims and to the whole of the world.

occasions, stressed that his divinely-appointed rightful successors were twelve in number. The first was Imam Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib and the last Imam Mahdi, peace be upon them. At the end of the rituals of his final Hajj pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca, and before the masses headed home in different directions, Prophet Muhammad, in an unprecedented move, ordered everyone to gather at a location called Ghadir Khumm. More than 120,000 people assembled at the fresh-water lakeside of Ghadir Khumm to hear what the Prophet had to say. In the course of delivering an exceptional sermon which lasted more than an hour, Allah's final messenger formally appointed Imam Ali as his first successor and the leader of the nation after him. The Prophet then declared it to be their duty before Allah and His Messenger for every Muslim to pay allegiance to Imam Ali as the Successor to Allah's Messenger, and Commander of the Faithful. Thereafter, the people present at the lakeside came, one-by-one, to shake hands with Imam Ali and pledge allegiance to him as the Successor to Allah's Messenger and the Commander of the Faithful. This pledge of allegiance to Imam Ali by the people took three days and nights to accomplish. The most famous part of the Prophet's Ghadir sermon is "Whoever I am his authority, Ali is his authority too". Another well-known hadith that the Prophet has stated about Imam Ali is: "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate. So whoever wants [to access the knowledge of] the city, should reach for its gate". However, after about seventy days from this event, Prophet Muhammad was assassinated by those who had orchestrated a coup against him, and most of those present in Medina at the time did not honour their pledge of Ghadir Khumm to Imam Ali, and the coup masters took over the helm. After a popular uprising against the coup's third ruler for his extensive corruption and embezzlement, the masses turned to Imam Ali for leadership of the nation. This was twenty five years after the coup against the Prophet. Imam Ali had governed for four-and-half years when he was assassinated while he was performing his morning prayer in the Kufah mosque. The assassination plot was planned and instigated by Mo'āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān.

Passages from the *Sharia*

In the Islamic *Sharia* there truly are very many passages which indicate that politics (*siyāsah*)ⁱ is an inseparable part of Islam. In fact it is more correct for us to say:

Islam and politics are two words for one notion. Politics is Islam and Islam is politics according to its true, comprehensive meaning.

We shall mention here some of those passages not mentioned at the beginning of the book or in the various chapters coming up:

There is reference in a holy *hadith* describing the Imams to their being: “shepherds to [Allah’s] servants.”³

Another noble *hadith* says: “The Imam is a knowledgeable scholar who is not ignorant of anything, proficient in the Imamate, and knowledgeable about politics.”

A holy *hadith* says:

“. . . Then the Almighty delegated the matter of the religion and of the nation to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, to shepherd His servants.”⁴

In another *hadith* it is said:

“The Sons of Israel were shepherded by their Prophets.”⁵

And Imam Ali, peace be upon him, said in his covenant document to Mālīk al-Ashtar al-Nakha‘i, may Allah be pleased with him:

“Choose your governors from amongst the people of piety, knowledge and politics.”⁶

In another part of the same covenant document he said: “Appoint from your soldiers those you feel in your heart to be the most sincere to

ⁱ *Siyāsah* means both politics and shepherding. Much of the richness of this book depends on this dual meaning and the shepherding analogy to politics which runs throughout.

Allah, to His Prophet and to your Imam and who have the most comprehensive knowledge and politics.”⁷

Imam Ali also said: “The best of policies is justice.”⁸

He said in a letter of his to Mo‘āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān:

“O Mo‘āwiyah! Since when have you been shepherd to the flock and in charge of the nation?”⁹

This shows that the shepherd to the flock were not Mo‘āwiyah, his predecessors or the likes of him, but rather the Prophet, the Imam and their deputies.ⁱ

Allah’s Messenger said in his great sermon on the Day of Ghadir Khumm:

“O People! By Allah, there is nothing which brings you closer to heaven and distances you from the hell which I have not ordered you to do, and there is nothing which brings you closer to the hell and distances you from heaven which I have not forbidden you to do.”¹⁰

ⁱThe term “deputies” is in reference to divinely appointed imams, the first of whom is Imam Ali, and the last is Imam Mahdi, the Imam of Our Time. Imam Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Mahdi, peace be upon him and may Allah hasten his reappearance, is the Prophet Muhammad’s twelfth and last of the successors he appointed, on divine instructions, to lead the nation after him. Imam al-Mahdi was born on 15th of Sha‘bān 255AH/870CE, and he assumed the office of leadership and imamate at the age of five when his father Imam Hasan al-‘Askari was assassinated by the Abbasid ruler of the time in 260AH. The young age for Allah’s Authorities is not an issue as it can be seen in various other cases the most famous of which is that of Prophet Jesus son of Marry who declared to the Israelites that he was Allah’s servant and messenger who has been given a divine Book, when he was only a few days old. The imam of our time, Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, is now alive, lives amongst us, but the masses do not recognise him. He will reappear by Allah’s leave to “fill the earth with justice and equity, after it is filled with injustice, wronging and oppression”, as stated by Allah’s final messenger, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

After the Prophet's martyrdom, his daughter *Sayyidah* Fatima al-Zahrāⁱ said as part of her sermon which she gave in Allah's Messenger's mosque before the first self-appointed ruler: "Allah Almighty made obligatory the obedience of us Ahl al-Baytⁱⁱ as a means for the regulation and order of the religion, and [made obligatory] the leadership of us as a protection against division [of the nation]."¹¹

ⁱ *Sayyidah* Fatima al-Zahrā' was the Prophet's only surviving offspring. The Prophet exceedingly loved his immaculate daughter and showed her exceptional respect and devotion. He used to say, "Fatima is my spirit that is within me" "Fatima is the blood of my heart" "Fatima is part of me, whatever hurts her hurts me, and whatever pleases her pleases me." The Prophet also declared, "Allah is angered when Fatima is angered, and is pleased when Fatima is pleased." This hadith shows that *sayyidah* Fatima lived in unison with the Will of the Almighty. Allah Almighty gave her the title *sayyidatun-nisā'-al-ālimeen* (meaning Chief of the women of the worlds). Out of his respect and devotion to her, the Prophet gave her the nickname *ommo-abihā*; he used to say *fatimato ommo-abihā* (meaning Fatima is like a mother her father.)

ⁱⁱ The Ahl al-Bayt (literally meaning "People of the House") are the fourteen *ma'ṣoom* (infallible) personages of Islam; namely they are the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter *sayyidah* Fatima al-Zahrā', and the Prophet's divinely-appointed successors of twelve; the first of whom is Imam Ali, and the 12th is the imam of our time the Awaited Imam Mahdi. Allah Almighty has cited the Ahl al-Bayt and their station in the holy Qur'an on numerous occasions, one of which is: ﴿Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you O Ahl al-Bayt, and purify you with a thorough purification﴾. 33:33. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, methodically stressed the role and position of Ahl al-Bayt, and on every suitable occasion he reminded the nation of the significance of these personages. There are numerous hadith in this respect, only two are cited here as examples. Prophet Muhammad stated: "The example of my Ahl al-Bayt is like that of Noah's Ark; whoever boards it is saved, and whoever abandons it is drowned." Another hadith is: "I leave behind amongst you the two momentous entities; the Book of Allah, and my family the Ahl al-Bayt – as long as you adhere to them both, you will never go astray."

It is narrated that Imam Ja‘far al-Şādiq,ⁱ peace be upon him, said:

“There is nothing about which there is neither Scripture nor Sunnah.”¹²

Also reported is a conversation between Sumā‘ah and Imam Musa al-Kāḍim,ⁱⁱ peace be upon him, in which the former said:

“May Allah keep you well. Did Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, bring everything that people needed?”

The Imam, peace be upon him, said: “Yes, and all that they will need until the Day of Resurrection.”

“Was any of it lost?”

“No. It is all with its rightful trustees.”¹³

ⁱ Imam Ja‘far al-Şādiq is the Prophet’s sixth of the successors he appointed to lead the nation after him. The twelve *ma‘şoom* (infallible) imams whom Prophet Muhammad appointed on divine instructions have received their knowledge from the Prophet. This is evident from the well-known hadith in which the Prophet states, “I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate. So whoever wants [to access the knowledge of] the city, should reach for its gate.” Imam Ali is the first imam, and this hadith applies to all the twelve imams. So the twelve *ma‘şoom* imams have all the knowledge of Prophet Muhammad. Imam Ja‘far al-Şādiq had a greater opportunity to disseminate his teachings to the masses, and he had the greatest number of students. It is reported that he had some four thousand students at one time. The leaders of the today’s four Islamist sects received their tuition from Imam Ja‘far al-Şādiq either directly, like Abu Hanifah, or indirectly. Imam Ja‘far al-Şādiq was murdered by poisoning by the Abbasid ruler of the time Mansour al-Dawāniqi. (148AH/765CE)

ⁱⁱ Imam Musa al-Kāḍim, peace be upon him, is the Prophet’s seventh of the divinely-appointed successors to lead the nation after him. Like his father Imam Ja‘far al-Şādiq, peace be upon him, Imam Kāḍim was persecuted by the ruler of the time and in a bid to stop him disseminating his teachings, he was imprisoned – on and off – for a total of twenty years. Imam Kāḍim was known for his immense knowledge, piety, and devotion to worship. He too was murdered by poisoning by the Abbasid ruler of the time Haroon al-Rasheed. (183AH/800CE)

It is also reported that Imam al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

“Allah revealed in the Qur’an the explanation for everything to the point that, by Allah, He did not fail to explain to the people anything which the servants need, so no servant can say: “If only this had been revealed in the Qur’an!” because Allah did make a revelation about it.”¹⁴

Clearly this means revelation of the Qur’an’s universals, not its particulars.

It is also reported that Imam Riḍā,ⁱ peace be upon him, said:

ⁱ Imam Riḍā is the Prophet’s eight of the successors he appointed on divine instructions to lead the nation after him. Like his father and forefathers Imam Riḍā was known for his immense knowledge to the extent that he became known as “the scholar of Muhammad’s progeny” (*‘ālim al-Muhammad*). Like his predecessors, the Abbasid ruler of the time, the Ma’moon, despised the imam for the station had attained amongst the people, and he wanted to do all to disperse the people from around the imams of Ahl al-Bayt. As a strategic policy to this end, the Ma’moon decided to build upon the scheme his predecessors had started – but in a grand way. The previous rulers of the Abbasid dynasty, as well as the later rulers of the Umayyad dynasty had begun translating into Arabic the works of ancient Greek philosophers as well as old Persian and Hindu philosophers with a view to engage and therefore occupy the Muslim nation with the false notions embedded in the philosophies and therefore distance the people from the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt. The Ma’moon decided to establish *bayt al-hikamah* – “The House of Wisdom”. The Ma’moon succeeded in creating a preoccupation for some of the Muslim thinkers and in this way distanced them from the Ahl al-Bayt and their teachings – a phenomenon that has prevailed until today. In his wildest dreams the Ma’moon would not have dared to imagine this could continue thirteen centuries later in the form of the so-called “Islamic” philosophy, “Islamic” mysticism, and “Islamic” sophism or Sufism. On the other hand, Imam Riḍā continued without failure to disseminate the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt which by the Grace of Allah Almighty have reached us today. Imam Riḍā held many and detailed debates with leaders of various schools of thoughts and religions such as atheists, Jews and Christians. With the fame and popularity of the Imam spreading throughout the land the Ma’moon decided to eliminate him. Imam Riḍā, was assassinated by poisoning by the Ma’moon, the Abbasid ruler of the time. (203AH/818CE)

“He – meaning Allah’s Messenger – did not fail to explain anything which the nation would need; so whoever claims that Allah did not complete His religion has rejected Allah Almighty’s Book.”¹⁵

In *Biḥār al-Anwār* the highly erudite scholar ‘*allāmah* Majlisi, may Allah bless him,ⁱ quoting the work *Baṣā’ir al-Darajāt* and its chain of authority, says that Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir,ⁱⁱ peace be upon him, said:

“Allah did not fail to reveal in His Book and explain to His Messenger anything which the community would need right up until the Day of Resurrection. He has made a limit for everything and a guide to it which guides towards it.”¹⁶

There are hundreds of passages with the same meaning which indicate through their universals and particulars that politics is part of Islam – and moreover that it is at the heart of Islam. The hadith books are full of these references in a variety of contexts.

ⁱ al-Majlisi was one of the most eminent Shi’a scholars, who is famous for his mammoth task of gathering and compiling the hadith of Ahl al-Bayt. The product of his endeavour is the masterpiece called *Biḥār al-Anwār* which is in 110 volumes. He died in the year 1111AH/1700CE.

ⁱⁱ Imam Muhammad Bāqir is the Prophet’s fifth of the successors appointed on divine instructions to lead the nation after him. Imam Bāqir, as well as his son and successor Imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq, had the greatest opportunity, compared to other Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, to disseminate the teachings of Allah and His messenger. This was because of the political turmoil due to the weak Umayyad rule and the conflict between it and the upcoming Abbasid clan. The ruling tyrants therefore were too busy fighting their combatant opponents to pay constant attention to the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. However, the imams were never far off the agenda of the rulers. Imam Bāqir continued to train and educate his students on the sciences of Qur’an, hadith, jurisprudence, and suchlike. Imam Bāqir was assassinated by means of poisoning by the Umayyad ruler of the time. (124AH/742CE)

Two types of politics

Islamic politics differs from today's world politics. It differs in its roots and branches. Islamic politics is completely different from modern politics as implemented by nation states. That is because Islam in its politics follows a blend of administration and justice, comprehensive love, preserving the dignity of the person and the sanctity of blood. It strives not to spill even so much as a drop of blood without a just cause, and strives not to let the dignity of even a single person become compromised unjustly, or, for a single person to be oppressed – or even for a single animal for that matter.¹

In contrast, politics – according to the modern meaning of the word – is the power to steer the helm of government, directing people and seizing the reins of power, no matter what the cost may be in terms of disregard for dignity, bloodshed, suppression of freedoms, blackmail, oppression, injustice and so on. So long as government is for the rulers and the executive is subject to their orders then [power] is the end sought, which justifies the means, even if these means include unjustly and oppressively shedding the blood of thousands or even millions. This is the language of the politics implemented by the countries of the world today.

In order for us to appreciate the meaning of politics in Islam, what modern politics means to most countries of the world, and for us to be able to understand clearly the enormous difference between the two types of politics, let us consider some real life examples and practices of both types of politics.

¹ It is reported that when Allah's Messenger saw a hobbled, saddled she-camel he asked: "Where is its owner?" "Tell him to get ready to be held to account". The Prophet also said: A master has six duties to his beast: to feed it when he disembarks, to offer it water when he passes by water, not to beat it unless it deserves it, not to load it up beyond its capability, not to make it travel further than it is able to, and to wait long enough between milking it. *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il* vol.8 p300 hadith1 and, p258 hadith1

Firstly from Islamic Politics

Islamic politics as stated above was built upon a foundation of complete justice, human dignity and forgiveness alongside forbearance and strength.

A head of state that does not kill his killer

This is the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, at the time when he was on the throne of the leadership of the greatest Islamic country in history – the territory of which spread across the greatest part of civilization, and when all countries of the world at that time had great awe and respect for it. He knew who his killer would be, would refer to him and to the fact that he would be killed by him, but did not even once lay a finger on him; because of his philosophy of justice which holds that so long as a crime has not yet been committed then execution is not warranted.

Look at the following prooftext:

Ali, peace be upon him, would say to Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam:

“You are going to kill me” and would recite the following verse over and over:

I want him to live and he wants to kill me

*The one who makes excuses to you is one of your bosom friends from
(the tribe of) Morad*

Ibn Muljam would say to him, “Commander of the Faithful, if you know this about me then why don’t you kill me?”

He would say, “I am not allowed to kill a man before he does harm to me.”

The Shi’a heard that, and so Mālīk al-Ashtar, Ḥārīth ibn al-A‘war and other Shi’a stood up and drew their swords and said, “Commander of the Faithful, who is this whom you repeatedly address this way; you are our Imam and guardian, and the paternal cousin of our Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family. Command us to kill him.”

He said to them, “Sheathe your swords, may Allah bless you, and do not sow dissent among the nation. Do you think I would kill a man who has not yet done anything to me?”¹⁷

This is the philosophy of justice and humanity.

It is the philosophy of Islamic governance and politics according to the head of the Islamic government, Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful.

In Islamic logic there is no rule or jurisdiction which says that “the end justifies the means”. In fact there is the opposite: “Allah is not obeyed through disobedience” which means that it is not permissible to achieve Islamic government which is obedience to Almighty Allah through means which involve disobedience to Allah – the shedding of innocent blood and disregard for dignity. As far as the matter of the Imam’s knowledge is concerned, that requires in-depth study which is beyond the scope of this presentation.

[But] in short:

The Imam’s metaphysical divine knowledge of the unseen cannot normally impact upon his behaviour or what he does in public. Otherwise the test for which Almighty Allah created the creatures would not be completed and the proof for which Allah appointed the Imam would not be established.

The Imam’s public behaviour both in personal matters and towards society at large have to be normal, just like everyone else’s, just as his human traits normally have to be just like everyone else’s.

﴿Say: I am just a human like you. I [just] receive revelation.﴾¹⁸

﴿And they said: What is it about this Messenger who eats food and walks through the marketplaces?﴾¹⁹

﴿Then after them, We appointed you as vice-regents on the earth so that We see how you perform﴾²⁰

– exactly like Almighty Allah’s behaviour towards mankind, even though He is Omnipotent and Omniscient.

If Allah wanted to stop the oppressed from being oppressed or stay the hand of the oppressor to stop him from carrying out acts of oppression, how would the test be conducted?

The behaviour of the Prophet and Imam who have the knowledge of the unseen world – through Almighty Allah’s power and Allah’s teaching them – is just like this.

The Supreme Leader leaves he who threatens him alone

A noble *hadith* states that one of the Kharijites threatened to kill the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, but the imam just left him alone.

A man was caught and brought to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, after he had threatened to kill Imam Ali. The Imam said:

“Leave him alone. If he kills me then the decision rests with the slain’s next of kin.”²¹

This is the forgiveness and humanitarian policy that Islam teaches.

An ordinary person whose name does not deserve to be recorded in history threatens to kill the Supreme Leader of the Islamic government who has at his disposal all the power and all the might but does nothing to him!

He is brought before him completely at his mercy and He says: “Leave him alone.”

What a difference there is between the likes of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and the other leaders of the world.

It is reported that a ruler received a death threat. At that point, he imprisoned two hundred people from a single street. Then the detentions carried on in the aftermath until the number arrested reached five thousand people. He then executed a group of them and put others in prison and a third group was subjected to torture. He eventually set a number of them free.

What a difference there is between these two policies; the policy of Islam and the policy of Satan.

The Prophet does not pre-emptively kill the heads of the opposition

Historical accounts and noble *hadith* tell us that Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, would sometimes say about a person that he would cause trouble (*fitna*) among the Muslims or that he would invent a false religion, but would not then set about killing him nor allow the Muslims to kill him.

This comes under the great policy of forgiveness implemented by Allah’s Messenger throughout his lifetime, through which he was able to found an Islamic government largely through winning people’s hearts.

If the Prophet had killed people at random for arbitrary reasons, Islam would not have been established, nor would its roots have become firm.

Look at the following passages:

Al-Mufid,ⁱ Allah bless him, reports in *al-Irshād*: “When Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, divided the spoils of war at Ḥunayn a tall man came up to him, the mark of prostration on his forehead. He uttered the greeting without addressing the Prophet by name or title and said: “We saw what you did with the spoils.”

The Prophet replied, “What did you see?”

He said, “You did not divide them justly.”

Allah’s Messenger said, “Shame on you. If I am not fair then who is?”

The Muslims asked, “Should we not kill him?”

The Prophet replied, “Leave him. He will have followers who will shoot through the religion just as the arrow shoots through the quarry. Allah

ⁱ Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Baghdādi, otherwise known as Sheikh al-Mufid, (336-413AH) was one of the Shi’a world’s most eminent scholar.

will kill them at the hands of the most beloved creation to Him after me.”

He was among the Kharijites killed by Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, at the Battle of Nahrawān.^{i/22}

In another prooftext, al-Zuhri reports on the authority of Abu Salamah that Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri said, “When we were with Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, at the time when he was dividing out shares, Dhul-Khuwayṣarah – a man from the clan of Bani Tamim came up to him and said “Divide equally, Messenger of Allah.”

Allah’s Messenger replied to him, “Shame on you. If I am not fair then who is fair? You would be damned and lost if I did not divide equally.”

Omar ibn al-Khattāb said, “Let me to take his head off.”

Allah’s Messenger replied, “Leave him alone! for he has companions to whose prayers you would consider yours to be inferior, and to whose fasting you would consider yours to be inferior; they recite the Qur’an but it does not go beyond their throats. They shoot through Islam like an arrow shoots through the quarry. One looks at its arrowhead, but finds nothing stuck to it. One then looks at the lowest end, but finds nothing stuck to it. One then looks at its grip but finds nothing stuck to it. One then looks at its feathers but finds nothing stuck to them because the arrow has moved too fast even for blood and excretions [to smear]. They would be recognised by the presence of a black man whose upper arm is like a woman’s breast or like a dangling piece of flesh. They will go out against the best group of people.”

ⁱ The battle of Nahrawān was between the Imam of the time, the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him, and the Kharijites. Nahrawān is an area in Iraq between Baghdād and Wāsiṭ. The Kharijites were the group who reneged and waged a military campaign against Imam Ali who, for the first time in the history of the Muslim nation, was elected as the leader of the Islamic nation and its Head of State. The rulers before him had seized power unlawfully contrary to the Prophet’s instructions to follow his divinely-appointed successor.

Abu Sa'īd said, "I testify that I heard that from Allah's Messenger and I testify that Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib fought against them and I was with him. He ordered that man to be brought to him, his order was followed, the man was found and brought; such that I could look at him and see that he was as Allah's Messenger had described him."¹

In this way the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, would not attempt to kill any mischief-maker, person who had gone astray or had caused innovation in religion (*bid'ah*) until there had developed an environment among the people which would allow them to accept his killing, such as the appearance of his mischief or his going astray or his innovation (*bid'ah*) so that killing him would not cause any greater mischief than his presence.

This is the Divine Wisdom in allowing people's minds to develop, putting everyone to test.

There are many examples of this in Allah's Messenger's life, and the Commander of the Faithful's life out there for researchers to find. We will mention some of them within the following studies, Allah Almighty willing.

His pardoning those who fled

Fleeing the battlefield is considered a mortal sin. Almighty Allah threatened hell [as a punishment] for it. The Almighty said: ﴿If any do turn his back to them on such a day - unless it be in a stratagem of war,

¹ *A'lām al-Warā bi A'lām al-Hudā* p121, section1, chapter1. Imam Malik, *al-Mudawwana al-Kubrā* vol.2 p48 about al-Khawārij. Al-'Asqalāni, *Fath al-Bārī* vol.12 p262. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Dibāj 'alā Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* vol.3 p160; al-Nisā'i, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* vol.5 pp159-160 The section on the presentation of the specific battles of Ali with the "Renegades" (*māriqeen*), and similarly what he said about the unique characteristics of the Commander of the Faithful, *ibid*, p138. Al-Iṣfahāni, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah* p116. They all quote the hadith word for word or an extract from it which includes the words: "**Ali [and his followers are] the best group of people**".

or to retreat to a troop (of his own), he draws on himself the wrath of Allah, and his abode is hell - an evil refuge (indeed!) ﴿23

Whoever commits this act of great disobedience deserves *ta'zir*, or punishment, according to the *Sharia* – there is a penalty for every act of disobedience – but even so, Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, pardoned the Muslims who fled from the battlefield at the Battle of Uhud leaving the Prophet on his own [exposing him to grave danger] among a small number of his devoted companions.

[No system or ruler, past or present, would tolerate any form of betrayal or desertion, major or minor, in the battlefield, let alone endangering the life of the head of the state. Yet Allah's Messenger forgave betrayal and desertion; and on more than one occasion.]

This is one of the great foundations of pardon and forgiveness in Islam which keeps Muslims within Islam and draws others to Islam.

Allah revealed the pardon granted them in the Wise Qur'an in two verses of the *surah* (chapter) of The Family of 'Imran:

﴿Allah did indeed fulfil His promise to ye when – with His permission – ye were about to annihilate your enemy, until ye flinched and fell to disputing about the order, and disobeyed it after He brought ye in sight (of the spoils) which ye covet. Among ye are some that hanker after this world and some that desire the Hereafter. Then did He divert ye from your foes in order to test ye but He forgave ye: For Allah is full of grace to those who believe.﴾²⁴

﴿Those of you who turned back on the day the two hosts met, it was Satan who caused them to fail, because of some (evil) they had done. But Allah forgave them: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Forbearing.﴾²⁵

It is said in the noble hadith that those who fled from the battlefield came back to Allah's Messenger to seek his forgiveness for this crime. By fleeing the battlefield, they had exposed Allah's Messenger to having his noble forehead cleaved and his lip split, as reported by many accounts and hadith, along with the killing of Hamzah – the Master of the Martyrs and uncle of Allah's Messenger – and of Hanzalah, he who

was washed [for burial] by the angels, and, dozens of the faithful fighters.

This is the great policy of forgiveness in Islam.

Compensation for the fright caused to women

Here is another example of the great policy of justice and fairness in Islam:

Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, sent Khālid ibn al-Walid with a group of Muslims with the purpose of inviting the various tribes around Mecca to Islam. The Prophet did not give any orders to fight.²⁶ Khalid came across the tribe of Bani Judhaymah who were from Bani al-Mustalaq and he learnt that they had already become Muslims. But Khalid attacked them and killed a group of them with whom he had an age-old dispute. When news of this reached Allah's Messenger, the Prophet wept. He got up and climbed atop the pulpit, lifted his hands up to the heavens and said three times:

“Oh Allah, I seek through you to disassociate myself from what Khālid ibn al-Walid has done.”

“Oh Allah, I seek through you to disassociate myself from what Khālid ibn al-Walid has done.”

“Oh Allah, I seek through you to disassociate myself from what Khālid ibn al-Walid has done.”

Then the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, called Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, and gave him a chest full of gold, ordering him to go to Bani Judhaymah and pay them compensation for those who had been slain and for the loss of property.

So Ali, peace be upon him, came to them and divided the money as follows:

1. He paid damages of one thousand gold dinarsⁱ for every one of those who had been wrongly killed, to their heirs.
2. He paid damages for every slave – male or female.
3. He paid them compensation for all the dog bowls and cords [used to hobble the feet of a camel] they had lost.
4. He paid them compensation for whatever they might have lost, without being aware of the loss, or that may have been taken by Khalid or by whoever was with him or which may have been destroyed during the fighting.
5. He paid them compensation for the fear and terror caused to their wives and fright caused to their children.
6. He paid them a sum equal to the amount of property or wealth they had lost.
7. He paid them whatever it took to make their children and servants as happy as they had been saddened.
8. He paid them the rest of the money so that they would be contented with the Messenger of Allah.

Then Ali, peace be upon him, went back to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, told him how he had divided the gold into eight shares and said, “O Messenger of Allah! I was determined to compensate for every drop of blood spilled, for every male or female slave and to replace every bit of money or property. I had some left over so I gave it to them for their dog bowls and for the cords for hobbling their herds, for the terror caused to their women and shock caused to their children. I had some left over so I gave it to them so that they would be happy with you, Messenger of Allah.

The Messenger of Allah’s face lit up and he laughed with a smile so wide that his molars were showing. He said, “You gave them

ⁱ This is equivalent to approximately 3250g of pure gold, which is more than 100 oz of pure gold.

[something] to make them contented with me, may Allah be pleased with you.” Then he said, peace be upon him and his holy family, “Ali, you are to me as Aaron was to Moses except that there is no Prophet after me.”²⁷

This is the philosophy of justice and doing good to others which He commands [us to implement] in the Wise Qur’an:

﴿Allah commands justice, the doing of good ...﴾²⁸

This is human dignity linking what Almighty Allah says in the Qur’an: ﴿Verily we have honoured the Children of Adam﴾²⁹ to the parameters set by Allah’s law and heaven’s legislation.

Compensation for those killed, compensation for every male or female slave, compensation for everything that was lost, compensation for what may have been lost without their knowing it, compensation for terrifying the women and frightening the children, and a reward to make them happy with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his holy family...

What failing was there by Allah’s Messenger such that he needed to please them?

Nothing...He could never...

Every failing was Khalid ibn al-Walid’s.

Nevertheless, Prophet Muhammad is the Prophet of Mercy, peace be upon him and his holy family.

﴿And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds.﴾³⁰

On account of Khalid’s having been sent by the Prophet, the Prophet of Mercy holds himself accountable for it.

At this point a question arises: “If Khalid ibn al-Walid by killing Bani Judhaymah was acting on a dispute between him and them dating back to the days of pre-Islamic ignorance, why did Allah’s Messenger not carry out the death penalty on behalf of those murdered, given that

damages are an alternative to the death penalty for premeditated murder.”

There are many answers to that given by some of the jurists of Islam, some of which we shall mention here:

1. “The death penalty is conditional upon a demand made by the victim’s next of kin. Because Bani Judhaymah were the victims’ next of kin and had not demanded the death penalty the ruling commutes to compensation.
2. Allah’s Messenger insofar as he is everyone’s guardian, even the victims’ families’ by way of unrestricted guardianship, accorded to the Wise Qur’an:

﴿The Prophet has more authority over the believers than they over their own selves.﴾³¹

So it was the Prophet’s right to forgo the death penalty in favour of compensation.

3. It is a matter of competing priorities – *tazāhum* – between something which is important and something which is more important, which dictates commuting the death penalty on account of what may have to be done in order to carry out the death penalty in the particular circumstances surrounding the Prophet and his mission, in view of the fact that the Muslims were at the brink of the victory of Islam, widespread hegemony and the entry of people in droves into Allah’s religion directly after the conquest of Mecca. Something like imposition of the death penalty in these circumstances would have led to terror and discontent in the hearts of Muslims which would have damaged Islam at that time and in its future.

There are parallels to this in the life histories of the Messenger, and the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon them, of which we shall mention a few in the following studies, Almighty Allah willing, and Allah knows best.

Compensation for a child lost through terrorising a pregnant woman

The authors of both *al-Wasā'il* and *al-Mustadrak* report on the authorities of the Sheikhs Kulayni, Ṭousi and Mufid, may Allah bless them, in *al-Kāfi*, *al-Tahdhib* and *al-Irshād* [respectively] that Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said,

“News of a woman who used to receive callersⁱ reached Omar so he summoned her, which in turn terrified her, and Omar ordered that she be brought to him. The woman was frightened, so she went into labour, went into one of the buildings and gave birth to a baby boy. The baby cried out loudly and then died. Heⁱⁱ was confronted with the issue of the woman’s trauma and the death of the baby boy.

Some of those seated at his court said to him, “You are not liable to anything on this issue.”

Some of them said, “What is to be done?”

One replied, “Ask Abu al-Ḥasan” (i.e. Imam Ali).

Abu al-Ḥasan, peace be upon him, said to them, “If you applied legal reasoning then you did not get it right, and if you acted on your opinion alone then you were wrong.”

Then he said to Omar, “You are liable to pay compensation for [the death of] the baby boy.”³²

Omar said to Ali, peace be upon him, “Out of all of them, you are the only one who could give me the right advice.”³³

Compensation for allowing someone to die of thirst

Mustadrak al-Wasā'il cites *Da'ā'im al-Islām* as saying that Imam Ali, peace be upon him, “...passed judgment with regard to a man who had begged some people for water but they had not given him anything to

ⁱ i.e. she used to work as a prostitute

ⁱⁱ i.e. upon Omar

drink. They abandoned him until he died of thirst while he was among them, even though they had water available. He ordered that they were liable to pay damages for his death.”³⁴

A doctor is liable if he makes a mistake

Al-Wasā'il and *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* report a number of *hadith* on the liability of a doctor or veterinarian to pay compensation for the patient or the animal if he makes a mistake in diagnosing, or in prescribing, and the patient or animal dies as a result.

The author of *al-Wasā'il* reports on the authority of the two Sheikhs al-Kulayni and al-Ṭousi through their chains of transmission on the authority of Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him: The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said, “Whoever administers medical or veterinary treatment should seek a disclaimer from the family member or owner, otherwise, he is liable.”³⁵

He also reports on the authority of Sheikh Ṭousi through his chain of transmission that Imam al-Bāqir, peace be upon him, said, “Ali held a performer of circumcision liable to pay compensation for cutting off a baby boy’s glans.”³⁶

Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidin,ⁱ peace be upon him, reported that, “Imam Ali, peace be upon him, held a performer of circumcision to be liable after

ⁱ Also known as al-Sajjād, Imam Zayn al-‘Ābideen, peace be upon him, is the Prophet’s fourth of the successors he appointed on divine instructions to lead the nation after him. He became the imam after the slaughter of Imam Husayn in Karbala on the day of Ashura. As well as for immense knowledge, Imam Zayn al-‘Ābideen became renowned for his numerous spiritual supplications and invocations to the Almighty. Through these supplications the imam disseminated the doctrines of Islamic belief and principle of the religion. These supplications are compiled as *al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Sajjādiyyah*. Imam Sajjād also became known for his frequent weeping for his father, as well as for his aunt Zaynab and for his sisters who were taken captives and paraded through towns and villages in Iraq and Syria, along with the almost 100 heads of those slain carried on spearheads. Another issue that Imam Zayn al-‘Ābideen was known for was that he used to buy the slaves off the market, educate and train

she performed a circumcision on a young girl who lost so much blood that she died. Imam Ali, peace be upon him, said to her, ‘Sorrow upon your mother. Did you not leave anything?’ Imam Ali, peace be upon him, decreed that she was liable to pay compensation for the death of the young servant girl.”ⁱ

Is there in the history of the world anything like this outside Islam?ⁱⁱ

Do international leaders accept responsibility like Muslim leaders do?

Forget history. Reflect upon it and you will be sure of the answer: “Of course not.”

The examples and parallels for that are many and they are many in the history of Islam. This abridged study is not a detailed exposition of the humanity that is manifested in various aspects of Islamic governance and politics.

them, and then free by year end to lead their own lives. It is reported that over the course of his life, he had bought and freed thousands of slaves in this way. Because of his knowledge, morals and spirituality, as well as his mourning for his father, he had become popular amongst the masses, and this was not liked by the Umayyad rulers. He was assassinated by means of poisoning by the Umayyad ruler of the time, al-Walid ibn Abdel-Malik ibn Marwān, who had said I will not rest as long as Ali ibn Husayn [Zayn al-‘Ābideen] is alive. (95AH/713CE)

ⁱ *Mustadrak al-Wasā’il* vol.18 p325 chapter19 hadith3 [In terms of “female circumcision” the operation that is permitted in Islam is only the trimming of some of the labia minora, which may enhance sexual pleasure for her during intercourse with her husband. The modern day term for this “female circumcision” operation is known as “labiaplasty” or “labia reduction surgery”.]

ⁱⁱ This is one of the excellent merits of Islam’s policies implemented by the Imams, peace be upon them. Probably the first of its kind in history. Some fourteen centuries ago the Imams established liability for medical and veterinary negligence. It is also amazing that compensation is upheld even for a servant girl – thus we have “equal-rights-for-all-citizens”. Long before anyone else Imam Ali said that everyone including slaves were entitled to damages for medical negligence.

Secondly from Modern Politics

After seeing these examples in the history of Islam ... look at some examples from the history of the implementation of modern non-Islamic policy to see the difference – or rather the enormous difference – between the two policies. That will be by way of general reference to the following without going into details:

1. In China, at least twenty million people were killed as a result of the Opium War and its subsequent treaties, consequences, orchestrated by the British Empire and Christian missionaries.³⁷
2. In India, the British killed eight hundred thousand people by way of a man-made famine during the days of the struggle for freedom from the yoke of colonialism.³⁸
3. Out of all the Communists, atrocities committed by Leninⁱ and Stalin alone include:
 - a) As leader of the Communist political movement, Lenin wanted to implement a system of communal farms. The peasants and workers would not agree to it, so in the year 1921-1922 he brought about open and systematic mass terror throughout the land and a man-made famine, the likes of which had never been seen before, during which more than fifteen million people died.³⁹
 - b) Stalin resumed the attack on the workers and peasants by forcing people to follow the Communist system in the years 1928-1930. People struggled against this and the result was the following:

The Stalinist Communist security apparatus OGPU operated against the people; beating, killing and making people “disappear”. The prisons were filled until the number of

ⁱ Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) Leader of the Russian Revolution and Founder of the Communist Party in Soviet Russia. He ruled through tyranny, oppression and despotism.

victims killed numbered a hundred thousand, as acknowledged by Communist Party official reports.

- c) After two years exactly, in the year 1932-1933, Stalin launched an attack on the poor people to implement the agricultural policy at any cost. The end result was as follows: an estimated five million fatalities by the admission of the official Communist agencies.⁴⁰

At that point Stalin laid the foundations of the *kolkhoz* which means the collectivist socialist agricultural system.⁴¹

After all this cruelty, Stalin stood to declare dictatorship – which he had established in all insolence, and stated, “Whoever does not acknowledge the necessity of dictatorship for every revolutionary class to assure its success knows nothing about the history of revolutions or does not want to know anything about this matter.”⁴²

4. During the Second World War there were nearly seventy million casualties of power and control over power, comprising those killed, wounded, disabled, or disappeared.
5. The French occupation forces in Algeria killed more than a million people in the course of the Algerian people’s struggle for independence.
6. In the Vietnam War, one American battalion alone killed nearly half a million from Giap’s troops and people under his command leadership.

Measure everything else against this.ⁱ

ⁱ During the decade when Prophet Muhammad was the Head of State, he was obliged to resort to defensive combat when polytheists attacked the Muslims and suchlike. In all fewer than eighty encounters, combat operations or battles that took place. It was a fundamental principle that the Prophet used to instruct the commander of the troops, who was usually Imam Ali to invite them to Islam, or invite them to think about, or alternatively not fight at all.

The enormous difference

Look at the enormous difference between Islamic and non-Islamic politics.

How is it that in Islamic politics a woman's fear, a child's terror, a camel's bindings and dog bowls are not overlooked or that the supreme leader does not pre-emptively execute his own murderer?

This is in accordance with Islam and its humanitarian policy. You have seen how non-Islamic politics undervalues human beings, dignity and millions and millions of lives.

In this book we shall set out brief extracts on Allah's Messenger's and the Commander of the Faithful's wise policies, which are the best examples of Islamic policy, and take a quick look at the political lines taken in Islam in most matters essential to life and to humanity:

Economic affairs, Health matters, Cultural matters, Justice and freedoms, Combating crime, Unique social security, Construction and agriculture, International relations, Population growth, War and peace, Foreign policy, Borders and customs duties, Nationality, passports and residence permits, and Supreme Leadership.

These will be presented so that it becomes evident that politics is the essence – and at the very heart – of Islam, and that non-Islamic politics lags behind Islamic politics the way a walking man lags behind rockets.

Because the aim was that no blood is shed. It is reported that the total number of those killed during battles and combat operations was about 800. And that was on both sides, in all the eighty battles; over a decade.

Chapter Two

Prophet Muhammad's Wise Policies

﴿...He allows them as lawful what is good and prohibits them from what is bad; He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them﴾¹

Allah's Messenger was the master to the politicians of the world, and was the greatest sophisticated politician the world has ever seen. Indeed, he was a pupil of Allah Almighty and of Gabriel; he was the master of all prophets and the teacher of the whole of mankind.

His politics is what baffled minds and caught the eyes of the world. Through this wise policy, Allah's Messenger was able to gather around Islam the largest possible number of people in a short space of time which astonished history, caused the first and last to be forgotten and wise people of the world would be humbled before it out of awe for its majesty and appreciation of it, the likes of which had never been seen in the long history of the world.

Here we note a few points as examples, which Allah Almighty may bestow upon the Muslims the grace to follow in this age, so that they can recover their countries which were taken away from them, recover their rights which were breached and their dignity which was ripped apart; so that the Muslims can propel the world forward just as Allah's Messenger did when Islam began, and encourage [followers of other] religions and others to embrace Islam willingly, and out of love and yearning for it.

Policy of Steadfastness and Forbearance

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, displayed this great forbearance at the beginning of his call when the idol worshippers sent his uncle Abu Ṭālib, peace be upon him, to him to win him over and get him to give up on that cause...He, peace be upon him and his holy family, said:

“O Uncle, I swear by Allah that if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand on condition that I abandon this cause I would not do so.”²

Then he, peace be upon him and his holy family, continued to show this mighty forbearance through his actions in many situations.

They wanted to kill him many times but he showed forbearance, and the Almighty declared:

﴿And when those who disbelieve plot against thee (O Muhammad) to confine thee, or to kill thee or to drive thee away.﴾³

They said, “His Lord has abandoned him and has become displeased with him,” but he showed forbearance and so Almighty Allah revealed about him:

﴿By the morning hours and by the night when it is stillest thy Lord has not forsaken thee nor has He become displeased.﴾⁴

They mocked him and he showed forbearance and so Almighty Allah revealed about him:

﴿Indeed We will suffice you against the scoffers.﴾⁵

They claimed he was a madman and he showed forbearance until Almighty Allah revealed about him:

﴿In the Name of Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate: Nūn. By the pen and what they write, thou art not, by the Grace of thy Lord, mad or possessed.﴾⁶

They claimed he was a poet and he showed forbearance until Almighty Allah revealed about him:

﴿And We have not taught him poetry; it is not seemly for him. It is only a reminder and a manifest Qur'an.﴾⁷

They claimed he was a liar and he showed forbearance until Allah revealed to him:

﴿Yā Seen. By the wise Qur'an you truly are one of the Messengers.﴾⁸

They claimed he was a soothsayer and he showed forbearance until Allah revealed about him:

﴿Therefore continue to remind, for by the grace of your Lord, you are not a soothsayer, or a madman.﴾⁹

They plotted against him and he showed forbearance and Allah revealed to him:

﴿They plot and plan, and Allah also plans; but the best of planners is Allah.﴾¹⁰

They said fables of the men of old and the Almighty revealed:

﴿Say: He who knows the secret of the heavens and the earth has revealed it. He truly is ever Forgiving, Merciful.﴾¹¹

The hypocrites called him a liar. He showed forbearance and Almighty Allah revealed:

﴿Indeed the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of hell.﴾¹²

They challenged him and picked quarrels with him and he showed forbearance until Almighty Allah revealed:

﴿Indeed those who oppose Allah and His messenger, they will be among the lowest.﴾¹³

They split open his noble forehead and he showed forbearance until Allah, May He be Praised, revealed:

﴿Those who vex Allah's messenger, for them there is a painful punishment.﴾¹⁴

They threw spears at him and he showed forbearance until Allah sent revelation, Mighty is He who said:

«Indeed those who malign Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in the world and the Hereafter.»¹⁵

It is all forbearance and nothing but forbearance.

Policy of Courage

Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, gave the finest example of his policy of courage which knew no cowardice or negligence.

It was the Commander of the Faithful, Ali, peace be upon him, – the brave one who was not, has not and will not ever be surpassed, who used to say, “I swear by Allah that even if all the Arabs unite together against me I shall not run away from the battlefield,”¹⁶ – who declared:

“When the fighting became fierce and fear became vehement, we would seek Allah's Messenger's protection, peace be upon him and his holy family, and stay close to him.”¹⁷

In another hadith Imam Ali, peace be upon him, states:

“If the war became fierce we would stay close to Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. There was no one closer to the enemy than he.”¹⁸

Referring to the Battle of Badr, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, states:

“You saw me at the Battle of Badr when we were staying close to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, who was the closest of us to the enemy. He, peace be upon him and his holy family, was the bravest person that day.”¹⁹

During the Battle of Hunayn, most of the Prophet's companions deserted him, allowing the polytheists to draw near to Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. They wanted to reach him and kill him. It was the Commander of the Faithful, Ali, peace be upon him, who remained steadfast and defended him in that terrifying situation.

In such dire straits as these in which the courageous had fled, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, rushed onto the battlefield with outstanding courage and said, "I am the Prophet. That is no lie. I am the son of Abd al-Muttalib."²⁰

Almighty Allah revealed many verses about that in the Holy Qur'an including His words:

﴿When you ran off precipitately and did not pay attention to any one, and the Messenger was calling you from your rear, so He rewarded you another sorrow on top of (your) sorrow; so that you might not grieve at what had escaped you, nor (at) what befell you; and Allah is aware of what you do.﴾²¹

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, is the one about whom 'Imran ibn Ḥoṣain uttered his famous words:

"Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, would not encounter a single squadron without being the first to strike."²²

He was the one who advanced in the face of every terror, every vicissitude and every horror.

That spread courage among the Muslims; for the boldness of a courageous leader makes the masses courageous, boldness, and steadfast.

Sheikh Ṭabrasi reports in *Makārim al-Akhlaq* that Anas ibn Malik said, "There was terror in Medina and so the Prophet mounted one of Abu Ṭalḥah's horses and said, "We saw nothing but a fleet-footed horse."²³

Another narration on the authority of Anas says, "Allah's Messenger was the best, most courageous and noblest person."

He continued: "The people of Medina were terrified one night and they rushed out towards the noise.

He said: Allah's Messenger met them. He had gone on ahead of them, saying; "Do not be afraid." He was on one of Abu Ṭalḥah's horses and a sword was slung around his neck. "Do not be afraid. We found out that it was a very fast horse."²⁴

What can be gathered from this is that Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, was always alert and always aware of everything that went on around him, as can be seen from the fact that he was the first to arrive at the scene. The Muslims come along and arrive there after Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. This is the courageous policy, the like of which history rarely records for leaders and chiefs.

Leaders of the Muslims who follow the Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, should do nothing other than take that as their code of practice, by which they become known, so that Muslims might be assured of reaching the goal in their long and thorny political journey.

Nations look at their leaders, and, in their political life, they crystallise in the image of their leaders. Courageous leaders breed a courageous nation and vice versa.

Policy of Great Forgiveness

History reveals to us the great forgiveness shown by Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, towards his enemies?

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, set the best example of the forgiveness of Islam, and made everyone understand that Islam came along wanting the best for everyone – for its devotees and its enemies alike. It is not a religion which bears a grudge against anyone nor do some of its strict practices stem from cruelty or rancour. They merely stem from a spirit of applying justice to all. Here are some examples.

With Ghawrath ibn al-Ḥārith

During one of his campaigns, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, had sat down on his own under the shade of a tree, far away from his companions after a flash flood had distanced him from them.

Ghawrath ibn al-Harith came to him and stood over the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, with his sword drawn, his hand lifted to the Prophet and shouted at him, "Who is protecting you from me, Muhammad?"

The Prophet replied, "Allah."

The sword fell out of his hand. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, rushed to the sword, took it and lifted it over Ghawrath and said to him, "What is protecting you from me now, Ghawrath?"

He replied, "Your forgiveness. Accept my apology."

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, left him alone and forgave him.

He went to his people and said to them, "I swear by Allah I have come to you from the best of people."²⁵

Does history tell a story like this story about any of the greats?

An enemy on the road to war brandishing his sword, maliciously and insolently wanting to kill the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family; his power is taken away from him against his will; the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, takes hold of the sword ... and then forgives Him?

This is the forgiveness of Islam which is embodied in Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family.

Oh Allah guide my people

The vexation of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, by the polytheists grew fiercer at the Battle of Ohod when they killed his uncle Hamzah and mutilated his noble body, cutting out his liver, cutting off his fingers and toes and cutting off his nose and ears. All manner of things were done to him, and dozens of Muslims were killed ...

Some of the companions went up to the Prophet and suggested to him to pray to Allah against the polytheists to inflict His punishment on them, as He had punished the unbelievers among people of yore, after their prophets had prayed against them ...

However, he is the Prophet, and his policy of great forgiveness. He refrained from doing so and said, "I was not sent as a curser. On the

contrary, I was sent as an inviter [to Allah] and a blessing. Oh Allah, guide my people for they know not.”²⁶

Forgiving the Bedouin Man

A Bedouin came to the Prophet who had a mantle over his shoulders. The Bedouin pulled the Prophet’s mantle so violently that the edge of the mantle caught the skin of his neck leaving marks on it. He said extremely roughly, “Load up some of Allah’s money which is at your disposal onto these two camels of mine. You would not be loading me up with your own money or your father’s money ...”

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, remained silent for a moment and then he said, “The money is Allah’s money and I am His servant,” he then said, “Will there be any retaliation against you, Bedouin, for what you have done to me?”

He said, “No.”

He asked, “Why?”

He said, “Because you forgive and pardon and do not confront a bad deed with another bad deed.”

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, smiled. He then ordered that wheat be loaded up onto one of the camels and dates onto the other.²⁷

With forgiveness like this the Prophet gathered people around Islam and attracted various groups and members of a number of religions and moral codes.

You Are Free

An example of the Prophet’s great forgiveness was his dealings with the people of the city of Mecca – the unbelievers who falsely attributed partners to Allah – the people of stubbornness, denial, and bigoted tribalism, people of mischief and oppression, people of cruelty and ruthlessness, those who killed his companions, supporters and relatives in numerous wars, those who forced him out of the place of his birth, the land of Allah, the land of his forefathers, the place of his worship for

half a century, those who inflicted all manners of torture on the migrants and killed many of them, those who plotted to kill him, peace be upon him and his holy family, on a number of occasions, all of them ending in failure, those who used all manners of iniquity and brutality in their dealings with the Prophet and with his companions, those whom the Prophet came to conquer, and over whom he gained victory ...

Can you imagine what another person in the Prophet's position would do?

He would have carried out a terrible massacre...

Those present were the actual perpetrators of persecution – not their children – Abu Sufyān,ⁱ Hindd,ⁱⁱ and their ilk, men and women.

However, during the conquest of Mecca when Sa'd ibn 'Obādah carried the banner and began to walk around the streets of Mecca, waving the banner and calling out;

“Today, is the day of slaughter, Today the women will be taken as slaves”²⁸

... by which he meant: we will kill so many Meccans that the corpses and flesh of the dead will pile up one on top of the other and beside each other, and we will take the women as enemy unbeliever slaves.

The Meccans expected this sort of action from an army, the members of which had been expelled from Mecca [their hometown] for so many

ⁱ Abu Sufyān, the father of Mo'āwiyah, waged many wars against the Prophet and masterminded many attacks and assassination attempts against Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

ⁱⁱ Hindd – Abu Sufyān's wife – instigated, enticed, and proactively encouraged the leaders of Quraysh in their military campaigns against Prophet Muhammad. In the course of the battle of Uhud, Hindd is infamous for ordering the killing of the Prophet's loyal and devout uncle – Ḥamzah – as a priority target. After he was killed, Hindd ordered the mutilation of Ḥamzah's body, his liver cut out. Hindd then tried to eat Ḥamzah's liver raw there and then.

years, who had been tortured by those same people of Mecca and had had what was sacred to them as well as their property and their dignity walked all over by those very people.

If the people of Mecca had been in the Islamic army's place and if they had been the victors over the Muslims, they would have done worse than that to them.

In fact the people of Mecca had already carried out a massacre and taken women as slaves as a pre-emptive strike before the "crime"; so just imagine what the people of Mecca would have done if they had the right to retaliate?

The People of Mecca would definitely have destroyed the Muslims had they been in the Muslims' place and had the situation been reversed...

However, Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, the messenger of mercy, messenger of forgiveness, messenger for humanity and messenger of Islam had the strongest aversion to that.

On the contrary, the Prophet recorded a point of distinction in the history of Islam and of humanity, and ordered the companion who had called out to come back...

The Prophet ordered Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, to carry the banner, to enter Mecca calmly and gently and call out tenderly and courteously to the Meccans – the opposite of the other call.

Imam Ali, peace be upon him, called out repeatedly in the streets of Mecca:

"Today is the day of mercy. Today women will be protected."

Then the Prophet gathered the Meccans and called out to them, "What do you think I am going to do to you?"

They said, "You are going to do us good! You are a kind brother, and the son of a kind brother."

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, said; "I say to you as my brother Joseph said:

﴿There shall be no reproof against you.﴾²⁹

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, then addressed them by saying, "Go forth. You are free."

He then said, "O people: whoever says there is no god except Allah is safe...

Whoever enters the Ka'bah is safe...

Whoever closes his door and stays his hand is safe...

Whoever throws away his weapon is safe...

Whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyān is safe...

Whoever enters the house of Hakim ibn Ḥazzām is safe."³⁰

Forgiving Abu Sufyān

When the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, entered the holy city of Mecca and Abu Sufyān came to him; he was the archenemy of the Prophet and his mission –

Abu Sufyān came to the Prophet with the blood of the household and companions of the Prophet on his hands, his heart full of spite and hatred for Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and of Islam, and his eyes full of evil and destruction.

No person in the Prophet's position would have done anything else but confront - in the cruellest way - someone like Abu Sufyān, the chief of conspiracies and mischief, and make an example of him in the harshest manner. However, what Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, did was quite the opposite.

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, forgave him, pardoned [him] and said to him kindly and politely, "Has the time not come for you to declare that there is no god except Allah and that I am Allah's Messenger?"

The stunned Abu Sufyān said, “May my father and my mother be your sacrifice! How noble you are! What good relations you maintain! How forbearing you are!”³¹

... and the Jewess

Sheikh Kulayni, may Allah bless him, reports in *al-Kafi* that Imam Bāqir, peace be upon him, narrated,

“The Jewess who had poisoned a sheep meant for the Prophet’s consumption, peace be upon him and his holy family, was brought to Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family.

He said to her, “What drove you to do what you did?”

She said, “I said [to myself] if he were a Prophet it would not harm him, and if he were a king then I would rid the people of him.”

The narrator said, “And so Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, forgave her.”³²

Can you see any king or president forgiving a person who had attempted a crime such as this?

Would you hear a story like this about anyone who is not a prophet or saint?

No, certainly not.

It is Prophethood.

It is a strong bond with the Creator.

It is forgiveness which has reached its pinnacle.

Furthermore, it is Islam – that which combines all merits and laudable characteristics at their very highest.

Any Muslim Head of State who follows Allah’s Messenger’s line will be just like that.

Examples of Allah’s Messenger’s forgiveness, peace be upon him and his holy family, are many...very many. To recount them [all] would require a volume to themselves.

Hospitality towards delegations

The Prophet set the record in the hospitality he showed to delegations from the tribes, clans and even from the Jews, Christians, idolaters and hypocrites who came to see him – for he would honour them and treat them with respect.ⁱ

There is reference in history to his personally welcoming delegations. He would clear space for their chiefs at seated gatherings, sit with them and keep them company in conversation. He would receive them with a radiant smile, speak to them gently, sympathetically and pleasantly, and ask them about their families and countries. He would pray for them, change their unattractive names to good names, be gentle with their ignorant ones and forgive their insults.

He would release their prisoners when a delegation came to and ask the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, to do so and return them to their families.

He, peace be upon him and his holy family, would wear his best clothes if a delegation came and he would tell his companions to do the same out of respect for them.

He, peace be upon him and his holy family, would give presents and donate foodstuff, clothing and so on to them.

In short, he, peace be upon him and his holy family, was the only one who would do those things in cruel and difficult circumstances such as those.

These generous practices would lead many of them to embrace Islam and abandon their baseless schools of thought, idol worship and corrupt religions.

History has recorded much of that and we will select some of it and as examples, by way of a brief summary:³³

ⁱ The common societal order that prevailed in the Arabian Peninsula was a tribal order governed by tribal values; one tribe was known for bravery, another for generosity, and suchlike.

The Muzayyanah Delegation

They came to Medina and came to see Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. They were four hundred men in total. The Prophet gave them gifts and honoured them with this phrase:

“You were migrants (*muhajjiroon*) where you were. Return to your possessions.”ⁱ

They went back to their homeland and began to call the rest of their community to Islam.

The Juhayna Delegation

They came to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and greeted him. He entertained them as guests, gave them gifts and asked them, “Who are you?”

They said, “The sons of Ghaylān.”

He said, “Rather you are the sons of Rushdān.”

The name of their valley was Ghawā (meaning: “gone astray”) and the Prophet called it “Rushd” (meaning “right guidance”).ⁱⁱ

He planned their mosque for them.

And so they went back to their home and invited others to Islam.

The Ashja‘ Delegation

They came to the Prophet. He was generous to them, made a peace treaty with them and entertained them as guests. They became Muslim as a result of his treatment of them. There were a few hundred of them. They went back as hundreds of unwavering inviters to Islam.

ⁱ By saying this to them, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, is giving them the status of the migrants who sacrificed so much and migrated with the Prophet from Mecca to Medina, and thus were revered in the Muslim community.

ⁱⁱ It was the Prophet’s policy to change the names that were unpleasant to pleasant ones – whether names of individuals or of places.

The Tha'labah Delegation

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, entertained them as guests and gave them presents. They went back joyful and contented and invited people to Almighty Allah.

The Tamim Delegation

They came to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, as intermediaries to secure the release of their prisoners whom the Muslim army had taken in the course of battles with the unbelievers. They entered Medina and came behind the Prophet's home while he was at home. They were more than eighty men from the heads of Tamim and they cried out, "O Muhammad! Come out and face us." It was then that the Almighty's words were revealed:

﴿Those who shout out to thee from without the inner apartments - most of them lack understanding.﴾³⁴

Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, showed them generosity and respect, returned their prisoners to them and gave them presents after entertaining them as guests. They went back inviting [people] to Allah and to Islam.

The Fazārah Delegation

They came to Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, a few dozen men. The Prophet welcomed them, entertained them as guests and showed them generosity. They were going through a drought and so they asked the Prophet to pray for them. They complained to him about the scarcity of water and so the Prophet prayed for them. Allah answered his prayer, the sky brought them a deluge, and thus they had enough water.

The Muḥarib Delegation

They were ten people who came to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and became Muslim. The Prophet showed them generosity and gave them presents and they gave him a guarantee that their relatives would follow them into Islam.

The Kilāb Delegation

Thirteen men came as Muslims and they greeted Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, with the Islamic greeting; peace be upon you (*al-salaamu alaykum*). The Prophet showed them generosity, welcomed them and gave them presents.

Aqil ibn Ka'b's Delegation

Seven people; they had become Muslim and the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, showered them with gifts and presents. They went back, content and having pleased him, and called their people and other people to Islam.

Bani al-Bukā's Delegation

They came to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and he ordered accommodation for them, that they be entertained as guests and gave them presents. He prayed for good things and blessing for them.

They left him and returned content, their hands full, and they called the people to the high moral standard and merits of the Messenger.

Sulaym's Delegation

One of them came initially to Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and his name was Qays ibn Nusaybah. He heard what the Prophet said and saw his very kind and generous nature. He was drawn to his merits and to his kindness. So he became a Muslim and went back to his people calling them to Allah. He stood among them and said;

“I have heard the accounts of the Byzantines, the domination of the Persians, poetry of the Arabs, foretellings of the soothsayer, the sayings of Himyar'sⁱ princes' sayings (*maqawil*) but none of their words can compare to the words of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.”

ⁱ They are a group of Arab people.

He concentrated on inviting people to Islam and went to great lengths to encourage his people to turn to Islam. He relentlessly endeavoured to turn them one after the other to Islam both in groups and individually. In the year of the conquest, he came along with seven hundred people, some of whom became Muslim for the first time at the hands of the Prophet and some of whom reaffirmed their Islam in his presence, peace be upon him and his holy family.

A historical record on Bani Sulaym states:

“Rāshid of Bani Sulaym was a custodian and keeper of one of Bani Sulaym’s idols and the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, as per his custom would order them to break the idols. Rāshid saw a male fox urinate on the head of the idol, and so he went on to recite the verse:

“What kind of a lord is it upon whose head a fox urinates?!

Humiliated has been he on whom foxes urinate.”

Then Rāshid went to the idol and broke it.

He came to the Messenger, and the Prophet asked him, “What is your name?”

He replied, “Ghāwi ibn Abd al-‘Ozzā”, [Ghawi means “the one who has gone astray” Abd means slave, and ‘Ozzā is one the main three idols of Quraysh; so the whole name means “The one who has gone astray, the son of the Slave of ‘Ozzā”]

The Prophet said to him. “No, on the contrary, you are Rāshid ibn Abd Rabbeh”, [meaning The Rightly Guided the son of the Slave of his Lord].

And so the man became a Muslim upon seeing Allah’s Messenger’s manners, and hearing his delightful words and the words of the Qur’an. He went back to call others to Islam.

‘Āmir ibn Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah’s Delegation

They came to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and greeted him and the Prophet asked them, “Who are you?”

They replied, “Sons of ‘Āmir ibn Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah.”

The Prophet welcomed them, instructed them to break their idols and to worship the One and Only Allah. He taught them some of the obligatory duties of Islam, and showed them generosity and esteem.

They went back to their people as Muslims and began to invite them to Islam.

Abd al-Qays’ Delegation

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, wrote to the people of Bahrain to present him with twenty of their men.

They presented them and the Prophet showed them esteem and generosity. He entertained them as guests for a while. He said: “Wonderful people are the [tribe of] Abd al-Qays. Oh Allah, forgive Abd al-Qays.”

He said to their chief, Abdullah: “You have two characteristics which Allah loves – wisdom and patience.”

He taught them from the Qur’an and the laws of Islam, ethics and high moral standards, gave them presents and bade them farewell.

They went back calling people to Allah and to Islam.

The Taghlib Delegation

They came to Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, some of them Muslims and some of them Christians. The Prophet showed all of them generosity and received them with joy and cheerfulness of face. The Christians had hung golden crucifixes on themselves.

Allah's Messenger reached a settlement with the Christians for their protection under the Islamic government in return for *jizyah* tax, and rewarded the Muslims with gifts and presents.

They all went back talking about the Prophet's morals and virtues.

The Bani Hanifah Delegation

They came to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, as a delegation. They were non-Muslims. They saw Allah's Messenger's manners, the generosity he showed them, his humility and his guidance. The Prophet gave them gifts and presents, taught them some of the laws of Islam and precepts of the religion, ethics and good manners. They went back as Muslims who propagated Islam.

The Ṭayy Delegation

They came to Medina and came to see Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. They saw how well he received them and his words and actions had an effect on them. They all became Muslims and the Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, showed them generosity, ordered that they be entertained as guests, gave them presents and they went back wealthy.

The Tajayyub Delegation

They came to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, as Muslims when they heard about him and [when word] of his honesty, trustworthiness and miracles reached them. The Prophet was kind to them and welcomed them.

He instructed Bilālⁱ to serve them with the best hospitality and to give them the nicest presents.

ⁱ Bilāl was a black African slave owned by one of the leaders of the Quraysh. When Bilāl heard the Prophet's message, he believed in him, and as a result he was subjected to severe torture by his master. He was bought by the Prophet from his owner, and set free. He converted to Islam. Because of his devotion to the Prophet he became the Prophet's aide and *mo'azzin* – the one

The Sa'd Hudhaym Delegation

They came to Medina as idol worshippers and saw the Prophet's laudable morals, peace be upon him and his holy family, his great affability, generosity and the esteem he showed them. They all became Muslims and pledged allegiance to the Prophet with regard to every command and prohibition, in times of peace, and war, ready to sacrifice their property, family and children.

He then appointed a commander for them to guide them towards obedience to Allah and to govern them according to Allah's law.

He appointed them as his messengers to their people to call them to Islam.

They acted [accordingly] and in no time their people became Muslims at the hands of this delegation.

The Balā Delegation

They came to Medina as unbelievers and came to see the son of one of their people (Ruwayfi' ibn Thābit al-Balawi) who had become a Muslim. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, ordered that they be entertained as guests and that they be treated with esteem.

They then came to the Prophet and became Muslims when they saw how great his morals were and how pleasant his company was. They endeavoured to gain a clear understanding of the religion, learned some of the laws of Islam and learned to distinguish between what is lawful and what is unlawful. Then the Prophet gave them gifts and presents and they went back to their people wealthy, calling their [people] to Almighty Allah, and because of them, many of their people became Muslims.

who calls for the daily prayers. He remained loyal to the Prophet and his holy family, and did not give in to any of their enemies.

The Bahra' Delegation from Yemen

They came to see Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and his generous nature and pleasant company attracted them. They all became Muslims and learned some of the duties prescribed by Islam. When they were ready to go back home to their people, the Prophet gave them gifts and presents, and appointed them as messengers to their people. They acted [accordingly] and many of them became Muslims at their hands.

The Azd Delegation

They entered Medina and came to see Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. Then all of them became Muslims. Allah's Messenger said to them *inter alia*: "Welcome to you, oh people with the most handsome faces who are most honest in their meetings, who are the best spoken and the most trustworthy."

He accepted their slogan, gave them gifts and presents, and they went back, wanting for nothing, inviting their people to Islam.

The Hamdān Delegation

They came to see him, peace be upon him and his holy family, and he encouraged them with the following words:

"What an excellent clan Hamdān is. How quick they are to assist and how persevering they are in their striving."

He showed them generosity and ordered that they be entertained as guests and given presents. They all became Muslims and went back to their country calling people to Islam and to the Messenger of Islam, peace be upon him and his holy family.

The Ghāmid Delegation

They came to Medina as unbelievers, and there were at the time many other delegations who had arrived in the city. Thus they stayed at Baqi' *al-Gharqad* (of the Boxthorn) –the cemetery of the people of Medina. There they put on their best clothes, cleaned themselves up and set off to see the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family. When they

were met with generosity and esteem at his hands, his excellent reception of them and gentleness of disposition, they became Muslims and learned some of the Qur'an.

When they wanted to go back, the Prophet gave them gifts and presents and they went back to their people calling them to Islam.

The Nakha' Delegation

This is the delegation of the tribe whose most famous member is Mālik al-Ashtar.ⁱ They came from Yemen and came to see Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. The Prophet said this prayer for them: "O Allah Bless the Nakha'."

They saw the Prophet and his lovely behaviour towards the people, became Muslims on their own behalf and on behalf of their people on account of their being their representatives and deputies. The Prophet gave them gifts and presents and they went back to their people.

After a while two hundred of their men came as a delegation to Allah's Messenger affirming their Islam, making themselves subject to its laws.

The Prophet showed them extra generosity and respect and prayed for the best for all of them.

The Rahawiyyin Delegation

They are a clan from Mudhḥij. They came to see Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. They looked at the Prophet, saw his wonderful lifestyle, the wonderful way he spoke, his wonderful deeds and his wonderful behaviour towards them. They all became Muslims and learned some of the surahs (chapters) of the Qur'an. They

ⁱ Mālik al-Ashtar was Imam Ali's most loyal devotee and courageous military commander, who served as his army's Chief of Staff. Later Imam Ali, peace be upon him, appointed him as the governor of Egypt. Mālik al-Ashtar was murdered by Mo'āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān when his agents slipped poison into Mālik's honey. After the assassination of Mālik al-Ashtar, Mo'āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān is renowned for declaring his infamous words, "God has soldiers of honey".

presented Allah's Messenger with gifts and the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, presented them with gifts. They went back to their people inviting them to Islam.

The Haḍramaut Delegation

They came to Medina and came to see Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. They were kings of Haḍramaut and their chief, Wā'il ibn Ḥajar al-Haḍrami, said to the Prophet: "I have come with a taste for Islam and for leaving my old life behind me."

Allah's Messenger ordered that an announcement be made to the Muslims for "Congregational Prayer" as a welcome for them and in honour of them. The Prophet prayed for him and for them. The Muslims congregated in the mosque and received the delegation cheerfully and with a great deal of respect.

Then the Prophet ordered that they be entertained as guests and that they be given presents – and plenty thereof – after speaking to them nicely, giving them a nice place to sit and putting on a lavish banquet for them. They all became Muslims and they bade the Prophet farewell. They went back to their people calling them to Islam.

The Kinda Delegation

They came to see Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. He welcomed them and ordered the Muslims to welcome them, and be hospitable to them and so the Muslims entertained them as guests and showed them a great deal of respect.

They then gave them gifts and presents and they became Muslims. They went back to their hometown calling them to Allah.

The Aslam Delegation

They came to see the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, having already become Muslims, saying, "We believe in Allah and His Messenger."

The Prophet said to them, "Aslam – may Allah keep them safe."

He wrote them a document explaining *ṣadaqah*ⁱ and some of the obligatory religious duties, gave them gifts and showered them with presents. They went back to their people calling [them] to Allah's Messenger. Because of them many of their people became Muslims.

The Jayshān Delegation

They came to see the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family. He showed them deference and treated them as people of importance. He ordered the Muslims to welcome them and entertain them as guests. They did so and they became Muslims at the hands of the Prophet and they prayed with him. Then, they went back to their clan calling them to Allah.

A Winning Policy

These were examples of some of the delegations which came to Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, of some of the beneficence shown by the Prophet towards them, of his inclusive policy with respect to them, and his drawing them to Islam and to Allah, and making their hearts incline through beneficence. There are hundreds and hundreds of delegations which used to come to Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and he would treat them in the same wonderful way.

Through this wise and inclusive policy, a policy of bringing together disparate factions, a policy of overlooking faults and of revealing and emphasising on the positive aspects, Allah's Messenger was able to educate those people whom [both] Allah and history called ignorant, emphasising the fact that they were ignorant and ignorant of their own ignorance – ignorant from every perspective ... ignorant in terms of their upbringing, their education and information they had, of how to read and write, of interaction with people, of irrigating and herding

ⁱ Khums, zakah, and other fiscal matters come under the category of *sadaqah*, and thus Allah's Messenger wrote to them about the Islamic monetary and taxing system.

animals, ignorant in matters of peace and war and consequently ignorant in terms of everything. Through this intelligent policy the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, was able to turn them into a great nation which dazzled history and baffled thinking people.

So much so that Almighty Allah who had described them before they became Muslims as “the ignorant”,ⁱ instead described them after they had become Muslims as the greatest nation by saying in the Holy Qur'an: ﴿You are the best of nations that has been raised up for mankind.﴾³⁵

Accordingly, it is incumbent upon Muslims in their dealings and interaction with others in this day and age – in which enemies of Islam and Muslims spare no effort to overwhelm them and put an end to Islam and the Muslims – that their policy be a policy of inclusivity, unity, forgiveness and encouragement, so that they can, with Allah's will, recover their unbeatable strength.

Policy of Keeping Promises

The Messenger's policy– which was managing countries and people in the true sense of the word as Almighty Allah wishes and according to His approval – was also based on keeping promises, sticking to one's word, and, moral rectitude.

Chroniclers tell many wonderful stories about that. We will refer to a number of them as examples:

Waiting Three Nights

In the holy city of Mecca, before the start of the Prophetic Mission, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, had made an arrangement with someone to wait for that person to come. The man

ⁱ The Almighty said the holy Qur'an: ﴿Do they then seek after a judgment of (the days of) ignorance?﴾ (5):50. He also said, may He be praised: ﴿a dazzling display, like that of the former Times of Ignorance.﴾ (33):33. The Almighty also refers to: ﴿the heat and cant of ignorance.﴾ (48):26.

went away, forgot his appointment and left the Prophet waiting for him in the same place for three nights.

After three [nights] the young man came and found the Prophet still waiting for him in the same place.³⁶

Khadija's Friend

It is narrated that Lady Khadijah – the Mother of the Faithful – had one friend left when her relatives, the women of her clan and the whole of Quraysh had abandoned her. She would provide support for Lady Khadijah, come and see her and comfort and console her through her loneliness.

When Lady Khadijah passed away, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, would send gifts to that woman out of loyalty to her. He would say:

“She would come to visit us when Khadijah was alive. Indeed loyalty is part of faith.”³⁷

The Negus' Delegation

It is narrated that a delegation sent by the Negus – the ruler of Abyssinia – came to Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. He put them up and treated them with deference and respect. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, would personally get up to bring them some of the things they needed.

One of his companions said to him, “We can do that for you,” but he said, “They treated our companions with deference and it is my pleasure to see to their needs.”ⁱ

ⁱ Ibn Kathir, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, vol.2 p31. This is in reference to the time when some of the companions of the Prophet, on his instructions, migrated to Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), to seek protection from the persecution of the Quraysh. The Quraysh tried to have them extradited, but after hearing their argument and learning about their belief of the religion of Islam, from their leader Ja'far ibn Abu Tālib, Negus – the king of Abyssinia – gave them refuge and rejected the Quraysh delegation's demands.

With His Wet-Nursing “Parents”

It is narrated that his parents and brother through wet-nursing came to see him. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, hugged his brother through wet-nursing and showed him deference and respect. He spread out his cloak for his “parents”, presented them with gifts and gave them presents. He did the same for his sister through wet-nursing al-Shaymā',³⁸

Return with the Anṣār

When Almighty Allah granted the Holy Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, victory over the holy city of Mecca he did not stay there and let the Anṣār go back to Medina on their own. He did not just involve them so long as times were hard and abandon them as soon as victory had been achieved.

Instead, he left one of his companions in charge of Mecca and set off on the way back to Medina, keeping the Anṣār company who had followed him in times of hardship, given him shelter and assisted him.

[This was] in spite of the fact that Mecca was the place of his birth, his city where he had spent more than fifty years, the city of his parents, and contained the Holy Ka'bah, the tombs of his parents and grandparents, their remains and the remains of the previous Prophets from Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, peace be upon them, etc. All this was to show loyalty to the Anṣār.

He said, “Today is a day of good deeds and loyalty” and then headed towards the Anṣār, saying, “To live and die with you.”³⁹

This is unique in the history of the greats, leaders and revolutionaries because if they are turned out of their homelands, after the revolution, they all return home once they have triumphed over the opposing forces – all of them except the Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family; he did not go back to Mecca and stay there.

Instead, he returned to Medina with the Anṣār and remained there until Almighty Allah granted unto him eternal rest and he met his Maker. He

did not live in the holy city of Mecca and did not even spend a single night there.

Policy of Universal Mercy

In the whole of history, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, was “number one” in mercy insofar as he was unparalleled by any person of importance or leader.

In the following section we will give some examples to illustrate thousands of similar [incidents] referred to in the chronicles:

With the Bedouin

A Bedouin man came to see Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, to ask him for something. The Prophet gave it to him and said to him, “Have I been kind to you?”

The Bedouin replied, “No. Nor have you been good.”

That was in the Prophet’s gathering in the presence of his companions, the Muhajiroun and Ansar. The Muslims became angry. It was very difficult for them to put up with this harshness on the part of the Bedouin man. One of the companions got up to admonish and reproach him.

The Prophet signalled to him to stop.

Then he got up, went into his house, sent for the Bedouin and gave him more. He then asked him, “Have I been good to you?”

The Bedouin man replied, “Yes. May Allah reward you greatly in your family and your tribe. Then the Bedouin man bade him farewell and left.

Then the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, turned to his companions and said:

“Verily the similitude of myself and this Bedouin is that of a man whose camel has run away. People going after it only drives it further away. Its owner shouts, ‘Leave me and my camel. I am kinder to it, and know it better. He heads towards it stands in front of it. He takes some

sweepings from the ground, and drives it back until it comes and kneels down. He puts his saddle on it and mounts it. Verily had I left you be at the point where the man said what he said, you would have killed him and he would have gone to hell.”⁴⁰

Mercy for His People

When the idolaters rejected Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, harassed him, spat in his holy face, ostracised him, tortured, drove away and killed his companions, left no stone unturned in their hunt for them ... and did what they did for many long, hard years, archangel Gabriel came down to him from Almighty Allah and said:

“Verily has Allah heard what your people say to you and how they have answered you, and He has told the angel of the mountains that you are to command him to do to them as you wish.”

And so the angel of the mountains called out to him, peace be upon him and his holy family, greeted him and said:

“Command me to do as you wish. If you wish, I will make the great mountains fall on them.”

The Prophet said: “I would rather that Allah brought out of their loins those who worship Allah alone and who do not attribute any partners to Him.”⁴¹

Keeping Prayer Short

If he prayed alone he, peace be upon him and his holy family, would draw his prayer out, prolong the invocation while bowing and prostrating, and prolong his recitation, his glorification, praise, and utterances of the phrases, “There is no god but Allah”, and “Allah is too great [to be described]”.

If he prayed in congregation he would keep it short, to the point that it is reported in a holy hadith: “Allah's Messenger's prayer was the shortest full prayer.”⁴²

It is reported that he would keep his prayer short out of compassion for the children who would come to the mosque with their mothers.”⁴¹

Keeping His Cautionary Sermons Short

It is reported that he would keep his cautionary sermons short, fearing that his companions would get bored. He would not deliver too many cautionary sermons to them but if he did, he would not drag them out. Instead he would make them few and keep them short.

True enough, he would occasionally prolong them if circumstances dictated a need for that.

Were I not to place too great a burden...

He would be sure to avoid placing too great a burden upon the Muslims through a deed or word. It is reported that on a number of occasions he made declarations that included:

“Were I not to place too great a burden upon my people...”⁴³

“Were it not for the fact that your people were only recently idolaters ...”⁴⁴ and suchlike.

Rescuing a Woman

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said that Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, saw a slave-girl sitting and crying on one of the roads and so the Prophet asked her, “What is the matter?”

She said, “Oh, Allah’s Messenger! My household gave me four dirhams to buy something for them. I lost them and I am afraid to go back to them.”

So Allah’s Messenger gave her four dirhams and said, “Go back to your household.”

ⁱ al-Bahrani, *Hilyat al-Abrar*, vol.1 p328 no.5 chapter44 which says that Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: “I begin praying, wanting to prolong it but then I hear a child cry and so I prayed quickly because I know how distressing it is for his mother to hear him cry.”

Allah's Messenger went on His way but lo and behold the slave-girl was still sitting on the road and crying.

Allah's Messenger asked her, "What is the matter? Why are you not going back to your household?"

She replied, "Oh, Allah's Messenger, I have taken so long that I am scared that they are going to hit me."

So Allah's Messenger said to her, "Go on ahead of me and show me the way to your household."

So Allah's Messenger went along until he reached the door of her house. He then said, "Peace be upon you, people of the house."

They replied, "Peace and Allah's Mercy and blessings be upon you, Allah's Messenger."

Allah's Messenger said, "This slave-girl kept you waiting a long time but do not do her any harm."

They replied, "She is free on account of your visit."⁴⁵

Can you imagine any leader other than Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, or whoever follows in his footsteps personally, having the humility to see to his subjects' needs as insignificant as these?

Compassion for Animals

His mercy applied to everything, even to animals and he would tell others to do the same.

He is reported as saying much on the subject and by way of example:

"Allah prescribed doing good in relation to everything."

It is reported that when Allah's Messenger saw a hobbled, saddled she-camel he asked: "Where is its owner?" "Tell him to get ready to be held to account". The Prophet also said: A master has six duties to his beast: to feed it when he disembarks, to offer it water when he passes by water, not to beat it unless it deserves it, not to load it up beyond its capability,

not to make it travel further than it is able to, and to wait long enough between milking it.⁴⁶

Even when it comes to slaughtering the animal the prophet used to say;

“One’s blade must be sharp so that the animal does not suffer.”⁴⁷

Imam Ali, peace be upon him, states:

“Fear Allah in the matter of His servants and His cities; because you will be questioned even about lands and beasts.”⁴⁸

It is narrated that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, said, “Whoever kills a Sparrow in vanity and frivolity, it will come on the Day of Judgement crying to Allah saying, “O Lord! This person killed me for a game and in vain; did not benefit from me, nor allowed me to live and eat from the seeds of the land.”⁴⁹

Imam Ali narrates that Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, passed by a group of people who were target practicing a live chicken, and so he said, “Who are these?! May Allah cruse them.”⁵⁰

It is reported that Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said, “A woman was condemned to hellfire because of a cat; she had tied it without feeding it or allowing to fend for itself.”⁵¹

In another narration Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said, “A woman was going through a desert when she became very thirsty, found a well, climbed down, and drank from it. When she claimed up, she found a dog that was suffering thirst, so she climbed down again, filled her footwear with water, brought it up and fed the dog. Allah Almighty appreciated her deed and forgave her.” Those around him said, “O Messenger of Allah! Are we rewarded even in the case of animals? The Prophet replied, “Yes, there is a reward for the thirst of every soul.”⁵²

It is reported that before his death, amongst the other things, Imam Sajjad, peace be upon him, instructed that after him, his camel be treated kindly, fed, and not be made to carry things or travel on after him. He

had gone to the hajj pilgrimage on twenty occasions and he never hit her with a stick once.⁵³

Giving Gifts to Friends and Foes alike

Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, set the record in his gift giving, generosity and beneficence to the point that it was said of him:

“He would give donations to people in a manner of one who does not fear poverty [as a result of this practice of his].⁵⁴

He would give to the Muhajiroun.

He would give to the Anṣār.

He would give to the people of Medina.

He would give to villagers and country folk.

He would give to the Muslims.

He would give to the hypocrites.

He would also give to non-Muslims to cause their hearts to incline and to discourage them from plotting against Islam and the Muslims.

History records the Prophet's unique generosity towards his enemies and the enemies of Islam such as Abu Sufyān, his offspring and those who followed in their footsteps.

It is reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, gave generously from the spoils of war of Ḥunayn even to the enemies of Islam – to Abu Sufyān and his son Mo'āwiyah; 'Ikrimah son of Abu Jahl; Ṣafwān son of Umayyah; Ḥārith son of Hishām; Suhayl son of 'Amr; al-Aqra' son of Ḥābis; Uyayna son of Ḥiṣn; Hummām (Suhayl's brother); Malik son of 'Awf and 'Alqamah son of 'Alāthah. The Prophet would give them each one hundred camels, along with their herdsmen, and sometimes more than that and sometimes less.⁵⁵

Reported in the Prophet's biography by chroniclers such as Ibn Hishām:

“Then Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, went back to whoever was left in al-Ja‘rāna and divided the spoils of war he had come by in the Battle of Ḥunayn among those of the Quraysh and of the rest of the Arabs whose hearts still had to be caused to incline. There was neither a little nor a lot left over for the Anṣār.

It is said in the alternative that he made some small provision for the Anṣār and gave the bulk to the hypocrites.

Muhammad ibn Ishāq states:

“He gave a hundred camels to Abu Sufyān ibn Ḥarb, a hundred to his son Mo‘āwiyah,

a hundred to Naḍr ibn Ḥārith ibn Kaldah,

a hundred to al-‘Ala ibn Ḥārithah al-Thaqafi (who was Bani Zohrah’s ally),

a hundred to Ḥārith ibn Hishām from Bani Makhzoum,

a hundred to Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im (from Bani Nawfal ibn Abd Manāf),

a hundred to Mālīk ibn ‘Awf al-Naṣri,

a hundred to ‘Alqamah ibn ‘Allāthah,

a hundred to al-Aqra’ ibn Ḥābis,

a hundred to ‘Oyaynah ibn Ḥiṣn,

a hundred to Suhayl ibn ‘Amr,

a hundred to Ḥawaiṭabs ibn Abd al-‘Ozzā ibn Abu Qays,

a hundred to Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah,

Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, gave fewer than a hundred to various men from Quraysh including:

Makhramah ibn Nawfal al-Zuhri;

‘Umayr ibn Wahb al-Jamḥi, and

Hishām ibn ‘Amr (a member of the clan of Bani ‘Āmir ibn Lu‘ay)

The Prophet gave fifty camels to Sa'id ibn Yarbou' ibn 'Ankashah ibn 'Āmir ibn Makhzoum, and fifty camels to al-Sahmi.

It is also reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, gave to others whose hearts remained to be swayed, and, to the chiefs of the idol worshippers upon their becoming Muslims to cause their hearts and the hearts of their people to incline, and, to the rest of Quraysh from Mecca.

Similarly, he gave to others from the Arab tribes. Out of them, Ibn Hishām mentions the following in his biography of the Prophet:

Ṭulayq ibn Sufyān ibn Umayyah;

Khālīd ibn Osayed ibn Abu al-'Ays ibn Umayyah;

Shaybah ibn 'Othmān ibn Abu Ṭalḥah ibn Abd al-Dār;

Abu al-Sanābil ibn Ba'kak ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Umaylah;

'Ikrimah ibn 'Āmir ibn Hishām ibn Abd Manāf;

Zuhayr ibn Abu Umayyah ibn Mughirah;

Khālīd ibn Hishām ibn Mughirah;

Hishām ibn al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah;

Sufyān ibn Abd al-Asad;

Al-Sā'ib ibn Abu al-Sā'ib ibn 'Ā'idh;

Muṭi' ibn al-Aswad ibn Ḥārithah;

Abu Jahm ibn Ḥudhayfah ibn Ghānim;

Uḥayḥah ibn Umayya ibn Khalaf;

'Umayr ibn Wahb ibn Khalaf;

'Udayy ibn Qays ibn Hudhāfah;

Hishām ibn 'Amr ibn Rubay'ah ibn al-Ḥārith;

Nawfal ibn Mo'āwiyah ibn 'Urwa ibn Ṣakhr;

‘Alqamah ibn ‘Alā’ah ibn ‘Awf;

Lubayd ibn Rubay‘ah ibn Kilāb;

Khālīd ibn Hudhah ibn Rubay‘ah; and

Abbās ibn Mirdās ibn Abu ‘Āmir.⁵⁶

This is one example of the policy of generosity practised by Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, in early days of the first Islamic government on the face of the earth. Perhaps this is one of a kind in the entire history of mankind.

This is because a single camel at that time was worth a fortune to a person just the same as someone today who owns a luxury car, something similar or even something greater. A single camel was worth the equivalent of a car, as its meat was eaten, its milk was drunk and its hair was worn. It is the same as if a person today gave fifty cars or suchlike to every head of the opposition after defeating them and gaining hegemony over them.

Is there anything like this in history?

This Islamic policy of causing the hearts of enemies, their communities and their followers to incline, ought to be followed by whoever follows in the footsteps of Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and who wants Islam to be established on the face of the earth through love and pleasant words just as Allah’s Messenger used to do, not by force and violence as done by others in the past and today.

His hauberk was put up as collateral

An example of his wonderful generosity that is recorded in history, is that when he died he had his hauberk put up as collateral to look after his family’s expenses.

It is reported on the authority of Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, on the authority of his father Imam Bāqir, peace be upon him, who said:

“Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, left behind neither a dirham nor a dinar,ⁱ nor a slave, nor a servant, nor a sheep nor a camel. He was taken, peace be upon him and his holy family, and his hauberk was put up as collateral with one of the Jews of Medina in exchange for twenty *ṣā’*ⁱⁱ of barley which he had borrowed to provide for his family.”⁵⁷

Sheikh Ṭabrasiⁱⁱⁱ reports in *Makārim al-Akhlāq* on the authority of Ibn Abbas who said, “Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, passed away having left hauberk as collateral with a Jewish man in exchange for thirty *ṣā’* of barley which he had taken to provide for his dependants.”⁵⁸

Whether the loan taken out by Allah’s Messenger towards the end of his life was twenty *ṣā’* or thirty *ṣā’* i.e. equivalent to approximately sixty or ninety kilograms of barley with his hauberk put up as collateral, [either way] this is an amazing historical fact:

Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, who would give hundreds and hundreds of camels to his enemies...

Allah’s Messenger to whom the [whole] world bowed down!...

Allah’s Messenger at whose disposal were enormous amounts of money...

He dies with his hauberk having been put up as collateral in exchange for barley to feed his dependants.

He would give away all the livestock, gold, silver, pulses, and so on which came into his possession to the point where he had nothing left to feed his dependants...

He then has nothing left to buy something simple to support his family.

ⁱ A dirham, which is the smallest unit of currency, is one silver coin, and a dinar is a gold coin equivalent to ten dirhams.

ⁱⁱ A *ṣā’* is a unit of measurement equivalent to 3kg approximately.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sheikh Ṭabrasi is one of the prominent Shi’a scholars of 12th century AD.

He then finds he has no clothes or furnishings or commodities to put up as collateral in exchange for a few kilograms of barley and so he is forced to put up his hauberk as collateral.

Is this not one of the most amazing historical facts?

Muslim leaders ought to follow the example of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family.

He is a role model and a beautiful pattern of conduct for them to follow, as the Wise Qur'an states:

﴿Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern of conduct for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of Allah.﴾⁵⁹

He died in debt

“Debt is a worry at night and humiliation by day.”⁶⁰

This is one of Allah's Messenger's sayings.

However, this refers to debt which a person incurs for his desires.

There is another kind of debt which is an honour at night and something to be proud of during the day.

It is debt [incurred] for the sake of Islam and the Muslims.

Even though millions and millions of livestock and gifts would come into Allah's Messenger's possession, he would still be in debt most of the time and frequently incur debt for one reason or another.

When he died, he was in debt.

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said, “Allah's Messenger was in debt when he died.”⁶¹

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, appointed people to call out on the streets and alleys during the Hajj to inform people of the attempt to track down Allah's Messenger's debts so that they could be paid off. One of the testamentary instructions he gave to and

obligations he imposed upon the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, was to settle his debts. He said to him:

“Ali is part of me and I am part of Ali. No one can settle my debts apart from myself or Ali.”⁶²

He said: “Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib [alone can] keep my promises and settle my debt.”⁶³

Qatādah said, “We were told that for three years running Ali called out during the [Hajj] season, “Whoever Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, was indebted to should come to us so that we can settle up on his behalf.”⁶⁴

Some of them say, “The Prophet’s debt just meant his promises and it amounted to eighty thousand dirhams and he [i.e. Imam Ali] kept these promises.”⁶⁵

I stress this opinion - based on personal judgement (*ijtihād*) - is refuted by many clear statements in which the conjunction “and” appears between “promises” and “debts” or vice versa – between “debts” and “promises”.

Moreover, I rely on the variant expression of “keeping” [a promise] and “settling” [a debt] in one hadith the transmission of which is *mustafīd* (widely reported though not indubitable), along with the fact that he was in debt for a few *ṣā'* of barley against which he had given his hauberk as collateral.

If this proves anything, it proves his great bounty and his unique and extraordinary generosity. Muslim leaders should follow the example of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, follow his path and emulate his way of life.

Ali was in debt when he was killed...

His Executor and Vicegerent Imam Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, followed the example of Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family.

History records that when he was martyred he owned seven hundred dirhams and his debts amounted to eight hundred thousand dirhams.

Let us look at some of the historical documents in relation to that:

Ibn SharĀshoub narrates that “It is well known that Abu Bakr died while he was liable for a sum of over forty thousand dirhams to the public funds, Omar died while he was liable for a sum of over eighty thousand dirhams, Othman died while he was liable for a total which was too much to count,¹ and Ali died leaving nothing but a remainder of seven hundred dirhams after the provision he had made for a servant.”⁶⁶

Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir, peace be upon him, said:

“Ali, peace be upon him, died owing eight hundred thousand dirhams”, so Imam Hasan, peace be upon him, sold a property of his for five hundred thousand dirhams and settled up on his behalf. He sold another property for three hundred thousand dirhams and settled up on his behalf. That is because he would not retain any *khums*, and misfortunes [used to] befell him.”⁶⁷

This is the true model for the Imam of the Muslims.

And why were there these debts?

On what was the money spent?

They were incurred to meet the needs of wretched, orphaned, widowed and enfeebled Muslims.

¹ It is narrated that Ayyuob asked Nāfi‘: “Did Omar leave behind a debt?” Nāfi‘ in response said, “One of his heirs sold his share of inheritance for one-hundred-thousand.” References: see Omar Ibn Shabbah, *Tārīkh al-Madinah*, vol.2 p88, hadith#1603, publisher *dar al-kotob al-‘elmiyah*, Beirut, 1417AH/1996CE. See also Ibn Hajar’s *Fath al-Bari*, vol.7 p53, and *Nail al-Awṭār*, vol.6 p163. Furthermore, Omar ibn al-Khattab was survived by thirteen offspring – nine males and four females – along with his wives. re: Ibn Athir, *al-Nahayah*, vol.7 p156. Thus, Omar’s estate is calculated to be at least 1,343,000 (one million three hundred and forty three thousand) coins.

Otherwise, what need could Imam Ali, peace be upon him, who owned only two pieces of cloth with which to clothe himself in winter and summer – one piece to use as a loin cloth and another to use as a cloak – and who ate nothing but barley bread, salt and milk have to take out a personal loan for himself?

This is something to make the Islamic nation proud of their Imam, chief or leader.

Hasan and Husayn were in debt

Imam Hasanⁱ and Imam Husayn,ⁱⁱ peace be upon them, followed the example of their grandfather and their father – Allah's Messenger and the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon them – in that they spent

ⁱ Imam Hasan al-Mujtabā, peace be upon him, is the Prophet's second of the successors appointed by divine instructions to lead the nation after him. His father is Imam Ali the Commander of the Faithful, and his mother *Sayyidah* Fatima the Prophet's beloved daughter, peace be upon them. He became the imam after the assassination of his father by Mo'āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān. Ultimately Imam Hasan too was assassinated by Mo'āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān, but this time by means of poisoning rather than the sword.

ⁱⁱ Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, is the Prophet's third of the successors appointed by divine instructions to lead the nation after him. He became the imam after the assassination of his brother Imam Hasan. Imam Husayn was brutally and barbarically killed by Yazeed, the son of Mo'āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān. Imam Husayn, together with notably his honourable sister Lady Zaynab, other women and children and adult sons and daughters, as well as some seventy of his followers, were surrounded in an area called Karbala, close to the river Euphrates. They were all denied water, and in the intense desert heat, Imam Husayn and all other males in the group – including Imam Husayn's six month old infant Ali, were beheaded by Yazeed's army. That day is known as Ashura. The women and children were taken captive and paraded through the towns and villages, from Kufah to Damascus, along with almost 100 severed heads of those slain carried on spearheads.

[*For there will be a slaughter for the Lord God of hosts, in the land of the north by the river Euphrates.* Jeremiah 46:10]

[685 *In this year in Britain it rained blood, and milk and butter were turned into blood.* The Anglo Saxon Chronicle]

all the money at their disposal on Muslim affairs and Muslims' needs. They did not depart this world other than in debt.

Read the following passages:

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

“Hasan was in debt when he died, peace be upon him, and Husayn was in debt when he was killed, peace be upon him.”⁶⁸

Imam Bāqir, peace be upon him, said:

“Husayn, peace be upon him, was in debt when he was killed and Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, sold a property of his for three hundred thousand to settle Husayn's debt. He honoured his father's promises too.”⁶⁹

Another *hadith* says:

“Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, continued to settle his father's debt until he by the will of Allah settled it.”⁷⁰

In another *hadith* it is reported that Imam al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, also said:

“Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, was in debt when he died; Ali, peace be upon him, was in debt when he died; Hasan, peace be upon him, was in debt when he died; Husayn, peace be upon him, was in debt when he was killed.”⁷¹

Mingling with the community to teach them

Most of the time, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to teach members of his community in person. Whenever circumstances permitted, he would engage them in conversation, wade in wherever they waded in and put them right when they went wrong, devoting all his efforts to winning their hearts for Allah and His Messenger and deepening their guidance onto Allah's Path and towards the pursuit of the right course.

There is reference to this in a number of verses of the Wise Qur'an such as where the Almighty states:

﴿Allah did confer a great favour on the believers when He sent among them an Apostle from among themselves, rehearsing unto them the Signs of Allah, sanctifying them, and instructing them in Scripture and Wisdom, while, before that, they had been in manifest error.﴾⁷²

The Almighty also says:

﴿It is He who has sent among the Meccans an apostle from among themselves, to recite to them His Signs, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and Wisdom, though they had been, before, in manifest error.﴾⁷³

The Almighty says, citing prophet Ibrahim's prayer:

﴿Our Lord! Send amongst them a Messenger from amongst themselves, who shall rehearse Thy Signs to them and instruct them in scripture and wisdom, and sanctify them: for Thou art the Exalted in Might, the Wise.﴾⁷⁴

The Almighty says:

﴿A similar (favour have ye already received) in that We have sent among you an Messenger from amongst yourselves, reciting to ye Our Signs, purifying ye, and teaching ye the Book and Wisdom, and teaching you that which you did not know.﴾⁷⁵

In his communications with the Muslims, Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, would mingle with them; the way a sympathetic kind teacher would, the way of a tutor who loved to enhance their mental attitude, culture, education and upbringing.

Read the following historical extracts and what the holy *hadith* has to say.

He repeats three times

It is reported that Ibn Abbas said:

“If Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, uttered a *hadith* or if he was asked a question, he would repeat it three times to make sure he is understood and so that [his audience] would quote him correctly.”⁷⁶

The *hadith* could also mean, so that those to whom he was speaking would understand, and so that when they passed on what he had said to them, they would not pass on some other meaning by mistake or through forgetfulness.

It appears from this *hadith* that repetition was his custom, peace be upon him and his holy family, which permeated all his holy utterances.

What teacher, private tutor or instructor would do this sort of thing? The answer is Allah’s Messenger and everyone who learned at his school.

He joins in with people’s conversations

It is reported that Zayd ibn Thābit said:

When we went to see the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, if we started talking about the afterlife he would join in our conversation, and if we started talking about worldly things, he would join in. If we started talking about food and drink he would join in. I tell you all this about Allah’s Messenger.”⁷⁷

Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, would never even think about worldly things, food or drink at all, but, in order to remain in Muslims’ affections, and, so that they would not become bored with him, he would engage in conversation with them about worldly things, food and drink.

He would show hospitality with his cushion

It is reported that Salmān al-Fārisi, may Allah have mercy on him, said:

“I went to see Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and he was sitting back on a cushion. He threw it to me and said, ‘Salmān, there is not a Muslim whose brother comes to see him and to whom he throws his cushion whom Allah does not forgive.’”⁷⁸

He throws the cushion he sits back on to Salmān to strengthen the cohesion between the leader and his constituents and to teach the Muslims to implement this cohesion in all respects and in all activities.

He threw him his cloak

It is reported that Jurayr ibn Abdullah said:

“The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, went into one of his houses and the house became full.ⁱ Jurayr came along and sat outside the house. The Prophet saw him, picked up his cloak, rolled it up, threw it to him and said: ‘Sit on this.’ Jurayr picked it up, put it on his face and kissed it.”⁷⁹

He, peace be upon him and his holy family, throws his cloak to one of the Muslims to sit on it so that he would not have to sit in the dust in order to promote equality between the constituents and their leader in their standard of living.

He sits in the dust

Ibn Abbas said: “The Messenger of Allah would sit on the ground and eat [while sitting] on the ground, herd the sheep, and respond to a slave’s invitation for barley bread.”⁸⁰

This is the implementation of equality in the standard of living of the Messenger and of those to whom he was sent, because a number of Muslims at that time had nothing but dust to sit on or [to sit down] to eat on.

He wouldn’t be recognised in his assemblies

Abu Dharr said, “Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, would sit right in the middle of his companions and when a stranger came he would not know which one he was to put his question to him.”⁸¹

ⁱ i.e. there was no space left for another person because the room was so crowded by the Muslims or by some of his family members.

I am not a king

Ibn Mas‘oud said, “A man came to talk to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and was trembling. He said: “Take it easy! I’m not a king; I’m just the son of a woman who used to eat charqui [i.e. sun-dried meat].”⁸²

He means: I am a person like you in my personal conduct [in relation to others]. My mother was a woman who was not elevated above [other] people in [terms of] what she ate. She used to eat charqui just the same as everyone else used to eat charqui.

He rides a donkey

It is reported that Anas ibn Mālīk, Allah’s Messenger’s servant, peace be upon him and his holy family, said:

“Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to visit the sick, walk in funeral processions, accept invitations from slaves and ride a donkey. At the Battle of Khaybar, the Battle of Quraydah and Nuḍayr he rode a donkey haltered with a rope made out of palm fibres, under which was a pack saddle (*ikaḥf*) made out of palm fibres.”⁸³

He greets them first

Whenever Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, passed by a group he would greet them first to the point that one of his companions said, that every time he tried to greet the Prophet first when he saw him, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, would beat him to it and greet him [first].⁸⁴

He forgives the Bedouin man

It is reported on the authority of Anas that a Bedouin man caught up with the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, grabbed his cloak and pulled it so hard that I saw it had left marks from its border on the skin of Allah’s Messenger’s neck. He said: Muhammad! Order that I be given out of the wealth of Allah which is at your disposal. Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, turned to him, smiled, and ordered that a provision be made for him.⁸⁵

Study circle

It is reported that Anas ibn Malik said: “Whenever we came to see Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, we would sit in a circle.”⁸⁶

The Messenger adopted this sublime code of conduct as a policy for seated gatherings with the Muslims, which gives a seated gathering neither a head nor a foot and there is no affront to anyone’s dignity in the gathering, either in the eyes of anyone at the gathering, in the eyes of society generally or in the person’s own eyes – for everyone seated in a circular seating arrangement such as this ends up [simultaneously] sitting at the head and the end and in the middle ...

The world learned this code of conduct from the Holiest Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, only after civilisation had passed through more than ten centuries.

For that reason you find that the seating arrangements for parliaments, ministers and leaders in many countries of the world today are circular.

There really is a great deal to say – too much for these pages – about the Prophet’s code of conduct in his dealings with people.

These examples suffice us. May Muslim leaders of our time reflect this lovely picture of Islam and of the Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, so as to draw people towards happiness in this world, and the afterlife, under the exquisitely beautiful shade of Islam.

Indeed thou art of tremendous morals⁸⁷

At the end of this section we are going to refer to an account given by him who was fostered by Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, by him, who at his birth, opened his eyes onto Allah’s Messenger’s face, and not onto the face of any other before him, [by him] on whose chest the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, closed his eyes – and not on the chest of any other – [i.e.] Imam Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him. He was the one who knew Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, the best. It is reported that he said, peace be upon him:

“Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, would never pull his hand away after shaking hands with someone until the other person had pulled his hand away.”

He would never walk away after making a matter or discourse clear to someone until the other man had walked away.

He would never pull away from a conversation and fall silent before the other person had fallen silent.

His foot would never ever be seen stretched out in front of a person sitting with him.

When given a choice between two things he would only ever choose the more difficult one.

He would never fend off for his own sake unless Allah’s commands were violated. On the contrary, his anger would only ever be for the sake of the Almighty Blessed Allah.

He left the world without ever having sat back while eating.

He never said, “No” to anything requested of him.

He never turned away anyone who was asking for something he needed without giving it to him, or saying something pleasant to him.

Out of everybody, his prayers were the shortest.

Out of everybody, he delivered the shortest sermons and was the least loquacious.

He was known for his pleasant fragrance as he approached [people].

When he ate with people he would be the first to start and the last to finish.ⁱ He would eat from what was nearest to him. If there were fresh or dried dates his hand would go round.

ⁱ This is because – out of respect for the Prophet – people would not start eating before him, and stop if he did. So he would resort to that in order not to keep them from eating.

When he drank, he would drink in three draughts. He would take small sips of water and not gulp it down.

He used his right hand to eat and drink, to pick up and to offer [food and drink]. He would only ever give and take with his right hand. His left hand was for other parts of his body. He would like starting on the right hand side in everything – in getting dressed, putting on his sandals and in dismounting.

When he called out, he would call [not more than] three times. When he spoke he would speak alone [i.e. he would not interrupt others and only speaks when others have concluded their talk]. If he asked permission, he would ask three times [to give one the chance to reflect and let him feel free to reject].

His speech was clear and so everyone who heard him would understand his meaning.

When he spoke it was as if light could be seen coming out from between his lips. If you saw him you would say his lips were split but they were not split.

When he looked, it would only be a glance.

He would not say anything he did not like to anyone.

When he walked it was as if he was descending a hillside.

He used to say, “The best among you are those with the best manners.”

He neither praised nor criticised connoisseurs. His companions would not vie with each other in his presence.

Whoever spoke about him said, “I have never seen with my eyes – either before or afterwards – anything like him, peace be upon him and his holy family.”⁸⁸

I stress: This holy hadith definitely needs detailed commentary to do any justice to it. The limited confines of this book force us to put off doing so until another time.

Nevertheless, this does not prevent us from indicating at this juncture that it is an absolute necessity for any Muslim politician to adopt as much as he can in the way of high moral standards, sympathetic and endearing interaction with people to attract them to the fold of Islam or keep them within it because the best, quickest and profoundest factors in sowing love in [people's] hearts are high moral standards, sympathy and humanity in dealing with people.

Indeed, that is part of the best policy in managing people.

Throughout His History

Allah's Messenger's whole life was politics and wisdom in its various facets and dimensions:

His policy in mustering troops and leading the army to war;

His policy of combining military force and rapid victory with refraining from transgressing the bounds of Islam and humanity;

His policy in dealing with the wounded, handicapped, their families, and orphans and widows of those killed;

His policy in passing judgment and settling disputes between his companions and the way of compromising between fair settlement and correct judgment and between holding on to people's love for Allah and the Messenger and within the framework of Islam;

His policy of collecting money from the rich, from merchants, farm owners, livestock owners and others, in taking from them and keeping them loyal to Islam, to Almighty Allah and to the Messenger;

His policy of distributing wealth in varying proportions, on various occasions to Muslims, to hypocrites and even to idolaters to cause their hearts to incline towards Islam;

His policy of socialising with Muslims and hypocrites, of speaking with them and of remaining calm and humble and managing to combine all of that;

His policy of inviting his relatives, [other] clans and tribes, Jews and Christians to embrace Islam, and, his technique of uniting rich and poor, proud and humble, parents and children, men and women, guiding them gradually to the faith;

His policy of how, when and for whom to perform miracles publicly to keep hold of the Muslims and to get the infidels to embrace Islam, while at the same time not allowing every act issuing from him to be a miracle, which would make it impossible for people to follow his example, and would also have conflicted with the Divine Wisdom of sending messengers;

His policy of combining gentleness with power in such a way that his gentleness did not become weakness, his humility as degradation, his power roughness, or his might and sternness as violence and harshness;

His policy of striking a balance between being candid about the truth and the modesty of Islam; so neither off-putting candour, nor such modesty as to encourage those longing to exploit it to play around with Islam;

His policy of how, when, and where to migrate to, and the procedure for doing so – which achieved all that was good at that time, and for the future of Islam, right up until this day;

His policy of inviting kings and heads of states of the world to Islam, the procedure for doing so, on selecting those sent to do it, and on his directions to them;

His policy with his wives, on dividing his time among them and striking a balance between his enormous tasks, the responsibility of being a Messenger and between managing his wives whatever their ages, nationality, language, appearance and custom;

His policy of building mosques quickly in the far reaches of the Arabian peninsula whenever he had a chance to do so to bring Muslims together and to be a centre from which invitation [to Islam], war, justice, collection and distribution of wealth and other pursuits pertaining to politics and to [Allah's] servants could all start out;

His policy of keeping two different wings around him – the *Muhajiroun* and the *Ansar* – and his support of each of them at one time or another, encouragement of each by the other in word and deed...

and so on and so forth – everything in his immaculate conduct and his tremendous history is a wise and tremendous policy which astonishes thinking people when they fix their eyes on it.

How could it not be when they are policies commanded by Almighty Allah Creator of everything, and Knower of all secrets? Mighty is He who said about His greatest Messenger:

﴿Nor does he say (aught) of (his own) Desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him: He was taught by one Mighty in Power.﴾⁸⁹

Thus the Messenger's policy is Almighty Allah's command and Almighty Allah's command is the best, most complete and wisest policy, because He is the Omniscient and Omnipotent Creator.

Conclusion

This is a mere drop in the ocean of what can be said about Allah's Messenger's life, his policy throughout, and his deepening of it throughout his life so replete with blessings.

We make a record of this so that someone who knows little about Islam cannot attempt to explain Islam [to others], to cut off those who distort the image of Islam with their pens and disassociate the pure teachings of Islam from everything which is done today in the name of Islam in most Islamic countries but which Islam is innocent of.

Islam is only taken from the Messenger's conduct and that of the Members of his Household, peace be upon them, should only be learned from the history of the Prophet and the Members of his Household, peace be upon them, and be explained by Allah's Messenger's practices and those of his Infallible Progeny only and nothing else.

Through this brief outline, the reader can learn how Islam and true politics were breastfed from the same milk and how one is explained by the other.

True politics is Islam and Islam is true politics.

There is no true politics outside Islam and there is no such thing as Islam without true politics.

Anything else is nonsense which is contradicted by the Wise Qur'an, the Holy Sunnah, the Prophet's conduct and the history of the Members of his Household, the holy Imams, peace be upon them.

Chapter Three

Imam Ali's Enlightened Policies

“Ali is with the Truth and the Truth is with Ali.”

After Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, was the other true example who reflected the policy of Islam along with all its precision, magnificence and comprehensiveness.

This is indicated by hundreds of verses which were revealed about, or which have been interpreted or explained as referring to Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, his superiority and seniority.¹

Similarly there are thousands of prophetic *hadith* which fill books of exegesis, *hadith* and history books including the following:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, said:

“Ali is with the Truth and the Truth is with Ali.”¹

“Ali is with the Qur'an and the Qur'an is with Ali.”²

“Oh 'Ammār son of Yāsir! If you see Ali travelling along one valley and see the people walking along a different valley, travel with Ali.”³

“I am a city of knowledge and Ali is its gate”⁴

“I am the House of Wisdom and Ali is its door”⁵

¹ In his two-volume work entitled *Ali fi al-Qur'ān*, (Ali in the Qur'an), the author has collected together more than seven hundred Qur'anic verses that have been cited by Sunni scholars to have been revealed about Imam Ali, peace be upon him.

“Ali is to me as my head is to my body.”⁶

and so many other examples.

For that reason the Commander of the Faithful’s Real politik is the best lesson for leaders and for the Muslims on which to mould their practical and political life just as Allah’s Messenger was, peace be upon him and his holy family. For he is the Prophet and Ali, peace be upon him, is the Executor;ⁱ he was one of a pair and Ali was the other;ⁱⁱ he is the upper arm and Ali is the forearmⁱⁱⁱ as he, peace be upon him and his holy family, described him.

Within this limited framework and after having given a few examples of the policies of the Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, at various stages of His busy life, we shall give some other examples, this time, of the Commander of the Faithful’s politics at various stages of his great life. They can be paired up with the other examples, and provide a living, virtuous manifesto for all; a true proof of the wisdom, justice and humanity of Islam in its government, authority and rule to get the apathetic to wake up, make despots eat humble pie, and be a small aperture through which we can open the way for researchers to write about the various stages of the government of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him, with various pens and at various levels to fill the enormous gap in Islamic society which yearns with all its heart to get to know this brilliant history through calm and collected, proper analysis...particularly lately with Muslims throughout the world feeling the depth of the marks of colonialism in Islamic countries and looking for intellectual independence through a rule based on

ⁱ An allusion to the Prophet’s saying: “Oh, Ali! You are my executor and the Imam of my nation.” *Amāli* by *al-Ṣadūq* p12 hadith10, lecture#3.

ⁱⁱ This is an allusion to the Prophet’s saying: “You are to me like one of a pair of trees [which share the same root] is to the other”; al-Nabati, *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* vol.1 p252 chapter8

ⁱⁱⁱ An allusion to Imam Ali’s saying: “I am to Allah’s Messenger as the upper arm is to the shoulder, and as the forearm is to the upper arm ...” *al-Mu‘tazili, Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* vol.20 p315.

foundations of true Islam and to apply them to the reality facing the modern Muslim world.

Allah's Messenger's life and the history of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon them, are the best lesson and example for laying the bricks of modern Islamic rule upon their foundations. This matter needs hundreds of different books on the subject.

One of the ways to achieve that is through deepened ideological cooperation and rapprochement between the hawzah and university to put in place a proper, comprehensive formula so that Allah's true Islamic government can be implemented. Surely it is Allah Who grants success.

The policy of his personal life

A leader's deeds are a lesson to the people and a curriculum for generations. For that reason a leader is responsible for what people do because of what they learn from him; whether it be good or bad.

A leader's personal life is the best "school" for the generations loyal to that leader. For that reason it was part of the Commander of the Faithful's policy to base his personal life upon faith and asceticism. By way of example:

No to the materialistic world

Nothing was worth less to Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, than the world and what is in it.

Wealth, money, government, power, furnishing, clothes, palaces, food and drink – all of these meant nothing to Ali, peace be upon him, beyond what was absolutely necessary. Perhaps the profoundest similitude of the world in the Commander of the Faithful's view, peace be upon him, is what he said so eloquently in his eternal words:

"I swear by Allah, this world of yours is worth less to me than the intestines of a swine in the hand of a leper."⁷

What a great expression it is – the intestines of a swine in the hand of a leper.

A pig is undesirable so what of its intestines?

What is in the hand of a leper is undesirable even if it is the entire world because the entire world is not worth certain infection with leprosy.

So what of a pig's intestines in the hands of a leper?

Who would want anything like that?

Imam Ali, peace be upon him, considers the world to be worth less than that.

He did not place an adobe brick on another

Imam Bāqir, peace be upon him, said:

“Ali governed for five years. He did not lay a baked brick upon another, or an adobe brick upon another, allot himself an allotment, or leave behind either ‘white’ or ‘red’.”⁸

“He did not lay a baked brick upon another” means he did not build a house out of baked brick.

“[He did not lay] ... an adobe brick upon another” means that he did not build a house out of adobe brick.

“[He did not] ... allot Himself an allotment” means that he did not assign land or an allotment to Himself.

“[He did not] ... leave behind either ‘white’ or ‘red’” means that he did not bequeath to his heirs either silver or gold.

Nothing but un-tanned sheepskin

It is reported that the Commander of the Faithful used to say:

“We had nothing but un-tanned sheepskin on which Fatima and I would sleep at night and upon which by day we would feed our camel [which we would use to carry water].”⁹

Believers follow his example

It is also reported that Imam Ali, peace be upon him, was seen wearing a rough loincloth which he had bought for five dirhams and he was seen wearing a patched up loincloth. He was asked about it, so he said,

“The believers should follow such practice, the heart is humbled by it, the soul is humiliated by it, and through it the costs are kept down.”¹⁰

This is edification for the soul, edification for society, a model and an example.

Matching what is on the outside to what is inside “is most like the practice of the pious”.

It is all embodied in a rough loincloth worn by the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him. This is spiritual depth, nobility of the soul, self-denial and total absorption in Allah all combined in the personality of the Islamic leader.

He ripped off his sleeve

It is also reported “that Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, saw a poor man whose sleeve had been ripped off. He ripped off the sleeve of his shirt and threw it to him.”¹¹

He did not buy new clothes

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, spent four years or more between Kufah and Basra as the supreme leader of the wide expanses of the lands of Islam.

Throughout this long period he did not buy any clothes for himself with the Muslims' public money, or take any of the money from Basra or Kufah for that [purpose].

Instead he carried on wearing the clothes from Medina throughout this long period, and just buy out from his own allowance just like the poorest of the poor among the Muslims throughout the length and breadth of the Muslim lands.

Read the following passages:

Al-Aṣḡagh ibn Nabātah reported: “Ali, peace be upon him, turned to the people of Basra and said: “Oh, People of Basra! Why do you have against me? This is from my wife’s spinning yarn –and he pointed to his shirt.”¹²

And he said: “I entered your land in these clothes, and these are my provisions and my camel. If I were to leave your land with other than what I arrived with I would be a traitor.”¹³

It is reported that Haroun ibn ‘Antarah said: “My father said: I went to see Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, at the Khurnaḡ¹⁴ and he was shivering under an old cloak. I said to Him: ‘O Commander of the Faithful! Allah has assigned a share of this public treasury for you and for the people of your household and in spite of that you do this to yourself.’ He replied: ‘I swear by Allah that I do not take anything out of your property. This cloak is the same one I was wearing when I left my house in Medina. I do not have any other.’”¹⁵

Will anyone suffer destitution in such a country when its supreme leader has such a personal policy?

Does anyone go naked under such a system?

Does anyone go hungry?

This is the greatness of Islam.

The Commander of the Faithful’s food

At the time when good things were available to the whole of the Muslim world and thanks to Islam, Muslims and non-Muslims were living in the lap of luxury and in Kufah, the Commander of the Faithful’s capital city no one could be found who was not well provided for, in these circumstances you find that the Master of Kufah, the Master of the Muslim lands and leader of Islam, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, would not even eat what the poorest of people would eat.

Look at the following passages:

It is reported that Ali said: "No one in Kufah fails to wake up in the morning in comfort. The lowliest of them eats wheat, sits in the shade and drinks water from the Euphrates."¹⁶

Imam Bāqir, peace be upon him, said in a hadith: "Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib used to feed people wheat bread and meat, and then go off to his home and eat barley bread, with either oil or vinegar."¹⁷

Suwayd ibn Ghaflah says: "I went to see Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, in the late afternoon and I found him sitting with a bowl in front of him in which there was sour milk which I could smell because of the severity of its acidity. In his hand was a piece of bread, and I could see barley husks on its face. Every now and again he would break it with his hand but if it was too hard he would break it with his knee and throw it in [i.e. in the bowl].

He said: 'Come and let me dish you some of this food of ours.' I said to his servant girl who was standing near to him: 'Shame on you, Fiḍḍah! Do you not fear Allah for treating the old man this way? Do you not sieve his flour?' . . .

Ali said to me: 'What did you say to her?'

I told him what I had said to her.

He said: 'May my father and mother be made ransom for the one for whom flour was never sieved, who did not eat his fill of wheat bread for three days in a row right up until the time Allah took him away.'¹⁸ He meant by that Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family.

He would only eat meat once a year

The Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, would only eat meat once a year on 'Id al-Aḍḥā and that was only because on that day all Muslims are able to eat meat given the abundance of meat from sacrifices.ⁱ

ⁱ That is the sacrifices made on the occasion of the Hajj 'Id al-Aḍḥā.

Out of solidarity for the poorest people in the nation, the Imam of the nation would only eat meat on that day.

This was in the days of his public caliphate when responsibility for the entire nation fell upon him.

Imam Ali is renowned for saying:

“... you should know that your Imam is satisfied with taking from his world two ragged pieces of clothⁱ... He would satisfy his hunger with two round loaves.ⁱⁱ He would not eat a piece of meat throughout the year except in the year when he offers a sacrifice on the occasion of al-Adhā.”¹⁹

Imam Ali, Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, would not just look to the people of Medina who would normally have meat to eat, or to the people of Kufah where all kinds of meat – lamb, beef, camel, chicken, fowl and fish – were available. On the contrary, he would look to the remotest Muslim lands, to the people in distant parts of the countryside, to the poor people who lived in tents. None of them had meat to provide them with sustenance every day.

So long as Ali, peace be upon him, was Imam to all of them, as it was their duty to follow him with regard to his actions, he imposed an austerity upon himself in his food and clothing – and even his dwelling place – like the poorest of his subjects.

This human being is truly great.

This way of life is truly great.

And Islam which produces a leader such as this is truly great.

ⁱ One as a loincloth (*mi'zar*) and the other as a loose garment for the upper body (*rida'*)

ⁱⁱ Perhaps he would have one for lunch and the other for dinner i.e. two a day

The sound of frying in his house

One of the most wondrous and amazing things which history records about the life of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, is that once the sound of frying could be heard in his house. He disapproved of that, because no meat was supposed to be fried in the Commander of the Faithful's house during the days of his reign.

The venerable Sheikh al-Mufid, may Allah bless him, reports via his chain of transmission on the authority of Ibn Da'b in a long hadith: "He – meaning the Commander of the Faithful – heard frying in his house, so he got up saying "What!! Are *karākir*ⁱ to be fried on Ali's watch?"

He said: "His children were afraid and said: 'Oh, Commander of the Faithful, it's your wife, so-and-so. Some camels were slaughtered in her area. A share was taken for her and her family sent it to her as a present.

He said, peace be upon him: 'Enjoy it.'

He said: "It is said that he was not complaining, but he, peace be upon him, was just afraid that it was a gift from one of his subjects, and for a Muslim governor to accept a gift amounts to betrayal of the Muslims."²⁰

This hadith means that the existence of meat in the house of the Commander of the Faithful in the days of his caliphate was something that was an exceptional and extraordinary occurrence."

It was such a close and careful watch that Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, kept on the personal behaviour in his house that Imam Ali considered frying *karākir* even once to be something for which he was accountable, because he says: "Are *karākir* to be fried on Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib's watch?"

His children then became afraid because they knew how firm and strict he was about what was right, and because they wanted to tell him that

ⁱ Karākir are calloused protuberances upon the chest of a camel which when the animal lies down touch and rest upon the ground, projecting from its body like a cake of bread.

they had not disobeyed his wishes, and not hidden away in his house anything which was not pleasing to him.

In spite of all of this, he would not stand in the way of maintaining family bonds and relations between his wife and her relatives. On the contrary, he would encourage it and invite them, making his invitation exclusive to them, because he would not eat from that food so long as there were Muslims who did not have the same...

Has history – after the Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, – witnessed anyone as great as that? If so let us meet him!

No to hoarding the community's property

Following Allah's Messenger's example, Ali, Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, would not hoard Muslim property. On the contrary, he would make a point of handing it out and getting it to them straight away.

This is how the Muslim leader should be.

Look at the following passages:

Sālim al-Jahḍari narrates: "I saw Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, receive some money in the evening.

He said, 'Hand this money out.'

They said, 'It's late, oh Commander of the Faithful. Leave it till the morning.'

He said to them, 'Do you think I will live till tomorrow?'

They said, 'What can we do?'

He said, 'Don't put off handing it out.'

He brought a lamp and they handed it out that very night.²¹

What kind of world leader would do such a thing today?

You cannot find one like him.

So this is how we know for sure how the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, with his pure conduct was able to champion history right up to this day and [how] with all honour and greatness he became a light for all to follow.

It may be that a question springs to mind: “Why did the money have to be handed out at night even though the Muslims would not be able to use it until the morning?”

The answer may be for various reasons:

Firstly: To discharge the responsibility of a leader who is a believer and who sees responsibility to be his greatest burden.

Secondly: To reassure some of the believers who needed the money to decide their fate the following day.

Thirdly: To hasten to do a good deed; about which there are Qur’anic verses and hadith, including Allah Almighty’s words:

﴿Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord.﴾²²

﴿and they hasten in good works: They are in the ranks of the righteous.﴾²³

﴿These [three] were ever quick in emulation in good works.﴾²⁴

﴿It is these who hasten in every good work, and these who are foremost in them.﴾²⁵

A holy *hadith* says, “Hurry to do good whenever you can.”²⁶

He would not take for himself

There is reference in the history of the Commander of the Faithful Ali, peace be upon him, to the fact that he would hand out wealth and not take any for himself even when he was in need of it.

Ibn ShahrĀshoub mentions in his *al-Manāqib*: “There would come upon him a time when he, peace be upon him, would not have three dirhams with which to buy a loincloth or what he needed. He would share out everything there was in the public treasury among the people. He would

then pray in it [i.e. in the treasury] and say, ‘Praise be to Allah who has taken me out of it just the same as I entered it.’”²⁷

Simplicity in Life

Simplicity in his personal life is one of the things for which the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was known. He did not care about adornments at all and would not waste even seconds of his time in pursuit of adornments.

This is how a Muslim leader should be – spending all his time on Muslim affairs and the affairs of the poor.

Abu Jaysh al-Balkhi narrates: “Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, passed through Kufah market and a chair caught on him. His shirt was ripped. He took it in his hand, went to the tailors and said, ‘Stitch this together for me, may Allah bless you.’”²⁸

Al-Ash‘ath al-‘Abdi said, “I saw Ali, peace be upon him, bathing in the Euphrates on Friday. He then bought a white fabric shirt for three dirhams. He led the people in Friday prayer in it before its pockets were stitched.”²⁹

Al-Zamkhshari said: “Ali, peace be upon him, bought a shirt. He cut off the excess sleeve and said to the man, ‘Stitch its seam’.”³⁰

“Ali went to the barber’s and wanted something taken off his moustache. He was engaged in *dhikr* (invocation) of Almighty Allah and his lips were moving. The barber said to him, ‘Oh Commander of the Faithful. Stop invoking Allah for a moment to have your moustache straightened out. Ali said, peace be upon him: ‘It is not that important’. He did not stop the invocation for one moment...”

True enough a holy hadith says: “Allah is beautiful and loves beauty.”³¹

However beauty is not just in material things. There is also beauty of the spirit and of spiritual things. Their beauty is more beautiful than the beauty of physical things.

The Imam, Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, knows full well the comparative value of one type of beauty in relation to another and he chooses the greater beauty over the lesser one.

Invocation of Allah is the greater beauty, and making one's moustache look nice is the lesser beauty.

The ratio of inheritance to debt

When most people die, their estate normally exceeds their debts so their debts are paid off and the remainder becomes an inheritance for the heirs to be divided among them.

As for the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, he was the exact opposite. When he was killed, his debts were much greater than what he left behind.

His debts were more than a thousand times greater than his estate.

His estate was seven hundred dirhams left over from his stipend— he wanted it to be used to hire a servant for his family.

His debts were eight hundred thousand dirhams.³²

He sells his sword to buy a loincloth

In his commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*ⁱ Ibn Abi al-Ḥadid quotes from Majma', from Abu Rajā' who said: "Ali, peace be upon him, took his sword to the market and said, 'Who will buy this from me? I swear by the One in whose Hand Ali's soul rests, if I had the price of a loincloth I would not be selling it.'

I said to him, "I'll sell you a loincloth and let you off paying for it until you receive your stipend."

ⁱ *Nahj al-Balāghah* is a collection of some of Imam Ali's Sermons, Letters, and Aphorisms, as compiled and edited by the renowned scholar al-Sharif al-Raḍi from original hadith and historical sources. Ibn Abil-Hadid is a renowned Sunni scholar who has written an extensive 20-volume commentary on Imam Ali's *Nahj al-Balāghah*, called *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*.

I gave him the loincloth and when he received his stipend he paid me the price of the loincloth.”³³

He hands gifts out among the Muslims

It was one of Imam Ali, Commander of the Faithful’s known and reported customs not to hoard personal gifts given, and intended exclusively, for him. On the contrary, he would either hand them out among the Muslims or share them with them.

Let us read together the following passages:

Ḥakim ibn Aws said: “The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was brought fruit picked from trees. He ordered that they be sold and that the proceeds be placed in the public treasury.”³⁴

He also said, “Ali, peace be upon him, would send us pots filled with honey to be shared among us and would tell us to make sure to scrape the remnants in the pot.”³⁵

‘Āṣim ibn Maytham said: “Ali, peace be upon him, was given a gift of baskets of hodgepodge [made from dates and clarified butter] for his exclusive [enjoyment]. He called for a spread to be laid out, placed it on it, and two groups sat down to eat.”³⁶

Abu Ḥurayz said, “On New Year’s Day (Nurooz), the Zoroastrians sent Ali, peace be upon him, a gift of silver bowls containing sugar. He, peace be upon him, shared the sugar out among his companions. He treated the gifts as their jizyah tax contribution, and deducted their value from the jizyah of the Zoroastrians.”³⁷

Daḥqān sent Ali, peace be upon him, a cloak with gold stitching. ‘Amr ibn Hurayth bought it from him for four thousand dirhams and the proceeds went into the Treasury.”³⁸

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was great, truly great.

He is given a cloak stitched with gold worth four thousand dirhams and he sells it and puts the proceeds in the public treasury.

He then buys a rough cloak for three dirhams, wears it and gives thanks to Allah.

Where can anyone like him be found?

It is the school of Islam, the teachings of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and the policy of heaven.

He fetches water and gathers wood

The Commander of the Faithful, Ali, peace be upon him, was like the poorest of the poor. He would fetch his own water from the well and would gather his own firewood with his holy hands so that he could be a good example to all Muslims throughout history and an excellent and beguiling example for Muslim leaders. In the same way, he would see to all his own personal matters.

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

“Ali, peace be upon him, was the person who most closely resembled Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, in his eating [policy] and conduct. He would eat bread and oil and would feed [other] people bread and meat. He would fetch water and gather firewood.”³⁹

He would patch up his own hauberk.

He would stitch his own cloak.

He would cobble his own sandal.⁴⁰

In short, he, peace be upon him, would not dump it all on someone else. He would take care of his own personal affairs. He would not think himself to be above [other] people in anything. Instead, he would live worse off than most people. He is the one whom Allah raised up above the level of all the saints and Imams and prophets except for the Messenger of Islam, peace be upon him and his holy family, and who said of [the Prophet]: “I am one of Muhammad’s servants”.⁴¹

In this way the Commander of the Faithful’s excellent and beguiling, eternal conduct could produce the following results:

1. It put Ali, peace be upon him, at the top of the list of the greats after Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family.
2. It has and always will shatter humanity's despots in the past, present and future.
3. It taught leaders and nations the path of humanity and greatness.

In this way the Islamic politics nurtures the likes of Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him.

Imam Ali, peace be upon him, stated the philosophy behind this asceticism and said:

“Allah made me the Imam of His Creation. He imposed upon me a duty to exercise self-restraint, and my food, drink and clothing are like the poorest people's so that the poor man can follow my poverty and so that the rich man's riches do not turn him into a tyrant.”⁴²

No... to gifts

Gifts are often given to those in power [as a means of bribery] to sway the heart of the ruler to say that which is right is wrong and that which is wrong is right. It is for this reason that there was strong emphasis in the holy *hadith* on refusal by rulers, judges, those in whose hands are might and power, and influential people to accept gifts [in return for a favour], thus cutting off the roots which leave society unprotected from iniquity, injustice and unfairness.

The highly erudite scholar 'allāmah Majlisi mentions in the *Bihār al-Anwār* that the Commander of the Faithful, Ali, peace be upon him, said about Mighty and Sublime Allah's words, ﴿devourers of that which is forbidden﴾⁴³, “It means the man who fulfils his brother's wish and then accepts his present.”⁴⁴

Majlisi also says that Jābir ibn Abdullahⁱ said: “Acceptance of presents by rulers is fraud.”⁴⁵

Sheikh al-Anṣārī,ⁱⁱ may Allah bless him, narrates in his jurisprudential masterpiece *al-Makāsib* that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said:

“If he – meaning the governor – takes a present, it constitutes fraud.”⁴⁶

Further: “Acceptance of presents by provincial governors is fraud.”⁴⁷

Another hadith states: “Acceptance of presents by provincial governors is forbidden.”⁴⁸

The Imam, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was the master of all virtues. For that reason he would not accept personal gifts for himself so that no one would covet him and so that no one would hope that he could carry his favour.

He, peace be upon him, refers to one incident when a person gave him a gift. He returned it. He talks of the event in the following steely words:

He said in one of his sermons, peace be upon him, after mentioning the story of Aqil and his, peace be upon him, returning it to him:

“A stranger incident than thisⁱⁱⁱ is that a man came to us in the night; with a closed flask full of honey paste^{iv} but I disliked it as though it was

ⁱJābir ibn Abdullah was one of Prophet Muhammad's few devout companions who steadfastly remained loyal to the Prophet and his holy family throughout his life and always observed piety and righteousness.

ⁱⁱ Sheikh Murtaḍā Anṣārī was one of the most eminent scholars and religious authorities, who produced significant works in Islamic jurisprudence, which are still used in the Islamic seminaries today. He was the tutor of the renowned scholar and leader of the famous ‘tobacco movement’ Sayyid Hasan ‘*al-mujaddid*’ al-Shirazi.

ⁱⁱⁱ i.e. stranger than ‘Aqil’s expectation that I would give him more than the rest of the Muslims.

^{iv} which al-Ash‘ath ibn Qays had brought as a present to the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon him. al-Ash‘ath ibn Qays and his offspring

mixed with the saliva of a serpent or its vomit. I asked him whether it was reward, alms (*zakāt*) or charity (*ṣadaqah*),ⁱ because these are forbidden to us, members of the Household.

He said it was neither this nor that but a present.ⁱⁱ

Then I said, “May bereaved mothers mourn you! Have you come to lead me astray from Allah’s religion [with what is prohibited], are you mad, have you been overpowered by Satan, or are you speaking without senses?”

By Allah, even if I am given all the domains of the seven (skies) with all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey Allah to the extent of snatching the husk of one grain of barley from an ant; I would not do it.

For me your world is worth less than a leaf in the mouth of a locust that is chewing.”⁴⁹

This is how the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, treats himself so that a person who has been wronged does not fear him and so that a wrongdoer does not covet him.

And the truth has always been like this..

“Ali is with the Truth and the Truth is with Ali. It goes with him wherever he goes.”⁵⁰

sided with the enemies of Ali and his family. al-Ash‘ath sided with opponents of Ali in the case of the battle of Siffien. al-Ash‘ath’s daughter, Ju’dah, killed Ali’s son Imam Hasan on Mo‘awiyah’s instructions. al-Ash‘ath’s son Muhammad participated in the battle of Karbala.

ⁱ Zakāt is the obligatory contribution [which is not applicable for the Ahl al-Bayt to receive] and *ṣadaqah* is a recommended contribution. [Gift or reward to the ruler or leader is expressly prohibited as it is seen as to make the leader to incline or favour the donor, the issue of which is addressed in the main text of the book.]

ⁱⁱ Based on the background knowledge that the Imam had of al-Ash‘ath ibn Qays, Imam Ali knew this was intended as a bribe.

No wonder there are such courageous codes of conduct in the life of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him.

Rulers, judges and chiefs should apply Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib's code of conduct, firstly to their private lives so that society can be safe from injustice and iniquity. They should then follow his code of conduct in politics, the economy, society, education and so on.

His policy in dealing with relatives

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was not like other rulers of the world who put the wishes of their relatives first, and who then if anything is left over, give it to the rest of the people.

On the contrary, in matters relating to all Muslims, he, peace be upon him, would not draw a distinction between his relatives and others. He would treat them equally in all respects.

This is the discerning Islamic policy which the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, applied to himself and to his relatives before applying it to everyone else and asking them to follow it.

Whoever wants the politics of Islam should learn from Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, Allah's Messenger's pupil, who has been trained and educated by the Qur'an, and is Allah's proof for the whole of Creation.

We shall cite below examples of how he would deal with his relatives in general matters.

With his brother 'Aqil

Ibn ShahrĀshoub quotes in *al-Manāqib* from *Jumal Ansāb al-Ashrāf*:

'Aqil came to see Ali, peace be upon him, and he said to Hasan, peace be upon him: "Give your uncle something to wear, and so he gave him one of his shirts and one of his mantles. When dinner came it was nothing but bread and salt.

'Aqil asked: "Is there nothing else apart from what I see here?"

He said: “Is it not of Allah’s bounty such that He be thanked greatly?”

‘Aqil said: “Give me something so that I can pay off my debt and let me leave the sooner the better.”

He asked, “How much is your debt, Abu Yazid?”

He said, “One hundred thousand dirhams.”

He said, “I swear by Allah, I do not have it on me nor in my possession, but be patient; when my stipend is due I will share it with you. Were it not for the fact that some has to be set aside for my children I would give it all to you.”

‘Aqil said: “The treasury is at your disposal and you make me wait until your stipend is apportioned! How much is your stipend and how much will be even if you give it all to me?”

He said: “As far as the treasury is concerned, you and I are no different from any other Muslim man.”

They were talking atop the Amir’s pavilion overlooking the market people’s shops.

Imam Ali said: “If you object to what I say, O Abu Yazid, go down to one of those shops, break the locks and take what is inside!”

He asked: “What is in those shops?”

He replied: “Inside is the traders’ money.”

He said: “Are you telling me to break into shops belonging to people who have put their faith in Allah and put their money inside?”

The Commander of the Faithful said: “Are you telling me to open the Muslim Treasury and give you their money which they have locked away and put their faith in Allah?”

Then Imam Ali said to him in words meant to stir up his faith and morality: “If you like you could take your sword and I could take my sword and we could go out together to Hirah. There are wealthy merchants there. We could go to some of them and take their money.”

Aqil asked: "Are you calling me a thief?"

He replied: "Your stealing from one person is better than your stealing from all the Muslims."⁵¹

This is the Islamic policy towards relatives summed up in the Commander of the Faithful's logic.

He, peace be upon him, considers giving something extra to the brother of Allah's vicegerent on earth stealing from all the Muslims.

Also with his brother 'Aqil

Sermon 224 in *Nahj al-Balāghah* says as follows:

"I swear by Allah that I saw 'Aqil fallen into destitution and he asked me for a *ṣā'*ⁱ of your wheat and I also saw his children with dishevelled hair and a dusty countenance due to starvation, as though their faces had been blackened by indigo. He came to me several times and repeated his request to me again and again. I heard him, and he thought I would sell my faith to him and follow his tread leaving my own way.ⁱⁱ Then I heated a piece of iron for him and held it near his body so that he might learn a lesson from it, [Aqil was blind at that time] then he cried as a person in protracted illness cries with pain and he was about to get burnt with its branding. Then I said to him, "Bereaved mothers may mourn you, Aqil. Do you cry on account of this iron which has been made by a man for fun while you are driving me towards the fire which Allah, the Powerful, has prepared for His wrath? Should you cry from pain, but I should not cry from the hellfire?"⁵²

In these sentences there are truly amazing things that Imam Ali, peace be upon him, said compared to the practices of rulers, judges and civil servants ...

ⁱ equivalent to approximately 3kg.

ⁱⁱ 'Aqil was seeking to receive more than his fair share for himself and his family from the public fund. Imam Ali would not give him more than their allotted share.

By way of observation, we point out the following:

“He asked me ... of your wheat...” The food belongs to the community, not for the Commander of the Faithful even though he is the supreme leader and Imam appointed by Almighty Allah over all the people.

“[He thought] I would betray my faith for his sake...” According to the Commander of the Faithful’s logic, giving as little as oneṣāʾ i.e. three kilograms of the Muslim’s wheat to his impoverished brother Aqil whose children’s colour had changed due to hunger would mean selling his faith...

“Then I heated a piece of iron...” At that time, Aqil could not see – he was blind. So the Imam heated up a piece of iron for him and held it near his body without touching him with it just so that Aqil could sense the heat in the fate of someone who goes against justice. The Commander of the Faithful did so in order that ‘Aqil would understand and thus exonerate his brother for withholding a ṣāʾ of wheat above and beyond his share and entitlement.

“May bereaved mothers mourn you...” This insignificant thing for many people is so huge for Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, that it warrants his saying to his brother: “May bereaved mothers mourn you.”

That is because Truth is great even if it is a minor or simple case.

“But I should not cry from the flames...” in the Commander of the Faithful’s philosophy, [taking] a single ṣāʾ of Muslim property is considered to be a betrayal punishable by hellfire ...

May leaders, rulers, ministers and civil servants open their eyes so that they can better understand their position and their responsibility.

With his sister

In *al-Ikhtisāṣ* the eminent Sheikh al-Mufid, may Allah bless him, narrates a long hadith which says among other things:

“Then he – meaning the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, refrained from favouring himself and his children over any one of the people of Islam.

His sister Umm Hāni daughter of Abu Ṭālib came to see him and he gave her twenty dirhams.

Umm Hani asked her non-Arab servant girl: “How much did the Commander of the Faithful give you?”

She said: “Twenty dirhams.”

She went away angrily.

Ali, peace be upon him, said to her: “Go forth – Allah bless you. We have found in Allah’s Book no preference for Ishmael over Isaac.”⁵³

The Commander of the Faithful’s sister, daughter of Abu Ṭālib, daughter of the Prophet’s uncle, a Hashemite Qurayshi Arab pedigree ought not to be given a greater share than her non-Arab servant-girl.

This is the just policy of Islam which the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, stood for, so that he could be the true measure for all generations and [all] times, against whom to weigh up leaders in every age and place.

With his daughter

Chroniclers report: “A treasure from deep sea diving, the value of which was unknown was sent to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, from Basra. His daughter Umm Kulthoum asked him: “Could I adorn myself with it, around my neck?”

Ali told the treasurer Abu Rāfi’: “Oh Abu Rāfi’, Put it in the treasury.”

He then told his daughter: “There is no way that could happen until there is not a single Muslim woman left who does not have what you have.”⁵⁴

The Commander of the Faithful’s daughter ought not wear something which cannot be worn by every single Muslim woman. Is there anything like this phenomenon in the “dictionary” of politics and politicians?

Is the quality of life and are the clothes of the wives of leaders the same as those of the poorest among [their] people?

That is the policy of Islam to which we call the world, so that all can be blessed in the shade of human dignity which Allah created for mankind and for which Allah created mankind.

With his wife

It is narrated in *al-Manāqib* on the authority of Umm ‘Othmān – one of the wives of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, – said:

“I went to see Ali, peace be upon him, and before him were carnations which had been bequeathed in the open square. I said, “Oh, Commander of the Faithful, give my daughter a necklace of these carnations.

He, peace be upon him, said: “Take this,” and he handed me a dirham.

He, peace be upon him, then said: “These are just for [all] Muslims first. Be patient until our share of them reaches us. Then you can take a necklace for your daughter.”⁵⁵

With his son-in-law

Abdullah ibn Ja’far al-Ṭayyār was his nephew and his son-in-law [i.e.] the husband of his daughter, the best of the Hashemite women, Zaynab the Great, peace be upon her. He was a pious man of faith and one of the senior members of Bani Hāshim. [He was] generous and would feed people. He would have an open table summer and winter, night and day.

One time his circumstances became difficult and he went to see his uncle the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and said, “Oh, Commander of the Faithful, if only you could order some assistance or benefit to be set aside for me. I swear by Allah that I have nothing to support myself apart from selling my mount.” He, peace be upon him, told him: “No, I swear by Allah that I cannot find you anything unless you are telling your uncle to steal to give to you.”⁵⁶

This is the Commander of the Faithful’s code of conduct with his relatives – precise implementation of Islamic policy at all levels.

His policy with his civil servants

The Commander of the Faithful's monitoring of civil servants was at the top of his administrative policy in relation to them. He did not want civil servants to sing his praises – as is the case with many rulers and chiefs – he would only want them to sing the praises of Almighty Allah. He wanted them to Allah's Path – precisely, completely and at all times, and so, just as he personally appointed them so too would he consider himself to be personally responsible for their behaviour. He would counsel them, then direct them, then scold them for inappropriate behaviour, but if none of that helped, he would resort to dismissing them and punishing them if they deserved punishment. Diplomatic immunity, administrative immunity, civil service immunity and similar terms had no meaning for Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, if a diplomat deviated from the truth or justice, if an administrator committed an injustice or if a civil servant set about something inappropriate such as bias, oppression or not caring about the community.

The principle in selecting a civil servant and in keeping on a civil servant is one according to the Commander of the Faithful's logic – one does not differ from the other.

“Allah and the Community” – this is the true basis on which to select a civil servant and this is the true basis on which to keep a civil servant.

In the same vein, history records that one of the Commander of the Faithful's close friends did something punishable. He fled from Ali, peace be upon him. He was taken to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him. He said to the Imam, “I swear by Allah. Standing by you is humiliation and abandoning you is disbelief.”⁵⁷ He meant by that: “You do not discriminate between your friends and those who are not your friends. You do not let them off something which you would not let anyone else off.

Immediate dismissal of a governor

There is reference in history to a woman from Bani Hamdān whose name was Sawdah daughter of 'Imārah who complained to him about

the governor. The Imam, peace be upon him, dismissed him and the dismissal came about as follows:

It is reported Sawdah, the daughter of ‘Imārah of Bani Hamdān, went to see Mo‘āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān, and he asked her about Imam Ali. She replied:

“I swear by Allah. I went to him [i.e. the Commander of the Faithful] about a man he had put in charge of collecting our religious taxes who treated us unjustly. I found him standing in prayer. When he saw me he discontinued his prayer. He then came towards me pleasantly, compassionately, mercifully and sympathetically and asked:

“Do you need something?”

I said: “Yes,” and told him the story.

He cried. He then said, lifting his hands up to heaven:

“Oh Allah! You are the Witness over me and them and to the [fact] that I did not order them to act unfairly towards your creation, nor to abandon their duty towards You.”

He then took out a piece of skin and wrote on it:

﴿In the Name of Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate. Now hath come unto ye a clear (Sign) from your Lord! Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due; and do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order: that will be best for ye, if ye have Faith.﴾⁵⁸

When you have read this letter hold onto whatever of our funds and duties is in your possession until someone comes to take it from you. Peace.”

She said: “He then gave the handwritten note to me and I swear to Allah that he did not seal it with clay, nor did he wrap it. I took the note to the intended recipient and he left us, discharged [from office].”⁵⁹

There is another time and place for jurisprudential study and the legal ruling on this issue, not a book like this which has been written to

clarify points concisely and provide a brief outline of the political career of the Commander of the Faithful Ali, peace be upon him, so that we can seek proper political lessons from it and from the life of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, for these modern times of ours.

A practical lesson for the governor

The following is also related about the Commander of the Faithful Ali, peace be upon him:

He, peace be upon him, had appointed a man from Thaqif as a governor over 'Akbarā.ⁱ He said: "Ali, peace be upon him, said to me, "When you have prayed Duhr tomorrow come back to me." I went back to him at the appointed time. I found him sitting down. He had a cup and a small clay jug of water. He called out for a bound sealed bag.

I said to myself he has taken me into his trust to give me a jewel.

He broke the seal and unravelled it and inside was barley meal. He took some out and poured it into the cup and poured water onto it. He drank and gave me [some] to drink but I could not wait any longer.

I said to him: "Oh, Commander of the Faithful. Why do you do this in Iraq even though you can see food is plentiful?"

He said: "I swear by Allah. I do not seal it off to be miserly. However I only buy what I need and I fear that as it lessens something else will be put in it. I hate to fill my stomach with anything but permissible.

That is the reason why I keep it sealed as you can see."

Then he said: "Beware of eating or drinking something the permissibility of which you do not know."⁶⁰

Dismissed for raising his voice

It is reported that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, appointed Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali as a judge and then dismissed him.

ⁱ A township on the edge of Baghdad towards Sāmarrā'.

Abu al-Aswad asked him: “Why have you dismissed me? I have neither cheated nor embezzled.”

He replied: “I saw you raise your voice above the voice of your opponent.”⁶¹

Two opponents are two respected human beings in the view of Islam. A judge must not insult either of them in any way. Raising one’s voice is a type of insult. That does not befit Islamic judicial etiquette ...

A judge who does that ought to be dismissed even if his knowledge, merit, character and closeness to the Commander of the Faithful are like those of Abu al-Aswad al-Du’ali. For justice has no room for compromise in the view of Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him.

Al-Qummi the traditionist, may Allah bless him, wrote about Abu al-Aswad al-Du’ali as follows:

“Abu al-Aswad al-Du’ali was one of the eminent, eloquent men of the highest class of poets of Islam and followers (*shi’ah*) of the Commander of the Faithful. He was one of the most senior and distinguished *tābi’in*.¹ He was from Basra and considered to be one of the heroes and people of intellect.⁶²

He was the creator of Arabic grammar at the instruction of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him.⁶³

Send me your detailed accounts

Even though the Commander of the Faithful’s conduct during Allah’s Messenger’s lifetime, after his death, and during the lifetime of those who ruled before he did is the best indication of how he would be later on in his lifetime, and the governors and civil servants he sent out here and there knew full well the Commander of the Faithful’s code of conduct... Ali would still not miss an opportunity to keep an eye on his governors and workers and keep account of them so that none of them would act unfairly towards the people.

¹ i.e. the generation immediately after those who lived to see the Prophet.

He, peace be upon him, wrote to one of his governors when news of the latter's bad behaviour had reached him:

“A matter has come to my attention about your conduct. If you did it then you have angered your Lord, disobeyed your Imam and breached your trust. I have been given to understand that you have taken possession of State-lands and that you have not only brought them under personal use but also misappropriated State funds. So send me your detailed accounts immediately. Remember that Allah's reckoning is far more severe than any audit which man can carry out. Peace.”⁶⁴

People are free according to the logic of Islam. None of them is asked for an account. They ought not be asked, “Where did you get that?” according to Almighty Allah's universal general rule:

“Assume your brother's affairs to be at their best,”⁶⁵

This is what the jurists (*fuqahā*) term “*aṣālat al-ṣiḥḥah*”, (presumption of correctness) the obvious exception to which are certain exceptional circumstances based on the principle of “competing priorities” derived from the Islamic Sharia itself:

“As far as the governor, ruler, or senior civil servant, are concerned, they can be asked, “Where did you get that from?”

An account is to be kept of their property and of what is in their possession.

They can be threatened with Allah's reckoning which is greater and stricter, so that justice can be made firm and protection from injustice and inequity can be provided for the nation.

If you cheat

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, wrote a letter as follows to one of his commissioners Ziyād ibn Abeeh, successor to his commissioner Abdullah ibn Abbas in Basra:

“I swear by Allah that if I find you misappropriating Muslim property – in a minor issue or a major one – I will punish you in such a way that

you will be left with little provision, your back burdened, and disgraced. Peace.”⁶⁶

A commissioner is the civil servant selected by the Imam to govern and run cities. He has to have two characteristics: knowledge and integrity (*‘adālah*).

On the issue of knowledge, he has to know the rules of Islam, what is permissible, what is prohibited and the way to mediate in affairs between Almighty Allah and His creation.

Secondly, he has to be just (*‘ādil*), a man of faith, and, good, not a sinner (*fāsiq*), inequitable or unfair.

Why all this severe browbeating of a commissioner who has both knowledge and integrity (*‘adālah*)?

It is the severity of the justice, the sharpness of which is sharper than the edge of a sword ...

Embezzling Muslims’ money is betrayal of the Muslims, betrayal of the Commander of the Faithful and betrayal of Almighty Allah.

Whoever commits such compound betrayal deserves rebuke like this.

This is how the Commander of the Faithful Ali, peace be upon him, disciplines city commissioners in the politics of Islam. This is how the Imam ought to discipline his governors, commissioners and civil servants to protect Muslims from being cheated and from inequity.

Imam Ali, peace be upon him, said elsewhere:

“The worst form of betrayal is betraying the nation [in its wealth and other interests] and the most despicable example of deception is deceiving [the nation] by the leaders.”⁶⁷

Accountability for land and beasts

In one of his sermons which he delivered at the beginning of his caliphate, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, states:

“Fear Allah in the matter of His servants and His cities because you will be questioned, even about lands and beasts.”⁶⁸

Accountability in the logic of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, is not exclusive to Islam and the Faith, nor to Muslims and the Faithful, nor to men and women, nor to mankind. Rather, it applies to everything which Almighty Allah has created and which mankind can use for good or evil, right or wrong, in guidance or misguidance, and so on.

People are even subject to various forms of accountability in relation to the earth, soil, countryside, land and sea – dwelling thereon, farming it, leaving it fallow, wasting it and so on. Mankind is answerable before Almighty Allah even in relation to livestock and [other] animals for treating them cruelly or humanely, using them for good or for evil, using them fruitfully or wastefully and so on ...

This is the extent of responsibility in Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib's government. The nation and leaders should take it as an example so that they can follow the right path under the Commander of the Faithful's guidance.

Freedom under Imam Ali's government

The Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib's time was one during which people were blessed with extensive Islamic freedom, especially after the previous ruler Othmān ibn 'Affān had been characterised by cruelty and brutality– to the point that even a noble companion (*ṣaḥābi*) like Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari, may Allah be pleased with him, upon whom the Messenger of Islam, peace be upon him and his holy family, had lavished praises time and again, had no freedom to enjoin good and forbid evil.

This Islamic freedom for which the Imam, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, had paved the way was the closest thing to the freedoms granted by Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, to people at the inception of Islam. Just as pagans, Jews, Christians, and hypocrites used to live side by side with the Muslims in the holy city of Medina and its environs until the Prophet's death,

mingling together in their homes, their markets, doing business with each other and enjoying their mutual freedoms under the shade of the great [religion of] Islam, so too did Muslims, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and pagans – in fact the whole of mankind – proudly and comfortably live a wholesome and respectable life under the shade of Islam during the reign of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him. It is reported that he, peace be upon him, said on this subject:

“They [i.e. people]: form two groups – either your brothers in religion or fellow members of Creation.”⁶⁹

These unique, great and eternal words which pave the way for human beings to be respected as human beings – so that people can look at them from this perspective – and unite them all are the word of justice and the right of humanity.

Truly can we say that after the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, is the one who laid the deep foundations for freedom through what he said and was the enduring implementer of freedom through his deeds and practices among the nation. There is reference in *Nahj al-Balāghah* to his saying, to spur on and instigate freedom:

“Is there not a free man around who leave these particles?”ⁱ

“Do not be a slave to any other, for surely Allah created you as a free man.”⁷⁰

“O People! Adam did not procreate any male or female slave. People are all free but Allah conferred the rights of some over others.”⁷¹

In this way Ali, peace be upon him, was the first to apply these sayings to his practical life and founded a just and free Islamic government in which people were free just as they were under Allah’s Messenger’s government. Here are some examples of that for you:

ⁱ The Imam is talking about the world. He means: “Is there not a free man around who leaves this crude thing to crude people?”

Ibn al-Kawwā

Ibn al-Kawwā was an accursed hypocrite and kharijite⁷² who opposed Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, at the peak of his massive government which at that time was the biggest government on the face of the earth. Ali, peace be upon him, as well as being the Imam appointed by Allah and the Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, was the most powerful ruler on the globe. Ibn al-Kawwā would viciously and publicly fire his objections at the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him.

It is reported that Imam Ali was leading the dawn prayer and Ibn al-Kawwā, who was standing behind him in the congregational prayer, addressed him by reciting the Qur'anic verse:

﴿And verily, it has been revealed to you and to those before you: Surely if you ascribe a partner (to Allah), your work would certainly come to naught and you would certainly be among the losers.﴾ⁱ

Ali, peace be upon him, listened attentively out of respect for the Qur'an until he had finished [reciting] the verse.ⁱⁱ

Then Ali, peace be upon him, resumed his recitation and Ibn al-Kawwā repeated:

﴿And verily, it has been revealed to you and to those before you: Surely if you ascribe a partner (to Allah), your work would certainly come to naught and you would certainly be among the losers.﴾

ⁱ The Holy Qur'an, Throgs (39):65. In this way the man was insinuating that to Imam Ali, and to the people in the congregational prayer that Imam Ali was a polytheist, not a Muslim, and a loser, and thus unfit for leadership. This is a very grave accusation against the Islamic Head of State.

ⁱⁱ The Almighty instructs that when the Qur'an is being recited we should fall silent, 7:204, and so even though Imam Ali was reciting the Qur'anic chapter (*surah*) in the course of the dawn prayer, he fell silent when the Qur'an was being recited by this abuser.

Ali, peace be upon him, once again listened attentively out of respect for the Qur'an. Then he resumed his recitation.

Ibn al-Kawwā repeated:

﴿And verily, it has been revealed to you and to those before you: Surely if you ascribe a partner (to Allah), your work would certainly come to naught and you would certainly be among the losers.﴾

Imam Ali, peace be upon him, once again listened attentively out of respect for the Qur'an.

Once Ibn al-Kawwā had finished reciting the verse the third time, Imam Ali recited:

﴿So patiently persevere: for verily the promise of Allah is true: nor let those shake your firmness, who have (themselves) no certainty of faith.﴾⁷³

He then finished reciting the chapter (*surah*) and bowed to perform *ruku'* [and complete his prayer].⁷⁴

What wonderful freedom for people this is which allows a hypocrite to abuse and slander the supreme leader of the Muslim world, someone like the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, while he is praying, and accuse him of polytheism and of going wrong ...

Then the Imam, peace be upon him, listens attentively out of respect for the Holy Qur'an and the process is repeated three times.

The Imam, peace be upon him, completes his prayer without doing anything to Ibn al-Kawwā and Ibn al-Kawwā goes back to his previous course as if nothing had happened.

This freedom is worlds apart from the free countries in the world today.

Could an ordinary person dare do something like that with any president or leader?

And if this happened would he be able to walk on by in peace?

History does not answer [this question] other than in the negative even today in the majority of countries of the free world.

This is the Islamic freedom which Ali, peace be upon him, implemented.

Let those who say that there is no freedom in Islam, hear this.

Abu Horayrah

It was Abu Horayrah who had become accustomed to being treated with pomp and circumstance under some of the previous administrations. The time of Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, came with the bitterness of the justice, the precision of Islam and the exactness of justice ...

But he did not like all that ... so he stood to challenge and oppose Imam Ali and argue with him ... wanting to teach Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib the politics of Islam and the implementation of the rule of the holy Qur'an.

It was as if he had not heard Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, mention Ali's many virtues and good deeds such as his saying:

“Ali is with the Truth and the Truth is with Ali. It goes with him wherever he goes.”⁷⁵

and his saying, peace be upon him and his holy family:

“Ali is the inheritor of my knowledge and my wisdom,”⁷⁶

and his saying, peace be upon him and his holy family:

“I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate. Whoever wants [to enter] the city should enter it through its gate,”⁷⁷

and hundreds and thousands like them.

All that (audacity) is from Abu Horayrah.

As for Ali, peace be upon him, all that did not lead to his changing his position towards Abu Horayrah.

On the contrary, Ali, peace be upon him, would see to Abu Horayrah's needs even after that. Look at the following historical extract:

It is reported that “Abu Horayrah came to see Ali, peace be upon him. He had spoken ill of him to his face the previous day, but the following day he asked Ali to see to his needs and Ali did so.

Imam Ali’s companions queried him about that, and so the Imam said: “I disdain to let his ignorance get the better of my knowledge, his sin [to get the better of] my forgiveness and his request [to get the better of] my generosity.”⁷⁸

Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, the great and erudite companion of the Prophet talks about the religious law at Othmān’s court but his reward is nothing but to be beaten, imprisoned and exiled, left to starve in humiliation and die.

In contrast, Abu Horayrah who was known for the numerous number of hadith he fabricatedⁱ and attributed to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family:

Firstly: dares to speak out against Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib to his face,

Secondly: knows of the Islamic freedom practiced by the Commander of the Faithful so he fears no violence or punishment,

Thirdly: Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, does not punish him even though he knows that what Abu Horayrah has done is disobedient and sinful, in blotting out the truth and chasing after falsehood and inequity,

Fourthly: the following day, Abu Horayrah has the audacity to ask Ali for favours.

ⁱ *Sunan ibn Mājah* vol.1 p130 hadith363. [Reference to Abū Hurayrah’s saying: “People of Iraq, you claim that I falsely attribute [sayings] to Allah’s Messenger] Bukhāri cites it in *al-Adab al-Mufrad* vol.1 p331 hadith956 as does *Musnad Aḥmad* vol.2 p424 hadith9479. Similarly it is reported that ‘Omar flogged him with a whip and said to him: “You have narrated a lot of traditions and are only fit for telling lies about Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family.). See *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol.4 p67

Fifthly: Imam Ali, peace be upon him, actually sees to his needs as if nothing had happened.

Then his companions query him about that and he answers them with words of knowledge and forgiveness and generosity.

This is the freedom of Islam at this high level.

The *Kharijites*' share

The *Kharijites* fought against the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him. They drew swords on him and on his companions. They killed thousands of the faithful, male and female from among Ali's companions and his followers (*shi'ah*).

They waged a fierce war against Ali, peace be upon him.

In spite of all that, history records of the Commander of the Faithful:

“That he did not cut off the *Kharijites*' stipend from the Treasury.”⁷⁹

What wonderful freedom this is and how far reaching it was.

Where can we find anything like this freedom in history apart from with Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and with him who followed the line of Almighty Allah, and the line of Allah's messengers and His saints?

They pledged allegiance to a lizard

The nation agreed unanimously upon pledging allegiance for a second time to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, after the killing of Othmān, twenty five years after they had first pledged allegiance to him at Ghadir Khumm upon the order of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, on his journey back from the Farewell Pilgrimage.⁸⁰

Among those who pledged allegiance were eight of the hypocrites. They then broke their pledge amongst themselves and pledged allegiance to a lizard in the desert.

Read the following historical extract:

It is reported that al-Aṣḡagh ibn Nabātah said:⁸¹

“The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, ordered us to travel to Ctesiphon (Madā’in) from Kufah. We set off on Sunday, and ‘Amr ibn Ḥurayth stayed behind with seven people. They went out to a place in al-Ḥirah called al-Khurnaḡ. He said: “Let’s go on an outing.” It was a Wednesday, so we would catch up with Ali before he prayed Friday prayers.

While they were having lunch a lizard showed up and they caught it.

‘Amr ibn Ḥurayth took it and stretched out its hand, and said:

“Pledge allegiance to it. This is the Commander of the Faithful!”

The seven pledged allegiance and ‘Amr made the total eight. They then released it and set off.

‘Amr ibn Ḥurayth said: “Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib claims to have knowledge of the unseen world. We broke our pledge and we pledged allegiance to a lizard instead of him.”

They arrived at Ctesiphon (Madā’in) on Friday while the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was delivering his sermon.

They did not split up and stayed together until they arrived at the door of the mosque. When they walked in the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, looked at them from atop the pulpit, broke off his sermon and said:

“O People, Allah Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, told me in secret a thousand *hadith*. Each *hadith* has a thousand doors and each door has a thousand keys.

Allah, sublime is His transcendence, says: ﴿A day on which We call all people by their imam.﴾⁸²

I swear to You by Allah that eight people will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection who will be called by their imam and it will be a lizard. If I wished to name names then I would do so.”

Al-Aṣḅagh ibn Nabātah said: “I saw that ‘Amr ibn Ḥurayth had fallen down the way palm leaves do, out of shame, wickedness, cowardice and terror.”⁸³

How could those eight dare break their pledge of allegiance, their pledge of allegiance to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, whom the Wise Qur’an had put on a level with the Allah’s Messenger’s self, peace be upon him and his holy family, in the holy Qur’anic verse of *mubāhalah*.ⁱ

They then compound their error by pledging allegiance to a lizard, applying themselves assiduously to insulting the Commander of the Faithful – the allotter of heaven and hell.ⁱⁱ

The Commander of the Faithful’s position towards them was one of mercy and compassion. He knows them and informs about them but in spite of that refrains from mentioning their names so that people will not annihilate them.

In spite of all that the eight stuck to their hypocrisy and error.

Freedom like this only exists in Islam.

It is only represented by a just Muslim ruler like Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and whoever’s way of life follows their way of life.

ⁱ The Almighty’s Words: ﴿And whoso disputes with thee concerning him, after the knowledge which hath come unto thee, say (unto him): Come! We will summon our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, then we will pray humbly (to our Lord) and (solemnly) invoke the curse of Allah upon those who lie.﴾ 3:61

ⁱⁱ This is in reference to the Prophetic hadith, “Ali is the allotter of heaven and hell”. *Bihar al-Anwar* vol.35/p110; vol.36/p335; vol.37/p254; vol.38/p68, p95; vol.39/p193, etc.

Acting as a go-between in the matter of marriage

Kufah brought together a mix of Arabs and Persians and other nations who had embraced Islam in the times that followed Allah's Messenger's passing.

Nationalism had run roots deep in the hearts of some as a result of the weak faith inside their souls ...

Because of that some of the Arabs had begun to refrain from marrying non-Arabs.

Non-Arabs came to see the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him. They told him about it. They beseeched the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, to advise them and to take on the role of a go-between in the matter.

Ali, peace be upon him, did so but they did not respond to him.

What marvellous freedom is this where the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, personally makes the effort to marry [someone] off, his matchmaking is not accepted and the other side does not budge. This is the freedom of Islam.

Ṣalāt-al-Tarāweeh

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to pray *nawāfil* (supererogatory prayers) alone during the month of Ramaḍān and he would not allow them to be prayed congregationally, so one night during the month of Ramadan, the Muslims formed a congregation behind Allah's Messenger [as prayer leader]. When he finished his prayer, he left the mosque, went home, not allowing them to do that [i.e. pray *nawāfil* behind him congregationally].⁸⁴

The status quo remained the same during the time of Abu Bakr and similarly during part of Omar ibn al-Khattab's reign.

Then Omar came up with the idea that these *nawāfil* be prayed congregationally. They came to be known as "Ṣalāt al-Tarāweeh". Othmān ibn Affan followed suit.

When the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, came to power he prohibited Tarāweeh just as Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, had done. However a group of Muslims went out on a protest against the prohibition on Tarāweeh because they had grown accustomed to praying it over many years ...

When news reached the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, he ordered that they be left alone to do as they pleased.⁸⁵

This is an example of freedom in Islam – when people oppose the supreme leader of Islam and the Muslims, and he does not punish them in any way.

Fear Allah

Al-Ja'd ibn Na'jah the Kharijite said insultingly and derogatorily to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him: "Fear Allah, Ali. You are going to die."

Imam Ali, peace be upon him, said to him: "No, but rather, I swear by Allah, [I will be] killed by a blow to this," and he pointed to his noble head. A fate sealed and a covenant made, ﴿and he who forges a lie indeed fails to attain his desire.﴾^{86,87}

Do you think someone who dared in that age to speak that way to the ruler of the largest state in the world would be able to avoid having his name recorded on a death list?

In non-Islamic view, he would have received no other punishment but imprisonment, torture and ultimately death.

However the Kharijite man says these words in complete freedom and assurance without terror or dread, and in these words insults someone like the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him. There was no payback from the Commander of the Faithful apart from opening one of the doors of knowledge of the unseen world taught to him by Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and adding a verse from the Qur'an to prove the speaker wrong: ﴿and he who forges a lie indeed fails to attain his desire.﴾

The man was lying when he said, “You are going to die,” because Almighty Allah says:

﴿Think not of those who are slain in Allah’s way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord.﴾⁸⁸

This is the language of the spoken word instead of the language of the sword. This is freedom which can only be found in Islam.

Vexatious questioning

Imam Ali, peace be upon him, said in one of his sermons:

“Ask me. There is nothing short of the Throne which I can be asked which I will not answer. No one will say so after me apart from an ignorant person who is making false claims or a slanderous liar.”

A man at one side of the seated gathering got up, with a book like a codex hanging from his neck; he was swarthy, slender and hairy all over like the Jewish Arabs. He said in a raised voice to Ali, peace be upon him: “Oh claimer of that which he does not know and imitator of that which he does not understand. I am asking a question so answer me.”

Ali’s companions and followers (*Shi’a*) rushed at him from every side and were about to attack him.

Ali, peace be upon him, told them, “Leave him alone and do not rush him. Allah’s Proofs are not established through recklessness, nor through [recklessness] do Allah’s rational demonstrations become clear.”

Then he turned to the man and said, “Ask freely whatever is on your mind. I will answer you.”

The man asked him about matters and he answered him.

The man nodded his head and said, “I believe that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”⁸⁹

This is the meaning of freedom according to Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him:

The language of the spoken word not the language of violence, the language of dialogue ... instead of the language of bullets.

Freedom of speech allowed the vexatious questioner to become humble and [become] a polite believer.

The language of rational demonstration paved the way for the obstinate Jew to become a humble Muslim.

This is the language of Islam and the meaning of freedom according to the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him.

Forgiving insults

Chroniclers mention in the history of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, that when he was in Kufah during the days of His caliphate, a beautiful woman passed by and people stared at her.

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said, “The eyes of these stallions are covetous. That is the reason for their arousal. If one of you sees a woman he likes, he should have intimacy with his wife for she is just another woman like his wife.

One of the Kharijites who was there present said: “may Allah kill him! An unbeliever; but how endowed he is with understanding!”

The crowd rushed at him to kill him.

Ali, peace be upon him, said: “Wait a minute! An insult only warrants an insult in return, or forgiveness of a sin.”⁹⁰

Had it not been for freedom of speech that Kharijite would not have dared be insolent to the Commander of the Faithful and accuse him of being an unbeliever in broad daylight, right before his eyes and in the presence of his companions.

The Imam, peace be upon him, through his discerning and wise policy let people say what they liked as a safety valve allowing psychopaths to breathe, so that matters would not reach the blade of a sword or so that war would not break out – not even a small one restricted to Kufah.

That does not mean that Islam deems it permissible for this Kharijite to utter a statement like this. Certainly not. For what the Kharijite said was one of the most repugnant examples of what is forbidden and one of the most repulsive sins. Rather, the intention was to clarify what wide scope Islam's supreme leader has to grant people freedoms – even to someone like this dreadful miscreant.

Analysis of the situation

Normally, the *prima facie* sentence for someone like this person is execution.

The punishment for a person who insults the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, or the Imam, peace be upon him, is death according to the jurists.

The erudite scholar 'allāmah Majlisi, may Allah bless him, narrates in *Bihar al-Anwar* via numerous chains of narration, that Ibn Abbas passed by one of the seated gatherings of the Quraysh who were cursing Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him. He asked his guide – he was blind at that time – “What are those people saying?”

He replied: “They are cursing Ali, peace be upon him.”

He said: “Take me near to them.”

When he was standing next to them, he asked, “Which of you has cursed Allah?”

They replied “Far be it from Allah Almighty! Whoever curses Allah, attributes partners to Allah.”

He asked: “Which of you has cursed Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family?”

They replied: “Whoever curses Allah's Messenger is an unbeliever.”

He asked: “Which of you cursed Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib?”

They replied: “That we did.”

He said: "Allah has made [me] witness and I call Allah as a witness that I heard Allah's Messenger say:

"Whoever curses Ali curses me and whoever curses me curses Mighty and Transcendent Allah."ⁱ

In a hadith about Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, Abdullah ibn Sulaymān al-ʿĀmiri narrates: "I asked the Imam: 'What of a man I heard who insults Ali and disavows him?'

He said to me: 'I swear by Allah that [spilling] his blood is permissible'."⁹¹

It is reported that whoever speaks ill of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, or any of his Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*) and says anything inappropriate about them or slanders them must be killed.⁹²

It is narrated that Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, was asked about a man who speaks ill of Ali, peace be upon him. He said: "It is fitting that he should not live a day." Then he said: "And whoever curses the Imam should be killed just as someone who curses the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, should be killed."⁹³

ⁱ al-Zarandī al-Ḥanafī, *Naẓm Durar al-Sibṭayn* p105 and similarly al-Khawārazmī, *Manāqib* p137 chapter14, al-Ḥākīm, *al-Mustadrak* vol.3 p130 nos. 4615 and 4616. Something similar is narrated on the authority of Umm Salamah in what she said to ʿAbdallāh al-Jadali: Does anyone among you curse the Messenger of Allah? I said: "God forbid! Good God!" ... Or she said: I heard Allāh's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, say: "Whoever vilifies Ali vilifies me." Similarly, the second hadith narrated on her authority says: "For I heard Allāh's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, say "Whoever vilifies Ali vilifies me. Whoever vilifies me vilifies Almighty Allah." The first hadith is also reported by al-Haythamī in *Majmī' al-Zawā'id* vol.9 p130 and by al-Nisā'i in *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* vol.5 p133 no. 8476 and similarly what Allah's Messenger said to Burayda when Khālid ibn al-Walid told him to vilify Ali in front of the Allah's Messenger: "Whoever vilifies Ali vilifies me." no. 8475; see also *Musnad Aḥmad* vol.6 p323 no. 26791 and other sources.

There are tens of holy hadith on the subject.

Competing priorities

However, in spite of all that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, did not kill the Kharijite who had cursed him or order that he be killed. On the contrary, he would not even allow his companions to kill him!

This is for reason of a more important benefit or for reason of a detriment in killing him which was exclusive to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, in his particular circumstances at that time, or, applicable to Islam and the Muslims in that particular atmosphere surrounding them, or, both [to the Imam, Islam and the Muslims].

That benefit could have been merely showing the forgiveness and clemency of Islam. Perhaps the detriment was the mistaken impression of some ignorant people that Islam is violent and cruel or that it would have allowed those guided by personal interests or followers of the *shaytan* to spread the word that Islam is cruel and inflexible.

Or something else ... these matters are more important than implementing a single ruling of the rules of punishment in Islam, more worthy of attention and in greater need of being implemented.

Sometimes bad publicity has a negative effect on Islam and on the nation which outweighs the benefit of implementing some of the laws of Islam. To paraphrase what *muḥaqqiq* al-Qummi, may Allah bless him, says on the subject: “What the scholars have ruled and what they claim the jurists unanimously agree upon, and, legal proof-text tells us, is that cursing the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and the Imams is punishable by death. However it is conditional upon there being no fear of mischief and corruption (*fasād*) as a result of implementing this rule.”⁹⁴

For that reason there is a *hadith* with an authentic chain of narration in al-Kāfi on the authority of Zurārah that one of them i.e. al-Bāqir or al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon them, said: Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: “Were it not for the fact that I would hate it to

be said that Muhammad sought the help of people only to kill them once he had won a victory over his enemy, I would have slain a group of many people.”ⁱ

[The possibility of] bad publicity against Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, forced the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, to refrain from killing many who deserved to be killed, or those, the killing of whom was mandatory.

One of the principles of Islamic politics

Out of all the principles on which the policies of Islam are based this [i.e. the principle of competing priorities] is a profound one from which many of Islam's domestic and foreign policies are derived.

This is not to say all of Almighty Allah's laws change as a result of the mockery of those who mock. Rather, it means the mockery of or the levelling of an accusation against Islam, its Prophet, its Imams, peace be upon them, or even against the authorities of the religion (*marāji'*) – which cause the humiliation of the Muslims bringing scorn, malice and similar evils to bear upon them; while at the same time providing

ⁱ *al-Kāfi*, vol.8 p345, hadith544. Needless to say, those who deserved to be slain were in fact not specifically the people from whom the Prophet received support, but only rumours would spread to that effect. An example is the infamous Khālīd ibn al-Walīd, who killed innocent people – at the time of the Prophet. The Prophet condemned his action and paid compensation for the bloodshed, as well as for the damage and terror he caused, but the Prophet did not have Khālīd ibn al-Walīd killed even though he deserved to be slain. Furthermore, Khālīd ibn al-Walīd was one the archenemies of the Prophet, who had waged and participated in various battles against the Prophet. Like many others Khālīd ibn al-Walīd had pretended to accept Islam only as a means to fight the Prophet from within. As an example for his animosity and hatred of the Prophet and his holy family, few days after the Prophet's assassination, Khālīd ibn al-Walīd was one of those who stormed the house of the Prophet's daughter – *Sayyidah* Fatimah – setting it ablaze, crushing her between the door and the wall, killing her unborn child instantly, and *Sayyidah* Fatimah died later on from the injuries she sustained in the assault. This is one example of that group of people referred to.

encouragement to tyrants against Islam and the Muslims –dictate the non-implementation of certain articles of Islamic punishments to preserve the greatness, grandeur and pride of Islam; for reason of the Prophet’s declaration: “Islam takes precedence and nothing should be given precedence over it.”⁹⁵

In a word, if a serious mischief (*fasād*) as defined by the *shari’a* arises from the implementation of an Islamic punishment, then avoiding it becomes more important than [implementing] that punishment and therefore implementing it is waived.

The holy *hadith* state this explicitly; including the *hadith* narrated via an authentic chain of transmission which by the three eminent scholars al-Kulayni,⁹⁶ al-Ṣaduq,⁹⁷ and al-Ṭousi,⁹⁸ may Allah bless them, on the authority of Hishām ibn Sālem:

“I asked Abu Abdullah [Imam Ṣādiq], peace be upon him: ‘What do you have to say about a man who habitually vilifies Ali, peace be upon him?’”

He replied: “I swear by Allah, [shedding] his blood is permissible.”ⁱ

He then said: “Unless it results in affecting an innocent.”

I asked: ‘How can it affect an innocent?’

He replied: ‘A believer is killed in retaliation for an unbeliever’, and he did not say anything further.

For these reasons Ali, peace be upon him, refrained from killing the man who had cursed him and forbade [others from] killing him.

When we compare the case of Imam Ali’s being cursed in his presence and his forgiving the person who vilified him – brief as [the account] is

ⁱ It should be noted that this ruling applies only to the holy prophet Muhammad, his daughter *Sayyidah* Fatima, and his twelve divinely appointed successors, and not any other Muslim leader. Needless to say, vilifying an ordinary faithful unjustly is a sin and expressly condemned in Islamic teachings, but the ruling for that would not be as the above.

– with other cases of politicians from most Islamic countries today, you will understand the enormous difference between the two.

Today, whoever insults one of the leaders in the majority of Islamic countries especially to his face and in the presence of his cronies, the least punishment for him will be imprisonment, torture, denial of legal rights, [confiscation of] his business, income and so on. It may even lead to execution or death under cruel torture.

From this, we understand the freedom practiced by the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, who was the one who meticulously implemented the great [religion of] Islam.ⁱ

They failed to pledge allegiance

After ‘Othmān ibn ‘Affān was killed, the Muslims pledged allegiance to Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and a number of hypocrites failed to pledge allegiance.

However the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, did not force them to pledge allegiance.

A number of his companions wanted to force them to pledge allegiance and they sought the Commander of the Faithful's permission. However they received nothing but stern refusal on the part of the Imam, peace be upon him.

That is implementation of Islamic freedom and assiduous application of himself for the sake of communicating with words and worded communication, not the word of the sword or of violence.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ This would be appreciated more if we consider that this event took place some 1400 years ago. A response such as this is rare if not unparalleled. If a powerful leader of any country at the time was insulted in this way in his presence, the offender would receive the harshest of punishments. Imam Ali upheld this practice so that leaders after him would follow suit.

ⁱⁱ After the martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad, and contrary to his specific instructions about his succession, some of the Prophet's companions conducted a *coup d'état* and took over the realm. The coup master seated

‘*Allāmah* Majlisi, may Allah bless him, says in *Bihar al-Anwar*:⁹⁹

Ali, peace be upon him, went out to the mosque and people pledged allegiance to him.

They brought Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas.

Imam Ali said: “Pledge allegiance.”

He replied: “No. Not until everyone else pledges allegiance.”

He said: “Let him go.”

They brought Ibn Omar, and Imam Ali said: “Pledge allegiance.”

He replied: “Not until everyone else pledges allegiance.”

He said: “Bring me a surety.”

He replied: “I don’t have a surety.”

Al-Ashtar said: “Let me strike his neck.”

Imam Ali said: “Leave him alone. I’ll be his surety.”

All the Supporters (Anṣār) all pledged allegiance apart from a small group including: Ḥassān ibn Thābit, Ka‘b ibn Mālīk, Salamah ibn Makhlad, Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri, Muhammad ibn Musallamah, Nu‘man

himself on the seat of power and forced others to pledge allegiance to him, and those who refused were crushed and eliminated; like the leader of the Ansar was. The coup master’s aids used to literally drag people by hand and make it touch the hand of the self-proclaimed ruler, and he used to say this is accepted as *bay‘ah* (allegiance). Prophet Muhammad’s family refused to give allegiance to the usurper, as the Prophet Muhammad, on specific divine instructions, had appointed Imam Ali as his successor and the leader of the nation after him. The coup leaders attacked the house of the Prophet’s family, violently assaulted the Prophet’s beloved daughter *Sayyidah* Fatima, who was heavily pregnant at the time, and dragged Imam Ali from his house with a noose around his neck, and took him to the mosque. “Pledge allegiance or will strike your neck!” they said to Imam Ali. *Sayyidah* Fatima’s unborn son was killed instantly in the course of the assault, and she died later of the injuries she sustained.

ibn Bashir, Zayd ibn Thābit, Rāfi' ibn Khadij, Fuḍālah ibn 'Obaydah, and Ka'b ibn 'Ojrah. They were loyal to Othmān.

The Commander of the Faithful's response to this resistance was nothing but to give advice and invite [them] to the Truth.

“When Sa'd and those whom we have named withdrew and hesitated in pledging allegiance to Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, he praised gave thanks to Allah, then said, *inter alia*:

“I swear by Allah, I will give advice to the opponent and be fair to the oppressed. Matters displeasing to me have come to my attention in relation to Sa'd, Ibn Musallamah, Osamah, Abdullah, and Ḥassān ibn Thābit. Justice is between me and them.”¹⁰⁰

This was the Commander of the Faithful's response to those who failed to pledge allegiance to him without any lawful excuse or rational proof.ⁱ

This is where Islamic freedom implemented by a just Islamic ruler becomes clear – logic of the word and the sword of logic, not the logic of the sword.

In spite of their treachery

Zubayr and Ṭalḥahⁱⁱ were among the Muslim masses who pledged allegiance to Ali, peace be upon him. They then asked the Commander

ⁱ The duty to pledge allegiance to the Imams arises from: ﴿O you who believe, obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those who are in authority among you...﴾ (4:59) hadith narrated by both sects from so many sources as to be indubitable explain that *those* (who are in authority among you) means the Imams peace be upon them. Because obedience to them is linked to obedience to the Messenger and obedience to Allah, failure to obey them constitutes disobeying Allah and His Messenger. It is thus a religious obligation and is obviously extremely significant. The difference between those truly placed in charge by Allah and those who usurped the role is that the latter forced those who resisted pledging allegiance to do so whereas the former did not.

ⁱⁱ Zubayr was Prophet Muhammad's cousin, and following the assassination of the Prophet, he was an ardent supporter of Ahl al-Bayt and Imam Ali, peace be upon him. But with time he strayed from the Ahl al-Bayt until he ended up

of the Faithful for permission to go on ‘Umrah when they noticed that Imam Ali was not giving them a bigger share than the rest of the Muslims and was not going to grant to their request to have Kufah or Basrah. For the Imam, peace be upon him, knew of their conspiracy with Mo‘āwiyah in relation to that.

Ali, peace be upon him, realised that they did not really want to go on ‘Umrah and instead wanted to betray him and go to war [against him]. In spite of that, the Imam, peace be upon him, did not refuse them permission, in accordance with the Leader’s implementation of great Islamic freedom.

He, peace be upon him, said to them when they sought his permission to set off on the ‘Umrah.

“I swear by Allah that you do not want to go on ‘Umrah. You really want to go to Basrah.”

He said to Ibn ‘Abbas when he was telling him of their request for permission to go on ‘Umrah:

with the army of Aisha opposing the army of Ali, peace be upon him, at the battle of the Camel. At the persuasion and reminding of Imam Ali, Zubayr left the scene before fighting broke out between the armies, but he was killed by one Ibn Jormouz.

Ṭalḥah was Aisha’s cousin, and an adversary of Prophet Muhammad and Ahl al-Bayt. It is reported that Ṭalḥah had said that if the Prophet dies, he would marry Aisha; a Qur’anic verse was revealed to condemn this stance: ﴿And it is not for you to cause annoyance to the messenger of Allah, nor that ye should ever marry his wives after him. Indeed this is grievous sin and disobedience in the sight of Allah.﴾ 33:53 At the outset of the battle, Marwān ibn al-Hakam, another one of the arch adversaries of the Ahl al-Bayt, who was in Aisha’s camp, twice shot Ṭalḥah and killed him in a revenge attack, because of the latter’s role in the murder of Othmān ibn ‘Affān.

During their reign, Imam Ali’s predecessors had, on false grounds, privileged some individuals or groups, but when Imam Ali came to power he treated them equal to the rest of the Muslims. This did not please those who had lost the privileges.

“I gave permission to them in spite of my knowing the treachery they had inside. I appealed to Allah for help against them. Allah will ward off their cunning and will grant me victory over them.”¹⁰¹

Is there anyone against?

After allegiance had been pledged to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and the vast majority of Muslims had pledged allegiance to him, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, resolved to do something the likes of which were unprecedented in history.

On the authority of ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir and Ibn Abbas: “When Ali, peace be upon him, climbed atop the pulpit, he said to us, “Stand up, break ranks, and call out: Is there anyone against?”

People shouted from every direction: “Oh Allah! We are content, we are in agreement, and we obey Your Messenger and his cousin.”ⁱ

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, is the true Caliph appointed by Almighty Allah. In spite of that he abstains from [demanding] allegiance at the beginning of his rule so that it not be said that it was allegiance by force of compulsion.

People then pledge out of choice. He did not force anyone who did not do so to pledge. In spite of all that, he ordered that the ranks be broken in case there was anyone against, and so the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, could grant him the freedom to pledge allegiance or not, freedom of speech, freedom of dialogue and freedom of discussion.

ⁱ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p259. Needless to say, about two-and-half months before he was murdered, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, on instructions from the Almighty, appointed Imam Ali as his successor and the leader for the nation in a previously called for public gathering. The Prophet asked the masses who had assembled by the freshwater Lake Ghadir, and who were reportedly more than one-hundred-and-twenty-thousand, to pay allegiance to him and to Imam Ali as the Prophet's successor and leader of the nation after him.

What wonderful freedom this is in Islam implemented by the supreme leader after the pledge of allegiance.

It is one of the unique features of the great [religion of] Islam.

Ḥasan al-Baṣri's position

Ḥasan al-Baṣri was one of those who, according to historians, used to hate and slander Imam Ali.

He would say of him: “If Ali had carried on eating *hashaf* – i.e. the poorest quality dates – in Medina it would have been better for him than what he got involved in.”

He was one of those who deserted Ali instead of helping him.

Ali, peace be upon him, used to say of him, “Every nation has its Sāmeri.ⁱ This man is the Sāmeri of this nation, except that he does not say, ﴿No touching﴾¹⁰² instead he says, “No fighting”.¹⁰³

ⁱ An allusion to the Sāmeri referred to in the Qur'an's Chapter 20 (Surah Tāhā) who led the Israelites astray. The Sāmeri was one of the Israelites who had accompanied Prophet Moses in the exodus from Egypt. While Prophet Moses was on Mount Sinai to commune with his Lord, the Sāmeri seized the opportunity of the absence of Prophet Moses, encouraged the Israelites help him make a golden calf using the jewellery they had with them, and said this is the god of Moses and the Israelites, and called on the Israelites to worship the golden calf. This is cited in the holy Qur'an, (20): 83-98. When he returned Moses banished the Sāmeri and he was evermore to call out as a warning, “No touching!” (20:97) because, as a divine punishment for making the idol, he would develop a fever whenever anyone touched him and the person touching him would also develop a fever.

In Islamic literature, Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali, peace be upon them and their holy families, refer to leaders of deviation and straying or opponents of the divine teachings as “the Sāmeri of the Ummah (nation)”. The reason the Imam says that Ḥasan Baṣri is the Sāmeri of this nation may be because just as the Sāmeri led the Israelites astray (20:85), so, too, did Ḥasan Baṣri lead the Muslims astray. He may also be said to have idolised those he describes as having performed ablutions well.

Ali, peace be upon him, came across this man while he was performing wuḍu' (ablution) in a rivulet. He said to him: "Perform your wuḍu' diligently young man."

He said: "Not long ago you killed men who used to perform their ablutions diligently!"ⁱ

The Imam asked: "And are you grieving over them?!"

He replied: "Yes."

The Imam said: "may Allah prolong your grief."¹⁰⁴

The word 'Sāmeri' is the Arabic equivalent of the Hebrew word 'Shimroni', or its English biblical word Shimronite, which is in relation to the Israelite clan of Shimronites who, along with other Israelite clans accompanied the Prophet Moses on the exodus from Egypt. [Numbers26: 23-25] Shimon was one of the sons of Issachar who was one of the sons of Israel. [Genesis46:13] Issachar was Jacob's fifth son. [Genesis30:18]

The name of that particular member of the Shimronite clan in question is not mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an, he is only referred to as 'The Sāmeri' or 'The Shimronite'. It is reported that the Sāmeri was an intriguing savant who had such knowledge or 'insight' that not many others probably had. This is evident from the holy Qur'an, 20:96, where the Sāmeri is quoted as saying: ﴿I saw what they did not see, so I seized a handful of dust from the Messenger's (Gabriel's) track, and cast it into the thing, so my soul prompted me﴾.

The Sāmeri is not the same as the Samaritan, which is in relation to the city of Samaria that was built by Omri king of Israel some 570 years after the incident of the calf. So the Sāmeri, or the Shimronite as it would be known in Biblical English, should not be confused with the Samaritan.

ⁱ Those referred to as "used to perform wuḍu' diligently" had been described by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, as the *māriqeen* or the Renegades, who had left the religion of Islam altogether. It is true that Imam Ali fought against people who performed ablutions carefully, but the whole point is that Islam does not just mean performing ablutions carefully, when those concerned commit atrocities. It just shows how superficial Hasan Basri was. It's as bad as someone saying, "You're a disgrace for killing ISIL (*daesh*) members because they perform ablutions nicely and pray etc." The difference is that instead of locking him in a dungeon for ideologically supporting a terrorist group the Imam just exchanged words and let him go.

This is Ali's only response to Hasan al-Basri – word in response to word, and supplication against him in response to insult and slander.

This is the [true] meaning of Islamic freedom in its profundity.

Al-Ash'ath's position

“It is narrated on the authority of al-Hasan ibn Ali, peace be upon him, in a *hadith* that al-Ash'ath ibn al-Qays al-Kindi built a minaret in his home. Every time he heard the call to prayer at prayer times at the central mosque in Kufah, [when Imam Ali led the prayers] he would climb it and shout from atop his minaret, “That man! You are a liar and a magician.”

What was the Imam's response to this heinous offence?

He would just speak of the fate of this impudent man.

Imam Hasan, peace be upon him, continues: “My father used to call him “collar of fire”.

He was asked about that, and he said: “When death comes upon al-Ash'ath a collar of fire extending from heaven will strike and burn him. When he comes to be buried he will be nothing but a burned piece of charcoal.”

This was the only response by the Imam, peace be upon him, to what al-Ash'ath ibn Qays did. Had something similar been done in the reign of a despot, the least which would have happened to him in response would have been imprisonment, torture or deprivation of political and social rights.

As for the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, he was an authority of justice, Allah's vicegerent and a chief who implemented Islam meticulously and precisely.

At the time of al-Ash'ath's death, everyone who was around saw the fire which struck him like an extended collar until it had burned him, as he screamed and burst into loud laments.¹⁰⁵

Compensation for member of the opposition killed by angry mob

When the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, resolved to block off Mo'āwiyah, push him back and advance to Şiffin, he delivered a sermon in which he urged people to fight the jihad. A man challenged him. The people killed him and the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, paid compensation.

“Ali, peace be upon him, climbed atop the pulpit and delivered a sermon. I heard him say: “Advance on Allah’s enemies. Advance on the enemies of the Qur’an and the [Prophetic] traditions. Advance on the rest of the clans, and the killers of the Muhājiroun (Migrants) and Anṣār (Supporters).”ⁱ

A man from Bani Fazārah challenged him. The people trampled him underfoot and hit him with their sandals until he died. The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, paid compensation for his death out of the public treasury.

Al-Ashtar got up and said: “Oh Commander of the Faithful! Don’t be dismayed by what you saw, and do not give up on our support because of what you heard from this wretched traitor.”¹⁰⁶

It appears from this hadith that the man spoke roughly to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, but in spite of that, the Imam deemed him to be a victim for whom the Treasury was responsible. He therefore paid his compensation from the Treasury.

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, calls people to war against the enemy of Allah and the enemy of His Messenger: Mo'āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān. A man challenges him and the people kill him ...

In spite of that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, pays [the man's] heirs compensation.

ⁱ The term Migrants is in reference to Mecca’s Muslims who migrated from Mecca to Medina after the Prophet did so, and the term Supporters is in reference to Medina’s Muslims who supported the prophet and the migrants.

This is the way in which the Commander of the Faithful's code of conduct profoundly and comprehensively represented the great [religion of] Islam in all respects – including that of freedom – and he granted people [freedom] at various levels and in various matters. Ali, peace be upon him, set the record. Muslim rulers ought to follow his brilliant way of life and correct their policy in line with Ali's discerning policy in all matters.

Imam Ali's Equality Policy

Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, like the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his holy family, based his government upon complete equality between the various members of the nation with regard to dividing up the nation's money – to which they are all entitled to an equal share...

That was one of his shining characteristics to the point a *ziyārah* refers to him as:

“He who shares out equally and is fair with his subjects”¹⁰⁷

Implementing that caused the Imam, peace be upon him, a lot of trouble, hardship, wars and for some of the chiefs to turn away from him. However the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was not concerned about paying that price to implement Islam fully.

In what follows are examples recorded by history of the equal treatment practised by the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him.

He begins with himself

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, began this equal treatment with his holy self. Only then did he apply it to others so that he could be an example to other people.

When Othmān was killed and the Muslims pledged allegiance to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, ... he climbed atop the pulpit in Allah's Messenger's Mosque, and delivered a sermon to the people reminding them to fear Allah and to explain to them his policy for the lands and for Allah's servants. He then got down from the pulpit

and ordered that the treasury be opened. He said to ‘Ammār, “Ammar, go to the treasury, give each of the people three dinars and take three dinars for me. ‘Ammār and Abu al-Haytham went away with a group of Muslims to the treasury and the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, went away to Quba Mosque to pray there ...

Ṭalḥah, Zubayr and ‘Aqil refused to accept it.¹⁰⁸

Equality for all

The eminent scholars – al-Kulayni in *al-Kaḥfi*, and al-Mufid in *al-Ikhtisās* – narrate via their authentic chains of transmission that Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

“When Ali, peace be upon him, became the ruler, [in response to those who were asking more than the share that every Muslim received] he climbed onto the pulpit, praised and thanked Allah and then said:

I swear by Allah that I will not take a dirham of your treasury so long as I have a fruit-bearing date tree in Yathrib [Medina].ⁱ Be fair. Don't you see how I deprive myself and [yet you expect me] give to you [more than the rest]?”ⁱⁱ

His brother ‘Aqil stood up and said: “By Allah, would you treat me and a black man in Medina the same?”

He said: “Sit down. Was anyone else apart from you speaking out? You are no better than anyone else except in terms of becoming Muslim earlier or in terms of piety.”¹⁰⁹

The brother of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, the brother of the best of Executors, the brother of the supreme Muslim leader is not entitled to any greater share or any more money than any other.

ⁱ During the 25-year reign of the three rulers before him, one of the things Imam Ali, peace be upon him, did was to go into farming.

ⁱⁱ Here the Imam is making it clear to all that he is not going to favour some over others by giving them more than their fair share.

The only preference in Allah's sight is for reason of becoming Muslim earlier or for reason of piety.

Sahl and his freedman are equal

Sahl ibn Ḥunayf was one of Allah's Messenger's companions from among the Supporters (Anṣār). He participated at [the battle of] Badr along with the Prophet, peace be upon him.

It is narrated that Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said about Sahl ibn Ḥunayf: "He was one of the chiefs."

He then said: "Not one of the Quraysh or the other people surpassed him in any one merit," and he praised him.¹¹⁰

This 'restriction' is *additional*— in grammarians' terms — and includes those who took part in the battle of Badr, the Supporters (Anṣār) and their likes, apart from the Members of the Prophet's Household (*AhlulBayt*), peace be upon them.

It is reported that when Sahl died, as part of the funeral prayer, the Commander of the Faithful's accolade for him was to say "*Allahu Akbar*" (Allah is too Great [to be described]) twenty five times [as opposed to the normal five].

Imam Bāqir, peace be upon him, said:

"Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said "*Allahu Akbar*" seventy times for Hamzah. Ali, peace be upon him, said "*Allahu Akbar*" twenty five times for Sahl ibn Honayf.

He said five lots of five "*Allahu Akbar*".

Every time people caught up with him they would say, "Commander of the Faithful! We did not arrive in time for the prayer for Sahl." He would put him down and say "*Allahu Akbar*" five times for him. This happened five times until he reached his grave.¹¹¹

Not even with this man who held such an esteemed position, did the Commander of the Faithful depart from the policy of giving a stipend equal to a black slave whom [Sahl] had emancipated.

Al-Mufid reports:

Ali, peace be upon him, placed ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir, along with Abu Haytham ibn al-Tayhān, in charge of the Public Treasury in Medina, and wrote:

“The Arab, Qurayshi, Ansari and non-Arab, and all Arab tribes and non-Arab groups who are Muslim, are equal.”

Sahl ibn Ḥunayf brought his black freedman to him and asked: “How much would you give to this man?”

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, asked: “How much did you take?”

He replied: “Three dinars, the same as the others.”

He said: “Give his freedman three dinars the same as what he took.”¹¹²

It is narrated in *al-Manāqib*: “Sahl ibn Ḥunayf got up, took his slave by the hand and said: “O Commander of the Faithful, I have freed this slave.” He gave him three dinars the same as he had given Sahl ibn Honayf.¹¹³

The same share for his sister and her freedwoman

Al-Mufid reports in a long hadith: Ali's sister Umm Hāni daughter of Abu Ṭālib went to see him, peace be upon him, and he gave her twenty dirhams. Umm Hani asked her non-Arab freedwoman: “How much did the Commander of the Faithful give you?”

She replied: “Twenty dirhams.”

She went away angrily.

Ali, peace be upon him, told her, “Go forth, may Allah bless you. We found no preference for Ishmael over Isaac in Allah's Book.”¹¹⁴

He did not give preferential treatment to noblemen

The erudite scholar ‘*allāmah* Majlisi narrates on the authority of the eminent scholars Mufid, Kulayni, Ṭousi and Ibn Idris, may Allah be pleased with all of them, via various chains of transmission: “A group of

Shi'a (followers) came to see the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, when people had split away from him and many of them had run to Mo'āwiyah in pursuit of his worldly possessions. They said: "O Commander of the Faithful! hand this money out and give these Arab and Qurayshi noblemen more than the freedmen, non-Arabs and those it is feared will oppose you and run to Mo'āwiyah, until things get back to normal. Then you can go back to the best that Allah has accustomed you to – giving equal shares and being fair to your subjects."

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said: "Shame on you! Are you telling me to seek assistance by doing injustice to the people of Islam whom I have been put in charge of?"

No I swear by Allah that will never happen so long as day and night alternate and so long as I see stars in the sky.

I swear by Allah, even if this money of theirs were my money I would give them equal shares, let alone when the money is all theirs?"¹¹⁵

His argument with Ṭalḥah and Zubayr

Ṭalḥah and Zubayr became annoyed with what the Commander of the Faithful did to them – giving them the same share as other Muslims. They argued with the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, about that, but the truth and justice was stronger than they were and more worthy of being followed in according to the Commander of the Faithful's logic.

It is narrated in *Manāqib Āl Abu Ṭālib* that Abu Haytham ibn al-Tayhān and Abdullah ibn Abu Rāfi' said: Ṭalḥah and Zubayr came to see the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and said, "Omar didn't used to treat us like that."

He asked: "What did Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to give you?"

They fell silent!

He asked: "Did not Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, divide equally among the Muslims?"

They replied: "Yes."

He asked: "In your opinion, is Allah's Messenger's tradition (*sunnah*) more worthy of being followed or Omar's tradition?"

They replied: "The Allah's Messenger's tradition."

They then said: "O Commander of the Faithful, we became Muslims earlier, we have endured hardship and we are kin."

He asked: "Did you become Muslims earlier or did I?"

They said: "You did."

He said: "Is your kinship closer or is mine?"

They said: "Yours."

He asked: "Was your hardship greater or mine?"

They said: "Your hardship."

He said: "I swear by Allah, this labourer of mine and I are nothing but on the same level," and he pointed to the labourer.¹¹⁶

This is the way the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, lived so that he could be a shining example for generations to come, provide hope for the oppressed and the weak, and rein in the wilfulness of the arrogant and the tyrants. A rich man is no better than the pauper, a white man [is no better] than a black man, an Arab [is no better] than a non-Arab, and a nobleman [is no better] than someone of low class, unless – in Allah's sight on the Day of Resurrection – he is more pious. He should not receive a larger stipend which Allah has made equal in this world.

Imam Ali's Forgiveness

The Islamic supreme leader is entitled to pardon some criminals if there is a greater good which takes priority over carrying out the Islamic punishment.

In this way, the Islamic supreme leader is entitled to reduce the amount or nature of the punishment if the greater good so dictates.

The “greater good” in these matters arises from the Islamic *Sharia*, the source of which is the Wise Qur’an and the holy Prophetic teachings (*Sunnah*), the consensus (*ijmā’*) of the religious jurists (*fuqahā’*) and reason (*‘aql*).

Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, is the most knowledgeable on these greater goods and these competing priorities. For that reason one notes in his career a number of instances where in order to give effect to this “greater good” he pardons criminals from being given the Islamic punishments which they deserve.

In what follows we shall cite some of those examples.

Forgiving Marwān

Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam was one of the chiefs of the hypocrites. He was among those who – along with ‘Āishah, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr – prepared and spurred the army on against the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, at the Battle of the Camel.ⁱ He had started the fire of war and incited the people of Basra to secede from the Muslims...

ⁱ The battle is referred to as the battle of the Camel, because the “leader of the campaign” Aisha (daughter of Abu Bakr) was riding a camel – as she led the rebel army from Medina to Basra and during the course of the battle. The camel was called “Askar bin Hosar”. A brief background to the battle: Towards the end of the reign of the third ruler Othman bin Affān, Aisha fell out with Othman and issued a fatwa calling on the people to kill Othman, by saying: “Kill Na‘thal for he has become a disbeliever.” Aisha was the first to use the derogatory term Na‘thal for Othman. When she received the news of Othman’s killing at the hands of the people, and that the people had pledged allegiance to Imam Ali, peace be upon him, Aisha, out of her loathing for Imam Ali, immediately issues a new fatwa: “We must fight Ali to avenge Othman’s blood.” [See for example: Ibn Athir al-Shāfe’i, *al-kāmil fil-tāreekh* vol.3 p206. Al-Ṭabari, *Tāreekh al-Ṭabari* vol.3 p477. Al-Sibt ibn Jouzi al-Ḥanafī, *Tathkirat-al-Khawāṣ* pp 61,64,65. Ibn Mandour, *Lisān al-Arab*, vol.11 p670.] Aisha ends up leading a massive army from Medina to Basra, some 500 km north. In the ensuing battle with the army of Imam Ali, Aisha’s army was defeated and more than 20,000 were reportedly killed.

This is the war in which tens of thousands of Muslims who prayed and fasted fell victim.

However in spite of all that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, forgave Marwān for this after he had been captured.

“Mālik al-Ashtar captured Marwān at the battle of the Camel, [Imam Ali] peace be upon him, rebuked him and released him.”¹¹⁷

“It is narrated on the authority of Abu al-Ṣayrafī that a man from the Murād clan said: “I was standing before the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, at the Battle of Basra when Ibn Abbas came up to him after the fighting and said: “I have a request.”

He, peace be upon him, said: “How well I know the request you’ve come to see me about. You have come to ask for amnesty for ibn al-Ḥakam.”

He said, “Yes. I want you to grant him amnesty.”

He, peace be upon him, said: “I grant him amnesty but go to him and bring him to me, but do not bring him unless he is [riding] in tandem because that is more humiliating for him.”

Ibn Abbas brought him riding behind him.

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, asked him, “Do you pledge allegiance?”

He replied, “Yes, be there what there may be in my soul.”

Imam Ali said: “Allah knows best what is in [people’s] hearts.”

When Marwān stretched out his hand to pledge allegiance to Ali, the Imam took his hand out of Marwān’s hand and pulled it away. He, peace be upon him, said: “I have no need of it. If he were to pledge allegiance to me with his hand twenty times he would break it with his podex.

He, peace be upon him, then said: “Hey ibn al-Hakam! You feared for your head that it would fall in this tumult.”¹¹⁸

The renegades (*bughāt*) are those who go to war against the just Imam.

If they have a platoon, the sentence for any of them taken prisoner is death.

Those who fought [against the Imam] at the battle of the Camel were renegades and they were a platoon. Allah's *prima facie* ruling was for Marwān to be killed.

However the greater Islamic good – which the Commander of the Faithful Ali, peace be upon him, saw at that time – dictated pardoning him in spite of what the Commander of the Faithful knew of his wickedness, and of the Prophet's cursing him and his as yet unconceived descendants up to the Day of Resurrection – except for the few of them who were believers – and similarly, his knowledge of what acts of sedition and injustice Marwān would perform.ⁱ

'Aishah too

'Āishah was also a transgressor according to the text of the Wise Qur'an:

﴿If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other then fight ye (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with Allah's command.﴾¹¹⁹

'Āishah fought against Allah's Messenger's legitimate Vicegerent, appointed by Allah and His Messenger and elected by the people.

ⁱ It is reported that "There was not a single child born to anyone who was not taken to the Prophet for him to pray for the new-born. Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam was taken to him, and he said: "This is a lizard, son of a lizard, the cursed one, son of the cursed one". (al-Ḥākīm, *al-Mustadrak*, vol.4 p479 "*idhā balaghat bani Umayyah arba'in ...*"; Ibn Ḥammād, *al-Fitan*, vol.1 p131 no. 317. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, also said, "If the sons of Ḥakam become thirty men they will divide Allah's wealth among themselves, make [Allah's] slaves their own slaves, and distort the Qur'an to serve their own purposes".)

So she is a transgressor and the Islamic punishment for a transgressor, male or female, is death.

‘Āishah expected that from the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him. For that reason, when she saw the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, after he had defeated her she said to him, pleading for mercy:

“Now that you have won, be gentle.”

Meaning: Pardon [me] if you please, and do not pass Islam’s *prima facie* sentence. Rather, use some of the power you have to grant clemency.

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, granted her clemency for the greater good of Islam which was more important at that time than the benefit of killing someone like ‘Aishah even if she was a transgressor, chief of the transgressors and the reason behind a crushing war in which many Muslims had been massacred.

It is stated in Bihar al-Anwar: The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, fitted her out with the finest accoutrements and sent ninety – or seventy – ladies with her [as her guards] from Basra to Medina.¹²⁰

Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr

Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr was one of those who despised Ali, peace be upon him, and the Messenger’s Household, peace be upon them. He was the one who goaded his father into starting the Battle of the Camel. It is narrated that Imam Ali said about him:

“Zubayr remained one of us, the Members of the Household, until his inauspicious son Abdullah grew up.”ⁱ

ⁱ al-Qandūzi, *Yanābi‘ al-Mawaddah* vol.1 p450 chapter52. Ibn al-Athir in *Osd al-Ghābah* vol.3 p162 and Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tāreekh Dimashq* vol.18 p404 narrate the same. Ali’s words to Zubayr can be found in al-Balādhuri’s narration in *Ansāb al-Ashraf* p255: “We used to consider you to be one of us, the Sons of

He despised Bani Hashim and would curse and vilify Ali, peace be upon him.¹²¹

This Kharijite man who drew his sword in the face of Allah's Messenger's Vicegerent; this transgressor – *bāghi* in Islamic terms – deserved to be killed.

However the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, pardoned Abdullah ibn Zubayr at the Battle of the Camel.

“Aisha sent her brother Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, to ask him for clemency and exemption from punishment for Abdullah ibn Zubayr. The Commander of the Faithful granted him and everyone else who had participated in the Battle of the Camel exemption from punishment.”¹²²

Pardoning Musa ibn Ṭalḥah

“Musa ibn Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydallah was brought to him, and the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said to him: “Say three times: I seek Allah's forgiveness and turn to Him.”

He said it and Ali, peace be upon him, said: “Let him go on his way.”

He then told him: “Go where you like. Take your weapon or horse you may find in our camp. Fear Allah in whatever your future holds for you, and stay in your home.”¹²³

Pardoning the person behind the conspiracy

It is narrated in *Manāqib Āl Abu Tālīb* that Asbagh ibn Nabatah said:

“We prayed the Morning Prayer with the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and then all of a sudden a man wearing travelling clothes approached. Ali, peace be upon him, asked, “From where [have you come]?”

He said: “From Syria.”

‘Abd al-Muttalib, until your son – an evil son – grew up, who opened up a rift between you and us.”

He, peace be upon him, asked: "What has brought you here?"

He replied: "I need something."

The Imam said: "Tell me, or else I will tell you what your story is."

He said: "Tell me, Commander of the Faithful."

The Imam said: "Mo'āwiyah called out on such and such a day on such and such a month in such and such a year: Whoever kills Ali will get ten thousand dinars."

So-and-so jumped up and said: 'I will.'

Mo'āwiyah asked him: 'You?'

When he went away to his home he felt regret and said: 'Would I really travel to Allah's Messenger's cousin father of his two [grand] children and kill him?'

Then Mo'āwiyah's announcer called out the following day: 'Whoever kills Ali will get twenty thousand dinars.'

Another person jumped up and said: 'I will.'

Mo'āwiyah exclaimed: 'You?'

Then he felt regret, asked Mo'āwiyah to excuse him and so he excused him.

Then his announcer called out on the third day: 'Whoever kills Ali will get thirty thousand dinars.'

You jumped up. You are a man from Ḥimyar."

The man said: "You have spoken the truth."

Ali, peace be upon him, asked: "So what do you think? Should you carry on with what you were ordered to do or what?"

The man replied: "No. I will go away instead."

He, peace be upon him, said: "Qanbar. Get his mount ready, get his supplies ready and give him some spending money for the journey."¹²⁴

This is another wonderful example of Ali's forgiveness in his brilliant lifetime. He knows who wants to kill him. He lets him go wherever he pleases. Furthermore, he orders that a suitable mount be found for him, that his supplies be prepared and that he be given some spending money...

Where else but in true Islam can you find anything like that?

Forgiving the prisoners taken at Şiffin

Imam al-Bāqir, peace be upon him, said:

“Whenever Ali, peace be upon him, took a prisoner in the Syrian battles he would take his weapon and his mount and get him to swear that he would not help fight against him.”¹²⁵

So, the combatants who had drawn their swords on the Commander of the Faithful and some of whom had killed some of Ali's believer companions ... however he has not been identified [for committing that crime] nor does he admit to it... their army is routed, and the Commander of the Faithful defeats them ...

In spite of all that he leaves them alone and releases them while all the time their platoon – that is to say Mo'āwiyah and his companions – was still around.

This is part of the wonderful policy of forgiveness in the Commander of the Faithful's code of conduct applied to attract enemies to Islam and encourage the hypocrites and those in pursuit of material gain to join the ranks of the believers, and applied to bind the hearts of the believers to add to their faith.

Returning the Kharijites' belongings to them

“When Ali, peace be upon him, defeated those who fought against him at the Battle of Nahrawān, he brought what was in their camp. Whoever [amongst the captured] recognised any of his property reclaimed it until there remained a pot and then later I saw that it too had been reclaimed.”¹²⁶

He ordered a beating and then forgave him

“The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, sent for Lobaid ibn ‘Atārid al-Tamimi in relation to an accusation that he had made [against the Imam] which had come to his attention. The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was passing by when he saw Lobaid amidst the Bani Asad clan. But Na‘im ibn Dajājah al-Asadi stood in his way and let Lobaid escape.

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, sent for Lobaid and they brought him. The imam ordered that he be punished.

He said: “Yes. I swear by Allah that standing by you is humiliation and opposing you is disbelief.”

When Imam Ali heard him say that he said, “We have forgiven you. Verily Mighty and Transcendent Allah, says: ﴿Repel evil with that which is best.﴾¹²⁷

Your saying, ‘Standing by you is humiliation’, is an evil which you have accrued.

As for your saying, ‘Opposing you is disbelief’, it is a good which you have done. So the latter makes up for the former.¹²⁸

When the greater good – which takes priority over anything else – calls for it, a judge’s sentence is overruled by **forgiveness**. Forgiveness is part of Allah’s law. Beating is part of Allah’s law. And one ruling, which is of higher priority, takes precedence over another, if it is of a relatively lower priority. With this forgiveness, grace and kindness of Islam is preserved over the Muslims, the hearts of non-Muslims are caused to incline and they are drawn to Islam.

Always among the people

Normally those in power live far away from society and are too proud to do the simplest things for themselves; this is for a number of reasons:

1. Tyranny and despotism
2. Fear of the society whom they are oppressing

3. To avoid having the number of things they have to do pile up on them too much

In contrast, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, could not be further from all these reasons...

Ali, peace be upon him, could not be further away from tyranny and despotism.

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, does not oppress anyone so he won't fear mixing with society for that reason.

The Greatest Executor, peace be upon him, seeks out hardship and difficulty for Allah's cause; so how could he flee from that.

For that reason he would do the little things for himself as well as the important tasks. He would fulfil people's requests in person, and search them out among the people, night and day, in the heat and in the cold. This is what reassured the poor, weak, and wretched that they had no need to fear people's oppressing them. They knew that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was the one who would personally go on a search through the alleyways and markets, public roads and public places. He would help them and protect them from all injustice.

This is what would also stop tyrants and arrogant people from hurting and oppressing people because they knew that Ali, peace be upon him, was keeping a watchful eye on them. He would personally mingle with members of society. They could not be sure that at any moment or in any place, Ali, peace be upon him, would not be a witness and be there to arrest them in *flagrante delicto*.

In what follows we shall cite some examples of the Commander of the Faithful's presence among the people at all times, for Muslim leaders to sit up and pay attention to, so that they do not abandon [their] people, cut themselves off in ivory towers far away from society, and allow tyrants to feel safe from being stopped them and the oppressed to fear the oppression of the oppressors.

Interceding at the butcher's

It is narrated that a butcher was selling meat to someone's slave-girl and was cheating her. She cried, walked out, saw Ali, peace be upon him, and complained to him about [the butcher]. He, peace be upon him, walked with her towards [butcher] and urged him to be fair with her. He warned him and told him: "You should accord the weak the same status as the strong. Do not treat people unfairly."¹²⁹

His intercession at the date seller's

"The Commander of the Faithful passed by the date sellers and all of a sudden he saw a slave-girl crying. He said: 'Slave-girl, what is making you cry?'

She replied: 'My master sent me with a dirham to buy dates. I took them back to them and they did not like them. When I came to bring them back, he would not accept them.

He, peace be upon him, said to the date seller: 'Allah's servant, she is a servant. She is vulnerable. Give her back her dirham and take back the dates.'

The man stood up to him and punched him.¹³⁰

The people said: 'This is the Commander of the Faithful.'

The man became breathless, [out of fear] turned yellow, picked up the dates and gave her back her dirham. He then said: 'O, Commander of the Faithful! Be content with me!'

He, peace be upon him, said: 'What would make me happy would be if you cleaned up your act.'

Or he said: 'What would make me happy would be if you gave people their dues.'¹³¹

It appears from the story that the Commander of the Faithful was a new arrival in town –or the date seller was new in town – so he did not know the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him. That is why he punched the Imam.

Ali, peace be upon him, did not punish him for the punch because it was a personal matter in the Imam's view. Ali, peace be upon him, did not care about himself for the sake of himself...

Furthermore the Imam's priority, peace be upon him, at the time was to protect the slave-girl from injustice and this priority would have faded into the background if the Imam had held the man accountable for the punch.

These stories, in spite of their insignificance, are what nourish society on so many levels for reason of the presence of the most senior Muslim supreme leader among the people, personally seeing to their needs, admonishing villains and getting justice for the downtrodden.

Reconciliation between husband and wife

Imam Muhammad ibn Ali al-Bāqir, peace be upon him, said in a narration:

Ali, peace be upon him, got back home at the hottest part of the day and all of a sudden a woman standing there said:

“My husband treated me badly, frightened me, attacked me and swore he would beat me!”

He, peace be upon him, said: “Allah's servant, wait patiently until the day cools down, then I will go with you, Allah willing.”

She said, “He will get angrier and more annoyed with me.”

He lowered his head then he raised it, saying: “No. I swear by Allah, is the downtrodden's right to be taken for him without affliction by disquiet or agitation?”

Where is your house?

He, peace be upon him, went to the door of the house, stood there and said, “Peace be upon you.”

A young man walked out.

Ali, peace be upon him, said, "Allah's servant, fear Allah. You frightened her and made her leave."

The young man – who did not know the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, – said: "What does it have to do with you? I swear by Allah that I will burn her because of what you have said."

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said: "I am telling you to do what is right and to stop doing what is wrong, but you confront me with what is wrong and reject what is right?"

The narrator said: People approached from the roads and said, "Peace be upon you, Oh Commander of the Faithful."

The young man was taken by surprise.

He said, "Commander of the Faithful, forgive my transgression, and for this, I swear by Allah, I shall be the ground for her to trample upon." [i.e. will take good care of her]

Ali, peace be upon him, said, "O servant of Allah, enter your house, and do not drive your husband to do anything like this again."¹³²

To help an oppressed person

In his book *al-Ikhtisāṣ*, the great scholar Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Nu'mān al-Mufid, may Allah bless him, narrates a long hadith, part of which says:

The people of Kufah report that Sa'id ibn Qays al-Hamdāni saw him – i.e. Ali, peace be upon him – at the hottest time of the day in the shade of a wall.

He said: "Commander of the Faithful, at this time?"

He said, peace be upon him: "I only came out to help an oppressed person or to assist someone in distress."¹³³

Someone who is weaker than I

Sheikh Mufid, may Allah bless him, also narrates: "It is reported that Ali, peace be upon him, was performing wuḍu' (ablutions) with

everyone else in the ablutions area of the mosque. A man jostled him and threw him to the ground. He picked up the stick and hit him with it. Then he said to him: “This is not because of what you did to me, but rather [on account of] someone who is weaker than I am who may come along and to whom you may do the same, making you liable to pay compensation.”¹³⁴

Stopping people from walking behind him

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said: “The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, rode out to see his companions and people started walking behind him. He turned round to them and asked, ‘Do you need something?’

They replied: ‘No, Oh Commander of the Faithful. We just like walking with you.’

He said to them, ‘Go away. Walking with someone who is mounted is corrupting for the person mounted and humiliating for the person who is on foot.’

On another occasion he was riding and people started walking behind him. He said: “Go away. The sound of footsteps behind men is a cause of corruption for the hearts of the foolish.”¹³⁵

It is narrated that Imam Ali used to walk on his own, peace be upon him, in the marketplace... giving directions to the lost, helping the weak, passing by the sellers and grocers and reciting to them from the Qur’an:

﴿That abode of the Hereafter We shall give to those who intend not high-handedness or mischief on earth: and the end is (best) for the righteous﴾^{136 137}

This is how Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him; was always among the people, in the thick of society, sharing their problems and solving their difficulties, correcting them with his words, knowledge, conduct and deeds.

Precise implementation of Islam

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, implemented Islam precisely in matters both great and small because a small matter is important if it is Allah's Law, and a great matter is important because it is Allah's Law.

The criterion is Allah's Law, and on account of it, everything attributable to Allah is important.

From this profound perspective the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, would conduct himself among the people in various roles in life. Further, he was just as precise and profound in his private life.

In what follows, we shall mention some points from that so that they can provide the best example for Muslim politicians and leaders of Islamic countries.

Putting out the lamp

'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ went to see Imam Ali, peace be upon him, one night [on a personal matter] while he was in the Treasury. He put out the lamp and sat under the light of the moon. He did not consider it lawful to sit in the light unnecessarily."¹³⁸

How much oil would have been used up in those moments that 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ was speaking to him? It is a really small amount.

However Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, was a model and example. If the leaders of the Muslim world who squander away billions or even tens of billions of Muslims' money were instead as pragmatic and exacting as this, then matters would never have become as bad as they are today.

Strict for Allah's sake

It is also narrated that: "When he – i.e. the Commander of the Faithful peace be upon him – drew near on the way back from Yemen, he rushed ahead to see the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and appointed one of his companions as a deputy over his army. That man

resolved to kit out every man in the company with a vestment made out of the linen which Ali, peace be upon him, had with his army.

When Ali army approached him, he went out to meet them, and what should he see but them wearing the vestments.

He said: “Shame on you. What is this?”

He said: “Kitting them out so that they can look nice when they come in among the people.”

He, peace be upon him, said: “Shame on you. Before [the goods] reaching Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family.”

The narrator said: “Ali, peace be upon him, ordered the soldiers to take off the vestments and put them back with the goods.” The army showed grievance at what he had done to them.¹³⁹

Abu Sa’id al-Khidri said: “The people complained about Ali to Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family.

Allah Messenger, peace be upon him, stood up and delivered a sermon, saying:

“O People! Do not complain about Ali. I swear by Allah, he is strict for Allah’s sake.”¹⁴⁰

Breaking up gold

“Qanbar presented the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, with cups made of gold and silver on the bench [in Kufah Mosque] and said: “You leave nothing unshared, so I saved this for you.”

He drew his sword and said, “Shame on you! Would you wish to bring fire into my house?”

Then he faced them with his sword and struck them until there lay scattered about thirty odd broken cups. He said: “Bring me the district leaders.”ⁱ

ⁱ Kufah was divided into seven districts each “governed” by a leader.

They came and he, peace be upon him, told them, “Take this as the share of your district [and divide it among the people of your district].”¹⁴¹

The value of gold or silver cups so long as they remain cups may be greater than their value after they are broken. However, because gold and silver drinking vessels are forbidden, it may be for that reason that Imam Ali broke them, thus ensuring that their distribution would not be illicit. In this way the Commander of the Faithful set the record in implementing Islam to the letter.

No to nationalism

Nationalism is one of the methods of intellectual colonialism with which Muslims were beaten and smashed apart and through which their unity and cohesion were broken. As a result, applying the rule of “divide and rule” colonialism gained control over the lands of Islam and over the Muslims. This is what we see today in all its clarity and plainness.

In contrast, Islam rejected this nationalism the day the Wise Qur'an announced:

﴿O mankind! We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.﴾¹⁴²

and the day the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, announced:

“An Arab is no better than a non-Arab except in piety”¹⁴³ and said:

“Every one of you is an Adam and Adam is [made] from dust.”¹⁴⁴

Thus Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, followed the same path and rejected nationalism in the strongest and boldest terms in accordance with the law of the Qur'an and the command of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his holy family.

Arab and non-Arab women are equal

In *Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah* Ibn Abil-Hadid quotes Abu Ishāq al-Hamadani as saying, “Two women went to see Ali, peace be upon him, one an Arab and the other a freedwoman. They asked him for their stipend and he gave each of them an equal number of dirhams and an equal amount of wheat.

One of them said: “I am an Arab woman and this [woman] is a non-Arab.”

He, peace be upon him, said: “I swear by Allah, I find no greater entitlement to this for the children of Ishmael [i.e. the Arabs] than for the children of Isaac.”¹⁴⁵

His sister and a non-Arab are equal

We have mentioned before that he, peace be upon him, did not give a bigger stipend to his Arab, Qurayshi, Hashemite sister – one of the closest people to him – than to a non-Arab freedwoman.

He, peace be upon him, said in one of his sermons:

“I most assuredly treat the black man and the red-skinned man equally.”¹⁴⁶

When he wanted the Treasury to be shared out, he, peace be upon him, wrote:

“The Arab, Qurayshi, Ansari (Helper), non-Arab, and everyone from among the Arab tribes and non-Arab groups who has entered Islam is equal.”¹⁴⁷

In this way the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, made the universal criterion to be Islam, on the strong rock of which all nationalisms, tribalisms, non-Islamic distinctions, and non-humanitarian divisions and partitions are smashed to pieces.

Some other policies of Imam Ali

The Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib's policy in various aspects and in everything he did was a wise and discerning policy taken from Almighty Allah the Creator of mankind's policy; the Knower of the best of policies for humanity, the Revealer of the Wise Qur'an the most comprehensive constitution for life known to mankind ... and it is also modelled on Allah's Messenger's policy, which is the best, wisest and most profound policy ever implemented by a human being on the face of the earth.

For this reason, the Commander of the Faithful's lifestyle was all discerning policy: in the days Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, in the days of those who ruled before him, and, in the days of his "public" caliphate.ⁱ

Guiding the Muslims to the right path

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, knew that Mo'āwiyah would not be killed at Ṣiffin and would live on to do mischief in the land. He only waged war against him to correct the path taken by the Muslims, and to deny Mo'āwiyah and his rule legitimacy and thus deny those who would come afterwards and build upon Mo'āwiyah's foundations.

There are a number of passages in the history of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, which confirm this.

Ibn ShahrĀshoub narrates:

"Ali, peace be upon him, heard a clamour in the encampment and asked, "What is that?"

ⁱ Imam Ali, peace be upon him, is the divinely-appointed *caliph* or successor of Allah's Messenger. However, after the Prophet, Imam Ali was forced aside by those who took over the leadership of the nation by unlawful means, in total disregard and contradiction to the Prophet's specific instructions in this respect. Although Imam Ali always was the Prophet's successor or *caliph*, the time of his public reign is normally referred to as his public caliphate.

He was told: “It is rumoured that Mo‘āwiyah has died.”

He said: “No, I swear by the Lord of the Ka‘bah, he will not die until this entire nation submits to him.

They asked him: “Oh Commander of the Faithful, then why are you fighting against him?”

He said, “I am seeking to discharge my duty before Allah.”¹⁴⁸

It is also narrated that:

A rider came from Syria while Ali, peace be upon him, was in Kufah. He lamented Mo‘āwiyah. He was brought in to Ali, peace be upon him, and Ali asked him: “Did you witness his death?”

He replied: “Yes and I scattered [earth] on him.”

He said: “He’s a liar.”

Someone asked him, “How do you know that he’s lying, Commander of the Faithful?”

He replied: “[Mo‘āwiyah] will not die until he has committed such and such deeds under his government.”

Someone asked him: “Then why are you fighting against him if you know that?”

He replied: “To provide proof [of his deviation, and to expose him before the nation].”¹⁴⁹

Farsightedness

One of Commander of the Faithful’s obvious characteristics, peace be upon him, was his farsightedness.

Many pieces of textual evidence prove that in addition to rational argument on the basis of his infallibility (*iṣmah*).

Dirār ibn Ḍamrah described the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, when Mo‘āwiyah asked him after Ali’s martyrdom as follows: “I swear by Allah, he had great foresight.”

For that reason, he did not appoint Ṭalḥah and Zubayr as governors over Kufah and Basra.

For that reason also, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, did not keep Mo'āwiyah on as a governor because he knew of their plot with Mo'āwiyah against him.

Have a look at the following passages:

I will not appoint Mo'āwiyah as a governor even for a night

It is reported: "When Ali, peace be upon him, was sworn in, Mughirah ibn Shu'bah came to see him and said:

"Mo'āwiyah is someone you know and your predecessor appointed him as a governor over Syria. Appoint him yourself so that the bonds of Islam remain in good order and then dismiss him if you like."

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said in response: "Allah Almighty will never hold me accountable for appointing him as an authority over two Muslim men, [as I will never do it,] not even for a single night."

Then he recited the Almighty's words: ﴿Nor did I take as aides those who mislead [others]﴾^{150 151}.

It is also narrated that Ali, peace be upon him, said to Zubayr on the day that he pledged allegiance to him: "I fear that you will betray me and break your pledge of allegiance to me."

He said: "Fear not. I will never do that."

He, peace be upon him, replied: "Then Allah is my Witness and Protector against you?"

He said: "Yes. Allah is your Witness and Protector against me."

Thereafter, Mo'āwiyah sent a man from Bani 'Abas and wrote a letter for him to take to Zubayr ibn al-'Awām which said:

"I have sought the allegiance of the people of Syria for you and they have responded. They verified the oath. Be particularly attentive about

Kufah and Basra. Do not let Ibn Abu Ṭālib beat you to it. There is nothing left beyond these two cities. I sought the allegiance for Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydallah after you, so pretend and make it your two’s business to be seeking revenge for the killing of ‘Othmān and rally people behind that [cause]. Both of you should be determined and tireless.”

He said: “When this letter reached Zubayr, he was happy with it, informed Ṭalḥah of it and read it out to him. They did not doubt Mo‘āwiyah’s counsel in it and at that point agreed to oppose Ali, peace be upon him.

He said: Zubayr and Ṭalḥah came to see Ali, peace be upon him, days after pledging allegiance to him. They said to him: “O Commander of the Faithful! You saw what we had to put up with, being cut off during the entire period that Othmān was in authority, and you know that Othmān favoured [his clan] the Umayyad. Allah has given you the Caliphate after him, so appoint us as governors over some of your governates.

Ali, peace be upon him, told them: “Be satisfied with what Allah has granted you until I reach a decision in relation to you. Understand that I do not make any of my companions a partner in that which has been entrusted to me unless I am satisfied with his faith and his trustworthiness and whose inner secrets I know.”

They went away from him, despair hit them and they asked his permission to go on ‘Umrah pilgrimage.

It is narrated that they asked him to appoint them as governors over the two cities of Basra and Kufah.

He said: “Let me see”, but then did not appoint them as governors.¹⁵²

All of this is part of the Commander of the Faithful’s farsightedness in the administration of his lands and of Allah’s servants.

If the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, had appointed Mo‘āwiyah, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr they would have gone on to conspire

against him once they had acquired the legitimacy of their authority from the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him.

Protecting Muslim unity

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, did not give any opportunity to charlatans who wanted to create rifts among the Muslims.

It is reported that Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, said:

“A man leading a group of people came to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him. He told me to get Qanbar.

Ali, peace be upon him, told him: Go out to this headman and tell him, “You have made us hear that which Almighty Allah despises! So go on your way without Allah’s protection.”¹⁵³

The language of justice

Justice is the foundation of the Commander of the Faithful’s policy in every matter.

An example of that is the instructions he gave his governors with regard to the People of the Scripture including the Jews whom the Wise Qur’an described as ﴿the people most hostile to the believers.﴾¹⁵⁴

It is narrated that a man from Thaqif who was one of the Commander of the Faithful’s commissioners said:

“The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, appointed me as commissioner over Bāniqyā and over some of the environs of Kufah. He said to me in public: “Watch your kharāj [land lease revenue]. Be diligent with it and do not leave out [even so much as] a dirham of it. When you want to head off to your commission come and see me.”

He said: “So I went to him and he said to me: Don’t even think about hitting a Muslim, Jew or Christian over a dirham of kharāj or sell a

workhorse over a dirham. Indeed we have been ordered to collect from what is superfluous to their expenses, and without burdening them.”ⁱ

ⁱ *al-Kāfī* vol.3 p540 hadith8. Like what the bailiffs do. They take everything, even what you need for your work to sell off to settle a proxy debt. The Imam tells his commissioner not to do that because the workhorse represents the poor people’s only hope of paying off their own debts and maintaining their dignity.

Chapter Four

On Some Key Islamic Policies

Islamic Policy on Freedom

﴿There is no compulsion in religion﴾

The Imam, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said:

“Do not be a slave to any other, for surely Allah has created you as free.”ⁱ

The long history of the world has not seen anything like the freedoms which Islam established for Muslims and for people in general, even in this day and age, which is sometimes known as the “age of freedom”.ⁱ

Islam gives every Muslim individual and even every non-Muslim from the human race complete freedom in all lawful avenues, so long as they do not interfere with the freedom of others.ⁱ

ⁱ “In Islam freedom is a fundamental right of mankind. Freedom is the most precious entity for mankind. One such freedom is to engage in any activity without hindrance from anyone or any authority. The public has the priority over the authority if there is a conflict of interest and freedom between those of the public and those of the authority. Minimal regulation may be imposed only if deemed necessary to ensure order and avoid chaos, provided it does not result in deprivation of the individuals’ rights. When at later stages such regulations were no longer needed, then they must be lifted. If any regulations are imposed, however, no charges or duties may be incurred on those who want to engage in the activities. An individual must not pay to exercise his or her right.” Muhammad Shirazi, “*al-Fiqh series*”, vol. 108, “*Economics*”, pp 212-213.

Freedom of thought

The first thing in which Islam liberates mankind is thought and choice of religion. Islam does not force people into any particular religion even if they live in Islamic countries and under the care and protection of Islam.

The Wise Qur'an made this freedom of thought known through the Almighty's saying:

﴿There is no compulsion in religion.﴾²

Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, put that into practice in all his defensive wars and raids ...

Victories one after the other which Allah turned into a reality for Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, did not lead him to force people to adopt Islam. Rather Islam was offered to them; whoever accepted, fair enough, whoever did not accept was not compelled to do so.

The conquest of Mecca

One of the best examples of that is the liberation of Mecca. For thirteen years Mecca had put various types of pressure on Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, including killing, torturing, insulting, humiliating Muslims, cutting them off, not marrying them, not doing business with them, not talking to them, exiling them and imprisoning them ...

Mecca is the place that plotted to kill Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, until Almighty Allah ordered him to leave at night, and so he left *looking about, in a state of fear*.³

Mecca is the place that led the campaign against Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, for about twenty years.

ⁱ Some aspects of Islamic freedom are discussed in the chapters on the Prophet's policies and the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali's policies.

Mecca is the place that waged dozens of bloody, crushing wars to shatter Islam and the Muslims, and so on and so forth ...

Then came the turn of the Messenger's victory over Mecca. The time came for the fulfilment of Almighty Allah's promise to the Greatest Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family:

﴿Verily He Who ordained the Qur'an for thee, will bring thee back to the Place of Return.﴾⁴

and to the Muslims who had been exiled, who had migrated and had been tortured on Allah's path:

﴿Ye shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, in security.﴾⁵

And so Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, entered this land and the Muslim army entered with him.

Do you think Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, forced any of the pagans to become Muslim?

Of course not!

Freedom of belief is part of the constitution of Islam.

This position taken by Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, towards the people of Mecca is unique in the history of all conquests and victories, except of course the history of Prophets and those with a link to Almighty Allah from among the executors and saints, peace be upon them.

In order to deepen the goodwill and universal love, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, did more than that.

As mentioned above a person who was in the Prophet's army took the banner in his hand and started walking around the marketplaces and alleys of Mecca, shouting:

“Today is the day of slaughter. Today is the day on which women will be taken prisoner.”⁶

This came to Allah's Messenger's attention, and so he ordered Imam Ali, peace be upon him, to take the banner in his hand and announce the opposite of that call.

Thereafter, Ali, peace be upon him, took the banner in his hand and began shouting on the roads and highways of Mecca:

“Today is the day of mercy. Today is the day on which women will be protected.”

Do you think any conqueror apart from the Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, in a place like Mecca what with its position towards the Messenger would do anything like that?

That is Islam which came to bring joy to mankind. It even wants the best for a person who does not believe in Islam and wants him to succeed...

It is part of the extent of freedom in Islam.

It was Allah's Messenger's practice when he conquered lands to send its people a ruler, judge or teacher of the Qur'an and of the laws ...

Those people would spread Islamic culture among the people of those lands – love and dignity for whoever accepted it and became a believer, while whoever rejected it and decided not to become a believer was left alone.

One of the salient examples of that is that large numbers of Jews, Christians and pagans used to live in Mecca and Medina and the surrounding villages and countryside until the Messenger's death, because he did not force them to become Muslim. Instead he left them alone.

The basis of this deep freedom is many verses in the Wise Qur'an. The Qur'an presents that in a humanitarian and compassionate manner which is the epitome of pleasantness and beauty. The Powerful and Majestic says:

﴿Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the

indissoluble bond, which never breaks. And Allah hears and knows all things.)⁷

﴿Allah is the Protector of those who have faith: He will lead them forth from the depths of darkness into light. Of those who reject faith the patrons are the evil ones: from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness.﴾⁸

﴿Those who follow the Messenger, the Meccan Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (scriptures)- in the Torah and the Gospel; - for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure); he releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them.﴾⁹

﴿And We have shown him (mankind) the two highways.﴾¹⁰

﴿This is an admonition: Whosoever will, let him take a (straight) Path to his Lord.﴾¹¹

﴿Say: “No reward do I ask of you for it but this: that each one who will may take a (straight) Path to his Lord.﴾¹²

﴿We showed him (mankind) the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful.﴾¹³

Other freedoms

According to Islam, mankind is free to pursue of all kinds of activities, of various forms and states, at any time and in any place so long as he does not harm others.

Taking the above mentioned Qur’anic verses as a starting point and what the Almighty’s says –

﴿The Prophet has greater authority over the believers than they over their own selves ...﴾¹⁴–

what can be inferred from them is that every person is his own master. He is free in everything he does to himself and his property.¹⁵

The jurists of Islam have deduced a firm first principle from that, namely:

“People are in charge of their property and themselves.”

A holy hadith attributed to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, says:

“People are in charge of their property.”¹⁶

The Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, is quoted as saying:

“Do not be a slave to any other, for surely Allah has created you free.”¹⁷

These verses and holy hadith reinforce man’s individual freedom of action in all aspects of his life: in relation to himself, his property, as he pleases, when he pleases, however he pleases unless he uses that to do harm to himself, such as killing himself or wasting his money, or harm to society such as killing, doing injustice to others, stealing their money or anything similar to that.

In a word, any action taken by a person in relation to himself, his property, his faculties or the universe’s faculties which does not interfere with the right of any other person is permissible and he has full freedom to pursue it.

Islam gives every Muslim person freedom to earn and trade, freedom to work and manufacture, freedom to travel or to settle [in a particular city or location], freedom of speech and of the written word and freedom in all matters.

The trader, according to Islamic law, is free to trade from any point to any country without any need to obtain a permit or licence. He does not have to pay any customs and excise duties. The Islamic countries in which he trades do not have any borders. [The geo-political borders introduced over the last century between Muslim countries are not recognised in Islam.]

An individual, according to Islamic law, is free to travel from wherever he likes to wherever he likes, to settle in any country he likes without

being asked for a passport or a residence permit and without being asked his name or his father's and mother's names, the names of his kin, his relatives and friends or being asked the aim or purpose of his journey.

According to Islam, workers or manufacturers are free in the jobs they choose and what they choose to manufacture without any opposition, impediment, need for a permit or anything else ...

The writer – according to Islam – is free to write, broadcast and publish what he likes without any censorship or need for a permit, except what is harmful to society.

Islamic Policy on Economics Affairs

“Whoever’s hunger has been sated in an evening while his neighbour goes hungry that night, does not believe in me.”

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said to a man who was enquiring about managing his finances, “Earning a living is all about economising”.¹⁸

The economy is of enormous importance in politics. The stronger the economic balance is the stronger and more discerning the policy is.

Let us look at how Islam turned the Islamic country with broad horizons covering vast stretches of land,ⁱ populated by many souls into a rich community in which poverty had almost become a thing of a past.

Not even a single poor person

Sheikh Ḥurr al-‘Āmili, may Allah bless him, narrates in his book *Wasā’il al-Shi‘ah*:

The Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, was walking through the streets of Kufah and he saw a man who was begging. The Imam directed this question at everyone around him:

“What is this?”

ⁱ Jurji Zaydān in his book *Tāreekh al-Tamaddun al-Islāmi* and others who wrote about the size of the Islamic country and the civilisation of Islam say that the Islamic country kept expanding and expanding over two centuries until it covered three quarters of the populated world at the beginning of the third century after hijrah i.e. during the time of Imam Muhammad ibn Ali al-Jawād, peace be upon him. Africa, India, a large part of China and Spain, a large part of Russia and other countries were under the control of the Muslims and the Islamic government.

They said: “He is an old Christian man who has grown old and frail and who is not able to work. He has no money on which to live and so he asks people for help.

The Imam said angrily: “You exploited him in his youth until he grew old and then abandoned him?”

Then the Imam, peace be upon him, set up a specific pension from the Muslim Treasury for that Christian, for him to live on as long as he lives.¹⁹

This points to the fact that destitution was almost unheard of in the Islamic country, so much so, that if the Imam, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, saw a single destitute person he would be alarmed. He would consider it to be an abnormal phenomenon, something not befitting Islamic society and the Islamic economic system.ⁱ

He then sets up a pension from the Muslim Treasury for him to live off, even though he is a Christian and does not confess to the faith of Islam, so that there is not a single manifestation of poverty and hunger in the Islamic country, so that the world and the Muslims themselves will know that an Islamic government puts an end to poverty and improves the standard of living of the poor not only with respect to Muslims but also eliminates poverty with respect to non-Muslims, as long as they are under the care of the Islamic government.

No poverty in Africa

The dark continent which – in spite of all the economic advancement in various fields in the world – continues to this day to succumb to the

ⁱ However, today poverty and destitution is widespread throughout the globe and even in the richest countries of the world. As an example, the following may be cited:

One-in-Three Americans were poor at least two months from 2009 to 2011, US Census Bureau, January 2014.

<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/poverty/cb14-05.html>

pressure of hunger, poverty and wretchedness in which hundreds of thousands die, this continent which sits on huge treasure troves, fortunes, and minerals, of which tyrants of the world steal without giving it bread and wheat to stop its hunger – more than ten centuries ago this continent was blessed with wealth and fortune as a result of Islam’s ruling it.

Historians report that the governor of Africa in the Islamic era – specifically during the time of Abu Ja‘far, Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir, peace be upon him, the fifth Imam from the Household at the beginning of the second century after the *hijrah* (eighth century CE) – sent a letter to the Islamic capital to ask what to do with the enormous amounts of religious dues (*khums*, *zakah* and *kharaj*) which it had in the treasury.

The answer came back: “Spend it on the poor and weak.”

He wrote: “We have already done that and there is a lot of religious dues left over. What should we do with it, then?”

The answer came: “Appoint someone to announce before the people in the lands: ‘Whoever is in need should come to the governor and take what he needs from the religious dues. Appoint someone to seek out the poor and needy for there may be some who are prevented by shame from coming to the governor...’

The governor wrote to the Islamic capital: “We’ve done that and there is still religious dues left over.”

The response came: “Spend it on what benefits Muslims generally.”

Has Africa seen anything like that in all its history or after Islam?”

Has the world seen, read about or heard of an economic system which is able to pull out the roots of people’s poverty until it becomes a reason to be shocked or surprised to see a single destitute person along the whole length and breadth of the Islamic land even if that person is not a Muslim, but a Christian. Has the modern world and have the many economic experiments been able to create an economic system like this one?

The answer to all that is of course, “No.”

Today, even though civilisations have reached their peak and economic systems their pinnacle, you can hardly find a single country where poverty has not spread its black wings. The poor have filled the world. Hunger and deprivation cover east and west, north and south.ⁱ

In case in the Hijāz

The Hijāz and Yamāmah²⁰ are dry lands and barren earth on which there is for the most part no cultivation or agriculture, especially in past history when its water was scarce and there were only rarely any springs.

It is only natural that people in countries like these should complain of hunger and wretchedness.

ⁱ As an example of humanity’s suffering today due to poverty, see the following report:

One Billion people live in slums or other sub-standard housing,
International Committee of the Red Cross, 2010 report

<http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/red-cross-red-crescent-day-2010-feature?opendocument>

Furthermore, there is an astonishing inequality between the rich and the poor, which continues to grow:

1% has half of global wealth – Oxfam

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/jan/19/global-wealth-oxfam-inequality-davos-economic-summit-switzerland>

US wealth inequality – top 0.1% worth as much as the bottom 90%

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/nov/13/us-wealth-inequality-top-01-worth-as-much-as-the-bottom-90>

Britain’s richest double their wealth in 10 years, now worth £547bn, not counting what’s in their bank accounts. A total of just under £250bn was recorded in 2005. This is despite the world economy being gripped by a punishing recession over much of the last decade, according to the Sunday Times Rich List.

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/apr/26/crisis-what-crisis-britains-richest-double-their-wealth-in-10-years>

However not a half century had passed since the foundation of Islam when the leader of the Islamic country, Imam of the Muslims, Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, said by way of explanation of his abstemiousness and asceticism in a sermon which he delivered to crowds of Muslims: “In case in Hijāz and Yamāmah there may be people who have no hope of obtaining a piece of bread and who have never satisfied their hunger fully.”²¹

The Imam, peace be upon him, leader of the greatest state on the face of the earth at that time did not express “certainty” that there was in the corners of his vast State a single destitute person who had never in his life satisfied his hunger fully or that there was not a single person who could not hope to obtain a piece of bread because of the lack of confirmation of this level of poverty. He uses the words “in case” and with that mentions the reason for his asceticism and for his not eating until he was full because the Imam ought to act out of solidarity for the poorest of his subjects. How could Imam Ali, peace be upon him, have satisfied his hunger fully when there may have been among his subjects someone who had never satisfied his hunger fully?

As for the matter of starving to death, as has become commonplace in some of the countries of the world, that is something of which authentic Islamic history does not even mention a single instance.

Is it not great the economy of Islam which eliminated poverty – more than thirteen centuries ago – to such an extent that poverty and the existence of someone “who has no hope of obtaining a piece of bread and who has never satisfied his hunger fully” was not confirmed throughout the length and breadth of the lands.ⁱ

ⁱ As opposed to the economic system taught and practiced by Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali, peace be upon them, the current economic system that is ruling the world today has brought poverty to the overwhelming majority of mankind, wreaked havoc to the lives of ordinary people, and in effect enslaved humanity. Cited below are reports about the state of the poor in the world’s richest country:

Passages in the Sharia

The many teachings in the Islamic Sharia, the laws of the Sharia and the deeds of the Muslim leaders – the Prophet and Holy Imams – together created that environment in which not even a single “footprint” of hunger could be seen. Here are just some examples for you out of so many.

It is reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, said:

“Whoever’s hunger has been sated in an evening while his neighbour goes hungry that night, does not believe in me.”²²

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, said, as narrated in *Nahj al-Balāghah*:

“Allah Almighty has fixed the livelihood of the destitute in the wealth of the rich. A poor person only ever goes hungry through that which a rich person denies him. Allah Almighty will question him about that.”²³

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said: “People are only poor, in need, hungry and naked through the sins of the rich.”²⁴

Imam Bāqir, peace be upon him, said: “Feeding a Muslim household, sating their hunger, clothing their nakedness, maintaining their dignity

One-in-Seven Americans lived on or below the poverty line, US Census Bureau, 2009.

43.6 million people or 14.3% of the population were in poverty in 2009, up from 39.8 million in 2008, US Census Bureau

http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/income_wealth/cb10-144.html

Nearly **One-in-Six in poverty in the U.S.** Washington Post, 2011.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/us-poverty-rate-hits-52-year-high-at-151-percent/2011/09/13/gIQApnMePK_story.html

Official Poverty Rate was 15%. There were **46.5 million people** in poverty, US Census Bureau, 2012.

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/>

instead of begging is dearer to me than going on a pilgrimage after pilgrimage ...” and he went on repeating himself until he reached ten, another ten, until seventy.²⁵

Economic dignity

There is a well-known principle which says: “Economic dignity leads to dignity within society”. This is a firm reality in societies in which awareness and understanding are not yet fully developed in all respects.

Because many societies through many stages of history were that way, remain so, and perhaps will also continue to be ... Islam did not overlook the importance of this issue so that the good and faithful at the so-called lower classes of society would not be left uncared for and their statuses and virtues unappreciated.

Because of that, we see great encouragement to achieve ever greater levels of economic dignity as confirmed in numerous teachings from the Household.

The chapters on trade in encyclopaedia of *hadith* like *Wasā'il al-Shi'a*, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, *Jāmi' al-Aḥādith* and so on are full of these holy hadith narrated on the authority of the Prophet and the Holy Household, peace be upon them.

There are some subtle, precise observations on this subject within the words of the holy hadith of which we shall mention [just] one.

Encouraging freedmen to engage in trade

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

“The freedmen and the non-Arab Muslims came to see the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and said: We have come to complain to you about these Arabs. Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to give them and us equally. He married off Salmān, Bilāl and Ṣuhayb [to Arab Muslim ladies].

But they refused to do that with us saying: “We won’t do it.”

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, went to them and spoke to them about (the freed slaves and the non-Arabs).

The Arabs shouted: “We refuse to do that, Commander of the Faithful! We refuse to do that!”

He went out angrily, tugging on his cloak and saying: “O ye non-Arabs! Those people have put you in the same position as the Jews and Christians. They marry (your daughters) but do not (marry theirs) to you.

They will not give you as much as they take. So engage in trade and may Allah bless you for I heard Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, say: “Livelihood is made up of ten parts. Nine of them are in trade and one is elsewhere.”²⁶

This holy hadith contains many extremely important Islamic themes at its core. In summary they are as follows:

1. The approachability of the most senior Muslim leader such that the freedmen can come to him in spite of their lowly status in society in which they have no standing and no value. The leader opens up his heart, listens to them and gives them a chance in the same way as he gives others a chance.
2. Great Islamic equality based on human justice to the point that non-Arabs in an Arab country dare to make a complaint to the supreme leader on account of them being treated with contempt by the Arabs. This is not to be found outside Islam [in those days].
3. The Commander of the Faithful’s personally acting as a go-between for them and going to see the Arabs to counsel them on this important Islamic law, namely equality in marriage between Arabs and non-Arabs based on Islam and humanitarianism.
4. Islamic freedom par excellence which allows ordinary people to reject the intercession of someone like the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him.

5. Great Islamic justice which manifests itself in the Commander of the Faithful's not taking action against those people's response to him, not admonishing them, punishing them or depriving them of any of their rights or anything like that, which most leaders in a similar position would have done.
6. The Commander of the Faithful's likening [the stance vis-à-vis the freedmen of] those Arabs who had rejected acting according to a truly great Islamic ruling and an important policy [equality amongst the Muslims] to [that towards] the Jews or Christians in adopting this chauvinistic and hateful stance which Islam had come along to reject and reject everything like it, adding greater depth, as the Imam, peace be upon him, did, to this important political point in Islam which unites Muslims and establishes the one Muslim nation.
7. Teaching the freedmen and the non-Arabs the path to societal dignity, which in societies like that which were not yet completely imbued with Islamic spirit in every sense of the word, amounted to achieving economic dignity ... in order for Muslims to pull together and for national groups to unite under the shade of Islam even if that has to be via economic dignity ... because nationalism normally takes root in poor surroundings. If there is wealth, land, cars, commerce, palaces and so on, nationalism collapses and disappears.

Those freedmen and non-Arabs did in fact learn this piece of social wisdom from the Commander of the Faithful Ali, peace be upon him. They took the path of trade until many of them became traders and owners of fortunes. After that, they married the Arabs, the Arabs married them, and Arab and non-Arab cohesion grew under the shade of the great [religion of] Islam.ⁱ

ⁱ The theme of this policy is linked to that idea of economic dignity, which in turn leads to social dignity. This is financial independence through trading to gain social standing to stop them from being treated as inferior by the Arabs.

Islamic Policy on Social Security

“Whoever leaves behind a legacy – it belongs to his family and his heirs. Whoever leaves behind dependants or a family without financial support – it would be my responsibility”.²⁷

The above was the declaration by Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family.

Social security in Islam is an outpouring of humanitarianism at its best. For that reason, given that Islam’s starting point is humanitarianism this [social] security pours forth with what is in accordance with the profoundest virtuous aspects of humanitarianism. With certainty, history has not seen prior to Islam and post-Islamic civilisations have not to this day recorded social security as profound as Islam’s social security.

It says that repayment of the debts of anyone who dies in debt is the responsibility of the Imam of the Muslims, but the deceased’s entire estate passes to his heirs, and the Imam of the Muslims is not entitled to any of it ...ⁱ

Have you heard of social security like this in even the greatest civilisations?

Of course not ...

In the textual sources of Islamic Sharia there is a great plethora of that which if anything, proves the importance which Islam most certainly

ⁱ So the state cannot claim any of the money, asset, etc. left behind by the deceased, i.e. no inheritance tax in Islam. Therefore any government that claims to be Muslim may not levy any inheritance tax whatsoever. On the other hand, the State is liable to the debts of the deceased if the latter leaves no asset behind.

attaches to this important social issue in view of the fact that it is narrated repeatedly on the authority of the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his holy family, and the Imams from his holy Progeny, the Household (Ahl al-Bayt), peace be upon them ...

In Allah's Messenger's hadith

Imam al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, the sixth Imam from the Household narrates that his forefather, Allah's Messenger, said:

“I have greater sovereignty over a believer than a believer has over his own self, and Ali has greater sovereignty [than a believer has] after me.”

Someone said to him: “What is the meaning of that?”

He said: “It is what the Prophet said: ‘Whoever leaves behind a debt or a family without financial support – it would be my responsibility. Whoever leaves behind a legacy – it belongs to his heirs.’”²⁸

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said after narrating this hadith from Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family:

The majority of Jews did not become Muslim until after this statement by Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, that they were secure and that their children were secure.”²⁹

It is reported that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said: A funeral service was brought before Allah's Messenger, and he asked: “Does your companion [i.e. the deceased] have any debts?”

They said: “Yes, two dinars.”

He said: [then you] “Pray [the funeral prayer] for your companion.”

[Imam] Ali said: “They are my responsibility and I guarantee them O Allah's Messenger.”

So Allah's Messenger stood up and performed the funeral prayer for the deceased. Then he turned to Ali and said to him, “May Allah reward you good and relieve you of your debts just as you relieved your brother's debts.”³⁰

The reason and wisdom of such a stance by Allah’s Messenger was sought from Imam Sadiq, peace be him, in another report. Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, replied, “Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and holy family, did that so that the [people] would take heed, and in order that they would guarantee one another’s, and that they would not take debt lightly.”³¹

Ali ibn Ibrahim mentions in his exegesis through his chain of narration mentioned therein that Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, would say: “There should not be a single debtor who takes his debt to one of the governors of the Muslims and explains his difficulty to the governor, without this person in difficulty being relieved of his debt, and his debt being transferred to the governor of the Muslims on account of the Muslim money which is under his control.”³²

In the hadith of the holy Imams

Imam Riḍā, peace be upon him, said:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, ascended the pulpit and said: ‘Whoever leaves behind a debt or a family without financial support – it is my responsibility and it passes on to me. Whoever leaves money behind– it belongs to his heirs.’ With that he achieved greater sovereignty over them than their fathers and mothers, and he achieved greater sovereignty over them than their own selves. The same as what applied to Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, applies to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, after his death.³³

Imam al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, used to say:

“Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, ascended the pulpit. His cheeks changed and his colour glowed. He turned his face and said: ... until he said, “O People, whoever leaves behind money – it belongs to his family and his heirs. Whoever leaves behind dependants or a family without financial support – it is my responsibility and it passes over to me.”³⁴

It is narrated that the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him, said: “Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, would not get down from his pulpit without saying: “Whoever leaves money behind – it goes to his heirs. Whoever leaves a debt or a family without financial support – it is my responsibility.”³⁵

It is narrated that Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said: “Whoever dies leaving a debt, his debt becomes our responsibility, and his children should come to us. Whoever dies leaving money behind – it goes to his heirs.”³⁶

Imam al-Kāḍim, peace be upon him, said: “Whoever seeks livelihood from what is permissible to provide for himself and his children is like a struggler (*mujahid*) on Almighty Allah’s Path. If things get the better of him, he should borrow to provide for his children and make the debt Allah’s and His Messenger’s. If he dies without paying it off, it is the Imam’s responsibility to pay it off, and if He does not pay it off He is answerable for it.”³⁷

Imam al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said: “The Imam pays off the debts of the believers on their behalf.”³⁸

In a narration it is reported that ‘Aḫ̄ā’ said to Imam al-Bāqir, peace be upon him: “May I be made your sacrifice. I have a debt which whenever I remember it, it stops me from doing whatever I’m doing.”

Imam al-Bāqir said: “Far be it from Allah! Did you not hear that Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, used to say in his sermon: “Whoever leaves a family without financial support then that would be my responsibility. Whoever leaves behind a debt – his debt becomes my responsibility. Whoever leaves money behind – it belongs to his family. Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, acting as a guarantor after his death is the same as his acting as a guarantor within his lifetime, and his acting as a guarantor in his lifetime is the same as his acting as a guarantor after his death.” [i.e. This rule, set up by Allah’s Messenger, is ongoing, and the Muslim ruler today has an obligation to practice it.]

The man said to him: “You have reassured me. May Allah make me your sacrifice.”³⁹

Imam Riḍā, peace be upon him, was asked by a man: “May I be made your sacrifice, Blessed and Almighty Allah says: ﴿Grant him time till it is easy for him to repay.﴾⁴⁰ Tell me about this grant of time which Allah mentions. Is there a defined limit to it; if the hard-pressed debtor has no recourse but to wait, while he has taken the creditor’s money and spent it on his children? The debtor has no crop which he is waiting to ripen, is not awaiting the due date for repayment of any money owed to him, and there is no other money the arrival of which he is expecting.

The Imam, peace be upon him, said: “Yes he waits until the news of it reaches the Imam and then [the Imam] pays it off on his behalf from the fund for those who are in debt.”⁴¹

Imam al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

“Whoever is owed money by a man who took it and did not spend it extravagantly or on disobedience, and it became difficult for him to pay it back, the creditor should give him time until Allah provides for him to pay it back. If the just Imam is in power, then he should pay off his debt for him for reason of what Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: “Whoever leaves money behind – it belongs to his heirs. Whoever leaves behind a debt or a family without financial support– it passes to me and becomes my responsibility. That for which the Messenger acted as a guarantor is the Imam’s responsibility.”⁴²

This is one of the articles of social security in Islam. From it the depth of humanitarianism in Islam, and specifically in this system, becomes apparent.

It is the exact opposite of what is done today by a number of world organisations which impose inheritance tax upon a deceased’s estate.

If a person has debts when he dies, the governing system never takes any responsibility for his debt. Can you see how systems like these contribute to the breakup of society and to the destruction caused by debts between individuals and groups? The creditor has no guarantee if

he gives a loan to a destitute person. If he dies who will take charge of his debts?

Who would lend to the desperate and needy?

Is there social security like this anywhere else but in Islam?

Islamic Policy on Urbanisation and Agriculture

“Whoever develops a disused land is entitled to it”

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his holy family, said:

“Whoever develops a disused land is entitled to it. This is a decree from Allah and His Messenger.”⁴³

Islam adopted a wise policy in relation to the growth of development and agriculture by which a state prospers. That [policy] is to grant the land to whoever develops it by building on it, farming it, digging a canal, opening up a spring, setting up factories, workshops or anything else, and also to encourage businesses, agriculture, or spacious family homes, and so on. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, said:

“Whoever brings life back to a disused land he is entitled to it, and no tyrannical stock has any right to it.”⁴⁴

The Prophet also said:

“Whoever builds a wall around a land is entitled to own it.”⁴⁵

“Whoever does something before a Muslim has a greater entitlement to it.”⁴⁶

If a person sees that land is free it should be given [to him] free of charge and he should be free to choose what he wants to manufacture or what he wishes to build. There should be no tax payable, no need for a permit, no toll for coming and going, no impediment, or anything else at all ...

It is natural for one to take up a means to earn a living, to work at a job, invent something, manufacture something, build structures, cultivate farmland, or anything else.ⁱ

For that reason a country prospers from having many built up areas and plenty of farmland, manufacture and inventions. A country expands, becomes richer and more powerful.

Have a look at what one author⁴⁷ writes about the heyday of construction and agriculture in the Islamic country, when – relatively speaking – it was ruled by Islam.

However, many of the Islamic cities became ruins after that compared to the way they were at the time of the Islamic government especially Iraq – or *al-Sawād* –ⁱⁱ especially Baghdad, Basra, Kufah and the other cities in Iraq.

A great many buildings

“Al-Istakhari⁴⁸ describes the city of Basra as developed as the land of Iraq was in his day: “Basra is a great city. It did not exist at the time of the non-Arabs. It was only the Muslims who settled there and built it. It has no water apart from canals.” “Some of the chroniclers report that a survey was made of the number of canals at the time of Bilāl ibn Abu Burdah and there were more than a hundred and twenty thousand canals on which skiffs went by. I did not believe what was said about the number of these canals at the time of Bilāl until I saw many of those areas. I may have seen across the length travelled by an arrow a number of small canals on which small skiffs went by. Every canal bore the

ⁱ This policy of development of the land is based on Qura’nic verses such as: ﴿And He created the earth for the people﴾ (55):10. There are also other verses that state that the earth and its minerals have been created for the benefit of all mankind and not just the few; ﴿It is He Who has created for you all things that are on earth﴾ (2):29

ⁱⁱ Iraq was only known as the “Land of Blackness” for reason of the abundance of its farmland. Farmland is green and green looks like black. It is for this reason that it was called the “Land of Blackness” (*arḍ al-sawād*)

name of whoever had dug it or of the subdivision in which it flowed. I agreed that across the length and breadth of that area it was possible.”

Consider an area in which 120000 canals or irrigation ditches are dug. How many inhabitants could it have? This is something which people today have difficulty believing, but all the same, it shows the level of development of that land.

Zaydān continues:

“Not to mention Baghdad ... for al-Istakhari also mentions in his description of what he saw in his time, i.e. in the fourth century AH: “The caliphal palaces and their gardens from the garden to the river stretch between two farsakhs along one wall so they link two canals to the bank of the Tigris and the built up area connects the caliphal home elevated above the Tigris to al-Shammāsiyya about five miles away.ⁱ On the west side al-Shammāsiyya is level with al-Harbiyyah. Going down to the Tigris it reaches the end of al-Karkh ...”

Then he said: “What a far cry these buildings are from what Baghdad turned into when they disappeared!”

Then he said, “Compare that with the city of Damascus and other cities which have become insignificant today.ⁱⁱ There are other cities which were at that time – i.e. under the Islamic government – at the height of their glory but have now become names without bearers of names such as Fustāṭ in Egypt, Kufah in Iraq, Qayruwān in Africa, Buṣrā in Ḥawrān and so on.”⁴⁹

This is in relation to buildings.

Farmlands were aplenty

Yazid ibn Haroun al-Wāsiṭi said, I asked Imam Sadiq, peace be upon him, about the farmers, and he said, “The farmers are Allah’s treasures

ⁱ The mile in Islamic texts is equivalent to about two thousand metres.

ⁱⁱ He means by that after the First World War; after the non-Muslims were in control of the Islamic countries

on earth, and there is no deed more beloved to Allah than agriculture, and Allah did not send a prophet except that he was a farmer apart from Idris who was a tailor.”⁵⁰

There was also an enormous, unparalleled amount of farmland – even in relation to today – now that agriculture has become easy and machines have been manufactured to extract water, scatter seeds, harvest and so on.

Iraq used to be known as the “Land of Blackness (*arḍ al-sawād*)” because wherever a person walked or stood still there used to be farmland as far as the eye could see. Those who describe the farmlands of Iraq used to say that there was not a single feddan (acre) which was not cultivated.

Egypt was fertile farmland at the time of the Islamic government.

Maqrizi, a historian, said: “In the year 107 AH Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ordered Abdullah ibn Ḥajjāb, his commissioner in charge of the *kharāj* in Egypt to survey it – i.e. to calculate its area. So he carried out the survey himself and found the area of its farmland travelled by the Nile to be 30,000,000 (thirty million) feddans (acres).

Jurji Zaydan states: “In the year 1914 the area of farmland along the Nile Valley did not exceed six million feddans (acres) by much in spite of the care taken by the government to fertilise and restore it.”

He then said: “Because the area covered by Egypt along with the oases of the Libyan Desert and the land between the Nile and the Red Sea and between it and the Byzantine Sea (the Mediterranean Sea up to al-‘Arish within it exceeds 40,000 square miles which is equivalent to about 187 million feddans (acres), it is therefore no surprise that the populated part of it should be 30 million feddans.”

He then continues: “This kind of populousness and prosperity was presumed in the greatest cities of Islam in the Andalusia such as Cordoba, Granada and Toledo and settlements in Iraq and Syria too numerous to mention, which in those days were big cities but have now become small towns.”⁵¹

Even if these observations do not give us a precise picture of the populousness and level of agriculture under the shade of the Islamic government in all the Islamic countries they do still suffice as illustrations of it.

This recessive decline in the farmlands and built up areas of the Islamic country was for no reason other than the removal of Islam from the field of government and the executive and for the reason of replacing Islam with laws which had nothing to do with Islam, and which Islam had nothing to do with, and the imposition of heavy restrictions on the farmlands and built up areas, in addition to the various taxes.

If the Islamic systems returned to the throne of government, land were to be granted to whoever put it to use and cultivated it, and restrictive laws and oppressive taxes were to be rejected, then complete prosperity would reign over the Islamic countries, there would be a lot more of that farmland, and through both, the Islamic country would rise and prosper in all respects and be able to make itself one of the richest and most advanced countries in the world.⁵²

Islamic Policy on Education and Culture

﴿Say: “Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?﴾⁵³

You hardly see a community, idea, principle or system which opened the doors of science and cultures in the same way as Islam did or which dedicated itself to them as much as Islam dedicated itself to knowledge.

Oh how Islam dedicated itself to knowledge, how it valued the knowledgeable scholars and raised their station.

The status of knowledge in the Qur’an

With a precise analytical look at the Qur’an, and examination of the Clear Signs in which there is reference to knowledge, thought, the knowledgeable and thinkers the researcher comes upon a big treasure trove and great plethora.

In the Qur’an there are more than one thousand five hundred verses which talk about the following subjects: Knowledge, cognizance, discernment, remembrance and contemplation which all come together under the meaning of culture.

If we realise that the Qur’an consists of some 6400 verses, more or less, and also realise that these verses deal with everything in Islam by way of “roots and branches” (i.e. “principle doctrines” and “religious practices”), laws, ethics, soul, body, natural sciences of the universe, the animal kingdom, the plant kingdom, philosophy, medicine, society, politics, economy, international relations and those between individuals, family [relations], [relations between] communities, regions as well as articles of worship and transactions, army, police, security, ruler, and the ruled and so on ... and that out of all of that roughly a quarter is dedicated to culture and education – if we were to understand all that and put it all together it would become clear as day to us the importance which the Qur’an attaches to culture and education, and that the

importance attached to it by any other system, religion or principle does not even come close.

Can we find anywhere in the whole of history a book of legislation and practice combined which covers various subjects [but] a quarter of which is monopolised by culture?

The status of knowledge in the Sunnah

The Sunnah and holy hadith narrated from Allah's Messenger, and from his Household, the holy Imams, peace be upon them, is the other thing which is filled to the brim with knowledge and cognizance.

It suffices you to know that just one hadith collection alone, namely *Biḥār al-Anwār* has gathered in it approximately three thousand or more hadith on knowledge and cognizance. This broad and deep background reflects some of the importance which Islam attaches to culture and thought.

Merely by way of examples we mention some of the hadith so that we can understand the extent to which Islam encouraged culture and knowledge.

Seek knowledge even in China⁵⁴

If we realise that the Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, who uttered this great gem was in the Hijāz and lived at a time when travelling from there to China and back took two years, not to mention the many great dangers which the traveller to China across the seas or across the deserts would encounter – the risk of drowning, getting lost, dying of thirst or hunger, being torn apart by wild beasts etc. – then we can understand profundity of what the Prophet said...

Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave⁵⁵

Perhaps we cannot find in history any saying apart than this gem found in the holy hadith which shows that the first and last priority for mankind is knowledge. Mankind begins his schooling from the cradle and does not complete it until he is put in his grave and buried.

The scholars are the heirs to the Prophets⁵⁶

The Prophets are the cream of mankind. They are ambassadors between Allah and His Creation. This status is what Allah chooses for whomever He wills from among the people ... It is not for mankind themselves to choose, rather, it is Almighty Allah's choice. However it is for any person to claim the inheritance from this elite by learning until he or she becomes a scholar (*'ālim*). That suffices as proof of the position of knowledge and the greatness of its position.

People are dead but people of knowledge are alive⁵⁷

Life fits the living and does not fit the dead because everything fits in with its like. This saying is one of the best expressions of that. If people are not scholars then they are dead, and the dead are not a part of this life. The people of knowledge are the living.

Even though an ignorant person is alive in this world, he is as good as dead.

A scholar, even if he has been dead for centuries is as good as alive.

I wish there were whips over my companions' heads to make them achieve clear understanding⁵⁸

The world today is proud of compulsory education which is the law in some countries for all people, even though the original planner of that in its positive humanitarian context – not the negative one practised by some today – was Allah's Messenger's descendant, Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, the one who uttered this gem.

He wishes that he could force his companions to achieve clear understanding and become learned even if that meant beating them with whips.

Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every believer, male or female⁵⁹

This general obligation of education and culture upon every man and woman is non-existent outside Islam. It is a feature exclusive to Islam. It is an obligation and a divine, religious duty. It is not subject to a

thousand restrictions or conditions such as age limits, nationality, profession or anything like that to which the education of the world is subject today.

It is a duty for all Muslims – young, old and middle-aged and of various ethnicities, colours, languages, nationalities, tribes and so on.

Similarly it is a duty for every Muslim female.

The holy hadith in urging [people to become] cultured, urging people to learn and to increase their knowledge are too numerous to mention here in this treatise which is based on brevity.

Can you find anything like that anywhere else apart from in Islam?

Of course not!

Learning about manufacture

Islam goes a step further in the field of culture. It issues a confirmed decree and [imposes a] definite obligation to learn all forms of manufacture, invention and profession as a collective duty.

The meaning of collective duty is that if all Muslims were to refrain from engaging in a particular type of manufacture or profession and the systems of life were to break down, even relatively speaking, they would all share the sin or the blame before Almighty Allah.

Chief jurist Sheikh Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī said in *al-Makāsib*: “There is a collectivity to the duty to engage in an essential field of manufacture especially if no one else is able to do it.”⁶⁰

Therefore knowing how to manufacture aircraft is a duty in Islam.

Learning how to manufacture machinery of different types and kinds is a duty.

Similarly learning how to manufacture satellites and spaceships is a duty.

Learning how to split the atom is also a duty.

Thus any field of manufacture, profession or invention is a sacred duty in Islam, if Islam and Muslims were to come to harm through a failure to engage in it...

Duty means that it is not just preferable. Rather it means that if Muslims were to become slack, and shy away from it, they would all deserve divine punishment for what they were able to do but failed to do. If some of the Muslims were to do it adequately enough for the collective duty to be discharged, it would no longer be a duty for the rest.

Whoever carried it out would have his reward in this life and the hereafter. It counts as part of worship, the only purpose for which Almighty Allah created mankind, for, as the Wise Qur'an says:

«I have only created Jinn and mankind, that they may worship Me.»⁶¹

Islamic Policy on Health

﴿Eat and drink and be not extravagant﴾

The Imam, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said: “There is a verse in the Qur’an which sums up medicine in its entirety: ﴿Eat and drink and be not extravagant﴾^{62 63}.

Islam put in place wise blueprints to cut out the roots of disease from all around the entire Islamic country and from all Muslims in general.

We find hundreds or even thousands in the list of holy hadith narrated from the Messenger of Islam, and from his holy Household, the holy Imams, peace be upon them, dedicated to explaining health matters.

To elaborate upon that take *Bihar al-Anwar*⁶⁴ by the erudite scholar ‘*allāmah* Majlisi which contains roughly one hundred thousand holy hadith, and *Wasā’il al-Shi’a* by al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmili, the book which contains roughly forty thousand holy hadith. You will find in them chapters devoted to health and medicine and many hadith on the subject.

That is why one rarely finds in the shade of the Islamic government large numbers of sick people or the spread of diseases.

Public health used to flap its wings over the vast Islamic country and that continued until the turn of the 20th century.

For example a few doctors used to suffice a single country which had a population of a hundred thousand and every day you would see some of them without patients to consult them or patients so few that they could be counted on [your] fingers.

Given that we do not deny the advancement of modern medicine in some fields, we wonder:

Why has medicine today, with all the might and power it has acquired, become unable to treat the sick and had its hands tied in the face of this enormous number of illnesses?

In every large country you see thousands of sick people, hundreds of doctors and hundreds of pharmacies, chemists, and drugstores.

If we were to compare the huge numbers [today] with the [early] age of Islam and the number of sick people at that time the ratio was one in hundreds, or rather a lot less.ⁱ

Is that not proof of the wisdom of Islam in its health policyⁱⁱ and the failure of that which is not Islam in this field?

The number of doctors rises by thousands every year.

Hospitals are on the increase.

Medical trials are advancing.

Sick people have filled up the world.

Illnesses have covered the lands.

Is this health policy wise?

You can research this reality by looking into clinics and hospitals. You will find the proportion of religious people and those who adhere to the

ⁱ Modern statistical surveys in various countries in the world often confront us with what is surprising in this field both in western countries and eastern countries – or developing countries as they call them. I personally met a consultant who specialises in diabetes in a small city the population of which did not exceed a million. The doctor was one of many who treated diabetes. He said to me I treat nine thousand patients who have diabetes. This is besides thousands of other patients and hundreds of other doctors. Measure other cases against this little anecdote. This is not meant to belittle doctors and their humanitarian vocation. Some of them are believers, good people and observant of the principles of Islam and of humanity. They know their responsibility to Allah. The only intention is to draw attention to the weakness of modern health policy. [The author]

ⁱⁱ An outline is given at the end of this chapter.

healthcare teachings of Islam in them to be a lot lower than those who are not religious and who do not adhere to Islamic directions in the field of general health.

I may not be exaggerating if I were to say that the proportion is one per cent.

This simple comparison gives you a rough and ready idea of the importance of health in Islam.

There is not in this simple exposition room to mention the healthcare provisions which Islam put in place to promote healthcare in every household and with every person. We will simply put that off for specialist studies. Whoever wants to, can look at some of what has been written on that such as:

*Tibb al-Nabi*⁶⁵ (The Medicine of the Prophet)

*Tibb al-Ṣādiq*⁶⁶ (Al-Ṣādiq's Medicine)

*Tibb al-A'imma*⁶⁷ (Medicine of the Imams)

*Sharḥ Tawḥīd al-Mufaḍḍal*⁶⁸ etc.

Reducing blood pressure in the body

Let us set out here one example which can be a single illustration of what we said about the health policy in Islam:

Muslims would for the most part – according to numerous decrees which have been stressed upon by the Islamic Sharia – set their minds to reducing blood pressure in every individual at least once a year especially in springtime when blood is in turmoil in line with every human being, animal, plant, systems, energies in Creation and suchlike.

That comes through practising wet cupping and bloodletting.ⁱ

ⁱ Wet cupping is the extraction of bad blood through a suction process – using a suction instrument – from the veins and capillaries of the flesh, with the purpose of cleansing the blood which helps stimulate the circulation, and brings about growth. Bloodletting is making an incision in the blood vessel to

There is reference in the holy hadith to [the fact] that reducing blood pressure protects against “sudden death” and as such protects against heart failure and paralysis which leads to that.

In a holy hadith attributed to Ali ibn Musa al-Riḍā, peace be upon him, he said: “Blood is a slave, and a slave may kill his master.”⁶⁹

However, modern medicine came along to ban reducing the amount of blood, and it was as a result of that that heart failure became widespread throughout the length and breadth of the lands.

Islamic countries lived on without knowing heart failure, and whoever was alive at the turn of the twentieth century, knows that the notion of ‘heart failure in a person’ would cause surprise and astonishment in the community, if [even so much as] a single person were to be struck down by it.

One of the faithful told me that during his youth there was the event of a fatality from heart failure in part of his hometown, and people tried to outrun each other to the deceased. Astonishment took hold of them at what they had heard and some of them could hardly believe it.

As for today, now that modern medicine has taken the place of Islamic medicine you can see that there are so many who die of heart failure. I may not be exaggerating if I were to say that the percentage may have reached 35%, that is to say that one third of people die through heart failure resulting from coagulation of the blood as a result of not reducing blood pressure through cupping or bloodletting and similar practices.

The error of this opinion and that what is beneficial to the body and healthy for mankind is reducing blood pressure has recently been revealed to modern medicine after millions of people have fallen victim to this error through death by heart failure.

extract a quantity of blood whether it is pure or thick. Cupping stimulates the body but bloodletting weakens the body.

As a result doctors advise people to reduce their blood pressure through such practices.

In a western country's broadcast one of the personalities of modern medicine mentioned during his discussion that reducing blood pressure or donating blood is an essential health matter for every person. This in turn stops arteriosclerosis which usually leads to coagulation of the blood which paves the way towards blockage of the heart valve and stoppage of the heart and subsequently heart failure. The practice of 'cupping' which Muslims had perpetuated is what kept the percentage of sudden deaths among them extremely low.

This is some of the correct policy in Islam for propagating good health for everybody everywhere.

On the Islamic health policy

The health policy encouraged by Islamic teachings for individuals to adhere to are in part manifested in those prescribed as mandatory as well as those deemed optional or recommended for the individual to practice.

- Personal hygiene, for example, is highly stressed upon in general, and particularly as part of the fulfilment of the daily obligatory duties, such as the daily prayers, and fasting. For these purposes, nothing but clean water would do, as well as for many other purposes. Indeed, many obligatory and recommended ritual washes of the body, as well as cloths, utensil etc. are required to be done with water.
- As part of those teachings, there are wide-ranging teachings on the issue of diet, as well as the wisdom, etiquettes, and art of.
 - a) What to consume; nutritional benefits of almost all fruit and vegetable, meat, fish, poultry, and their effect on body and soul.
 - b) Never eat to your fill.
 - c) What not to consume; and their adverse effects.

d) What to do and what not to do. What to have and what to avoid when complaining of almost every health problem.

- Comprehensive etiquette and dos and don'ts on sexual matters between husband and wife, and the effects of sexual conducts as well as sexual-intercourse's timing on the offspring's body and soul health, as well as his or her traits and character.
- One of the health-related teachings that is singled out is the notion of reducing blood amount in the body, which is known as wet-cupping or *ḥijāmah*. It is referred to as the "saviour" to show its significance.
- There is much emphasis on caring for the sick physically, mentally and emotionally. Not only in clinics and by practitioners, but by friends, family and the public. The Prophet used to personally visit his sick Jewish foe.
- There is also emphasis on protecting the environment. No water pollution, no cutting of plants, and prohibition of the use of chemicals even behind the enemy's line during the war time.
- Promoting, learning, teaching, researching and practicing medicine. It would be an obligatory duty upon every single man and woman to study and practice medicine if there is no one doing so in a town. Such an obligatory duty is not waived until a sufficient number of medical practitioners are attending to the needs of the residents of the town.

Islamic Policy on Procreation

Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: "Marry each other, reproduce and you will multiply. For I vie through you with other communities on the Day of Resurrection, even though the miscarried foetus."⁷⁰

Out of all the things countries of the world pride themselves on, they have recently begun to pride themselves on greater numbers. Countries with greater numbers have more to be proud about. That is natural because with greater numbers comes greater development and agriculture. With greater numbers comes a greater level of manufacture and invention and with greater numbers the power to defend against enemies increases. With greater numbers a country is kept far away from colonialism and exploitation. Small countries become colonised over a shorter period but more populous countries can only be colonised with a great deal of effort and continuous and perpetual trickery by the colonialists. All this is the result of greater numbers.

Let us look at Islam's view on that:

Islam realised the results of having greater numbers, endorsed it, set parameters and firm foundations for it through which the Islamic community could be turned into a great community with many souls. Here are some details of that for you.

A) Islam actively encourages marriage as soon as sons and daughters reach their majority.

He said:

"The worst of your dead are bachelors."⁷¹

"Two rak'ats prayed by a married person are better than seventy rak'ats prayed by a bachelor."⁷²

B) Islam lifted the restrictions which had been placed on marriage and applauded making marriage simple; making it possible for everyone and applauded setting a small dowry.

The holy hadith says:

“The best of your women are those who are most graceful and those who set the smallest dowries.”⁷³

It also applauded not rejecting a believer if he comes to ask for someone’s hand even if he is poor. For Almighty Allah says: ﴿if they are in poverty, Allah will make them rich out of His grace.﴾⁷⁴

Some scholars have decreed it impermissible to reject a believer capable of supporting [a wife]. The highly erudite scholar ‘*allāmah* Hilli, may Allah bless him, says: “It is compulsory to say yes to a believer capable of supporting [a wife].”⁷⁵

C) Islam permits taking more than one wife up to a limit of four so long as the husband is able to treat them all the same way, in view of the fact that the Almighty says in the Glorious Qur’an:

﴿Marry women of your choice, Two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one.﴾⁷⁶

There may be many people for whom one wife is not enough. Why should their energy go to waste? There are those whose wives are afflicted with illnesses which prevent reproduction and procreation or who are infertile and unable to have children. Why should the husband remain without children and offspring? There are those whose wives have become too old to have children.ⁱ The husband has reproductive potential. Why should his potential go to waste?

ⁱ For, as confirmed by science and observation of the norm, women do not usually have children after the age of fifty. In contrast, men enjoy reproductive potential which may allow them to father children even at the age of a hundred or more.

The [Muslim] countries which prohibit polygamy do so only for reason of western tradition, because otherwise Islam, as we have briefly stated, has a powerful economy capable of sustaining large populations.

D) Islam really urges people to look after their health. It tells them to do what brings them closer to good health and tells them not to do what pushes them away from good health. Islam even tells people not to leave rubbish in the home after dark,⁷⁷ just as it applauds a person's washing his whole body once every two days⁷⁸ and many other such teachings.

If they are of good health, there is a decrease in death and disease among them. Healthy men and healthy women are able to reproduce more and more. If these four principles rule in Islamic countries the number of people will increase as a matter of course.

If marriage were to take place between boys and girls as soon as they reach the age of maturity, heavy restrictions on marriage were to be lifted, a husband were to be allowed to have up to four wives and the balance of people's health were to be restored, there is no doubt that following this pattern, a state with 25 million souls, for example, would double in twenty years.

Islamic Policy on Fighting Crime

﴿There is life for you in retribution﴾⁷⁹

Islam fights crime and felonies in a way all states up to this day could not dream of. Through its wise and discerning laws, it turns people into a virtuous community which does not commit crimes.

If you look at the vast Islamic country in the two centuries from the Holy Prophetic Mission, you will see that history records few thefts in this enormous state. In contrast, you see America today which claims to be one of the civilised countries which excels in their level of civilisation appealing to the world for help on how to fight against this danger all around to rescue it from six million robberies every twenty five years. So what is the ratio?

Two hundred years, a very large state and the number of thefts is very low ...

A quarter of a century, a country like America, six million thieves and every day reports are published every day in different newspapers on how many crimes are committed in all the countries of the world today – east and west – as witnessed by court houses, police stations and so on.

Some scholars do not know the punishment for a thief

The following story clearly proves how powerful Islam is at eliminating crime:

At the time of the reign of the Abbasid ruler al-Mo'tasim al-Abbasi, when al-Mo'tasim was sitting on the throne of rulership in a great big court comprising the senior *ulema* and *fuqaha* – including the holy

Imam Muhammad al-Jawād,ⁱ peace be upon him, who was coming up to the second decade of his holy life and who still looked like a child to them – at a session like that, a thief was brought forward and al-Mo‘tasim turned to the jurists around him to ask them what the punishment was for a thief. All of them agreed that the punishment was that his hand or arm should be cut off for reason of the Almighty’s words:

﴿As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hand: a punishment by way of example, for their crime.﴾⁸⁰

However, they disagreed on the point from which the hand or arm should be cut.

Some of the jurists, including Abu Dawood, said:

“The hand should be cut from the wrist” for reason of Almighty Allah’s words in the verse on dry ablutions (*tayammum*): ﴿and rub therewith your faces and hands﴾⁸¹ for the Qur’an used the term “hands” to mean from the wrist.

Some of the other jurists said that on the contrary the arm should be cut from the elbow for reason of what the Almighty says in the verse about ablution from minor impurity: ﴿wash your faces, and your hands to the elbows.﴾⁸²

The Qur’an used the word “hand” to mean from the elbow.

ⁱ Imam Muhammad al-Jawād, peace be upon him, is the ninth of the Twelve Imams whom Allah’s Messenger appointed on divine instructions to lead the nation after him. Imam Muhammad al-Jawād was nine when assumed the office of imamate after the assassination of his father Imam Riḍā. His merits and competence were put to the test from the outset through theological debates and intellectual arguments with the leading scholars and jurists of the time. As well as his immense knowledge and learning, Imam Muhammad al-Jawād was also known for his piety and humility. On the instruction of the Abbasid ruler of the time, Imam al-Jawād’s wife poisoned him. He was twenty-five when he was killed.

All through this, Imam Jawād, peace be upon him, remained silent, and not saying anything, without supporting any of these views, so al-Mo'tasim sought to ascertain the Imam's ruling in view of the fact that he had not supported any of these views. He turned to the Imam and asked:

“What do you have to say about this, cousin?”

The Imam: “They had their say and I listened.”

Al-Mo'tasim: “There is no escape from stating your opinion. What do you have to say?”

The Imam: “If there is no escape from that then they have got the Sunnah wrong. The cut is from the joints at the base of the fingers leaving him his palms.”

Al-Mo'tasim: “Why?”

The Imam: “For reason of what Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: ‘Prostration is on seven parts [of the body] – the face, both hands, both knees and the tips of both big toes.’ So if his hand is cut off from the wrist or [the arm] from the elbow he will not have a hand left on which to prostrate. Blessed and Almighty Allah said: ﴿And the parts of the body used to prostrate belong to Allah ...﴾ by which he means the seven parts of the body ﴿... so invoke not any one along with Allah.﴾⁸³ That which belongs to Allah should not be cut off.

Al-Mo'tasim was impressed with that, and adopted the Imam's ruling,ⁱ peace be upon him.⁸⁴

ⁱ The point of citing this event is that the scholars at that time – some two hundred years after the Prophet's time – did not know the correct ruling about implementing the punishment for a thief, implying that they over that period jurists had not come across a theft case requiring them implement its punishment, and thus they were not well versed about it; theft had not taken place over that period such that it required the execution of its punishment.

Chapter Five

Islam's Policy on War and Peace

﴿Repel evil with what is best, when he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend﴾¹

Islam is the religion which truly calls to peace and peacefulness since it says:

﴿O you who believe! Enter, all, into peace and follow not Satan's footsteps; for he is to you an avowed enemy.﴾²

And it says: ﴿But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace.﴾³

Islam has never been like these states which only call for peace in their slogans, but then when war breaks out, their bombs wipe out millions, and they pride themselves on their ability to destroy the world in a few moments.

This is incredible!

Is destruction and bloodshed something to be proud of?

In contrast, in view of the fact that the Qur'an calls for peace, Islam, adopts the policy of peace in every minor or major aspect. History tells us that the Islamic state was established with a total of fewer than one thousand four hundred casualties, including both Muslims and non-Muslims, over a period of less than a decade, and this was the result of wars started by the non-Muslims against the Muslims, and the Muslims defending themselves.

Can you see a system being established today with fewer than millions of victims?

Part of Islam's humanitarian policy in wars is that it did not start a single war. Wars and raids which took part in Allah's Messenger's lifetime were all defensive. Furthermore, he would only start fighting after daybreak. Even in the case of the Battle of the Chains when the Muslims had the upper hand over the non-Muslims and could have attacked the non-Muslims at night, they did not attack them and the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, refused to do so.

﴿And strike sparks of fire, and push home the charge in the morning.﴾⁴

The second phrase means that the mounted horses charge at the enemy at daybreak. He only says daybreak because they would advance on the enemy at night and attack them at daybreak.⁵

In what follows we shall refer to a section of the holy hadith of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and his Household – the Guiding Imam – on various rules of peace and war, through which it becomes very clear how humanity, justice and spreading good and benefit for all are the strong and firm foundations of all conduct in Islam, even during wartime ... It is like nothing else we have ever seen throughout history – either in our modern history, the age of wars and destruction, the history of the world gone by, or the history of any other sect or religion.

At the same time we shall set out in the utmost brevity a number of holy hadith on this subject, comment on and discuss them as befits a book of this size.

No to treachery

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, is quoted as saying: Whenever Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, wanted to dispatch a squadron he would summon them, sit them down in front of him and then say:

“Advance in the Name of Allah, by Allah, on Allah's Path and in accordance with Allah's Messenger's religion ...

Do not pillage. Do not mutilate. Do not use treacherous means. Do not kill the old or the young or women. Do not cut the trees unless you are

forced to do so. If any of the Muslims, whether amongst the lowest or highest ranks, should give reprieve to any of the [combatant] infidels, then he has refuge to hear Allah's Message. If he follows you, then he is your brother in religion, and if he refuses take him to a place of safety for him, and seek Allah's help against him [if he chooses to fight you]."⁶

Talḥah ibn Zayd narrates that he asked Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, about two nations of those with whom the Muslims were at war. Each nation had its own king. They fought, and then made peace [with each other], and then one of the kings betrayed his opposite number by coming to the Muslims and making peace with them on condition that the Muslims join him carry out a raid against that other city.

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, replied:

“The Muslims ought not use deceitful means, encourage deceitful means be used, or fight alongside those who have employed deceitful means. On the contrary, they should fight against the polytheists wherever they find them,ⁱ and the pact between the unbelievers is not applicable to the Muslims.”⁷

So it is no ... to all depravities at wartime and crossfire when the casualties are falling.

Warfare on Allah's Path is a meritorious act no matter whether it is killing the enemy or the enemy's killing the believer – both are meritorious for the believer.

Depravities, however, will never count as meritorious acts.

This is the logic of Islam and its humane policy even at wartime ... The ends do not justify the means whatever they may be.

ⁱ This is only applicable, if the Muslims come under attack from the polytheists. Otherwise, if they are not aggressive towards the Muslims, the Muslims may not use treachery and deceitful means to attack or fight them, as stated at the outset of the hadith. [The polytheists and the unbelievers are categorised in five groups, and only one of them – i.e. the ones who wage war against the Muslims – may be fought. *al-Masa'el al-Islamiyah*, p441]

Excellent military organisation

A letter written by the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, to Ziyād ibn al-Naḍr when he placed him in command of his vanguard at Ṣiffīn is quoted in *Tuḥaf al-Uqool*:

“You should know that the vanguards are the overseers, and the overseers are the front. If you leave your country and approach your enemy, you should not feel weary from addressing the front to every side and to some of the defiles, woods, and secret places as well as every area so that your enemies will not raid or trap you. Do not give the orders of directing the battalions and tribes from morning to evening unless there are covering powers beyond them. If a matter occurs or a trouble befalls you, you will have covering powers. If you raid your enemies or if they raid you, your camp should be on the heights, versants of mountains, or in riverbeds for that will provide you with protection and form a fortress preventing your enemies from reaching you. Your fighting should be on one and two fronts. Order the lookouts to settle on the summits of mountains, heights, and on the edges of rivers. They should keep a lookout for you so that the enemies will not attack you from an expected or secured place. If you want to set up camp, you should all set up camp, and when you want to continue your march, you should all continue. When you set up camp at night, you should surround your camp with spears and armour. The archers should protect the carriers of armour so that you will not be taken by surprise or in a state of inattentiveness. Guard your army yourself. Beware, you should not sleep unbrokenly and should not pass a night with deep sleep. You should keep up this tradition until you meet your enemy. You should not rush in fighting. You may precipitate only when a good opportunity is granted for you. Do not begin the fight before the enemy attacks you, or you receive my order. Peace and Allah’s mercy and blessings be upon you.”ⁱ

ⁱ *Tuḥaf al-‘Uqūl* pp191-192

This religion of Islam is great, really, really great system.

It is the religion of humanity.

It is in truth the religion which the Creator of Mankind made for the happiness of Mankind.

The bond between the two is of the utmost strength. At the same time the Imam the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, sets out these superb military tactics for the leader of his army in the vanguard.

Did you see him emphasise at the end:

“Do not even think about fighting unless they start it.”

For what purpose have the two armies fallen into formation?

Is it not to fight?

Did not Mo'āwiyah rebel against Allah and the Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, when he rebelled against the Messenger's legitimate successor, the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him.

Are not Mo'āwiyah and his army transgressors in the words of the Qur'an:

﴿If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against

Rules of engagement and even military tactics can be really important. Atrocities are forbidden (RoE). The orders on encampment are all to ensure that no attacks are launched against the enemy at night. The strategy ensures that the Muslim army can camp safely and eliminates the temptation to disobey orders and attack at night. Another reason proper military tactics can be linked to humanity is because throughout history, leaders have thrown soldiers into battle unprepared, without regard to their safety or welfare e.g. going over the top – a reference to emerging from the trenches and advancing towards enemy guns and cannons – in WWI. It could be said that the Imam wants to ensure victory but it could also be said that he wants to ensure the safety and welfare of his men.

the other then fight ye (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with Allah's command.﴾⁸

However it is the great religion of Islam which does not let mankind down in the blackest of times and most difficult circumstances.

No ... to rushing into war.

Yes to rushing into humanity.

This is in brief the military language of Islam ... about everything.

No to chemical warfare

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said:

“Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, forbade hurling poison into the lands of the pagans.”⁹

No ... to chemical weapons.

This is what Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, confirmed fourteen centuries ago.

He said, “No,” and stood by that statement.

As for today, the world says, “No to chemical warfare,” but does not stick to it.

From this the greatness of Islam can be seen in the sword and in its sticking to a principle.

No to killing women

It is reported that Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, was asked about how it was that women became exempt from the *jizyah* and how the obligation was lifted from them.

He said: “Because Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, forbade killing women and children in the theatre of war unless they are combatants. If she is a combatant too, then restrain her as far as possible and so long as you do not fear disorder. If Allah's Messenger forbade killing them in the theatre of war, then that [prohibition] applies even more so to *dar al-Islam*, i.e. Muslim land. When she refuses to pay

the *jizyah* it is not possible to kill her, and because it is not possible to kill her, the obligation to pay *jizyah* is lifted from her. [However,] If men hold back and refuse to pay *jizyah* they are in breach of their treaty. Fighting them became permissible because killing men who were deliberately in breach of their treaty, and not for being unable to pay their lease is permissible in both polytheist and protected-religious-group territories (*dar al-shirk wa al-dhimma*). Similarly the disabled, the blind, the very old, women and children among the polytheists and protected-religious groups in the theatre of war are excused from *jizyah* for that reason.”¹⁰

Islam protects women in all fields and aspects.

Materialism has turned women into a cheap commodity – they have been put in the same position as wine or heroin.

The world should judge through this passage alone – of which there are thousands of similar ones in Islam. Does Islam protect women or wage war against them?

Has materialism protected women or stripped them naked?

The lowest ranking among them can grant refuge

Al-Sikouni narrates that he asked Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him: “What is the meaning of the Prophet’s saying: ‘The lowliest of them can act on their behalf?’”

He said: “If a Muslim army surrounds an army of pagans, a [pagan] man says: “Give me asylum so that I can meet your leader and debate with him,” and the most junior ranking of them grants him asylum, it is incumbent on the most senior of them to honour that.”¹¹

The most junior, lowest ranking Muslim is of such great value in the system of Islam that he can grant asylum to a pagan in wartime and it will become incumbent upon all Muslims even the supreme leader of the armed forces to respect his grant of asylum unless of course conspiracy is proven or feared.

This great value for the individual is not to be found in any government or any military system other than Islam ... the religion of humanity.

The scholars of Islam have clearly stated – drawing from the holy hadith – that if a Muslim slave or Muslim woman grants asylum his or her grant of asylum is effective out of respect for the greatness of Islam and to show the superiority of Muslims.

For “Islam takes precedence and nothing should be given precedence over it.”¹²

Muhaqqiq al-Hilli, may Allah bless him, says in *Sharā'i' al-Islam*:

The same ruling [of authority to grant asylum] applies to the free, slave, male and female [Muslim].¹³

Textual sources of the Sharia reported by so many sources as to be indubitable confirm that, deepening respect for Muslims and raising up Islam. In what follows we shall mention some of those texts:

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

“Ali, peace be upon him, allowed the grant of asylum by a [Muslim] slave to a non-Muslim from one of the fortresses [in Medina]. Imam Ali said: ‘He [the slave] is one of the believers’.”¹⁴

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, proved the validity of the Muslim slave’s grant of asylum through his being a believer who is covered unconditionally by the Prophet’s saying: The lowliest of them – can grant asylum on their behalf– i.e. on behalf of the believers.

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

“If a group besieges a city, and they ask them for asylum, and they say, ‘No’, but they think that they have said, ‘Yes’, and they come down to them, they are entitled to refuge.”¹⁵

Jawāhir al-Kalām says, citing *al-Muntahā* by ‘*allāmah* Hilli, may Allah bless him:

“Umm Hani said to Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family: ‘Oh Allah’s Messenger! I have granted asylum to my relatives and kept them in [my place] but my brother wants to kill them.’

Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: ‘We approve your asylum to whomever you have granted protection, O Umm Hani. It only takes the lowliest of them to grant an asylum on behalf of the Muslims.’”¹⁶

Jawāhir al-Kalām also says:

“Allah’s Messenger’s daughter Zaynab granted asylum to al-‘Āṣ ibn al-Rubay‘ and Allah’s Messenger endorsed it.”¹⁷

Imam Ṣādiq reported that his father, peace be upon them, said:

“I read in one of Ali’s documents that Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, wrote in a directive for battle for the benefit of the Migrants and the Supporters and their successors from among the people of Medina, saying, among other things; “Indeed the refugee is like one’s self – not to be blamed or harmed. The sanctity of an asylum seeker to his refuge provider is as the sanctity of his [the latter’s] mother and father”.”¹⁸

The essence is that there is equality between Muslim individuals, high ranking and low ranking, male and female, freemen and slaves, young and old, leaders and soldiers, at wartime and at other times – this is part of what makes Islam unique.

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said: “Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, delivered a sermon in Khayf mosque and said:

‘May Allah bless a man who listens to what I say, understands it, and passes it on to someone who has not heard it. It may be that someone carries a piece of knowledge without himself being a scholar. And it may be that someone carries a piece of knowledge to someone who is more knowledgeable than he is. There are three habits while conforming to which the heart of the believer will not be invaded by rancour: – acting sincerely towards Allah, giving honest counsel to the leaders of

the Muslims, and keeping to their group, and this applies to those who would follow them. The Muslims are brothers. Their blood is equal. Their protection can be granted by the lowliest of them. If one of the Muslims gives a promise of protection to any of the pagans then his promise of protection ought not to be broken.”¹⁹

This is also part of what makes Islam unique. The lives of learned people and ignorant people, black and white, old and young, those with clans and those without clans – all of them, even soldiers and leaders of the armed forces – are of equal value.

Is this not part of what makes Islam unique?

Yes. Look to the west and the east for guidance on this matter and then you will understand.

No to ruination

Muhammad ibn Sinan narrates that one of the written responses to questions he put to Abu al-Hasan Imam Riḍā, peace be upon him, was:

“Allah has forbidden desertion, because it constitutes weakening the religion, contempt for the Messengers and the just Imams, and failure to support them against their enemies. Punishment is for [the deserters] for rejecting acknowledgement of the lordship [of the Almighty], making justice appear, ditching injustice, eliminating corruption –because [desertion] results in the enemy getting the better of the Muslims and consequently take them prisoner, killing them, thwarting Almighty Allah’s Religion, as well as other ruination.”²⁰

Islam is the religion of righteousness. Righteousness and ruination do not go together.

So then: no, to all forms of ruination in Islam.

Deserting the battlefield ruins the religion, the leaders and the Muslims, so no to desertion from the battlefield.

Directions given by the Imam of the Muslims

When war came, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, would give verbal directions to the Muslims. [In the following Imam Ali outlines his instructions on combat-related issues after setting out the fundamental issues of belief and piety. He talks about the significance of prayer and zakah, before addressing the issues of jihad.] Imam Ali states:

“Make an undertaking with prayer, persevere with it, and say a lot of it. Achieve nearness through it. For surely prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times. The unbelievers will know that when they are asked, ﴿“What led you into hell?” they will say: “We were not of those who prayed.﴾²¹ Whoever broaches it knows its worth. Those of the believers who are not distracted from it by the beauty of material things or delight of the eye – property or offspring – prove themselves to be noble though it. Almighty Allah says:

﴿By men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the remembering Allah, nor from regular prayer.﴾²²

Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, would wear himself out even after the good news from his Lord that he was going to go to heaven. The Almighty says: ﴿Enjoin prayer on thy people, and be constant therein ...﴾²³ He would tell his family to perform it and he performs it earnestly and with perseverance.

Always mentioned along with the prayers (*ṣalaḥ*), almsgiving (*zakaḥ*) was obligated as a sacrifice by Muslims to fellow Muslims. Whoever does not give it, willingly and desirous of the reward which is greater than its value, is ignorant of the tradition (*Sunnah*), cheated of the reward, in error throughout his life, and will long regret abandoning the Almighty Allah's command and turning away from what Allah's pious devotees acquire and enjoy.

The Almighty declares:

﴿Whoever opposes with the Messenger even after guidance has been plainly presented to him, and follows a path other than that becoming to

men of faith, We shall turn him over to what he has taken charge of).²⁴ Whoever is not worthy of upholding the Trust loses, and his deeds will be in vain. It was offered to the erected skies and to the stretched out lands and to the built up mountains. There was nothing longer, broader, higher or greater. If anything could refuse because of length, breadth, height, greatness, power or strength they would have, but [they refused because] they were wary of punishment.

And Jihad is the noblest of deeds after [embracing] Islam by which the religion is upheld. Great is its reward with glory and insuperability, even though it is undesirable, it is rewarded with the best and the good news of paradise after becoming a martyr, being sustained with dignity in the presence of the Lord on the Day of Judgement.

Almighty Allah says:

«Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead; Nay, they are alive, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord.»²⁵

On the other hand, being afraid or terrified of fighting against those who deserve to be fought and those who help each other to go astray is to err in the religion and to plunder the world in humiliation and smallness. Through it one becomes deserving of the hell in fleeing from the battlefield when the time comes to fight. Almighty Allah says:

«O ye who believe! When ye meet the unbelievers in hostile array, never turn your backs to them.»²⁶

Uphold Almighty Allah's Command in these battles in which forbearance to endure them means nobility and happiness, deliverance in this world and the hereafter from hideous terror and fear. For Allah does not attach importance to what the servants scoop up in their nights and days. He knows about it but extends His Grace. All of it is:

«duly recorded: my Lord never errs, nor forgets.»²⁷

Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance and ask for victory. Get used to fighting and fear Almighty Allah «For Allah is with those who restrain themselves, and those who do good»^{28, 29}.

A whole book could be written on these directions. Every sentence of them and every one of its directions is knowledge, technique and humaneness. Consequently it is a summary of Islam which gathers up all that is good.

The Imam of the Muslims, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, is the one who knows this best in all its facets. These directions should be taken from him and Muslims should follow them in their wars with unbelievers and oppressors [if and when they are dragged into one].ⁱ

Precise military coordination

It is reported that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, described fighting and said:

Put the archers who are on foot in front so that they can shower [the enemy] with arrows. Let the two flanks engage in skirmishes. Position the horses of the elite confederations as support for the standard [–bearer]. They should not break away from their position if an enemy horseman pushes hard against them. Whoever sees an opportunity to get at the enemy should break away from his position and seize the opportunity after consolidating his position. After doing what he has to do, he should return to his position. If you want to charge, the leader of the vanguard should go first. If the vanguard gets pulled apart the line of the army should prop it up and if you get pulled apart the elite should move forward and the archers should fire volleys of arrows. The front rows and armed lookouts should stand on the edges and in the thickets and on the hills to maintain cover. If the enemy attacks you first, start

ⁱ This sermon was delivered during his caliphate, and is addressed to his troops who were about to engage in battle. Imam Ali was forced into three wars during his reign. All his wars during his caliphate were spearheaded by those who were masquerading as Muslims but were actually unbelievers. These individuals were trying to force out the legitimate leader, who was elected unanimously, by causing death and destruction and by supporting violence throughout the land. This advice is therefore for those about to fight against terrorism.

with spears, stand firm and endure so that the archers can shower [the enemy with arrows]. Move the banners. Clatter the shields. Those with breastplates and hauberks should go out in their faces. If they should break apart in the slightest attack them one at a time. Do not all attack them at once every time there is an attack ordered by the enemy. If he does not attack then draw him little by little. Stick to your rows and stay in your positions. If a rout is achieved, all of you advance in an organised format neither scattered nor all bunched together. If you leave the battlefield, move in an organised format.”³⁰

In view of the fact that the world was uncoordinated in every respect even in terms of warfare, the Household would make plans to coordinate everything at wartime and other times.

You will find this precise military coordination contained in this extract from the orders of the Commander of the Faithful Ali, peace be upon him, for fighting fourteen centuries ago to be good enough even for the age of satellites and missiles, the age to come after this one, and so it will continue to be.

Psychological and military preparation

It is narrated that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said: “If the enemy marches towards you, position yourselves at the gates of the trenches. There is no recourse but to swords and standing your ground after the rows have been consolidated. Do not look at their faces and do not let their numbers frighten you; watch your immediate positions... If they attack you get down on your knees and all take cover behind the shields in a firm row without a gap in it. If they turn back attack them with swords. If they stand firm, stand firm in synchronised format, and, if they retreat, mount the horses and go after the lot, and there is no power except through Allah. If some of you are routed – God forbid– then regroup, collectively say *Allahu Akbar*, (Allah is too great [to describe]), be assured of Allah’s support, and remember what is promised for those who flee from the battlefield, and censure whomever you see running away. Gather together the brigades and regroup. The light infantry should hasten to bring back whoever has been routed to

the main group and to the encampment and let the reservists in it come to your help. When your parties come together, your reinforcements are back, and your fault and failing sorted out, assign the troops with their leaders, fortify their synchronised format, then attack, seek Allah's assistance and be steadfast."³¹

Mental preparation in war and military preparation complement one another. Whenever they go together the army is victorious. This is something which Islam does not overlook. The Imam, peace be upon him, blends the two forms of preparation into a single verbal illustration to make it stronger and more cohesive.

No to settling scores in war[s]

Hafs ibn Ghiyath said: "I asked Abu Abdullah, peace be upon him, [what to do] if a combatant becomes a Muslim on the battlefield, in non-Muslim land, and the Muslims subsequently defeat them.

He said: 'His becoming a Muslim applies to himself and to his little children and they are [all] free. His children, possessions and slaves are his to keep. In contrast, his adult offspring are war spoils for the Muslims unless they had become Muslims before that time. As far as the buildings and land are concerned, they are war spoils and do not belong to him because the land is a *jizyah* land to which the rule of the People of Islam does not apply. They [buildings and land] are not the same as what we mentioned before [i.e. children, possessions] because they can be set apart and transferred to Islamic territory.'³²

Islam is the religion of truth and justice. It is not the religion of settling scores and gratification of one's thirst for revenge. If a pagan becomes a Muslim on the battlefield, his Islam is accepted and the same rule applies to his young children who are not yet adults.

The Wise Qur'an had already stipulated this wonderful and unique, humane inclusiveness:

﴿and do not say to anyone who offers you peace [*salām*]: You are not a believer [i.e. Muslim]﴾³³

Giving equal shares

It is narrated that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, ordered Ammar ibn Yasir, Abdullah ibn Abu Rafi‘ and Abu al-Haytham ibn al-Tayhan to share out among the Muslims the money taken from the spoils of war and he said: “Share it out equally among the Muslims and do not favour anyone over anyone [else].”

They counted it up and found that every Muslim man would get three dinars. The people came and Ṭalḥah and Zubayr approached them. Each of them had his son with him. They gave each one of them three dinars.

Ṭalḥah and Zubayr said: “That’s not what ‘Omar used to give us. Is this your idea or by the command of your boss.’

They said: ‘This is what the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, ordered of us.’

They went away to see him, peace be upon him, and found him going about some of his business standing, in the sun, over one of his hired help who was working in front of him. They said to him, ‘How about coming up with us into the shade?’

He said: ‘All right.’

They told him: ‘We went to see your assistants who were busy sharing out this war spoils and they gave us the same as everyone else.’

He asked: ‘What do you want?’

They replied: ‘That is not the same as what Omar would give us.’

He, peace be upon him, asked: ‘What would Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, give you?’

They fell silent.

He, peace be upon him, asked: ‘Did he not used to give equal shares to the Muslims?’

They replied: ‘Yes.’

He asked: 'Is it better to follow the tradition of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, or Omar's tradition?'

They replied: 'The tradition of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. But Commander of the Faithful, we entered Islam first, we suffered hardships and we are [Allah's Messenger's] relatives. If you can see a way forward to not treat us the same as the people, then do so.'

He asked: 'Did you enter the faith first or did I?'

They said: 'You.'

He said: 'Is your family relationship closer or is mine?'

They said: 'Yours.'

He said: 'Were the hardships you suffered greater or were mine?'

They said: 'No. You suffered greater hardships, Commander of the Faithful.'

He said: 'I swear by Allah, this hired help of mine and I are not entitled to anything but an equal share of money,' and pointed to the hired help who was in front of him.'³⁴

Great is the Imam, the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him.

He is the most unique person in history after Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family.

The greatness of a person is ascertained through his history.

Who is like Ali, peace be upon him?

Who has a history as glorious as this in all respects?

A western philosopher became a Muslim and said: "The reason for my becoming a Muslim was that I saw the Commander of the Faithful was a Muslim. If Islam were not true then he would not have embraced it. Through Ali's embracing Islam I realised that Islam was true.

Priority is to Islam

[It is reported] on the authority of Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq on the authority of his father on the authority of his forebears that when the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, besieged the people of Ta'if he said: 'Any slave who comes out to us before his master is a free man but any slave who comes out to us after his master remains a slave.'³⁵

The slave and master are both pagans in the theatre of war or on the battlefield. If the slave becomes a Muslim before his master then he is freed from slavery because ﴿Allah will never grant the unbelievers a way over the believers﴾³⁶ and "Islam takes precedence and nothing should be given precedence over it".³⁷

If the master becomes a Muslim and then the slave becomes a Muslim afterwards, he remains a slave to his master. This is the priority given to [embracing] Islam.

Respect for messengers

It is reported that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said: "If you capture a combatant who claims that he is a messenger [sent] to you, and if it is known to be true, and he brings something that proves it, then you have no alternative but to allow him to convey his messages, and for him to return to his companions. If you find no evidence to prove what he says then do not accept what he says."³⁸

A pagan messenger to the Muslims is respected. He is not killed. He is not insulted. He is not stripped [of his belongings]. He is not harassed. He is not driven away.

This is a humanitarian principle which is emphasised by Islam which is the religion of humaneness.

At the same time as operating with humaneness and emphasising it in all pursuits even in war which is the most ferocious of pursuits, Islam is not unaware of pagan treachery and their failure to adhere to humane principles, and so it stresses the need to look for proof that a man is a messenger so that the Muslims do not become ensnared by the treachery of the unbelievers.

Isn't this religion of Islam great in its policy which combines stringency with humane principles?

Battles cries in Islam

It is reported that Abu Abdullah, peace be upon him, said:

Our battle cry is, "O Muhammad. O Muhammad."

Our battle cry at the Battle of Badr was, "O Victory of Allah, draw near, draw near."

The Muslims' battle cry at the Battle of Uhud was, "O Victory of Allah, draw near";

at the Battle of Nuḍayr was: "O Spirit of Allah, give comfort";

at the Battle of Bani Qaynuqā' was: "Our Lord, do not let them defeat You"

at the Battle of Ṭā'if was: "O Riḍwān".

Their battle cry at the Battle of Ḥunayn was: "O sons of Abdullah, O sons of Abdullah";

at the Battle of the Confederates was: "*ḥā'-meem*, make them not see";

at the Battle of Bani Qurayda was: "O Peace, deliver them up to us";

at the Battle of Muraysay' i.e. the Battle of Bani al-Mustalaq was: "Indeed the matter is up to Allah?"

at the Battle of Ḥudaybiyyah was: "Behold! The Curse of Allah is on those who do wrong";

at the Battle of Khaybar – the Battle of the Lion – was: "O Ali, take them out from above";

on the Day of Conquest of Mecca was: "We truly, truly are Allah's servants";

at the Battle of Tabouk was: "O, One and Only! O Eternal One!"

At the Battle of Bani al-Mulawwah it was: "Kill! Kill!"

At the Battle of Şiffin it was: “O Allah’s Succour!”

Husayn’s battle cry was: “O Muhammad!” and our battle cry is: “Oh Muhammad!”³⁹

It is narrated that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said:

“Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, ordered that battle cries be shouted before going into battle and said: ‘There should be in your battle cry one of Almighty Allah’s names.’”⁴⁰

Battle cries are an absolute necessity for every nation that wants to lift its sons up, for battle cries are an expression of the pains and hopes of the nation. It is that on which rising generations are nurtured. It is that which defines the future of the community and makes their position clear on internal and external events and on Islam, in view of the fact that Allah is the beginning and end of everything and so there should be one of Almighty Allah’s Names in the battle cry.

Respect for those respected

Ali ibn Yusuf – the *‘allāmah*’s brother – reports in his work *al-‘odad al-qawiyah*, citing Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari: “When the Persian prisoners came to Medina Omar ibn al-Khattab wanted to sell the women and make the men slaves, and so the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said:

Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: “Treat with respect those who are held in esteem by every nation.”

Omar said: “I heard him say: ‘When those who are held in esteem by a nation come to you, treat them with respect even if they oppose you.’”

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said: ‘Those people sent their message of peace to you and expressed an interest in entering Islam. They inevitably have Muslims in among their descendants. I call Allah and you as my witnesses that I set my share of them free for the Allah’s Sake.’

The Migrants and the Supporters said: 'We present our share of them as a gift to you, Allah's Messenger's brother.'

'O Allah. I bear witness that they have made a gift of their share to me and I have accepted. I call You as my Witness that I set them free for Your Sake.'

Omar said: 'Why have you thwarted what I have set my mind upon regarding the Persians? What is it that has put you off my position on them?'

The Commander of the Faithful repeated what Allah's Messenger had said about treating with respect those who are held in esteem.

Omar said: 'I make a gift of my share, and the rest of those who have not already been given to you, to Allah, and to you.'

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said: 'O Allah! Bear witness to what they have said and to my setting them free.'

A group of Quraysh wanted to ask the women to marry them.

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said: 'They should not be forced into it. Rather they should be given a choice. What they choose should be acted upon ...'⁴¹

Islam is the religion of love

Traditions transmitted by so many sources as to be indubitable say: 'Is religion anything but love for Allah's sake and hate for Allah's sake?''⁴²

Through love and virtue Islam was able to win the world over intellectually, and subjugate the governments of the world politically, to the point that historians say that the Islamic advance was unique in its power and speed, the likes of which the history of the world has not told us.

What is this awful backwardness which has come to pass upon the Muslims this century if not the product of the powerlessness of the Muslims to implement Islam as they should?

Foreigners set about distorting the image of Islam and portraying it as strict, violent and cruel to appeal to non-Muslims and to tighten the stranglehold around the Muslims.

They also exploited the ignorance and bad behaviour of many Muslims.

If Muslims were to show Islam in its pure form, as revealed by Allah, most of Mankind would embrace it because most people are not narrow-minded. They are just ignorant and do not know. If they knew they would come.

This plethora of hadith uttered by the Messenger and his Holy Household in various matters pertaining to war, which we have cited from the sections on jihad in *Wasa'il al-Shi'a* and *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il* are just examples because there are many more in both these hadith collections and others. A huge, separate book would have to be compiled to gathering them all together.

Chapter Six

On Islam's Foreign Policy and International Relations

﴿Allah commands justice and the doing of good﴾

Islamic Foreign Policy

The foundations of the foreign policy of the Islamic state – according to the textual sources of the Sharia from the Wise Qur'an and the holy *Sunnah* – are based on a number of pillars, from which most of the other rules and laws are derived. They are as follows:

Globalising Justice

The Almighty says:

﴿Allah commands justice, and the doing of good.﴾¹

A holy hadith says:

“The heavens and earth were established through justice.”²

Islam does not deviate from justice no matter what the cost may be.

Justice and putting everything in its rightful place is considered to be one of the basic pillars of Islam.

For this reason, we find that Islam has forbidden things which conflict with justice, even though the rest of the world has never - either in ancient times or modern times - prohibited them as political practices.

As illustrations we cite a number of examples of matters which are forbidden in war in Islam.ⁱ

No to starting wars

Islam forbids Muslims from starting a fight with the unbelievers who have not drawn a sword on the Muslims, forced the Muslims out of their homes or supported their being forced out of their homes and only permits fighting those unbelievers who have started a war against the Muslims and forced them out of their homes.ⁱⁱ

The evidence in support of that is what the Almighty's words:

﴿Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loves those who are just. Allah only forbids you,

ⁱ Wartime examples had been chosen because nothing damages the relations between nations more than war, and the conducts exercised during the wartime. In other words, the worse the conducts, the deeper the enmity would be, therefore the longer the war, the greater the loss, and the harder to reconcile. And on the other hand the better the conducts the shorter the war, lesser losses, and easier the reconciliation...

ⁱⁱ "Islam is inherently based on peace and it does not resort to war unless it is absolutely necessary and when there is no other alternative; just as one only resorts to undergo a medical operation when it is vital to do so. The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad peace be upon him and his holy family, never engaged in any battle unless he was forced to do so. Even then, he never started a battle and always used to wait until his opponent attacked him. 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" between which the world is trapped. As a result, wars and military coups 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." Muhammad Shirazi, *al-Fiqh series*, vol. 99, *The Rule of Islam*, pp 133-136.

with regard to those who fight you for (your) faith, and drive you out of your homes, and support (others) in driving you out, that you make friends with them; and whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust.﴾³

No to deceit

Deceit is forbidden in warfare in spite of the fact that it accelerates victory and in spite of the fact that modern world politics is for the most part based on deceit.

It is narrated on the authority of Aṣḡagh ibn Nabātah that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, said in one of his sermons:

“Had I not been hateful of deceit I would have been the most cunning of all men. But every deceit is a sin, every sin is disobedience and every deceitful person will have a banner by which he will be recognised on the Day of Resurrection.”⁴

Islam goes a step further in avoiding deceit, which is incompatible with the all-pervasive Islamic justice prescribed for every situation, by not allowing unbelievers at war with the Muslims to be fought by helping other unbelievers at war [with the Muslims] to deceive the first group of unbelievers at war [with the Muslims]. It may be that we cannot find in the history of the world or in the dictionary of any political system on the face of the earth anything like this profound adherence to justice.

Look at the following, narrated on the authority of Allah's Messenger's descendant, propagator of the knowledge of Islam, and teacher of the Imams of all the schools (*madhhabs*), Abu Abdullah Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him:

Ṭalḡah ibn Zayd narrates that he asked Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, about two nations of those with whom the Muslims were at war. Each nation had its own king. They fought, and then made peace [with each other], and then one of the kings betrayed his opposite number by coming to the Muslims and making peace with them on condition that the Muslims join him carry out a raid against that other city.

Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, replied:

“The Muslims ought not use deceitful means, encourage deceitful means be used, or fight alongside those who have employed deceitful means. On the contrary, they should fight against the polytheists wherever they find them,ⁱ and the pact between the unbelievers is not applicable to the Muslims.”⁵

The end of the holy hadith is an allusion to what the Almighty’s words: ﴿Then fight the polytheists wherever ye find them...﴾⁶

No to mutilation

Islam forbade mutilation of dead of the enemy whoever they may be and whatever their religion or sect.

Mutilation is cutting off the limbs or extremities, gouging out the eyes and other such things which disfigure the dead body.

It is reported that Imam Ali, peace be upon him, used to forbid the army from mutilating and say, “Do not mutilate a dead body.”⁷

Imam Ali, peace be upon him, also narrates that Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: “Do not even think about mutilating; not even a rapacious dog.”⁸

No to killing ten categories

Islam made an exception of ten – or according to other jurists fourteen – categories of those present in the theatre of war i.e. of the unbelievers at war [with the Muslims]. These categories are not to be killed.

ⁱ This is only applicable, if the Muslims come under attack from the polytheists. Otherwise, if they are not aggressive towards the Muslims, the Muslims may not use treachery and deceitful means to attack or fight them, as stated at the outset of the hadith. [The polytheists and the unbelievers are categorised in five groups, and only one of them – i.e. the ones who wage war against the Muslims – may be fought. *al-Masa’el al-Islamiyah*, p441]

These are among the practices unique to Islam [observed fourteen centuries ago]. It is hardly possible to find anything like it in the dictionary of modern politics. These [categories] are as follows:

1. The very old who are not able to bear arms.
2. Women who do not participate in the conflict even though they may treat the wounded and combatants and help with food and clothing and so on.
3. Children who have not reached the legal age of maturity which is ten years old for females and, normally, the completion of fifteen years for males.
4. Whoever is paralysed and any invalid who is not able to stand on his own two feet.
5. The blind
6. Anyone incapacitated by illness
7. Messengers who bring messages from the combatant unbelievers to the Muslims
8. Monks occupied in their worship even if they are with the combatant unbelievers, praying for victory for them but without any practical participation in the conflict.
9. The insane
10. Any person the killing of whom would not lead to any strategic advantage.

A number of the scholars of Islam added four other categories who are not to be killed and they are as follows:

11. Peasants and farmers who make use of the land through cultivation
12. Those involved in manufacture such as engineers, inventors and so on
13. Craftsmen and artisans such as carpenters, jewellers and so on

14. Hermaphrodites

The evidence in support of making an exception for these categories is the textual sources of the Sharia as contained in detailed encyclopaedias of hadith such as *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il*, *Jawāhir al-Kalām* and so on.ⁱ

Accepting people's claim to have become Muslims at face value

[During the battles, and in order to save their skin, some defeated combatants used to claim they have accepted Islam. Some Muslim fighters tended not to believe them, while others were unable to tell the genuine claim from the false. Although it was wartime and the risks were too high to leave them free, not even taken as captives until the truth of their claim is established, the default guidance set by Islam was to accept their claim and for them to be treated as Muslims together with their families. This default guidance then was extended to cover wartimes and peacetimes alike. Ed.]

The Almighty says: ﴿Say not to one who offers you peace [*salām*]: You are not a believer.﴾⁹

[By “offering peace” it is meant: affirming the two declarations of faith: “I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger”.]

The property, family and life of anyone who says: “I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger”, are protected.”¹⁰

ⁱ In 1942 the British Cabinet decided on the area bombing of German cities in a strategic bombing campaign, in order to destroy as many homes and houses as possible (referred to as *dehousing*).

... the destruction of houses, public utilities, transport and lives, the creation of a refugee problem on an unprecedented scale ... are accepted and intended aims of our bombing policy; they are not by-products of attempts to hit factories.[Wikipedia: Sir Arthur Harris]

[In line with the above Qur'anic verse, this hadith from the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, stresses protection for such claimants.] However, if he is known to be lying and to be a charlatan and it is known that what he is saying is just lip service – that is another matter entirely, which this brief [work] does not have the space to look into.

In view of the fact that Islam is a universal religion which came from the Creator of Mankind to guide the whole of Mankind, it should be all inclusive:

﴿We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to mankind.﴾¹¹

﴿Say: “O mankind! I am sent unto you all, as Allah's Messenger.﴾¹²

In order to attract the greatest possible number to be guided to the *truth* it is necessary to accept that whoever claims to be a Muslim is a Muslim.

I add to that that achieving justice for all also dictates this acceptance. That is because some of those who offer a salutation and confess to Islam are people who are telling the truth and it is not possible to tell them apart for sure from those who are lying. If Islam did not accept a confession from every person the honesty of a lot of honest people would be in vain, and this is inconsistent with the universality of divine beneficence and His justice in relation to His slaves.

Furthermore, add to that that many of those who offer peace and confess to Islam half-heartedly, or who are lying, or pretending, become genuine Muslims as a result of humane practices which they see in the shade of Islam, and so they are drawn to Islam.

The two declarations are equivalent to a melting pot for gold into which adulterated gold is poured and in which there is another mixture; the melting pot then purifies it bit by bit.

Rescuing the oppressed

One of the firm pillars of the foreign policy of the Islamic Government is rescuing the oppressed no matter where they are, no matter what their

religion and beliefs may be, even if they are non-Muslims and if they are polytheists, idol-worshippers and so on ...

The basis of that is what the Almighty says:

﴿And why should ye not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who are oppressed ...﴾¹³

If there is a government which oppresses considers its people to be weak, it is incumbent upon the Muslims to fight against that oppressive government and rescue that people from the claws of oppression.

It could be said that this statement means intervention in the internal affairs of another government, but the principle concern for Islam is the human being. One of the pillars of the policy of Islam is to rescue those considered to be weak wherever they may and howsoever they may be.

Islam takes precedence

One of the well-established bases of Islamic foreign policy is that Islam ought to take precedence, over and above any other government or system at all times, in all places and in all respects. The evidence in support of that is what Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said:

“Islam takes precedence and nothing should be given precedence over it.”¹⁴

Islam should take precedence no matter how lofty other religions and communities may be, in view of the fact that Islam is superior to all of them, superior from all perspectives and in all respects.

Just as Islam is the only religion which Allah chose for the whole of mankind after the dispatch of the last of the Prophets, Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, equally this confirmed superiority of the religion ought to correspond to the elevation of the Muslims in all spheres ...

Muslims ought to surpass other people in terms of economy, agriculture, society, psychology, the art of administration, wartime, peacetime,

writing, publication, manufacture, medicine, engineering, physics, chemistry, space, the atom and so on in all spheres.

There are areas in the Islamic jurisprudence which are governed by the principle of "Islam takes precedence" to some of which we shall make brief reference:

a) The duty to migrate

Muslims are under a duty to emigrate from non-Muslims countries to Islamic countries if they are not able to practise the rites of Islam.ⁱ

The Almighty says:

﴿When angels take the souls of those who die in sin against their souls, they say: "In what (plight) were ye?" They reply: "Weak and oppressed were we in the earth." They say: "Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move yourselves away (from evil)?" Such men will find their abode in hell. What an evil refuge!﴾¹⁵

It is reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, said:

"I disassociate myself from every Muslim who stays with a polytheist in enemy territory (*dār al-ḥarb*)."¹⁶

It is also reported that he, peace be upon him and his holy family, said:

"No one stays in enemy territory apart from a sinner who is disassociated and no longer considered a Muslim."¹⁷

ⁱ The reason migration is mentioned here is not only for the Muslim individuals or families to know their duties, but also for the Muslim state to attend to its responsibilities through its foreign affairs department to defend the religious rights of the Muslims in the non-Muslim countries. The duty to migrate issue could be relevant, as a last resort, for young Muslim women in France who cannot practise their religion because the hijab is banned in state schools and colleges. The Muslims are encouraged to emigrate not only to keep their religion and identity but also to minimise the possible conflicts between the Muslim state and other non-Muslim states.

In view of the fact that the basis for arriving at that conclusion is “Islam takes precedence” – because they mention being able to practise the rites of Islam – the scholars make reference to a number of subsidiary rulings on the matter, some of which warrant consideration:

al-Fiqh says: Is the decisive factor in whether it is obligatory to migrate whether it is a non-Muslim province or a non-Muslim country? What is apparent from the context of the aforementioned verses and narrations is [that what is meant is] a non-Muslim province, so if there is a non-Muslim kingdom in which there is a Muslim settlement in which a Muslim is able to practise the rites of Islam then he is not under an obligation to migrate. If the opposite is the case i.e. the country is a Muslim [country] but the province is non-Muslim then there is no obligation to migrate provided the Muslim is able to practise the rites of Islam.

Does the rule also apply to a household if a man is a servant, for example, in a non-Muslim household in a Muslim country and is unable to practise openly the rites of Islam? Is he under an obligation to leave the household?

That is apparently the case for reason of the aforementioned textual evidence supported by rational deduction.¹⁸

b) Invitation to Islam

Islamic scholars state: Muslims should not start a war against non-Muslims without inviting them to Islam and providing all the proof they need.ⁱ They rely on four pieces of evidence to prove this:

The Wise Qur’an, the holy Sunnah, the consensus of the Islamic scholars, and rational proof such as the Almighty’s words:

﴿Nor would We visit with Our Wrath until We had sent a messenger. When We decide to destroy a population, We (first) send a definite

ⁱ This is to eliminate any misunderstanding or misconception and endeavouring for a potential common grounds for being one nation and community with mutual interests, instead of bearing the war’s ruinous consequences.

order to those among them who are given the good things of this life and yet transgress; so that the word is proved true against them: then (it is) We destroy them utterly.﴾¹⁹

It is narrated that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said:

When Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, sent me to Yemen he said: O Ali, do not kill anyone until you have invited him to Islam. I swear by Allah if Almighty Allah guides one man at your hands it is better to you than anything the sun could rise or set on, and you will have his fealty, Ali."²⁰

It is also reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, said:

“Do not fight against the unbelievers until you have invited [them to Islam].”

This point is further application of “Islam takes precedence” in various intellectual, military and social capacities.

c) The prohibition on fleeing from the battlefield

Fleeing from the battlefield is one of the greatest sins and one of the mortal sins for which Allah has promised the hellfire. The Almighty says:

﴿O ye who believe! When ye meet the unbelievers in hostile array, never turn your backs to them. If any do turn his back to them on such a day - unless it be in a stratagem of war, or to retreat to a troop (of his own)- he draws on himself the wrath of Allah, and his abode is hell,- an evil refuge (indeed)! ﴾²¹

It is narrated that our Master Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Riḍā, peace be upon him, wrote in response to Muhammad ibn Sinān's questions:

“Allah has forbidden desertion, because of what it constitute – weakening the religion, contempt for the Messengers and just Imams and failure to support them against their enemies or in punishing their enemies for rejecting what [the Messengers and just Imams] propagated

– i.e. acknowledging that Allah is Lord, making justice appear, discarding injustice, eliminating corruption –because [desertion] results in the enemy getting the better of the Muslims by taking them prisoner, killing them, thwarting Almighty Allah’s Religion, and other forms of ruination.”²²

This holy hadith expands upon and reinforces the words of “Islam takes precedence and nothing should be given precedence over it”.

Muslim Unity

The Muslims are all a single nation (*Ummah*) in the words of the Qur’an and Islam.ⁱ Almighty Allah says:

﴿Verily, this nation of yours is one nation, and I am your Lord: so serve Me.﴾²³

And He says, Exalted is He:

﴿And verily this nation of yours is one nation, and I am your Lord: so fear Me.﴾²⁴

He said, Mighty is He:

﴿O mankind! We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in Allah’s sight is the most righteous of you.﴾²⁵

ⁱ Needless to say that the author, his late brother, his late father and other distinguished figures of the Shirazi family as well as many Shi’a scholars fought against dividing the Muslim Ummah into scattered weak countries. The reason the author chose to mention the Muslim Unity under the foreign policy section is to emphasise the necessity of adopting a totally different foreign policy by all Muslim countries aiming for one Muslim United State. There should be a better foreign policy among the Muslim countries and one shared foreign policy with all other non-Muslim countries. Major practical steps towards uniting the Ummah are presented.

In the exegesis *Nur al-Thaqalayn*, after citing these verses, a number of hadith are quoted, of which we shall cite some as illustrations:

Ali ibn Ibrahim says in his exegesis re His words:

﴿We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other﴾ that the “nations” are the non-Arabs and the “tribes” are the Arabs.

His words ﴿Verily the most honoured of you in Allah's sight is the most righteous of you﴾ are a response to whoever boasts about noble descent and genealogy.²⁶

Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said on the day of the conquest of Mecca:

“People! Through Islam Allah has removed from you pre-Islamic (*jahiliyah*) haughtiness and boasting amongst yourselves about your forebears. Being Arab does not come through one's mother and father; rather it is a spoken language. Whoever speaks it is an Arab. Behold! You are of Adam and Adam is of dust. The most honoured of you in Allah's sight is the most righteous of you.”²⁷

It is narrated that Imam Bāqir, peace be upon him, said: Salmān was sitting with a small group of Quraysh in the mosque. They began going through their genealogies and noble descent until they reached Salmān and Omar ibn al-Khattab said to him: “Tell me, who are you? Who is your father and what are your origins?”ⁱ

He said: “I am Salman son of Abdullah. I was in error and deviation, and then Almighty Allah guided me through Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family. I was poor and then Allah made me rich through Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

I was a slave and then Allah freed me through Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

ⁱ Omar deliberately picked on Salmān in a bid to belittle and humiliate him as he knew that Salmān was a non-Arab.

This is my noble descent and this is my genealogy.

Imam Bāqir said: The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, came along while Salman, may Allah be pleased with him, was talking to them.

Then Salman said to him: O Allah’s Messenger! I was taunted by these people. I sat down with them and they began going through their genealogies and noble descent until they reached me and Omar ibn al-Khattab asked: “Who are you? What are your origins and what is your genealogy?”

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, asked: “What did you tell him, Salman?”

He replied: “I said I am Salman ibn Abdullah. I was in error and then Almighty Allah guided me through Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family. I was poor and then Allah made me rich through Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family. I was a slave and then Allah freed me through Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family. This is my noble descent and this is my genealogy.”

Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: “People of Quraysh. A man’s religion is his nobility. His morality is his magnanimity. His intellect is his origin. Almighty Allah says:

﴿We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in Allah’s sight is the most righteous of you.﴾

Then the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, said to Salman: “None of them can be any better than you except in terms of piety. If you are more pious than they, then you are better.”ⁱ

ⁱ *al-Kāfī*, vol.8 pp181-182 hadith203. Salman used to be referred to as Salman al-Farisi – meaning Salman the Persian – but Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, changed his name to Salman al-Muhammadi – Salman the Muhammadan – to emphasise the importance of faith over genealogy or race and to reflect his faith and utter devotion to the Prophet and

What place is there for nationalism and regionalism in Islam?

The Islamic lands are all a single state, with a single set of laws, a single community, with their various languages, national groups, colours and customs just the same as they share the same Allah, the same Prophet, the same Qur'an, the same *Sunnah* and same Qiblah.

For this reason, creating division between the Muslims is deemed to be one of the most serious sins in Islam. It breaks up the single community and makes it easier for the non-Muslims to take control of the lands of Islam and of the Muslims; whether it be division through ethnicity – this person is Arab, this person is Turkish, this person is Persian, this person is Kurdish, this person is Indian etc. – or division by country – this is Iraq, this is Iran, this is Syria, this is Egypt, this is the Hijāz and so on and so forth – or division by nationality – this person is Iraqi, this person is Egyptian, this person is Syrian, this person is Iranian, etc. – or any other form of division. All of that is emphatically rejected in Islam.

No to nationality and passports

Because of this, passports, nationality certificates and similar concepts are innovations of colonialism which are not part of Islam and which Islam is free from.

There is no precedent in Islam's long history other than in the last century, during which Muslims became weak and the whims of the colonialists played with them.

It is for this reason that it is reported that when nationality, passport and residence law came along in Iran, the great ascetic and venerable scholar Mirzā Ṣādiq Āghā Tabrizi,ⁱ may Allah bless him, opposed it and issued

his teachings. Because of his utter devotion Salmān acquired such a status that Allah's Messenger revealed about him saying famous hadith, "Salmān is one of us the Ahl al-Bayt."

ⁱ Known as al-Mirzā Āghā al-Tabrizi, he studied under al-Sheikh Hādi al-Ṭahrāni. He wrote a number of books including *al-Maqālāt*, *al-Mushtaqqāt* and *Sharā'ih al-'Iwāḍayn* – a simplified treatise on jurisprudence. He passed away in Dhul-Qa'dah 1351AH and was buried in the holy city of Qumm.

a ruling that it was forbidden to obey it. It is even reported that he issued a ruling that it was not permissible to go on the hajj pilgrimage if going on hajj depended on complying with the passport and nationality law, and using passport etc., for reason of the fact that the illicitness of this law was more severe [than not going to the hajj] and it was of a greater contravention to the obligation of hajj.ⁱ

This is an example of the essence of Islamic freedom which Islam granted to the Muslims, based on what the Islamic jurists have deduced from the textual sources of the Islamic Sharia – they say: “People are masters over themselves.”ⁱⁱ

No to land borders

For this reason creating land borders between the lands of the Muslims is also one of the greatest sins and is the other thing which had no precedent in Islam’s long history until Lawrence,ⁱⁱⁱ the British colonialist, created borders for Iraq, Iran, the Arabian Peninsula and so on and so forth. They are a contradiction to the brotherhood of the Muslims and the single community which the Wise Qur’an clearly spoke of in more than one verse.

ⁱ In Islam we do not have nationality law, and nationality is not a distinguishing factor between Muslims; Muslims should be able to travel freely from one Muslim country to another without any restriction whatsoever, such as using passport and applying for visa etc. in the same way that one travels from one city to another in a given country. Nationality law is in strict contradiction to the teachings of Islam, proves divisive, and serves nothing but the colonial powers.

ⁱⁱ “People are masters over themselves.” It refers to one’s personal freedom generally, and as such mostly applies to general life and transactions. This means that one’s freedom may not be curtailed by the state say. One is free, for example, to travel to and reside anywhere one wishes without any restrictions.

ⁱⁱⁱ Thomas Lawrence (1888-1935): English officer and writer, nicknamed Lawrence of Arabia, encouraged the Arabs to revolt against the Turks (1916-1918).

Many holy hadith spoke clearly of it and Muslims followed that way for centuries and centuries ...

These artificial land borders are the product of non-Muslim colonialism which the Qur'an ordered us to avoid.

We are looking out for the day when all Islamic countries – which have more than one thousand million Muslims – become a single country from one end to the other as Almighty Allah wanted and as the Wise Qur'an said: ﴿one nation and I am your Lord.﴾²⁸

No to customs and excise

One of the things confirmed to be strictly forbidden but which over the last century has become common in the lands of Islam is the matter of customs and excise.

Islam fought against it fiercely.

In addition to its being a contradiction to Islamic freedom – “**People are masters over themselves**” – it is also a contradiction to Islamic economy which is based on economic freedom in Islam – “**People are masters over their own money**”.²⁹

“It is not permissible for anyone to use anyone else's property without his permission.”³⁰

“The blood of a Muslim man is not fair game, nor is his property apart from what he willingly gives away.”³¹

“So that the right of a Muslim man is not rendered null and void ...”³²

... and other textual sources of the Sharia and the holy hadith.

In addition to all that there are holy hadith which take a severe tone, such as cursing the people who impose customs charges, and talking about Allah's punishment pouring onto them. Here are some of them for you:

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said to his companion Nawf:

“O Nawf! Beware being a tax collector.”^{i/33}

Imam Ja‘far ibn Muhammad al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, narrates on the authority of his forebears that Ali, peace be upon him, said: “Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: “When Almighty Allah created heaven...” and so on until he said: “The Almighty said: I swear by My Power, Glory and Elevation that those who drink alcohol, heavy drinkers, slanderers, pimps, ... and tax collectors as well as those in charge of customs and excise duties will not enter heaven.”³⁴

Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: “... Tax collectors and those who snub their familial relations ... will not enter heaven.”³⁵

Nawf said: “The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said to me:

“O Nawf! Take my advice. Do not be an informer or a tax collector ...”³⁶

Majlisi, may Allah bless him, narrates in *Biḥār al-Anwār* that Umm Salamah, may Allah be pleased with her, said: “The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, was walking in the desert and a voice called out to him twice: “Allah’s Messenger!” He turned around but did not see anyone. Then it called him and he turned around and lo and behold it was a closely bound female gazelle and she said: “This Bedouin man caught me in a trap and I have two calves on that

ⁱ This is to point to the severity of the crime of levying any taxes other than the four categories of taxes allowed in Islam. These four are khums, zakāh, jizyah, and kharāj. Khums is 20% on income, zakāh is a levy on nine articles and commodities, jizyah is the corresponding tax for non-Muslims as opposed to the Muslims’ khums and zakah, and kharāj is land lease rent. Yet, we have most Islamic countries routinely levy a variety of taxes, including value-added tax VAT and customs & excise duties, (known as *maks* at the time of the Prophet and hadith text) with total disregard to the strict prohibition of such taxation in Islamic teachings.

mountain. Release me, so that I can breastfeed them, and I will come back.”

He asked: “And will you do so?”

She said: “Yes. If I do not, may Allah will give me the same punishment as he gives to tax collectors.”ⁱ

So he released her.”³⁷

No to trinity

This trinity is comprised of:

1. Artificial geographical land borders within the entire Islamic homeland.
2. Nationality, passport and residence law within the single Islamic nation.
3. Customs and excise law.ⁱⁱ

They are some of the factors leading to the destruction of Muslim unity, while at the same time they are some of the firm foundations of the unbeliever colonialism.

Allah, the Qur'an and the Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, are all opposed to this trinity.

ⁱ Prophet Muhammad's communication with the animals is 'normal' when it comes to the prophets, just as Prophet Solomon communicated with insects, such as ants, and birds, such as hoopoe, as given in the holy Qur'an; (27):18-20

ⁱⁱ It is worth noting that the European Union has removed all three of the above within the union. The EU has come to the conclusion that this measure – i.e. the removal of these three – is to its best interest and that of its citizens. This is in effect implementing the teachings of Islam, which were laid down fourteen centuries ago, thus proving the validity of those teachings and their relevance to 21st century society. 7th century Islamic teachings applied in the 21st century. Yet, a top British official declared, in Feb2015, that in his view, the Islamic religion was “not well geared to reviving and modernising itself so that it meets the values and the norms of a 21st century society”.

The Islamic scholars, the history of Islam and the jurisprudence of Islam are all opposed to this trinity.

Yes to Islamic border defence

Yes ... defence of Islamic borders between Islamic countries and non-Muslim countries is what is referred to in Islam's Qur'an, Islam's *Sunnah*, Islamic history and Islamic jurisprudence. [No borders between Muslim countries are recognised in Islam and therefore there should be no such borders between them.]

The Almighty says in the Wise Qur'an:

﴿O ye who believe! Persevere, vie in perseverance, tether [horses on the borders] and fear Allah, so that ye may prosper.﴾³⁸

It is reported that Salman al-Fārisi, may Allah be pleased with him, said I heard Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, say: "Whoever tethers [horses on the border] for one day and one night on Almighty Allah's Path is like one who fasts for a month and prays for a month without breaking his fast and without turning away from his prayer other than for bodily need."³⁹

Islamic Policy on International Relations

﴿Allah loves those who are just﴾

Islam introduced a law to strengthen diplomatic ties and friendship with all countries, even non-Muslim ones. It allowed that in relation to non-Muslims who do not harm Muslims and forbade it in relation to non-Muslims who harm Muslims, in view of the fact that the Almighty says:

﴿Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loves those who are just.﴾

﴿Allah only forbids you, with regard to those who fight you for (your) faith, and drive you out of your homes, and support (others) in driving you out, that you make friends with them; and whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust.﴾⁴⁰

It is not permissible to form relations with non-Muslim countries, such as Israel, which have forced Muslims out of their homes. As for neutral non-Muslim countries, there is no harm in Muslims' creating ties with them and forming friendships and being nice and kind to them.

These verses were revealed in relation to Khuzā'ah and Bani Madlaj when they made a treaty with Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, not to fight against the Muslims or help anyone against them.⁴¹ The Muslims formed ties with them, went to see them, were kind to, equitable with and nice to them in accordance with the universal bond which Islam has placed between the children of mankind. For one person is the counterpart of another person as is narrated on the authority of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him: "They [i.e. people] are of two types: either a brother to you in religion or an equal to you in Creation"⁴². Muslims did not ostracise those who did not fight against them or force them out. As for those who rose up against the Muslims, the Muslims would, in defence,

ostracise them to defend themselves and punish them for what they had done.

The best model for any Islamic System on the face of the earth to follow is in Allah's Messenger's conduct in relation to non-Muslims of various groups such as pagans and Christians.

Almighty Allah says about that:

﴿Ye have indeed in Allah's Messenger a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah.﴾⁴³

﴿Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes﴾ Allah does not forbid you to interact with *ahl al-'ahd*, who have made a treaty with you not to fight, or to deal kindly and justly with them, as He says: ﴿from dealing kindly and justly with them﴾ in what there is between you and them i.e. sticking to the treaty. ﴿For Allah loves those who are just﴾ who are fair. He then says: ﴿Allah only forbids you, with regard to those who fight you for (your) faith﴾ of the People of Mecca and others ﴿and drive you out of your homes﴾ i.e. your homes and properties ﴿and support (others) in driving you out﴾ i.e. assist in that and support that referring to the masses and followers who help their leaders to do wrong ﴿that you make friends with them﴾ i.e. Allah forbids you from turning to them, making friends with or loving them. This means that your correspondence with them disclosing the believers' secret[s] is friendship with them. ﴿Whoever among you makes friends with﴾ and assists them, ﴿these are the unjust﴾ who deserve punishment for doing so.⁴⁴

When some Meccan women embraced Islam and sought refuge in Medina, a crisis ensued because of their pagan Arab husbands' subsequent reaction was not been less than declaring war against Muslims at large. Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family managed the crisis when he dealt with this issue accordingly. On one hand he wouldn't let down the believing women, and on the other,

he wouldn't let a war start over the issue. Here is what he did with the guide of the words of Almighty Allah.

When the Almighty put an end to affiliation between the Muslims and the unbelievers He explained the rule on women believers and their [unbelieving] husbands by saying: ﴿O ye who believe! When there come to you believing women refugees, examine (and test) them﴾ Test their faith i.e. seek to ascertain their faith. He called them believers before they became believers because they had adopted the outward trappings of belief. ﴿Allah knows best as to their Faith﴾ i.e. you found out what they appear to believe through the test but Allah knows what they truly believe deep inside. ﴿If ye ascertain that they are Believers﴾, meaning, on the face of it ﴿then send them not back to the Unbelievers﴾ i.e. do not return them to them. ﴿They are not lawful (wives) for the Unbelievers, nor are the (Unbelievers) lawful (husbands) for them﴾. This refers to the occurrence of a marriage breakdown between them as a result of her leaving home as a Muslim even if the pagan had not divorced her. ﴿But pay the Unbelievers what they have spent﴾ i.e. the dowry which the pagans gave to their wives. ﴿And there will be no blame on you if ye marry them on payment of their dower to them﴾ means you Muslims may marry the female refugees, once you have given them their dowries.

﴿But hold not to the guardianship [*isma*] of unbelieving women﴾ i.e. do not cling to marriage to unbelievers. The core meaning of 'isma [in the Arabic text] is protection. Marriage is known as 'isma because the married woman is under the husband's "protection". ﴿Ask for what ye have spent on their dowries﴾ i.e. if one of your wives runs off as an apostate to those unbelievers with whom you have a treaty, then ask them for what you spent on the dowry if they take her into their protection and do not return her to you. Just as they ask you for their wives' dowries if they sought refuge with you, as per what He says: ﴿and let the (Unbelievers) ask for what they have spent. Such is the command of Allah. He judges (with justice) between you. And Allah is Full of Knowledge and Wisdom﴾. For reason of what was revealed in this verse the Believers believed in Allah's law and paid back what the

pagans had spent on their wives' as ordered. The pagans refused to abide by Allah's ruling in relation to what He had ordered them to do by way of giving [back] what the Muslims had spent and so He revealed: ﴿And if any of your wives deserts you to the unbelievers﴾ and becomes affiliated with them as an apostate ﴿and you retaliate﴾ meaning when you next carry out a raid and you score a result from the unbelievers – i.e. spoils ﴿then pay﴾ out of the spoils before it has been divided up ﴿to those whose wives have deserted the equivalent of what they had spent﴾ on their dowries. In that way the [value of the] dowry from the spoils is given to whoever's wife goes off to someone with whom you have a treaty but who reneges on paying back the dowry and so none of his right is lost. On the contrary, it is given in full.

No to all forms of colonialism

﴿O ye who believe! Turn not (for friendship) to people on whom is the Wrath of Allah, of the Hereafter they are already in despair, just as the Unbelievers are in despair about the inhabitants of the graves.﴾⁴⁵

Then the Almighty spoke to the believers and said: ﴿O ye who believe! Turn not (for friendship) to people on whom is Allah's Wrath﴾ i.e. do not turn to the Jews and other unbelievers for friendship. That is because a group of poor Muslims used to tell the Jews Muslim news all the time and would receive payment. Allah forbade the combatants from doing so and said: ﴿they are already in despair﴾ i.e. of reward in the Afterlife ﴿just as the Unbelievers are in despair about the inhabitants of the graves﴾ meaning that the Jews through their rejection of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his pure family, in spite of recognising his Truthfulness and that he is a Messenger, despaired of having any share in the Afterlife because they knew of Allah's punishment for certain.⁴⁶

Chapter Seven

Islamic Policy on Leadership

﴿O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you﴾¹

The supreme leader

One of the matters to which Islam attached a great deal of importance in terms of putting it in order and improving it is the system of government, by which we mean those who govern the people, such as the supreme leader of the Islamic countries who is called the ‘Imam’, or ‘*faqih* of unblemished record’, or Council of Jurists (*shura al-fuqaha*) as well as the Imam or the *faqih*’s governors and administrators.

Look at Islam, how it identifies the qualities of those individuals and how rigorous it is in relation to their affairs.

The supreme leader has to consider all the needs of the Muslims and see to them, providing assistance to the oppressed and the persecuted, listening to the poor and wretched.

Here are some short points on the history of the most senior leader in Islam.

Amongst the responsibility of the ruler

At the beginning of Commander of the Faithful’s publicly recognised caliphate² after Othmān was killed, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, gave a speech in which he mentioned the responsibility of the supreme leader in Islam. He said *inter alia*:

“I heard Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, say: ‘Whichever governor takes over control of my nation after me will

be made to stand on the edge of the Path. The angels will spread out his page. If he is safe, it will be for reason of his justice, and if he is unjust, the Path will rise up so violently that it will destroy what is between his joints so that there will be between all of his body parts the [effects of the] passage of a hundred years. The Path will break underneath him and the first part with which he will meet the fire will be his nose, and the ball of his cheek.”³

Biographies of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, say that he never once satisfied his hunger fully and used to say: “Perhaps in the Hijāz and Yamāmah there may be people who have no hope of obtaining a piece of bread, and who have never satisfied their hunger fully.”⁴

More are illustrations of the style of supreme leadership according to Islam, and of what the duty of the Imam of the Muslims is will follow shortly. This is how the Imam of the Muslims and Allah’s vicegerent should care about the Muslim affairs.

In contrast, you see that for reason of their deviation from Islamic laws Mo‘āwiyah, Yazid, al-Walid [ibn Abdel-Malik ibn Marwān] and their ilk used to collect money, follow their hearts’ desires and turn their backs on Allah’s Laws, and the Muslims used to object to some of them, and revolt against others because of that.

Ali describes his legitimate authority

At this point it is worth our taking from the history of the Commander of the Faithful Ali, peace be upon him, what he is quoted as having said on this subject:⁵

“Indeed for every follower there is an Imam whom he follows and enlightens himself by the light of his [imam’s] knowledge.

Now look to your Imam (Imam Ali meant himself). In this world he has satisfied himself with two old, torn and coarse garments, and two pieces of bread (one in the morning and one in the evening).

I know that to adopt such a hard way of life is beyond you, but at least help me by refraining (from committing any wrong and or sin), and

earnest striving, and [do so] through abstinence, continence, and simple living.

I swear by Allah that from this world I have not amassed gold. Nor have I gathered wealth and possessions, nor have I changed these coarse and old garments of mine with even ordinary raiment from its treasury, nor have I taken a hand span of its land, nor have I taken from it more than what an old jennet with galls on its back [caused by a saddle] would live off.ⁱ In my eyes it is more unsubstantial and of less value than a bitter gall.”

Fadak

“Verily, under the sky we had only Fadak as our personal property but we were deprived of it, it tempted them, they took it by force and we had to bear the wrench patiently and cheerfully, the best judge is the Allah Almighty. What was I going to do with Fadakⁱⁱ or with any other worldly possession? I never wanted them for myself. I know that tomorrow my lodging will be my grave. Its darkness will cover my traces and will not allow my condition to reach this world. A grave after all is a pit, and even if it is made very big and broad, it will gradually reduce in size and it will be filled with earth and stones. My attention is concentrated on one thing, that is, with the help of the fear of Allah and piety I keep my desires under control so that in this world I may not commit sins and errors, and on the Day of Judgement when fear will be the lot of everybody, I may feel safe and satisfied.”

No to living in luxury

“If I had so wanted I could have very easily found ways and means to provide for myself the purest honey, the best variety of wheat and the

ⁱ This is an expression used by the imam to say that he always consumed little amount of food.

ⁱⁱ Fadak is a village which belonged to Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family. He entered into a peace treaty with its inhabitants after Khaybar and Almighty Allah ordered him to give it to his daughter Faṭimah, peace be upon her. Details of Fadak are related in most history books.

finest silk clothes that could be woven. But it is not possible for inordinate cravings to overcome me, and it is not possible that greediness persuades me to acquire the best provisions when in Hijāz and Yamāmah there may be people who have no hope of obtaining a piece of bread and who have never satisfied their hunger fully. It is not possible for me to satiate myself when there are around me people whom hunger and thirst keeps restless and agonized. Do you want me to be like that person about whom somebody has very aptly said, “Is this disease not enough for you that you keep on sleeping with your stomach full, and around you there are such starving mouths that will greedily eat even dried goat-skin.”

No to egoism

Shall I be satisfied simply because people call me Commander of the Faithful? Shall I not share and sympathise with the faithful Muslims in their calamities? Shall I not be their partner in their adversities? Shall I not be their fellow-sufferer? Shall I not set an example for them to patiently, courageously and virtuously bear privation?

Am I created simply to keep on thinking about my food? Am I like that animal which is tied down to a post and which thinks of nothing but its fodder or like that uncontrolled beast which roams about and does nothing but eats its fill and does not know the purpose of life for which it is created? Have I no religion, no conscience and no fear of Allah? Am I left absolutely free without any check or control to do as I like? Am I at liberty to go astray, to wander away from the true path of religion and to roam about in the wilderness of greed and avarice?

Desert trees have very strong timber

“I am sure some of you would say that if the son of Abu Ṭālib eats so little and lives on starvation, then surely he must have gone weak and exhausted and must be unfit to face his enemies in battlefields. But you must remember that hardy desert trees have very strong timber; and trees which are found in marshy lands have thin bark and soft wood, similarly when the former are lit up they burn longer and with a very strong glow and give out more heat than the latter.

My relationship to the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, is like a branch shooting from the same stem, or like the relation of the wrist to the arm.”

All reliance is on Almighty Allah

“I swear by Allah that even if all the Arabs unite together against me I shall not run away from the battlefield, and when the occasion arrives I shall do my best to subdue them, at the same time I shall try to clean the earth of the existence and vicious influence of that untimely evil genius and warped mind [Mo‘āwiyah] so that the land may be free of his wicked and sinful sway.

O vicious world! Do not try to snare me, you cannot entrap me, I am beyond your temptations and pitfalls and I have taken good care not to slip into such pitfalls. Where are those people whom you had tempted with pleasures and enjoyments? Where are those groups whom you had allured with pomp and glory? They are imprisoned in their graves pressed down by tons of earth upon them. O vicious world! Had you been a person or a being with life and limbs I would have punished you under the laws of the Lord because you have tempted with impossible hopes millions of individuals from the true path of humanity, you have brought about destruction, decline and falls of nations after nations alluring them with power and pleasure, you have thrown crowned heads into dust, you have lowered them to such depths that there is no refuge for any of them at that place and no one can come out from there.

Woe be to the man who with misplaced confidence, steps on the slippery ground presented by you as a firm foothold, he will certainly slip; woe be to the man who thinks of riding the waves of false hopes and expectations raised by you, he will surely sink.

Whoever tries not to be entrapped by your temptations and snared by your allurements will find the straight path to safety and salvation. Whoever tries to spurn you does not care for the consequences of his action though he may find himself in adverse circumstances and difficulties. To him this world, its pleasures and the life surrounded by

the pleasures or by woes and afflictions, is like a day which will soon pass away.

Be gone from me. I can neither be caught unawares by you that you may plunge me into disgrace and humiliations nor will I lose control of myself that you may drag me wherever you like.”

Disciplining the soul

“I swear by Allah that barring His Destiny over which I have no control and which may mould my life as He wishes, I shall control myself that I shall be contented and happy if I get one piece of bread with a pinch of salt and that my mind will be dead to the desires of pleasures, fame, power and glory.

Ibn Honayf! You have seen sheep and goats, after eating and drinking their fill they retire to their den. Do you want Ali to be like them - to eat, drink and enjoy? May I get blind if after having passed so many years of my life I now turn into an animal in human form!

Happy is the person who did his duty to Allah and man, who bore adversities patiently and when sleep overpowered him he used his hand as a pillow and lay on mere earth along with those whom fear of the Day of Judgement has often kept awake, who do not find much time to sleep, whose lips keep on moving glorifying Allah, and whose sins have been absolved on account of the penance they impose upon themselves. ﴿They are the Party of Allah. Truly it is the Party of Allah that will achieve Felicity.﴾⁶

O Ibn Honayf! Fear Allah and be content with the bread that you get with lawful means, so that you may be exempted and free from the fire of hell.”⁷

Solidarity with the poorest of the subjects

One of the responsibilities of the supreme leader of the Islamic country is that his personal standard of living – in terms of his dress and what he eats etc. – should be like the poorest of the subjects.

This is not found anywhere else apart from in Islam.

You can hardly find anything **like** that apart from in Islam.

As far as Islam is concerned, it implemented that in the personal conduct of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him. In *Nahj al-Balāghah* there is a sermon delivered by the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, in which he said:

“Certainly, Allah, the Sublime, has made it obligatory on just Imams that they should maintain themselves at the level of the deprived so that the poor will not be overcome by their poverty.”⁸

We have already cited the hadith about the Commander of the Faithful's astonishment when he heard the sound of frying in his house.

In fact the Commander of the Faithful Ali, peace be upon him, applied this eternal wisdom to himself when he took the reins of government of the Islamic countries.

There is reference in a holy hadith that he, peace be upon him, would only eat meat once a year and that was on 'Id ul-Adḥā when all Muslims eat meat.⁹

In contrast, throughout [the rest of] the year, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, would not about to eat meat because on each of the days of the year there may have been some Muslims who did not have any meat to eat and Ali, peace be upon him, always and forever more wanted to show solidarity with the poorest of his subjects.

Keeping account of the governors

As far as the governors and commissioners [of provinces]ⁱ are concerned, even though the rules applicable to them are less stringent

ⁱ The Governor or wālī (plural for wolāt) in Islamic terminology is someone appointed by the Imam to govern an area of land no matter whether it is a large area such as the whole of Iraq or a small area such as Baṣra or Kufah etc. The Commissioners or *'ummāl al-wulāt* in Islamic terminology are civil servants appointed by the wulāt, both senior civil servants and minor civil servants.

than those applicable to the Imam, peace be upon him, all the same it is incumbent upon them to follow the example of the Imam, peace be upon him, and follow in his footsteps.

Keeping account of the governors and commissioners used to be the norm in the code of conduct of Imam Ali the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him; so that none of them could exploit his position and status to collect money by any means possible and treat people unfairly. Some of the Imam's instructions on that subject will follow shortly [in the next chapter].

If a governor or commissioner did not follow Islamic law he would be dismissed.

When al-Walid [ibn Abdel-Malik ibn Marwān] was a governor of Iraq and drank wine he was dismissed and brought to Medina. The Imam, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, imposed upon him the punishment for drinking wine and flogged him eighty times.

Furthermore, when Othmān ibn Honayf – who was a governor of Basra appointed by the Imam the Commander of the Faithful Ali, peace be upon him, – attended a banquet at which all those invited were rich people, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, wrote to him admonishing him for accepting this invitation, describing his holy self to him so that the governors and civil servants could follow his example:

“O Ibn Honayf! I have received information that a person of Basra invited you to a dinner and you immediately accepted the invitation. I have also heard that very sumptuous meals were served there! Finest varieties of viands were placed before you in large plates and you enjoyed them. I am sorry to hear the news. I never expected that you would accept the invitation of a person who invites big officers and rich people and from whose doors poor persons and hungry paupers are turned away rudely.

Look carefully into the things which you eat. If there is even a shade of their being obtained unlawfully then throw them away, only eat those

things about which you are perfectly certain that they are obtained by honest means.”¹⁰

There is a lot to say on this subject. We shall content ourselves with this much which suits the nature of the book.

Authority of Just Religious Scholars

It is one of the firm upright foundations in Islam. It means that Islam links administration of the country and Allah’s servants to people who have two characteristics:

Firstly: Full comprehension of Islam through understanding, cognizance, depth, and scholarly expertise (*ijtihad*).

Secondly: an unblemished record (*‘adālah*). This means acquiring religious strength and Islamic disposition to ensure never to do wrong to oneself or others, and complying with the teachings of Islam in every minor or major aspect.

Through this authority – which is precise in understanding and deed – Islam is able to programme the country’s system in a way which does not ever deviate from justice and merit.

The criteria are jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and an unblemished record (*‘adālah*) for any person who has them; whatever his nationality may be, whatever language he may speak, whatever his colour, and whatever his place of birth. Neither the person, nor his nationality, nor his region, language, colour or anything else like that is the criterion.¹

ⁱ In a secular system, the criterion for an individual to engage in politics and leadership is his birthplace and nationality – a kind of *tribal religion*. According to the teachings of the Islamic religion, on the other hand, the criterion for politics and leadership is belief and faith.

“In the western 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 carry, but the only criterion is their

Everyone knows that there is more than one *faqih* (Islamic jurist) who is fully qualified and meets all the necessary conditions, and therefore **authority** (*walāyah*) should be through a council of those *faqih*s who are fully qualified. The Council of Jurists (*shura al-fuqaha*) would run the countries and manage Allah’s servants’ affairs through the majority opinion if they do not arrive at a unanimous decision.

This is how Islam is able to absorb the greatest number of people into a fair system providing a happy world for them and most excellent afterlife.

On this subject there are in the Islamic Sharia a number of passages which support that. We are not presently concerned with examining those passages fully. We only want to cite some of them as illustrations:

It is reported that Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, said:

“The course of things is in the hands of those who truly know Allah; the guardians of His laws on the halal and haram (lawful and unlawful).”ⁱ

In the Qur’an exegesis attributed to Imam Hasan al-Askari,ⁱⁱ peace be upon him, the imam narrates on the authority of Imam Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, who said:

faith. 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.” Muhammad Shirazi, *al-Fiqh series*, vol. 106, *Politics*, pp 98-212.

ⁱ al-Sheikh al-Anṣārī, *al-Makāsib al-Muḥarramah*, vol.3 p551 [This hadith’s “those who truly know Allah” is in reference to the fourteen infallible personages of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them.]

ⁱⁱ Imam Hasan al-Askari, peace be upon him, is Prophet Muhammad’s eleventh of the twelve successors he appointed on divine instructions to lead the nation after him. Like his forefathers, Imam Hasan al-Askari was outstanding in learning, knowledge, piety, magnanimity, and other moral qualities. He assumed the office of imamate after his father Imam Ali al-Hādī died. Imam Hasan lived during a period when the members of Prophet’s Family (Ahl al-

“It is for the masses to follow whichever of the jurists (*fuqaha*⁷) who is self-restrained, observant of and devout to his religion, resists his desire and is obedient to the order of his Master.”¹¹

It is reported that Our Master, the Imam of our Time, the Awaited, the Promised One, *Waliyy al-‘Aṣr*, *Ṣāhib al-Zamān* the Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, wrote in one of his sublime signed documents:

“As far as current events are concerned, refer to those who transmit our hadith in relation to them. They are my authority over you and I am Allah’s authority over them.”¹²

Bayt) were subjected to particularly vicious persecution. When he was assassinated by the Abbasid tyrant Imam Hasan was twenty-eight. He is the father of the Prophet’s twelfth successor, the Imam of our time, Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance.

Chapter Eight

Imam Ali's Guiding Principles on Governance

“Be accessible to them. Be lenient with them. Be cheery faced with them. Give them equal consideration and attention...”

The letters sent by the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, to his governors, commissioners and civil servants are the best, uncorrupted face of the policy of Islam on the way to manage country and people.

On its own they contain the entirety of Islamic policy in all dimensions and on various matters.

We shall set out one of the Commander of the Faithful's political letters as transmitted by al-Sharif al-Raḍi, may Allah bless him, in *Nahj al-Balāghah* so that we can reflect another practical image of Islam's wise policy, and so that leaders and politicians can learn lessons from materialistic leaderships and policies which bring about nothing but annihilation, destruction and disruption, to mankind, and so that it can become known where salvation and deliverance lie, how they can be achieved, and at whose hands.

We shall leave explanation of and commentary on it in the capable hands of the reader, up to his astuteness and up to what he can gain from it on various levels.

No ... to a governor's cruelty

An instruction to one of his governors:

“After invoking Allah and praising the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, be it known to you that chiefs and farm owners of

the provinces under you, complain of your harshness, severity, disdain and roughness. I deliberated and found that they should not be favoured because of their paganism, or disfavoured because of their treaty.

Wear for them a cloak of tenderness mixed with an edge of strictness and take a middle road with them between sternness and kindness and for them between favouring and giving preferential treatment and disfavoured and giving unfavourable treatment, Allah willing.”¹

No ... to deceit

Extract from a letter of his, peace be upon him, to Ziyād ibn Abih who was the successor to his commissioner of Basra, Abdullah ibn Abbas. Abdullah at that time was the Commander of the Faithful’s commissioner over there and over the districts of Ahwaz, Fars, Kirman and suchlike.¹

“I swear truthfully by Allah that if I find you misappropriating a small or large amount of the Muslims’ property [treasury] I will punish you in such a way that you will be left poor, your back heavily burdened and with little prestige. Peace.”²

No to extravagance

Extract from a letter of his, peace be upon him, also to Ziyād:

“Give up extravagance and be moderate. Remember tomorrow, today. Keep as much money as you need, and offer up the surplus for a day when you will need it. Do you expect Allah to give you the reward for the humble when you are arrogant in His sight? Do you hope He will give you the almsgivers’ reward when you are rolling in luxury and depriving the poor and widows?

Man is only rewarded for what he has done, and comes to what he has offered up. Peace.”³

¹ The districts mentioned are southern provinces of today’s Iran.

Collectors' Manners

Extract from his instructions, which he would write to those whom he appointed as commissioners to collect alms:⁴

“Go forth, fear only Allah Who has no partner. Do not frighten a Muslim [when collecting the dues] and do not pass by them detestably. Do not take more than Allah's due from their property.

When you reach a neighbourhood, stay at their watering-hole, and not in their houses. Then proceed to them calmly and dignifiedly and when you stand among them, greet them and do not be stingy in your greeting to them. Then say: ‘Allah's servants, Allah's Authority and vicegerent has sent me to you to collect from Allah's dues from your property. Is Allah due any of your property to give to His Authority?’ If somebody says, ‘No’ do not dispute with him. If someone says, ‘Yes’ go forth with him without frightening or threatening him, taking him forcefully or overburdening him and accept whatever gold or silver he gives you. If he has cattle or camels then do not enter [the herd] without his permission because most of it belongs to him. When you enter [the herd] do not enter like someone inflicted as master over him nor [be] harsh with him.”

On animal rights

“Do not startle or frighten the cattle. Do not cause upset to their owner over them. Then divide the herd into two parts and let the owner choose. When he chooses, do not object to his choice. Then divide the remainder into two halves, then let him choose. When he chooses, do not object to his choice. Continue like that until that of his property which is due to Allah is part of what remains and take Allah's due from it. If he demands cancellation, cancel it, then mix the two [groups] up and do as you did the first time until you take Allah's due of his property.

Remember you have not to accept old and diseased camels or such as have their limbs damaged. Entrust this lot only to such person who is honest and who can be trusted and who can guard the property of the

Muslims sympathetically till it reaches their ruler and caliph so that it may be distributed equitably among the Muslims.

Do not accept old, decrepit, broken-limbed, diseased or defective [camels] or such as have their limbs damaged. Do not entrust them to anyone unless you have trust in his faith, and he treats Muslim property humanely until he gets it to their ruler and he distributes it among them.

Do not entrust them to anyone unless he is well-disposed and kind, trustworthy, takes good care of and does not treat [the animals] roughly, harm, fatigue or weary [them].”

Treating grazing livestock humanely

“Next, drive quickly that which has amassed in your possession to us so that we can send it wherever Allah has instructed. When the one you have entrusted takes them, instruct him not to separate a she-camel from its young, not to milk it dry such as to harm its young one, not to wear it out by riding, sharing that [burden] equally between it and its fellows.

He should let the tired ones rest and take pity on the worn hoofed and lame ones. He should lead them to whatever watering holes they pass and not steer them away from vegetated land to barren paths. And give them a chance [drink] where there are dropsⁱ of water and [graze where there is] grass. Thus, Allah willing they will reach us fat and large-bodied, not tired or worn out so that we may distribute them according to Allah’s Scripture and His Prophet’s custom. For that is more rewarding and wiser, Allah willing.”⁵

Instructions to his first governor for Egypt

Extract from the Commander of the Faithful Ali’s instructions, peace be upon him, to Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr when he put him in charge of Egypt:

Humility of the governor

ⁱ i.e. where a small amount of water has collected

“Be accessible to them. Be lenient with them. Be cheery faced with them. Give them equal consideration and attention so that the powerful do not take advantage of your unfairness on their behalf and the meek do not despair of your being fair with them.

For Allah, Exalted, asks you, His creatures, about your deeds, both trifling and consequential and [both] open and secret. If He punishes you, it is because you are too sinful and if He forgives you it is because He is too Kind.”⁶

Conduct of the pious

“Know, Allah’s servants, that the pious have taken away both the immediate [benefit] of this world and the later [benefit] of the hereafter, for they shared in worldly people’s worldly gain, whereas the worldly people will not share with them in their hereafter’s [pleasures]. They dwelled in this world in the best way it could be dwelled, and ate of the best that could be eaten. They received the same from the world as the prosperous, and took from it the same as the arrogant tyrants took... They then departed from it with sufficient provision and profitable business.ⁱ

They felt the pleasure of asceticism towards the world in their world and assured that they would on the morrow be Allah’s neighbours in their hereafter, none of their prayers unanswered and not missing out on any share of pleasure.”⁷

Fear the inevitable death

Allah’s Servants! Beware death and its nighness. Prepare your provision for it because it brings a great event or great sorrow, either good never adulterated by ill or ill never adulterated by good. For who is closer to heaven than he who works towards it and who is closer to hell than he who works towards it.

ⁱ﴿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

You are driven by death; if you resign yourself to it, it will take you, but if you flee from it, it will still catch you. It is closer to you than your own shadow.

Death is intertwined in your forelock, and the world is rolled away from behind you.

Beware hell whose pit is fathomless, whose heat is intense, and whose punishment is always new– an abode where there is no mercy, where no prayer is answered, and no sorrow is alleviated.

If you can be more afraid of Allah and think the best of Him, do both because a servant only thinks the best of Allah proportionate with his fear of his Lord. Surely, the people who think the best of Allah fear Allah the most.

Know, Muhammad, son of Abu Bakr, that I have put you in charge of what I believe to be my greatest forces, the people of Egypt, so you are duty-bound to resist your desire, and defend your faith, even if you only have an hour left of your life. Do not incur Allah's wrath to gain the pleasure of any of His creatures, because Allah can replace others but no one can replace Allah.⁸

Emphasising prayer

Offer your prayers on time. Do not pray them early because you are free, and do not delay them beyond their appointed time because you are busy. Know that every one of your deeds comes second to your prayer.⁹

No equivalence

Remember that there is no equivalence [between] a leader of guidance and a leader of depravity, [or between] a friend to the Prophet and an enemy of the Prophet.

Allah's Messenger told me: I do not fear for my nation over either a believer or polytheist because Allah will stop a believer through his belief and thwart a polytheist through his polytheism. However I do fear for you over a hypocritical hearted all-talk scholar who says what you approve of but does what you condemn.¹⁰

Send me your accounts

A letter of his, peace be upon him, to one of his commissioners:¹¹

“Now then, [word] has reached me of your [conduct]. If you did it you have angered your Lord, disobeyed your Imam, and breached your trust. [Word] has reached me that you have stripped the land, taking what was under your feet and consuming what was in your possession. Now send me your accounts and know that Allah's reckoning severe than people's reckoning. Peace.”

Humane instructions

A letter of his, peace be upon him, to one of his commissioners:¹²

“You are one of those persons whose assistance I seek in establishing the religion, and through whom I demolish the arrogance of the sinner, and through whom I guard vulnerable borders. Seek Allah's help in whatever concerns you. Mix strictness with a little lenience, be compassionate where it is most appropriate and resort to severity when nothing but severity avails you. Lower your wings in humility before the subjects and give them all equal consideration, attention, waves and greetings, so you're the powerful do not take advantage of your unfairness [on their behalf], and the meek do not despair of your being fair. Peace.”

To al-Ashtar al-Nakha'i

The document Imam Ali, peace be upon him, wrote to (Malik) al-Ashtar an-Nakha'i, when the position of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr had become precarious, and *amir al-mu'minin* had appointed al-Ashtar as the Governor of Egypt and the surrounding areas. It is the longest document and contains the greatest number of valuable teachings and advice.ⁱ

ⁱ Citing this document, and Nahj al-Balaghah, the United Nations advised Arab countries to take Imam Ali bin Abi Talib as an example in establishing a regime based on justice and democracy and encouraging knowledge.

<http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2002e.pdf>

In the Name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful

This is what Allah's servant Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, has ordered Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith al-Ashtar in his instructions to him when he appointed him Governor of Egypt to collect its *kharāj* (revenues), fight its enemies, work for the welfare of its people, and develop its lands.

Fear of Allah

He has ordered him to fear Allah, put obeying Him first, and follow the laws and obligations which He has directed in His Book, without following which no one ever succeeds, and without rejecting and neglecting which no one can ever be wretched. [He has ordered him] to support Allah with his heart, hand and tongue because He, Exalted is His Name, has undertaken to support whoever supports Him and honour whoever honours Him.

He has ordered him to break his soul away from desires, and curb it when it is tempted because ﴿the soul is certainly prone to evil, unless Allah bestows His Mercy﴾.

The qualifications of a governor and his responsibilities

Next, know, Mālik, that I have sent you to a country over which just and unjust governments have passed before you. People will scrutinise your affairs as you used to scrutinise the affairs of governors before you, and say about you what you used to say about them. Surely, the virtuous are known by the reputation that Allah circulates for them through the tongues of His creatures. Therefore, let the best treasure with you be the provision of good deeds. Restrain your desire, and be mean to yourself vis-à-vis what is not permissible to you, because being mean to the self is to do justice to it and discipline it in what it likes and dislikes.

Categories of people

Make your heart feel compassion, love and tenderness for the flock. Do not be a savage predator with them, seizing their fodder; for they are of two kinds: either your brother in religion or your fellow creature. They will slip and make mistakes, they may face difficulties and misfortune. They may be wronged, wilfully or by neglect. So, extend to them your

forgiveness and pardon, in the same way as you would like Allah to extend His forgiveness and pardon to you; because you are above them, and he who is in charge of you is above you, and Allah is above him who is in charge of you, having sought you to manage their affairs and tested you through them.

No to waging war against Allah

Do not set yourself up to wage war against Allah because you are powerless against His vengeance, and you cannot dispense with His forgiveness and mercy.

Do not regret a forgiveness you make, and do not be pleased with a punishment you inflict. Do not act hastily when there is an alternative.

Do not say, "I have been put in charge, I should be obeyed when I give an order", because that corrupts the heart, weakens faith, and brings one close to changes [of government]. If pride or conceit afflict you because of the authority, consider the greatness of Allah's Kingdom above you, and His power over you that do not have over yourself. This will curb your haughtiness, cure you of your high temper, and bring back to you your wisdom which had gone away from you.

No to Arrogance

Beware trying to compete with Allah's greatness and likening yourself to Him in His Might because Allah humbles every tyrant and disgraces every haughty person.

Justice

Do justice to Allah (by obeying Him) and do justice towards the people (by giving them their rights), as against yourself, your near ones and those of your subjects for whom you have a liking, because if you do not do so you will be oppressing (the people), and when a person wrongs Allah's creatures then, instead of His creatures, Allah becomes his opponent, and when Allah is the opponent of a person He disproves his plea; and he will remain in the position of being at war with Allah until he gives up (his oppression and wronging) and repents.

For nothing is more conducive to changing Allah's bounty and hastening His vengeance than establishing upon oppression because Allah always hears the prayers of the oppressed and is watchful of oppressors.

In favour of the people as a whole

You should like best that which is the most equitable for the right, the most universal by way of justice, and the most comprehensive with regard to the satisfaction of the flock because the anger of the masses does away with the satisfaction of the elite but the anger of the elite is forgiven with the satisfaction of the masses. None of the flock are more burdensome to the governor during good times and of less assistance to him in hardship, hate equality more, beg more persistently, thank less when given, forgive slower when deprived or are less patient with the vicissitudes of time than the elite.

The pillars of the religion, the repository of the Muslims and the defence against enemies are the commoners among the nation. Your inclination and tendency should be towards them.

Don't bring near the calumniator

The least favoured by you among the flock and most hated by you should be those most pursuant of people's flaws, because people have flaws and the governor has the greatest duty to cover them up, so do not expose those of them which are hidden to you. It is only incumbent upon you to cleanse what becomes apparent to you; Allah will judge what is hidden from you; hide a fault whenever you can, Allah will hide whatever you would like hidden from your flock.

Unravel the knot of every grudge among the people and cut away from yourself every reason to be hated. Turn a blind eye to whatever is not apparent to you, and do not be quick to believe a calumniator because a calumniator is a cheat even though he takes on the guise of well-wishers.

Policy of Counselling

Do include among those you consult a miser who will steer you away from virtue and make you fear poverty, or a coward who will make you too weak to give orders, or a greedy person who will make gluttony seem attractive to you by unfair means because miserliness, cowardice and greed are disparate instincts which all come under thinking the worst of Allah.

The worst ministers

Your worst ministers will be those who before you were ministers to evil men and who was an accomplice to their sins and evil doings. They should not be your confidantes because they are sinners' accomplices and brothers in wrongdoing. You can find better substitutes for them who have similar views and influence but without the same sins, culpability or transgressions, who did not aid a wrongdoer in doing wrong or a sinner in sinning. They will be the least troublesome for you, the most helpful to you, most sympathetic to you and least bound by friendship to others. Adopt them as your inner circle in private and in public.

The one most favoured by you should be the most outspoken about the bitter truth to you, and least supportive of whatever you do which Allah hates His Friends to do, attributable, whenever it occurs, to your desire.

Stick to people of Piety

Associate yourself with God-fearing and truthful people; then train them not to flatter or congratulate you for something false which you have not done because too much flattery causes conceit and draws one towards pride.

Good and evildoers should not be the same to you because that disincentivises those who do good from doing good and incentivises evildoers to do evil. Hold each of them to account according to what they have adhered themselves to.

Kindness to people

Know that nothing is more conducive to a shepherd having a good opinion of his flock than his being kind to them, reducing the burdens upon them and not forcing them to do what they do not owe him.

In so doing, you will thereby develop a good impression of your flock, for a good impression saves you a lot of trouble. He who is most entitled to your having a good impression of is he who has performed and conducted himself well, and he who is most entitled to your having a bad impression of is he who has performed badly.

Do not break the pious tradition acted upon by the early members of this community and upon which consensus has built up and through which the flock has prospered. Do not develop a custom which harms these past practices making those who started them rewardable and you culpable for breaking them.

Constant study the scholars

Constantly study with scholars and discuss with the wise the strengthening of what your country prospered on, and establishing what the people before you went aright with.

The different groups of people

Know that there are classes to the flock. They cannot prosper without each other and cannot do without each other.

They include Allah's soldiers, commoners' and elites' scribes, arbiters of justice, tribunal commissioners, *jizyah* and *kharāj* payers from *dhimmi* people and those who have come under the government protection, merchants, craftsmen and the lowest class including the needy and the destitute. [*dhimmi* are the protected religious minority]

Allah has assigned each of them a share and imposed obligations upon each of them in His Scripture or in His Prophet's practice as a covenant maintained in our possession.

The soldiers

Thus the soldiers by Allah's leave are the flock's fortress, the governors' adornment, the religion's strength, and the means of security. The flock cannot subsist without them. Next the soldiers cannot subsist without whatever *kharāj* (land lease rent) Allah extracts for them, through which they have the strength to fight their enemy and upon which they rely for what is of benefit to them and with which they fulfil their needs.

Judges and Justice

Next neither of these two groups can subsist without the third group – the judges, commissioners and scribes because of the contracts they assign and the revenues on specific and general matters which they collect and keep safe.

Craftsmen and Traders

None of them can survive without traders and craftsmen because of the benefit they all provide and the markets they set up, relieving them of providing for themselves what others do not provide.

The needy

Next comes the lowest class – the needy and destitute whom it is a duty to support and assist; there is sufficient provision in Allah's creation for everybody.¹³ The governor has a duty to each of them as appropriate. The governor cannot truly discharge the duty imposed on him by Allah without solicitude, asking for Allah's help, resigning himself to the binding nature of the duty and putting up with what is easy or difficult for him.

The Army

Out of your soldiers, appoint as commander the person you are sure is most sincerely devoted to Allah, His Messenger and your Imam, has pure legitimate birth, is the most clement, slow to anger, accepts apologies, is kind to the weak, is strict with the strong and is not stirred up by violence or incapacitated by weakness.

Noble families

Stick to those with heroic feats performed by themselves and their ancestors, people from good, illustriousⁱ houses, with good past acts, with people who help and are valiant, generous and forgiving because they are a repository of honour and branches of righteousness.

Next check their affairs as a parents check their child. You should not think something you have done to strengthen them is great or undervalue or scorn a kindness you have promised them even if it is insignificant because it is an incentive to them to support you sincerely and think well of you.

Do not fail to attend to their minor requirements relying on [satisfaction of] their major ones because a little kindness from you is of benefit to them and major requirements they cannot dispense with.

Rule on the principles of equity and justice

The most senior chief in your army should be he who helps them as if he is one of them, gives to them from his surplus, helping them and their dependants so that they all share the same concern – fighting the enemy. For, your compassion for them makes their hearts incline towards you.

Firm justice

And the best reassurance to governors is the establishment of justice in the lands and the flock's love appearing.

Their love only appears when their hearts are free of hatred. Their support only proves to be true when they rally round those in charge, scarcely consider their government to be a burden and stop thinking its end is coming too slowly. So give them hope, constantly praise them and recount the great feats performed by those who performed them, because frequent mention of their good deeds stirs up courage and incites stragglers, Allah willing.

ⁱ Because the plural is *buyūtāt* meaning illustrious households as opposed to *buyūt* meaning ordinary households. Tr.

Place people appropriately

Next, know that every man owns what he has done. Do not attribute a man's deed to someone else. Do not undervalue his deed. A man's prestige should not make you exaggerate his insignificant acts and a man's low station should [not make you] think little of his great feat. Refer important matters which you are not sure about and affairs which confuse you to Allah and His Messenger, because Allah, Exalted, says to the people He wishes to guide:

﴿O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you. If you quarrel about anything refer it to Allah and the Messenger.﴾¹⁴

Referring it to Allah means acting upon the explicit parts of His Holy Book. Referring it to the Messenger means following his unanimously agreed upon practice, not that over which there is disagreement.

Characteristics of Judges

Then choose to judge between people he who you know in your soul to be the best of your flock, who is not annoyed by cases and is not made cantankerous by litigants, does not perpetuate an error or begrudge coming back to the truth when he learns it, whose soul should not be close to greed, who is not satisfied with the most cursory understanding as opposed to the most profound, is most cautious when in doubt, most receptive to proofs, is the least exasperated by litigants' submissions, most patient with matters being revealed, the most assertive when the judgment becomes clear, does not become vain when praised and is not swayed by temptation. Such [people] are few.

Review his judgment often and pay him enough to meet his requirements so he has less need for [other] people. Give him such status in relation to you such that others who are close to you do not covet him and so that through that he can be safe from men character-assassinating him on your watch. Take extreme care over that for this religion was a hostage in the hands of evil ones treating it capriciously and seeking worldly gain through it.

Executive Officers

Next, look into the affairs of your executives. Appoint them after testing them. Do not appoint them through favouritism or without any consultation because [favouritism and failure to consult] bring together the branches of injustice and bad faith. Carefully select from them experienced, scrupulous people, from pious, respectable households who became believers early on in the early history of Islam because they are more ethical, more honourable, less inclined to greed and give greater consideration to the consequences of actions.

Next, provide for them plentifully because that gives them the strength to maintain self-proprietty and able to do without what is under their care so that they have no excuse if they disobey your order or breach your trust.

Check on them

Next check their activities and send honest, loyal intelligence officers because your secret watch over their affairs will be an incentive for them to employ integrity towards and kindness to the flock.

Be wary of assistants. If one of them stretches his hand out to an act of dishonesty on which the reports of your intelligence officers unanimously agree, be satisfied with that as proof, administer the punishment on his body and take from him what he has acquired through his work. Put him in a position of humiliation, brand him as a traitor and make him wear the ignominy of the charge.

The Administration of Revenues

Keep a watch on the matter of *kharāj* (land lease rent) as befits the prosperity of the lessees, because in its sufficiency and their prosperity lies the welfare of others. There is no welfare for others other than through them because people are all dependent upon land lease rent and those who pay it.

Development of the land

Your scrutiny of the land development should be closer than your scrutiny of land lease rent collection because that would not be achieved

except with development. Whoever demands land lease rent without development destroys the country, dooms [Allah's] servants and his rule will be but short.

If they complain to you about heaviness [of *kharāj*], poor yield, an interruption irrigation or rainfall, or change in land entirely covered by flooding, or dried out by drought, relieve them through what you hope will improve their situation. No reduction of their burden will be a burden on you because it is an investment which they will return to you through making your country prosperous and improvement of your authority with your attracting their good praises and happiness for you through flooding them with justice thus taking increased strength from them as support for you, through what you have invested in them – your relieving them – and their trust, on account of what you have returned to them, your being fair and kind to them.

It may be that circumstances arise such that if you depend on them they would put up with it willingly. Prosperity can put up with whatever you load it with.

The land's ruin only comes from impoverishing its people. Its people only ever become impoverished for reason of governors' desire to collect, the fear that they will not be allowed to stay on, and their learning little from [past] examples.

The Clerical Establishment

Next look at the state of your scribes. Appoint the best of them over your affairs. Assign your letters in which you put your schemes and secrets to the most ethical of them, who are not made reckless by prestige and will not dare publicly oppose you. Negligence should not prevent [a scribe] from bringing your officers' correspondence to you or issuing replies to it correctly from you vis-à-vis what he takes for you and gives from you.ⁱ

ⁱ The author's late brother comments: A scribe should know what he should take down from the officer to the governor and what he should "give" from the governor to the officer when writing a letter. Ayatollah Muhammad

He should not enter into a weak contract on your behalf, be unable to free [you] from [something] contracted on your behalf or does not know his place in matters, because he who does not know his place is even more unaware of the place of others.

Your selection of them should not be on the basis of acumen, trust or your good opinion [of people] because men exploit governors' acumen by pretending and providing good service with no sincerity or honesty to back that up. Rather, assess them by how they served the pious ones before you and turn to whoever of them made the best impression on the commoners and the most acquainted with trustworthiness because that is proof of your sincerity to Allah and to him to whose commission you have been appointed.

Appoint one of them as head for each of your matters who is not overwhelmed by important [affairs] or flustered by volume.

If your officers have any fault which you overlook, you are responsible for it.

Promotion of Trade and Industry

Next make traders and craftsmen your concern. Give instructions that they all be treated well: those who are resident, those who travel which their merchandise and manual labourers because they are sources of benefit and a means to provisions and bringers of them from remote and distant places by your land, sea, plains and mountains, which people are not suited to because of their locations and where they do not dare go. For [the traders and craftsmen] are peace-loving people. There is no fear of injurious conduct by them. They are conciliatory so there is no fear of their being wicked. Keep a careful watch over their affairs in your urban areas and on the edges of your country.

Ban hoarding and monopoly

Know in spite of that that many of them are scandalously narrow-minded and abhorrently miserly, hoarding merchandise to control

Shirāzi's commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p581 (Beirut: Dār al-'Ulūm, 1429 AH).

prices. That is a source of detriment to the public and shame for governors.

So prohibit hoarding because Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, prohibited it. Trade should be lenient with just and even measures, and prices detrimental to neither party – seller nor buyer. Make an example of anyone who hoards after you have prohibited it and punish him, though not excessively.

Concern for the poor

Next, for Allah's sake think about the lowest class – the helpless: the poor and the needy, the destitute and the paralyzed because this class includes [both] demanding and silent beggars. For Allah's sake, look after His share for them which He has placed in your care. Assign them a share for them from your Treasury and a share of the crops on land taken as spoils in the name of Islam in every area, because the remote ones are entitled to the same share as those nearby. Everyone's share has been placed in your care. So the high life should not make you too busy for them because you will not be forgiven for neglecting the insignificant to get a handle on the many important matters. Therefore, do not turn your attention away from them and do not put on a contemptuous mien towards them. Check up on the affairs of those who cannot reach you – those looked down on and whom men scorn. Free up for them those Allah-fearing, humble people you trust to inform you of their affairs. Next work among them enough to excuse yourself before Allah on the day you meet Him, because out of all your flock, they need equity more than anyone else. Discharge your duty to Allah with regard to giving everyone his share.

Orphans and children

Make an undertaking to orphans and the elderly – those who are helpless and do not themselves come out to beg. That is onerous upon governors, but all duty is onerous. Allah may relieve it for people who have sought the next world, and they have made themselves forbearing, and sincerely placed their trust in Allah's promise to them.

Complainants

Assign time when you are personally available to those who need things from you. Sit with them in a public audience in which you humble yourself before Allah Who created you. Keep your army and aides – your guards and police – away from them so that they can speak uninhibitedly to you. For, I often heard the Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, say: ‘A nation in which the meek’s right is not taken uninhibitedly for him from the strong is not blessed nor valued.’ Tolerate their awkwardness and inarticulateness. Avoid irritation and arrogance with them and Allah will spread the ends of His mercy over you and make reward for obedience to Him your lot. Give whatever you give joyfully and refuse courteously and apologetically.

Then there are some of your affairs which have to be seen to personally including sending the replies to your officers which your scribes cannot, and sending out people’s requirements the same day they come to you which would irritate your aides. Do every day’s work on the day, because every day has its own work.

Communion with Allah

Set aside the best times between you and Allah and give those segments generously even though they are all Allah’s if the intention is proper and the nation is secure. What your religion should be particularly dedicated to Allah in, is your obligatory prayers which are exclusively for Him. So give your body to Allah, night and day, and devote fully, unsulliedly and without deficiency what you use to achieve nearness to Allah, whatever it does to your body.

Congregational prayers

When you lead people in congregational prayer you should not be off-putting¹⁵ or neglectful¹⁶ because there are people who are ill or who have pressing needs. I asked Allah’s Messenger when he sent me to Yemen, ‘How should I lead them in prayer.’ He replied, ‘Pray like the weakest of them and be kind to the believers.’[Thus allowing the old and sick to follow you easily]

Be among the people

Now then, do not hide away from the people for long because governors hiding away from the people is a branch of impatience and insufficient knowledge of matters. Hiding away from them curtails their knowledge of what they are separated from, big things seem small to them, little things seem big, good things bad, bad things good and truth is adulterated with falsehood.

The governor is only human. He does not know what things people hide from him. The truth does not have any marks to distinguish it from falsehood, one has to search for facts and sift realities from fictions, only then can one reach the truth. There are only two kinds of man you can be:

Either a man generous in giving dues; so why hide from an obligatory right which you grant or a generous act which you perform? Or a victim of stinginess; so how quickly people stop asking you if they despair of it even though most people's requests of you are no burden upon you – a complaint of wrongdoing or petition for equity in a transaction.

No to privileged persons

Next a governor has best friends and an entourage who are presumptuous, arrogate and have little equity in their dealings. Cut off their root by cutting out the causes of those characteristics. Do not make any land grants to your hangers on or supporters. They should not expect from you the possession of land which may cause harm to adjoining people over the question of irrigation or common services whose burden the grantees place on others. In this way, the benefit will be rather theirs than yours, and the blame will lie on you in this world and the next.

Always be with the truth and justice

Hold to account and justice whoever has a duty to it, whether he is close to you or unrelated. Be forbearing about it and expectant of a [heavenly reward] even if it involve your relations and favourites, and keep in

view the reward of that which appears burdensome on you because its reward is handsome.

If your flock suspect you of unfairness, show them your justification and allay their suspicions about you through your showing them because that disciplines you [to fairness] and is consideration for your flock, and justification through which you reach your requirement of keeping them firm in truth.

Offer of peace

Do not reject a peace treaty agreeable to Allah, which your enemy has invited you to, because a peace treaty is a respite for your soldiers, a rest from your worries and security for your country. However, be very careful of your enemy after he has made the peace treaty because the enemy may become close via a peace treaty to catch you unawares, so be cautious and do not be too trusting in that regard.

Loyalty and trustworthiness

If you form a pact with or enter into a treaty to provide protection for your enemy, adhere to your treaty faithfully and provide your protection with integrity and make yourself guardian of it because there is no duty to Allah over which people agree more strongly, in spite of their various whims and divergent opinions, than considering adhering to treaties to be important.

Muslims aside, polytheists have adhered to that among themselves because they realised the consequences of breach of trust, so do not breach your duty and do not violate your treaty because no one but an ignorant or wicked person is audacious to Allah.

Allah has made His covenant and protection security which He has spread among the servants through His mercy, and an asylum in which they stay in His protection and seek the benefit of nearness to Him. Therefore, there should be no deceit, cunning or duplicity in it.

Do not make a pact open to various interpretations and do not exploit any poor wording after it is confirmed and ratified.

Forbearance in the face of calamities

You should not be enticed by hardship to seek unjustified annulment of what Allah's covenant has bound you to because your putting up with hardship in the expectation of relief and a handsome reward is better than a breach the consequence of which you fear, and that you fear that you will be called upon by Allah to account for it, and you will not be able to seek forgiveness for it in this world or the next.

Beware shedding blood

Beware bloodshed and spilling it unlawfully because nothing is more quickly punishable, has worse consequences, worthier of loss of blessing or more life shortening than unjustifiable bloodshed and Allah Exalted will begin by judging the servants for spilling each other's blood on the Day of Resurrection.

So, never try to strengthen your authority, by unlawfully shedding blood. That is one thing which weakens and saps and in fact takes away and transfers [authority]. There is no excuse for you before Allah or before me for murder because it is a capital crime.

And if you make a mistake or your whip, sword or hand slips when carrying out a punishment – because a fist upwards can kill – the self-magnification of your position should not stop you giving the victims' next of kin their due.

No to self-admiration

Beware conceit, reliance upon what you like about yourself and loving excessive praise, because that is one of the best opportunities for Satan to cancel out good doers' good deeds.

No to boasting to your subjects

Beware largesse upon your flock when being kind, making a show of what you do or making promises to them because largesse cancels out kindness, making a show extinguishes the light of truth and breaking promises incurs Allah's and the people's hatred. Allah Exalted says:

«It is most hateful in the sight of Allah to say something and not to practice it.»¹⁷

Keep a Balance

Beware hastening to things before their time, being slow to do them when you can, insisting on them when [their propriety] is unknown or weakening when they become clear. Put everything in its proper time and place.

No to self-appropriation

Beware earmarking for yourself what people are all equally entitled to and pretending not to know what concerns you and is clear to see, because it will be taken from you and given to someone else. Soon, the veils over affairs will be lifted off you and the victim of wrongdoing will seek redress.

Restrain your temper, the vehemence of your anger, the might of your hand and the sharpness of your tongue. Be on your guard against all that by refraining from hasty words and delaying punishment until your anger subsides – you are in control – and you will not be in control of yourself until you have many concerns by remembering you will return to your Lord.

You have to remember any of your predecessors' just governance, virtuous practice, emulation of our Prophet or duty in Allah's Scripture. Then follow what you have seen – what we have learned in them and exert yourself in following what I have instructed you in this instruction and which I have sought to rely on as my evidence against you so that you will have no excuse if your heart runs after its desire.

Prayer in Conclusion

I beseech Allah by His Limitless Mercy and His Supreme Might to grant every wish and grant us both success in what pleases Him – to be clearly acquitted before Him and before His creatures with handsome praise among [His] servants and a good effect on the country, full blessing, an increase in dignity, and to put an end to us with happiness and martyrdom, «surely we return to Him»¹⁸

Peace be upon Allah's Messenger and his pure, holy family and may Allah shower [them with] many greetings. Peace.¹⁹

In Conclusion

This is what the Just Imam – the supreme leader of the Muslims – was like. This is how the leader should be. This is how governors and commissioners should be, and this is how chiefs and commanders should be so that the affairs of the community can be put in order and so that everybody can enjoy living freely and comfortably enjoying peace and security.

When the Islamic countries were like that, and the governance was like that, the Islamic state did not need a lot of administrative departments because a single governor with a very small number of guards and police and a single judge would rule a country without putting pressure on them, and people's needs would be met by those people without any hindrance or delay.

Litigants would come before the judge. He would pass judgement between them and they would go away the same day.

Ever so many big court cases and disputes were resolved within short spaces of time and everybody was content with the decision because everybody knew that Islam's judges treat litigants fairly and are not allowed to make allowances for reason of friendship or other reasons.

At the time of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, the Islamic country was – in spite of its greatness, enormity and large population – ruled by one Imam, as well as governors, commissioners and a limited number of judges without any cases being adjourned or judgments being delayed or without anyone being deprived of his right.

And, oh what a great deal of time the governor or judge would have without any two parties bringing a dispute to him.

That was because Islamic policy is Allah's policy, heaven's policy, reasonable policy, policy the likes of which the world had not seen and will never see anywhere else but in Islam.

As for as those systems of the western and eastern countries within which the entire world and its politicians operate, they are completely different to Islam, root and branch.

His instruction to his cousin

His instructions to his cousin ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās when he sent him as his representative to Basra:²⁰

“Have a cheerful face with the people,²¹ allow them free audience, give generous orders and beware getting angry because it is Satan’s augury.

Know that whatever brings you closer to Allah takes you away from hell, and whatever takes you away from Allah brings you closer to hell.”

No to chamberlains

Similarly, Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, wrote to his commissioner over Mecca, Qutham ibn ‘Abbās, forbidding him from taking on a chamberlain by saying:

“You should have no ambassador to the people apart from your tongue or chamberlain apart from your face. Do not prevent anyone who needs something from meeting you...”²²

We see history tell us that the Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, who was the supreme leader of the Muslims and the greatest politician sent to them, was the most down to earth person with whom one could meet whenever one liked.

Just think how much more this should apply to someone who is less important than the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, such as the Imam, governor, commissioner or judge.

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, would not elevate himself above them or hide from them. He would mingle with them like one of them, speak to them when they were listening and listen to them when they spoke to him.²³

These are all politics

Are these things not all part of politics?

Are not economic policy, health policy, cultural policy, grant of freedoms, crime fighting, expansion of agriculture and built up areas, strengthening relations with states, organisation in peacetime and wartime and appointment of leaders of state all part of politics?

Yes. They are at the very heart of politics.

There is no reasonable policy without organising these things wisely in accordance with both rational intellect and benevolence the way Islam did.

Colonialist ideology

Saying that Islam has nothing to do with politics and that it is just a spiritual and ethical system is denial of the Wise Qur'an, the holy *sunnah*, i.e. the teachings and practice of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his holy family, and the Imams, and the practice of the eminent scholars and religious authorities (*marāji'*) after them, to the point that when Imam Hādī,ⁱ peace be upon him, wanted to teach people what to say when they went to visit their Imams, peace be upon them, he told them to say:

“... Shepherds to [Allah's] servants and pillars of the lands ...”²⁴

This concept, i.e. that Islam has nothing to do with politics is the product of the colonialism, which was promoted about a century ago. When the claws of colonialism dug in and took hold of Islamic countries it spread this idea among Muslims, to feed them the idea that the religion of Islam was one thing and politics was another matter,ⁱⁱ in

ⁱ Imam Ali al-Hādī, peace be upon him, is the Prophet's tenth of the twelve successors he appointed on divine instructions to lead the nation after him. He assumed the office of imamate after his father Imam Muhammad al-Jawād. Imam Ali al-Hādī excelled all others of his time in the fields of human perfections, knowledge, generosity, morals, way of life, servitude to Allah, and discipline. He died a martyr after being killed by poisoning by the Abbasid ruler of his time.

ⁱⁱ As reported by the British agent Miss [Gertrude] Bell in her book on the history of Iraq: When the great religious authority (*marji'*) Muhammad Kāḍim

order to pave the way for entry into the Islamic countries to do as they pleased, so much so that if a cleric or mujtahid wanted to stand up against the colonialists, criticism would be directed at him by the Muslims themselves who were apathetic and simple-minded:

“Why are you interfering in politics?”

“Politics is not your job.”

“Carry on with your prayers and invocations. What have you got to do with these matters?”

... And other similar sayings spread about by colonialism to extinguish every voice raised in support of Islam, and to push back through these sayings anyone who defends the hallmarks of the holy religion.

For this reason you see that a young person imbued with colonialist culture looks at Islam as empty rites and as a shell without any core – except that Islam without politics is not Islam [at all].

By the same token politics which is not in accordance with Islam is not politics in the true meaning of the word.

Because of this colonialist ideology some young people have started accepting every shout which rises from the east or the west. They side with every principle or idea with pours out of either.

You see them turn to Communism thinking that it is what brings equality between classes, not knowing that Islam looks after the rights of workers, peasants and poor people in a way that neither the history of Russia nor the history of the entire world, from the dawn of history up to the present day, could even dream of.

You look at the other [sort] who yearns after what is known as Britain’s orderliness, France’s civilisation or America’s culture or ... and he does not realise that whatever humanitarian and civic charitable organisations

al-Yazdi (may Allah bless him) directed himself towards the authorities to demand that they stop their anti-Islamic activity, they said in response to him: “You are a religious cleric. You have nothing to do with Politics.”

there are in Britain, France, America and so on are just borrowed from Islam, and whatever of theirs is bosh and humbug, is what Islam has warned us against.

If the young Muslim people knew a little about Islam, about its economics, freedoms, civilisation, culture, etc. they would not devote their efforts to implementing unsound principles and elevating rotten ideas, supporting tyrannical organisations which have nothing to do with Islam and which Islam has nothing at all to do with, and disassociates itself from.ⁱ

ⁱ Needless to say, this reflects the state of the Muslim youth in the sixties when various schools of thoughts and philosophical trends – from the East and West – had influenced them. However, today the situation is different to some extent, in that more of the youths have come to appreciate the significance of the teachings of Islam and have embraced and adhered to those teachings.

Chapter Nine

Muslim Scholars and Politics

“The courses of matters and laws are at the hands of those who know Allah; the custodians of what He says is lawful and what is unlawful.”¹

Imam Husayn, peace be upon him

The scholars throughout the ages and centuries walk a path set out for them by Allah’s Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, and the Holy Imams of putting the affairs of the Islamic community to rights and straightening them out. They did not leave the rulers to do what they pleased or claim what they liked. On the contrary, they became involved in politics.

It was part of the scholars’ duty to turn the commanders and rulers away from error and corruption when they slipped away, and imperative for them to meet with them and guide them, by talking to them and advising them, and if that did not help, to stand up against them and against what they wanted to do, no matter what the cost. They would do that – guide and advise – and threaten and declare them to be non-Muslims. They would challenge and boycott whichever rulers deviated from Islam.

Goodness knows how many scholars were exiled from their homelands.

Goodness knows how many mujtahids were harassed or imprisoned.

Goodness knows how many scholars’ homes were burned down or how many were expelled.

Goodness knows how many of them were killed or crucified.

How many ... How many ...?

All of that was for reason of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is illicit, guiding rulers, and putting them straight, away from lust and desires.

Shuhada' al-Faḍīlah by the highly erudite scholar 'allāmah Amini,ⁱ may Allah bless him, cites dozens of Shi'a scholars from the fourth century AH up to this century who became martyrs, were killed in the course of establishing the religion and putting the community to rights.

We shall cite here for the dear reader the names of some of the illustrious scholars who during the last century confronted policies opposed to Islam and became involved in politics in order to enjoin what is right and forbid what is illicit. We will then follow that up with a list citing a number of our righteous scholars who fell victim as a result of political intervention in the country and were killed on Almighty Allah's Path and for people to know that illustrious scholars continually made practical declarations to the world that politics is at the heart of Islam and part of its roots and foundations.

Struggle of illustrious scholars

1. Sayyid Muhammad al-Mojāhid who moved from Iraq to Iran to fight against tyrannical Russia which wanted to destroy Islam and colonise the Muslim homelands. For that reason he was nicknamed al-Mojāhid.
2. Sayyid Muhammad Hasan al-Shirazi,ⁱⁱ the great reformer, who fought against the British when they wanted to take control of Iran in the name

ⁱ 'Allāmah 'Abd al-Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad al-Amini (1320-1392AH) (1902-1971CE): historian and author, and one of the Shi'a jurists (*fuqaha*). He was born and died in Iran but he grew up and lived in the holy city of Najaf where he founded the Public Library of Imam Amir al-Mo'mineen, peace be upon him. His works include the renowned encyclopaedia of al-Ghadir, as well as such works as *Shuhada' al-Faḍīlah*, *Adab al-Zā'ir* and others.

ⁱⁱ Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥasan ibn al-Mirza Mahmud al-Ḥusayni al-Shirazi, the greatest and most famous scholar and most senior Marji' or religious authority of his time. He was born in Shiraz in 1230AH. He was a pupil of 'Allāmah Sayyid Ḥasan Bidābādi known as *al-Mudarris* (i.e. The Teacher) until he was granted a licence (*ijāzah*) before reaching the age of twenty. He became one

of the ‘tobacco trade’, and so he prohibited the use of tobacco and proved a mortal blow to the backbone of colonialism.

3. Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Shirazi,ⁱ who declared that it was a duty to throw out colonialism when it wanted to gain control over Iraq in the year 1337 AH. He faced off the British, defended Islam and the sons of Islam in his famous revolution known as *thawrat al-‘ishreen* or the 1920 Revolution.

4. The illustrious religious scholars of the Holy Cities of Karbala and Najaf a little after the 1920 Revolution who revolted against the imposition of western-style parliament in Iraq at that time.ⁱⁱ This was the

of the best teachers. He moved to Iraq in 1259AH and lived in the holy city of Najaf. He qualified as the head and leader in 1281 until he became the supreme Shi‘a Marji‘. The famous ‘tobacco movement’ is illustrative of the effectiveness of his authority and the power of his influence. He passed away in Sāmarrā’ in 1312AH and was buried in Najaf (may Allah bless him).

ⁱ Sheikh Mirza Muḥammad Taqi ibn al- Mirza Muḥibb ‘Ali ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥā’iri al-Shirazi leader of the Iraqi Revolution (1920 Revolution) was one of the most senior scholars and greatest mujtahids and one of those of his time most celebrated for knowledge, piety and protectiveness of the religion. He passed away in the holy city of Karbalā’ in 1328AH.

ⁱⁱ In Islam, the source of legislation is Allah Almighty, His messenger, and the twelve divinely appointed successors of His messenger. Therefore, in general, parliament in Islam does not have the right or authority to make a law contrary to the Law of Allah; for example, to set new taxes such as VAT, or levy inheritance tax, or to prohibit polygamy, or introduce any measures to suppress freedom of expression or any other freedom granted by the Almighty as part of the teachings of Islam, freedom to reside in any part of the Muslim country, freedom to develop a disused land or setup a business, or to setup newspaper, radio or TV station without prior permission from authorities/government, etc.

In the view of Islam, the role and function of parliaments are not for legislation, as Islam has rules for everything, but for implementing the rules of Allah.

The ulema in Iraq were opposing the parliament which was designed to ban Islamic freedoms and introduce non-Islamic rules.

reason why a number of scholars were exiled from Iraq such as the Religious Authority (*marje'*) Sayyid Abu al-Hasan al-Isfahani,ⁱ the Religious Authority (*marje'*) al-Mirza al-Husayn al-Na'ini,ⁱⁱ the Religious Authority (*marje'*) Sayyid Mirza Ali al-Shahristani, '*allāmah* Hujjah Sayyid Muhammad Ali al-Tabata'i and others.

5. Religious Authority (*marje'*) Sayyid Husayn al-Qummi,ⁱⁱⁱ expelled from Iran to Iraq after his protest against unbelief and colonialism and

ⁱ Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan ibn al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Mūsawi al-Iṣfahāni, erudite scholar and *marji'* to all the Imāmiyyah (Shi'a) of his time. He was born in Iṣfahān in 1284AH. He moved to the holy cities in 1307AH. His time to die came to him in 1365AH in Kaẓimiyyah. Rarely has a funeral procession like the one which trailed behind his body been seen. He was carried above people's heads from Baghdād to Najaf.

ⁱⁱ Sheikh Muḥammad Ḥusayn ibn *al-Sheikh al-Islam* 'Abd al-Raḥim al-Nā'ini al-Najafi a mujtahid who is always in people's thoughts; one of the greatest Shi'a scholars. He was born in the Iranian city of Nā'een in 1277AH where he grew up and learned the first principles and the basics of religious studies. He moved to Iṣfahān and from there to Iraq 1303AH. He did not leave (Muhammad Hasan) '*al-Mujaddid*' al-Shirazi's side and became his note taker and transcriber until his death. Mirza Nā'ini went on to become the leading Marje' or Religious Authority of his time until his death in Baghdād on Saturday 26 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1355AH. He was buried in the holy city of Najaf. The Mirza was the teacher of many religious scholars and *maraji'* such that he became known as *Sheikh al-Mujtahidin*, and *Ostādh al-Fuqahā'*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sayyid Ḥusayn Sayyid Maḥmud al-Qummi born in the holy city of Qumm in 1282AH where he studied the foundations (*muqaddimāt*). He moved to Iraq where he attended the lessons of the greatest scholars such as Sayyid Muhammad Hasan "al-Mujaddid" al-Shirazi and al-Mirza Habibullāh al-Rashti and al-Shaykh Muḥammad Taqi al-Shirazi. He achieved a high level of learning and was known for probity, piety and asceticism. He settled in the holy city of Mashhad (of Imam Riḍā, peace be upon him) and became one of the most senior religious authorities (*marāji'* taqlid) in the country. He was nominated (may Allah bless him) as overall leader after the passing of al-Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan al-Isfahāni. He passed away on Wednesday 14 Rabi' al-Awwal 1366AH. His body was taken to the holy city of Najaf and he was buried in the courtyard of the holy shrine.

against the then Shah of Iran, Reza Khan Pahlavi. Similarly, he travelled back again from Iraq to Iran to demand that the authorities – at that time headed by Muhammad Reza Pahlavi – reject massive deviations. He realised his demands and went back to Iraq. These two uprisings that he pursued constituted considerable risk to his life and those of his associates.

6. Religious Authority (*marje'*) Sayyid Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Dinⁱ who fought against France and issued decrees against it until he was expelled from Lebanon to Egypt, was almost killed and his house and magnificent library which contained priceless books, including some of his own unpublished works in manuscript were burned down, depriving Islamic libraries of them.

7. Religious Authority (*marje'*) Sayyid Agha Husayn Buroujerdi,ⁱⁱ who struggled twice against oppression in Iran in the days of Reza Khan Pahlavi until he was almost killed.

8. Religious Authorities (*marāḗje' al-taqlid*) in Iraq who, in the days of Communist encroachment at the time of Abd al-Karim Qasim, struggled and fought against unbelief, atheism and error until some of them were killed, others were imprisoned and a large number were expelled.

9. Religious Authorities (*marāḗje' al-taqlid*) in Iran who struggled against Reza Khan and Muhammad Reza Pahlavi until they brought about their downfall.

ⁱ Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥusayn ibn Sayyid Yūsuf al-Mūsawi al-'Āmili nicknamed Sharaf al-Din was one of the greatest Muslim scholars and one of the geniuses of the Shi'a. He was born in Kazimiyyah in 1290AH and passed away in Beirut in 1377AH. He was buried in Najaf following a solemn funeral procession through Beirut, Baghdād, Karbalā' and Najaf.

ⁱⁱ Head of the *ḥawzah 'ilmiyyah* in the holy city of Qumm. The Shi'a religious authority (*marja' iyyah*) passed to him after the death of Sayyid Abu al-Ḥasan al-Iṣfahāni (may Allah bless him) in 1365AH. His hour came in 1380AH and he was buried in the court of the shrine of Lady Faṭimah al-Ma'sūmah (peace be upon her) in the holy city of Qumm in Iran.

10. Religious Authorities (*marāje' al-taqlid*) and scholars of Iraq who struggled against the godlessness of Communism until they brought about its downfall. They continue to this day to struggle against the godlessness of Iraqi Baathism and they will with Almighty Allah's permission be granted victory [over them].

Martyred Religious Scholars

It is reported that Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said:

“There is not one of us who will not be slain or poisoned.”²

This hadith is explained as referring to the Prophet, his daughter al-Zahra and the Twelve Imams.

The question which begs to be asked about this holy hadith is: “How could the fate of those Fourteen infallible, peace be upon them, be to meet a violent death or be poisoned and to become martyrs on Allah's Path given that they were the best of the people of the earth?”

The only [possible] answer to it is that they, peace be upon them, pursued political activities with complete courage and defiance in the face of tyrants, and risked being slain or poisoned at the hands of the tyrants as a result of that.

From this we can understand why throughout history righteous scholars would also take the same risk – of being slain or poisoned.

The answer here is the same as it was then, because the religious scholars did not shy away from performing political activities of all sorts in the face of tyrants and despots, so their fate was to be slain or poisoned.

We shall place here a list of names of a number of the good, righteous Islamic scholars who were martyred on Almighty Allah's Path, and of the people who pursued Islamic politics which does not leave a single aspect of human activity unplanned or unorganised.

To look up details of their lives one can refer to history books and biographical catalogues such as *Ṭabaqāt A'lām al-Shi'a* by Sheikh Āghā

Buzurg Tehrani,ⁱ *A'yān al-Shi'a* by Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin al-'Āmili,ⁱⁱ *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* by Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Isfahani,ⁱⁱⁱ and so on.

ⁱ 'Allāmah Sheikh Muḥsin (or Muḥammad Muḥsin) ibn Ali ibn Muḥammad Riḍa al-Ṭehrāni known as Āghā Buzurg (1293-1389AH) expert biographer and researcher; born in Tehran. He moved to Iraq in 1313AH. He became a jurist in the holy city of Najaf and was awarded a licence (ijāzah) as a mujtahid before the age of forty. He was involved in the Constitutional Revolution in Iran. He moved to Sāmarrā' where he stayed from 1329 to 1355AH then he went back to the holy city of Najaf to continue working on his books until he died (may Allah bless him). He wrote several books including *al-Dhari'ah ilā Taṣānif al-Shi'ah* in nineteen volumes and *Nuqabā' al-Bashar fi al-Qarn al-Rābi' 'Ashar* (meaning Leaders of Mankind in the Fourteenth Century AH) – which is one of eleven books containing biographical works – and other works. He also awarded more than two thousand of his qualified students licences to narrate hadith. He donated his library containing more than five thousand books as *waqf* (endowment) property for the benefit of other scholars and researchers.

ⁱⁱ Sayyid Muḥsin ibn 'Abd al-Karim ibn Ali ibn Muḥammad al-Amin al-Ḥusayni al-'Āmili (1282-1371AH) (1865-1952) the last of the Shi'a mujtahids in the Levant. He wrote poetry and biographical works. He was born in the town of Shaqrā' in one of the provinces of Marji'iyūn on Jabal 'Āmil. He was educated there and then he moved to al-Najaf al-Ashraf. He went back to Syria and settled down in Damascus in 1319AH where he worked as a teacher and preacher and later as a mufti. He passed away in Damascus. He wrote a lot gathering together those legacies of the Imamiyyah which had become scattered and wrote about the lives of the Shi'a. He wrote about their jurisprudence, defended the Imamiyyah, engaged in debate and went on the offensive. His works include *A'yān al-Shi'ah* in 56 volumes, *al-Raḥiq al-Makhtūm*, a poetry collection which he composed before 1331AH, *al-Ḥuṣūn al-Mani'ah*, a treatise written in response to the author of al-Manār, and other works.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir ibn al-Mirza Zayn al-'Ābidin al-Mūsawi al-Khawansāri al-Isfahāni (1226-1313AH) erudite scholar, knowledgeable on jurisprudence, theology and other religious sciences. He was one of the luminaries of the thirteenth century AH. He lived in Khawansār and was responsible for matters of religion there. He wrote books entitled *al-Hudūd wa*

Al-Sharif al-Radi's grandfather

Al-Hasan ibn Ali nicknamed al-Uṭrūsh and al-Nāṣir al-Kabir maternal grandfather of al-Sharif al-Raḍi the compiler of the renowned masterpiece Nahj al-Balāghah, rebelled against tyranny and tyrants in the lands of Daylam at the time of al-Muqtadir al-Abbasi. He ruled for a period of thirteen years and was martyred in the year 304 AH at the age of seventy nine in the town of Amul, one of the old provinces of Tabaristan. He has a grave and well-known shrine which has a beautiful dome that can be visited there. The following people included a biographical note on him:

1. Mirza Husayn al-Nouri in *Khātimat al-Mustadrak*,³
2. Kashif al-Ghita in *al-Huṣūn al-Mani'ah*,
3. Ibn Dawoud al-Nabākiti in *Rawḍat Uli al-Albāb*,
4. al-Mirza Abdullah al-Effendi in *Riyāḍ al-'Ulamā'*,⁴
5. Ibn al-Athir in his large history book *al-Kāmil*,⁵
6. Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin al-'Āmili in *A'yān al-Shi'a*.⁶

The maternal uncle of al-Kulayni

Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim known as 'Allān, maternal uncle of *thiqat al-islam* al-Kulayni, may Allah bless him, compiler of al-Kafi and one of his sheikhs from whom people widely narrated.

He had a link with the Recipient of Divine Covenant, may Allah hasten his noble reappearance, and lived at the time of the Lesser Occultation.

He wrote to the Recipient of Divine Covenant, may Allah hasten his noble reappearance, about some matters and then his exalted signed reply came back to him.

al-Ta'zirāt, al-Jabr wa al-Ikhtiyār – which he wrote in 1233AH – and other works.

He was killed in the days of the Lesser Occultation on the road to Mecca.

He was one of the prominent Shi'a personalities and one of the promoters of the teachings of Islam.

Most history books and biographical catalogues contain a biographical reference to him.⁷

Al-Antaki al-Misri

Al-Hasan ibn Sulayman al-Antaki was one of the Shi'a scholars in Egypt in the fourth century after hijra. He lived at the time of al-Hakim al-'Ubaydi.

He spoke out for the truth, stood up openly for it and opposed falsehood disassociating himself from it by word and deed. Al-Hakim al-'Ubaydi killed him in the year 399 after hijra.

Mizān al-I'tidāl⁸ by al-Dhahabi contains a biographical note on him as does A'yān al-Shi'a⁹ and other books.¹⁰

Al-Ḥamdāni

Badi' al-Zamān al-Ḥamdani, Ahmad ibn al-Husayn ibn Yahya, celebrated Shi'a author, creative writer and preacher, well known poet. He received the patronage of Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād. He was honest and frank about the truth, and one to speak out logically about it.

He became a martyr to poison in the year 397 AH.

The majority of historians and experts on people in chains of narration¹¹ include a biographical note on him.

Al-Nashi' al-Saghir

Al-Ḥallā' Ali ibn Abdullah known as al-Nāshi' al-Aṣghar was nicknamed al-Ḥallā' because his father used to ornament swords for a living [ḥilyat al-suyūf] and was known as al-Nāshi' because that is what is said of someone who rises aloft in the art of poetry and has become celebrated for it.

He lived in Egypt and would write munificent and beautiful poetry on the Household (Ahl al-Bayt), peace be upon them. One of his poems was his famous ode which begins with the following line:

*Through the Family of Muhammad the Truth became known,
and it was in their homes that the Book was revealed*

He lived during the time of the Lesser Occultation and was burned to death at the age of ninety five in the year 366 AH.

The majority of books by experts on narrators of hadith, history and literature¹² include a biographical note on him.

Al-Azdi al-Andalusi

Muhammad ibn Hani al-Azdi, known as the “Mutanabbi of the west” for reason of his being from Muslim Spain (Andalusia) which is in the west of the Islamic lands. He was at that time one of those who spoke out openly for the truth and who dedicated himself to politics in his time. Ibn Shahrashoub numbers him among those who openly declared [his] Shi’ism. He was born in the year 326 AH in the Andalusia and was a martyred in the year 362 AH. His age at that time was thirty six.

The majority of history books, books on narrators of hadith and books on literature include a biographical note on him.¹³

Abu Firas al-Ḥamdāni

Abu Firas al-Ḥamdāni the famous scholar and poet about whom al-Sahib ibn ‘Abbad reports:

“Poetry began with a king and ended with a king,”

meaning Imra’ al-Qays and Abu Firās.

It is reported that al-Mutanabbi would not step up to compete with him regarding him as formidable. He went in for politics, plunged into its rough and tumble, and made the country and servants of Allah prosper.

He fought against the Byzantines a number of times and they captured him twice. The second time he took Allah's Path he became a martyr to the sword in the year 358 AH.

The majority of history books, literature books and books on narrators of hadith have a biographical note on him.¹⁴

Abu Firas' father

Sa'id ibn Ḥamdān al-Ḥamdāni; father of Abu Firas al-Ḥamdāni.

He was one of the Shi'a of distinction and one of the scholars of politics of his time. Nāṣir al-Dawlah killed him in Mosul in the year 323 AH.

Many of those who have a biographical note on his son also have a brief biographical note on him.¹⁵

Ibn al-Forat

Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn al-Forat.

He was a Shi'a writer of the fourth century AH from a family famous for nobility, merit and generosity.

He was put in charge of the cabinet several times during the time of al-Muqtadir al-Abbasi.

It is reported that the days of his government were times of respite for the people.

He was detained and killed during the time of the Lesser Occultation in the year 312 after hijra.

A'yān al-Shia by Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin al-'Āmili¹⁶ contains a biographical note on him as does *al-Shi'a wa funun al-Islam* by Sayyid Hasan al-Sadr.¹⁷

Al-Tuhāmi al-Shāmi

Abu al-Hasan al-Tuhāmi, Ali ibn Muhammad al-'Āmili al-Shāmi.

He was a scholar, poet, and creative writer at the beginning of the fifth century AH. It is said of him:

He has poetry more delicate than a sinner's religion and gentler than the tear of a lovesick person.

He begins one of his odes with this famous line:

*The judgment of Fate passes on the creatures,
This world is not a place of rest.*

He went in for lawful politics at the time of the Abbasids. He was persecuted. He went into hiding and began to wander the towns and villages in anonymity fleeing from the tyranny of the Abbasid rule until he entered Egypt. They happened to recognise him, captured him, put him in prison, tortured him severely and killed him in prison. It is possible that he died under torture. That was in the year 416 AH.

One of the nice things which is reported about him is that he had a vision in a dream; someone asked him, "What did Allah do to you?"

He replied, "He forgave me."

The person asked, "For doing what?"

"For my saying in a poem mourning my young son:

'I was in the company of my enemies, and he was in the company of his Lord. What a difference there is between his company and my company.'"

The majority of writers of history, poetry and on people in chains of narration of hadith have a biographical note on him¹⁸.

Thabit ibn Aslam

Thabit ibn Aslam, the grammarian, was a literary genius and Aleppan scholar.

He was one of the Shi'a scholars, daring in his outspokenness of the truth, clever at that. He was put in charge of the book depository in Aleppo at the time of the Fatimids. He went in for politics in a clever way.

He wrote some books exposing the nonsense of the false sects.

He was taken to Egypt and killed by way of crucifixion in approximately 460 AH.

*Rawdat al-Jannat*¹⁹ includes a biographical note on him as does *A‘yan al-Shi‘a*,²⁰ *al-Shia wa funun al-Islam*²¹ and other books²².

Abu al-Qasim al-Qazwini

Abu al-Qasim al-Sheikh Abd al-Karim al-Qazwini.

He was one of the scholars of Jurisprudence, legal presumptions (Usul) and Hadith of the sect known as the Karchiyyah in the fifth century AH.

He was an expert logician, spoke the truth, stood firm on that course and became involved in the politics of Allah’s servants and of the country. He engaged atheists in debate and silenced them until the atheists killed him in the year 498 AH.

Shuhada al-Fadila²³ and other books include a biographical note on him.

Al-Kindi al-Kātib

Abu al-Hasan ibn Tarkhan Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Kindi known as the Scribe (al-Kātib) was one of the scholars of the fifth century AH.

He spoke out openly for the truth standing up against falsehood. He would speak the truth and not deviate from it. He was killed for reason of his being a Shi’a and his open declaration of that in around the year 450 AH.

Al-Najashi, may Allah bless him, says about him: “He is reliable. He noted down accurately what he heard. He was one of us.”²⁴

The majority of books on people in the chains of narration of hadith include a biographical note on him.

Al-Hasan ibn Mufaḍḍal

Al-Hasan ibn Mufaḍḍal ibn Sahlān.

He was one of the Shi’a writers, scholars and politicians.

He went in for politics and was put in charge of the Daylamite state sultan’s cabinet.

He was killed on Allah's Path.

He is the one who built a wall around Imam Husayn's Ḥā'irⁱ in Karbala.

*al-Shia wa al-funun fi al-Islam*²⁵ contains a biographical note on him as does Ibn Kathir²⁶ in his history book and others.²⁷

Abu al-Maḥāsin al-Ṭabari

Al-Ṭabari, Abu al-Maḥāsin Abd al-Wahid ibn Isma'il

He was one of the most senior scholars at the end of the fourth century AH. Al-Qutb al-Rawandi and other outstanding scholars were his pupils.

A number of historians referred to him by the nickname of *al-Imam al-Shahid* [the martyred Imam].

He embarked upon a reformatory intellectual revolution in Islam against esotericism which at that time had infiltrated the Muslims.

The one who made a biographical note on him described him as the first to issue a decree declaring the esotericists – described as saying that there was a duty to obey the *tariqah* master and that there was no duty to perform any obligations to Allah beyond that – to be non-Muslims.

He was assassinated in the year 501 or 502 AH when he was over eighty.

The majority of historians and experts on people in the chains of narration of hadith have a biographical note on him.²⁸

Al-Fattāl al-Nisābouri

Al-Fattāl al-Sheikh Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Wa'iz al-Nisābouri

ⁱ Mutawakkil, one of the Abbasid rulers was particularly spiteful and tried to flood the tomb. However the water miraculously became confused (*taḥayyara*) and flowed around it. This is why a circular area comprising and surrounding the tomb is known as the Ḥā'ir. Imam Ṣādiq (as) called it by this name but it was not until this incident years after Imam Ṣādiq's (as) time that it was understood why.

Some of the historians nicknamed him al-Sheikh al-Shahid [the martyred sheikh].

He is the author of *Rawdat al-Wa'izin* and *al-Tanwir* on exegesis.

He was martyred on Allah's Path as a result of his bold stand against falsehood and his speaking out for the truth.

'*Allāmah* Majlisi²⁹ has a biographical note on him as does al-Sheikh al-Nuri,³⁰ the renowned compiler of hadith al-Hurr al-Amili,³¹ and others.³²

Al-Quṭb al-Rāwandi

Al-Husayn ibn Quṭb al-Din al-Rāwandi

Eminent scholar, described as *al-'Alim al-Salih al-Shahid*, meaning the martyred pious scholar.

He was killed on Allah's Path for reason of his rising up against deviation [from the Straight Path] and his standing up for the truth and justice.

Amal al-Amil³³ contains a biographical note on him as does Khātimat al-Mustadrak³⁴ and other works.³⁵

Al-Ṭaghra'i

Al-Ṭaghra'i al-Husayn ibn Ali one of the descendants of Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali.ⁱ He was an erudite scholar and able poet and his famous *lamiyyah* [ode]ⁱⁱ is well-known.

He pursued politics and propagated for the Household (Ahl al-Bayt) peace be upon them in his sermons, poems and the stands he took. He was defiant. He became vizier for a while but then because of the

ⁱ Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali was one of the eminent, eloquent men from the highest class of poets of Islam and *shi'a* of the Commander of the Faithful. He was from Basra and considered to be one of the heroes and people of intellect. He was the creator of Arabic grammar at the instruction of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him.

ⁱⁱ The last letter of every couplet in a *lāmiyyah* is a *lām* as the word suggests

defiance of the stands he took, he was killed unjustly a few years after the year five hundred AH. He had reached the age of seventy five or more.

Most historians, history books, poetry books and books on literature include a biographical note on him.³⁶

Al-Ṭabrasi

Amin al-Islam al-Ṭabrasi, al-Faḍl ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Faḍl author of the exegesis *Majma' al-Bayan* and dozens of other significant books including four other exegeses besides *Majma' al-Bayan*.

He lived in an atmosphere of divergent religions and sects. He was a mountain of knowledge, a champion of faith and bravely defiant for Allah's sake until he became a martyr on the eve of Eid al-Fitr in the year five hundred and forty eight in the city of Sabzavar.

His body was transported to Imam Riḍa's Mashhad and was buried there at a place known as Mughtasal al-Riḍā.¹

The majority of historians have a biographical note on him.³⁷

Abu al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl

Sayyid Abu al-Qasim Yahya ibn Abu al-Faḍl Sharaf al-Din a descendant of Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidin.

He was one of the most learned scholars and had deep involvement in the politics of the country. He was the chief of the Ṭālibi's (the descendants of the Prophet and Imam Ali) in Iraq.

The king Khawarizm Shah Tekkish challenged him and killed him by sword in the year 585 AH.

A number of books of history and books on people in the chains of narration of hadith include a biographical note on him.³⁸

¹ i.e. the place where the Imam (as) was bathed before burial

Al-Shahid al-Awwal [the First Martyr]

Al-Shahid al-Awwal, Muhammad ibn Makki al-‘Āmili whose books, decrees and opinions on jurisprudence, the principles of the religion, legal presumptions, hadith and other subjects remain topical in the Islamic seminaries (*hawzah ilmiyyah*). He engaged in true struggle tirelessly for Allah’s sake until his blood was shed and he was killed, then crucified, then burned in a fire in the square of the citadel of Damascus in the year 786 AH when he was 52 years old.

The majority of historians and experts on those in the chains of narration of hadith have a biographical note on him.³⁹

Al-Shahid al-Thāni [the Second Martyr]

Al-Shahid al-Thani Zayn al-Din al-Amili followed al-Shahid al-Awwal’s noble feats – martyrdom, learning and merit and similarly in the fact that his books, decrees and opinions on jurisprudence, the principles of the religion, legal presumptions, hadith and other subjects remain topical and continue to be discussed in the Islamic seminaries.

He was a struggler on Allah’s Path until the point that he was persecuted by the rulers of the Lebanon and Byzantine. They left no stone unturned in their hunt for him and captured him during the days of the hajj. To cut a long story short, he was killed on the coast, his head was sent as a gift to the Byzantine king and his noble body was left on the ground. A group of Turkmen lived on that land and that night they saw lights descend from and ascend to heaven. They buried him there and built a dome over him.

The majority of experts on those in chains of narration of hadith and historians have a biographical note on him.⁴⁰

Al-Shahid al-Thālith [the Third Martyr]

Al-Shahid al-Thālith is the epithet of a number of our righteous scholars who were martyred on Allah’s Path for reason of their standing up defiantly for the truth. The book *Shuhada al-Faḍilah* says that many scholars and biographers say that this epithet belongs to Shihab al-Din al-Tustari al-Khurāsāni.

He was one of the most excellent scholars at the time of Sultan Tahmasib. He pursued politics and counselled the Sultan, engaged in debate with deviants [from the Straight Path] and stood up defiantly for the truth and for high moral standing.

The Uzbeks attacked Khurasan, took Shihab al-Din al-Tustari prisoner, took him, tormented him, tortured him, and then killed him with daggers and knives and burned his noble body in the square in Bukhara in the year 997 AH.

Rawdat al-Jannat⁴¹ has a biographical note on him as does al-Janabidhi in al-Rawdat al-Safawiyya, Shuhada al-Fadhila⁴² and other works.⁴³

Al-Muhaqqiq al-Karaki

Al-Muhaqqiq al-Karaki Nur al-Din Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Abd al-Ali al-‘Āmili known as al-Muhaqqiq al-Thāni lived at the time of Tahmasib al-Safavi. He was put in charge of matters of politics of the country and administration of [Allah’s] servants. al-Muhaqqiq al-Karaki’s edicts had greater legal authority than the king’s. The king treated him as one of his commissioners and governors.

He was assassinated through poisoning and he died as a result in the year 945 AH.

The majority of historians and experts on those in the chains of narration of hadith have a biographical note on him.⁴⁴

Al-Qāḍi al-Tustari

Sayyid Qāḍi Nurullah al-Tustari author of the massive encyclopaedia entitled Iḥqāq al-Ḥaqq and dozens of other works referred to in history books.

He was appointed Justice in India during the time of the Safavids and was a brave struggler until he became a martyr on Allah’s Path in the year 1019 AH.

On how he was killed: His clothes were stripped off and he was beaten with spiked steel whips until his limbs were ripped apart and his flesh became mixed with his blood.

The majority of historians and experts on people in the chains of narration of hadith have a biographical note on him.⁴⁵

Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmili

Sheikh Ali al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmili, grandfather of the compiler of *Wasā’il al-Shi’ah*, father-in-law of the author of *al-Ma‘ālim* and one of the descendants of al-Ḥurr ibn Yazid al-Riyāhi who was killed alongside Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, at Karbala on the Day of Ashura. He was a knowledgeable scholar and hero of Allah’s Religion, defiant for the Sake of Allah, and struggler on the Path of Islam until he died as a result of being poisoned.

Some of his nicest poetry is the following two lines:

*If my love for the Executorⁱ and his near relations is Rejection (rafḍ)
as claimed by the thoroughly ignorant who plunge in [with their eyes
shut]*

*Then Allah, the Trustful Spirit,ⁱⁱ Ahmad,
and all the angels of heavens are Rejectionists (rawāfiḍ)*

A number of historians have a biographical note on him.⁴⁶

Sayyid Naṣrullah al-Ḥā’eri

Sayyid Naṣrullah al-Ḥā’eri: scholar, poet and well known teacher at the seminary of the compound of the shrine of Imam Husayn in the holy city of Karbala. He has a *takhmis*ⁱⁱⁱ of the ode which Farazdaq recited in

ⁱ i.e. Imam Ali, peace be upon him.

ⁱⁱ i.e. Archangel Gabriel.

ⁱⁱⁱ “From the eleventh century onwards a particular kind of *musammaṭ* begins to appear; these are poems of dual authorship in which the lines of an earlier *qasida*, usually a well-known work, are turned into rhyming stanzas by being supplied with two or three additional hemistichs. These forms, known as *tarbi’* and *takhmis* respectively, were common in Arabic poetry in Mamluk and Ottoman times.” Stefan Sperl & Christopher Shackle (editors), *Qasida*

honour of Imam Sajjad Zayn al-Abidin Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him.

He was a struggler on Allah's Path, was involved in the country's politics, rejected those with invalid beliefs and exposed them until he became martyr to a violent death in the year 1154 AH.

Many historians, history books and books on literature and poetry have a biographical note on him.⁴⁷

Al-Shaykh al-'Asili

Sheikh Salih al-'Asili was one of the scholars of Lebanon and one of the pupils of Ayatollah Sayyid Mahdi Bahr al-Uloom, may Allah bless him.

He was a struggler on Allah's Path, defiant for the Sake of Allah, spoke out for the truth, and dedicated himself tirelessly to political matters until he was killed in a state of forbearance for which he can expect reward in the Hereafter. He was killed by Ahmad Pasha, known as *al-Jazzar* (the Butcher) in the year 1208 AH.

Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah has a biographical note on him.⁴⁸

Al-Hamadāni al-Ḥā'eri

Mawla Abd al-Ṣamad al-Hamadāni al-Ḥā'eri, erudite scholar, chief of the scholars. He was one of the pupils of the venerable al-Wahid al-Bihbahani, author of *al-Riyad* may Allah bless them. He was a struggler on Allah's Path, and worked to hoist up the flag of Islam, dedicating himself tirelessly to political matters until he was killed at the front door of his house in 1216AH in the course of the invasion of the holy city of Karbala by the Saudi Wahnābi sect. Alongside him, many thousands of the faithful were killed by the Wahnābis, as well as scores of merited scholars such as Sheikh Muhammad, Sheikh 'Ain Ali, Sayyid Ṣādiq, and many others. Many historians and many of those who have written about the holy city of Karbala have biographical notes on him.⁴⁹

poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa 2: Eulogy's Bounty, Meaning's Abundance. An Anthology, (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 62

Mirza Bāqir al-Shirazi

Mirza Muhammad Bāqir al-Shirazi was a pupil of the reformer Imam Shirazi, may Allah bless him, and one of the martyrs of the Mashrouta Revolution in Iran. He dedicated himself tirelessly to political matters and would give orders, and issue prohibitions, struggling against the enemies of Islam until he was killed in Shiraz in the year 1326 AH.

Shuhadā' al-Faḍilah has a biographical note on him.⁵⁰

Shaykh Nouri

Shaykh Faḍlollah Nouri pupil of the reformer Imam Shirazi, may Allah bless him, and nephew and son-in-law of 'allāmah Muhaqqiq Mirza Husayn Nouri author of *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il*.

He started the Mashroutah revolution to reform the constitution, demanding a new constitution when he saw the deviant course taken by the revolution which had been led by the religious scholars.

He was killed by way of hanging on Allah's Path 1327 AH.

Many later historians have a biographical note on him.⁵¹

These are the names of thirty one of our righteous scholars who were martyred on Allah's Path as a result of their dedicating themselves tirelessly to political matters and their becoming involved in affairs of state and of monarchs who were unable to draw those scholars away with dirhams or dinars or with various forms of promise, threat, incentive or terror tactic.

We have set down their names as illustrations of the large number of martyred scholars who fill our shining history to the brim with their names, forbearance and struggle in every time and every place ...

Telling their whole story would require volumes after volumes.

There is reference to them in history books, hadith books, books on those in the chains of narration of hadith and encyclopaedias.

If this shows anything it shows that politics is at the very heart of Islam and that the first and final priority for the scholars of Islam should be advancement of governance of [Allah's] servants and of the country.

A final word

The duty of all

Becoming involved in political matters and straightening out and reforming the community are not just the duty of the scholars. On the contrary they are the duty of all for which all are accountable later on the Day of Resurrection.

It is the duty of all Muslims to struggle against and reform any error or deviation which creeps into the Islamic Community.

The Greatest Messenger, peace be upon him and his holy family, said: "Every one of you is a shepherd and every one of you is responsible for his own flock."⁵² Just as a shepherd is responsible for his sheep, in the same way every Muslim is responsible for others.

There is no difference in that between leaders and followers, scholars and laypersons, students and professors, men and women, the strong and the weak and so on and so forth ...

Muslims used to be the pioneers through whom Islam advanced and through whose sincere faith and mighty forbearance the pillars of the lands and the Faith were erected – whenever they would see an illicit act they would show their disapproval through whatever might and power they possessed until they managed to eliminate it.

This means that whenever one of the Muslims would see a man carrying gambling equipment, he would say, "Whose is this?" He would be told, "The ruler's." He would take it upon himself to go to the ruler and say gambling is forbidden. "I am a Muslim and it is my duty to take it upon myself, whoever may have done it and whoever's it may be."

For example, when al-Walid [ibn Abdel-Malik ibn Marwān] tore up the Qur'an, the Muslims surrounded him, killed him and wrote on him, "This is the reward of whoever tears up the Qur'an,"⁵³ in spite of the

fact that at that time al-Walid was an emperor who ruled over a large part of the earth.

For example in Syria another Muslim man saw drinking vessels being carried on camels and he asked what was in them. He was told it was wine. He set upon them, ripped and tore them to pieces with his knife and spilt the wine that was inside them. When he was told that they belonged to Mo'āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān he said, "So what?"

However Muslims have become too lazy to act and have lost all sense of responsibility. Calamities have poured onto them and they have fallen prey to the east, west and anyone else.

Today, the Muslims have started waking up and realising what is going on around them. Thus good and plenty are hoped for their future, and complete dignity, honour, and glory, Allah willing.

The basis of progress, welfare dignity and honour is true awareness and sincere belief. It is said in a holy hadith:

"He who knows his time is not beset by calamities."ⁱ

We ask High and Powerful Allah to deepen this awareness and awakening in the Muslims so that they spread to all. That is not beyond Allah.

﴿Thy Lord, the Lord of Power transcends what they ascribe (to Him)﴾

﴿And Peace on the apostles﴾

﴿And Praise to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds﴾

Allah's blessings upon Muhammad and his holy family

Ṣādiq Mahdi Husayni Shirazi

The Holy City of Karbala 15/7/1383 AH

ⁱ *al-Kāfi* vol.1 p27, hadith29 which contains the words: "He who is aware of his time is not beset by calamities."

Sources

The Holy Qur'ān

Nahj al-Balāghah

al-Ikhtisāṣ by al-Imām al-Muḥaqqiq Muḥammad ibn al-Nu'mān al-'Akbari al-Baghdādi nicknamed al-Mufid (d. 413 AH) Jamā'at al-Mudarrisin edition, Qumm

al-Adab al-Mufrad by Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhāri (d. 256 AH) Mo'assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya Beirut

al-Irshād by al-Imām al-Muḥaqqiq Muḥammad ibn al-Nu'mān al-'Akbari al-Baghdādi nicknamed al-Mufid (d. 413 AH) Dār al-Mufid Beirut

al-Isti'āb by al-Faqih Abū'Umar Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Birr al-Andalusi (d. 463 AH) Dar al-Jil Beirut

Usud al-Ghāba by Abū al-Ḥasan Ali ibn Abu al-Karam al-Shibani known as ibn al-Athir (d. 630 AH) Intishārāt Ismā'īliyyān edition Tehran

al-Iṣlāḥ al-Zirā'ī by the author Dār al-'Alqami edition Karbalā' al-Muqaddasa

al-A'lām by Khayr al-Din al-Zarkali (d. 1410 AH) Dār al-'Ilm li al-Malāyin Beirut

l'Īm al-Warā by al-Shaykh al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrasi (d. 548 AH) Mo'assasat Āl al-Bayt ('alayhim al-Salām) li Ih'yā' al-Turāth, Qumm

al-Amāli by al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Mūsā al-Qummi known as al-Ṣadūq (d. 381 AH) Mo'assasat al-Bi'tha, Tehran

Amal al-Āmil by al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-'Āmili (d. 1104 AH) al-Ādāb, al-Najaf al-Ashraf

al-Ansāb by Abū Sa'd 'Abd al-Karim ibn Muḥammad al-Sam'āni (d. 562 AH) Dār al-Jinān, Beirut

Ansāb al-Ashraf by Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Jābir ibn Dāwūd al-Balādhuri (d. 279 AH) Mo'assasat al-A'lami edition Beirut

Biḥār al-Anwār by the highly erudite scholar '*allāmah* Muḥammad Bāqir ibn Muḥammad Taqī ibn al-Maqsūd 'Ali nicknamed al-Shaykh al-Majlisi (d. 1111 AH) Mo'assasat al-Wafā', Beirut

al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya by Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH) Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabi, Beirut

Başā'ir al-Darajāt by Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Farrūkh al-Şaffār (d. 290 AH) Mo'assasat al-A'lami, Tehran

Tāj al-'Arūs by Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zubaydi (d. 1205 AH) Maktabat al-Hayāt, Beirut

Tāreekh Baghdād by Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn 'Ali al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi (d. 463 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut

Tāreekh al-Tamaddun al-Islāmi by Jurji Zaydān, contemporary, al-Hilāl edition, Cairo

Tāreekh Dimashq by Abū al-Qāsim 'Ali ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Hibatallāh al-Shāfi'ī nicknamed ibn 'Asākir (d. 571 AH) Dār al-Fikr edition, Beirut

Tāreekh al-Tabari by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarir (d. 310 AH) Mo'assasat al-A'lami edition, Beirut

Tabşirat al-Muta'allimin by al-Imām Jamāl al-Din al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf al-Ḥilli (d. 726 AH) Aḥmadi edition, Tehran

Tuḥfat al-Āhūdhi by al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-'Alā' Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mubārakpūri (d. 1353 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut

Tafsir Jawāmi' al-Jāmi' by al-Shaykh AbūAli al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Faḍl al-Ṭabrisī (d. 560 AH) Mo'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmi, Qumm

Tafsir al-‘Ayyāshī by al-Muḥaddith Abū al-Naşr Muḥammad ibn Mas’ūd ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Ayyāsh al-Sulami known as al-‘Ayyāshī (d. 320 AH) al-Maktaba al-‘Ilmiyya al-Islāmiyya, Tehran

Tafsir al-Qurṭubi by Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Ṭabari (d. 671 AH) Mo’assasat al-Tāreekh al-‘Arabi, Beirut

Tafsir al-Qummi by Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Ali ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim Abu Ishāq al-Qummi (d. 329 AH) Mo’assasat al-A’lami, Beirut

Tafsir Majma’ al-Bayān by al-Shaykh Abū ‘Ali al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Faḍl al-Ṭabasi (d. 560 AH) Mo’assasat al-A’lami, Beirut

Tafsir Nūr al-Thaqalayn by ‘*allāmah* al-Shaykh ‘Abd ‘Ali ibn Jumu’a al-‘Arūsī al-Ḥuwayzi (d. 1112 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, Qumm

Tanbih al-Khawāṭir wa Nuzhat al-Nāzīr known as Majmū’a Warrām by al-Amir Abū al-Ḥasan Warrām ibn Abu Firās al-Mālīki al-Ashtari (d. 605 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, Tehran

Tahdīb al-Aḥkām by al-Shaykh Abū Ja’far Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭousi (d. 460 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, Tehran

Tawḥīd al-Ṣadūq by al-Shaykh Abū Ja’far Muḥammad ibn ‘Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh al-Qummi (d. 381 AH) Maktabat al-Ṣadūq, Tehran

Thawāb al-A’māl by al-Shaykh Abū Ja’far Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh al-Qummi (d. 381 AH) Maktabat al-Ṣadūq, Tehran

Jāmi’ al-Shitāt by al-Muḥaqqiq al-Mīrzā Abū al-Qāsim ibn al-Ḥasan al-Jaylāni al-Qummi (d. 1231 AH) Manshūrāt Sharikat al-Riḍwān, Tehran

al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaghir by al-Ḥāfiẓ Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abu Bakr al-Suyūfī (d. 911 AH) Dār al-Fikr, Beirut

Jawāhir al-Kalām fi Sharḥ Sharā‘i’ al-Islām by al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan ibn al-Shaykh Bāqir ibn al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Najafī (d. 1266 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, Tehran

Ḥilyat al-Abrār by al-Sayyid Hāshim ibn Sulaymān ibn Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAbd al-Jawād al-Ḥusaynī al-Baḥrānī (d. 1107 AH) Moʻassasat al-Maʻārif al-Islāmiyya, Qumm

Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʻ by Abū Naʻīm Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430 AH) Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, Beirut

Khātimat al-Mustadrak by al-Muḥaqqiq al-Mirzā al-Shaykh Ḥusayn al-Nūri (d. 1320 AH) Moʻassasat Āl al-Bayt (ʿalayhim al-Salām) li Iḥyāʻ al-Turāth, Qumm

al-Kharāʻij wa al-Jarāʻiḥ by al-Mufasssir Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī (d. 573 AH) Moʻassasat al-Imām al-Mahdi (ʿAjjala Allāhu taʻālā farajahu al-Sharif) edition, Qumm

Khaṣāʻiṣ al-Aʻimma by Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Mūsā al-Mūsawi (d. 406 AH) Majmaʻ al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyya edition, Mashhad al-Muqaddasa

Khaṣāʻiṣ Amir al-Moʻmineen by AbūʿAbd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad ibn Shuʻayb al-Nisaʻi (d. 303 AH) Maktabat Ninawā al-Ḥadītha edition, Tehran

al-Khiṣāl by al-Shaykh Abū Jaʻfar Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 381 AH) Jamāʻat al-Mudarrisin edition, Qumm

Daʻāʻim al-Islām by Abū Ḥanifa al-Nuʻmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥayūn al-Tamīmi al-Maghribi (d. 363 AH) Dār al-Maʻārif edition, Beirut

Dalāʻil al-Nubuwwa by Ismāʿīl ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Tamīmi al-Iṣfahānī (d. 535 AH) Dār Ṭība edition, Riyāḍ

al-Dībāj ʻalā Saḥiḥ Muslim by al-ḤāfiẓʻAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abu Bakr al-Suyūfī (d. 911 AH) Dār ibn ʻAffān edition, al-Mamlakat al-Saʻūdiyya

Diwān al-Imām Ali by Amir al-Moʻmineen Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ʿalayhi al-Salām) Moʻassasat al-Aʻlami edition, Beirut

al-Dhari'ah ilā Taṣānif al-Shi'a by the erudite scholar 'allāmah Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihirāni (d. 1389 AH) al-Maktabat al-Islāmiyyah edition, Tehran

Rub' Qarn ma'a al-'Allāmah al-Amini by al-Ḥājj Ḥusayn al-Shākiri, contemporary, al-Mu'allif edition

Rijāl ibn Dāwūd by Taqī al-Din ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥilfi (d. 707 AH) al-Maṭba'a al-Ḥaydariyya edition, al-Najaf

Rijāl al-Kashshi by Abū'Amr Muḥammad ibn 'Omar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 350 AH) Mo'assasat al-Nashr fi Jāmi'at Mashhad edition, Mashhad al-Muqaddasa

Rawḍāt al-Jannāt by al-Sayyid Mir Muḥammad Bāqir ibn Zayn al-'Ābidin ibn Abu al-Qāsim ibn Ḥusayn ibn Abu al-Qāsim Ja'far known as al-Mir al-Kabir (d. 1226 AH) Maktabat al-Isma'īliyyān edition, Qumm

Riyāḍ al-'Ulamā' by al-Mīrzā'Abdallāh al-Affandi (one of the luminaries of the twelfth century after hijra) Maṭba'at al-Khayyām edition, Qumm

Safinat al-Biḥār by al-Muḥaddith al-Shaykh 'Abbās al-Qummi (d. 1359 AH) Maktabat al-Sinā'i edition, Tehran

Sunan ibn Māja by al-Hāfiz Abū'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Zubayd al-Qazwini (d. 275 AH) Dār al-Fikr edition, Beirut

Sunan al-Tirmidhī by Muḥammad ibn 'Isā al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 AH) Dār al-Fikr edition, Beirut

Sunan al-Nabī (Ṣallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa Ālihi) by al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'i (contemporary), Mo'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmi edition Qumm

Sunan al-Nisā'i by Abū'Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Nisā'i (d. 303 AH) Dār al-Fikr edition, Beirut

al-Sunan al-Kubrā by Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Ali al-Bayhaqī (d. 458 AH) Dār al-Fikr edition, Beirut

al-Sunan al-Kubrā by Abū‘Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad ibn Shu‘ayb al-Nisā‘ī (d. 303 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah edition, Beirut

Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’ by al-Imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabi (d. 748 AH) Mo’assasat al-Risāla edition, Beirut

Sirat al-Nabi (Ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa ‘Ālihi) by ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Hishām ibn Ayyūb al-Ḥimyarī (d. 218 AH) Maktabat Muḥammad Ali Ṣubayḥ wa Awlāduhu edition, Egypt

al-Sīrat al-Nabawiyya by Abū al-Fidā‘ Ismā‘īl ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH) Dār al-Ma‘rifa edition, Beirut

Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah by al-Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din Abū Ḥāmid ‘Abd al-Hamīd ibn Abu al-Ḥadīd (d. 655 AH) Dār Iḥyā‘ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya edition, Cairo

al-Shifā bi Ta‘rif Ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā (Ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa ‘Ālihi) by al-Qāḍī Abū al-Faḍl ‘Iyāḍ al-Yaḥṣabī (d. 544 AH) Dār al-Fikr edition, Beirut

Shuhadā‘ al-Faḍīla by al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad al-Amini (d. 1390 AH) Dār al-Shihāb edition, Qumm

Shaykh al-Muḍira by Mahmūd Abū Rayya (contemporary) Dār al-Ma‘ārif edition, Egypt

al-Shi‘a wa Funūn al-Islām by al-Sayyid Ḥasan al-Ṣadr (d. 1375 AH) Maṭba‘at al-‘Irfān edition, Sidon

al-Sihāḥ by Ismā‘īl ibn Ḥammād al-Jawhari (d. 393 AH) Dār al-‘Ilm li al-Malāyin, Beirut

al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm by Zayn al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad Ali ibn Yūnus al-Nabā‘ī (d. 877 AH) Maktabat al-Murtaḍawiyya li Iḥyā‘ al-Āthār al-Ja‘fariyya, Tehran

al-Ṭarā‘if fi Ma‘rifat Madhāhib al-Ṭawā‘if by Ali ibn Mūsā ibn Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664 AH) Maṭba‘at al-Khayyām edition, Qumm

al-‘Odad al-Qawiyya by Raḍi al-Din Ali ibn Yūsuf al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (one of the luminaries of the eighth century after hijra) Maṭba‘at Sayyid al-Shuhadā‘ edition, Qumm

al-‘Umda by al-Ḥāfiẓ Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥasan al-Asadī al-Ḥillī known as ibn al-Biṭriq (d. 600 AH) Mo‘assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmi edition, Qumm

‘Awāli al-Li‘āli by al-Shaykh Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 381 AH) Manshūrāt al-Dāwiri edition, Qumm

‘Uyūn al-Athar by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Yaḥyā ibn Sayyid al-Nās (d. 734 AH) Mo‘assasat ‘Izz al-Din Beirut

‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā (‘alayhi al-Salām) by al-Shaykh Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 381 AH) Mo‘assasat al-‘Alami edition, Beirut

al-Ghadir by al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad al-Amini (d. 1392 AH) Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, Beirut

Ghurur al-Ḥikam wa Durar al-Kalim by ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Muḥammad al-Tamimi (d. 510 AH) Maktabat al-I‘lām al-Islāmi edition, Qumm

Faṭḥ al-Bāri fi Sharḥ Saḥiḥ al-Bukhāri by al-Imām Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalāni (d. 852 AH) Dār al-Ma‘rifa edition, Beirut

al-Fuṣūl al-Mukhtāra by al-Imām al-Muḥaqqiq Muḥammad ibn al-Nu‘mān al-‘Akbari al-Baghdādi nicknamed al-Mufīd (d. 413 AH) Dār al-Mufid edition, Beirut

Fihrist ibn Nadīm by Muḥammad ibn Ishaq known as Abū Ya‘qūb al-Warrāq (d. 438 AH) Maṭba‘at al-Istiḳāma edition, Cairo

Fayḍ al-Qaḍir by Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ra‘ūf al-Manāri (d. 1331 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya edition Beirut

Qurb al-Isnād by Abū al-‘Abbās ‘Abdallāh ibn Ja‘far al-Ḥimyarī (d. 300 AH) Mo‘assasat Āl al-Bayt (‘alayhim al-Salām) li Iḥyā‘ al-Turāth edition, Qumm

al-Kāfi by al-Shaykh Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kulayni (d. 328 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya edition, Tehran

al-Kāmil fi al-Tāreekh by Abū al-Ḥasan Ali ibn Abu al-Karam Muḥammad al-Shibani known as ibn al-Athir (d. 630 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya edition, Beirut

Kashf al-Ghumma fi Ma'rifat al-A'imma by 'allāmah Abū al-Ḥasan Ali ibn 'Isā ibn Abu al-Faṭḥ al-Irbili (d. 693 AH) Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmi edition Beirut

al-Kunā wa al-Alqāb by al-Shaykh 'Abbās al-Qummi (researcher and historian) (d. 1359 AH) Maṭba'at al-Ḥaydariyya edition, al-Najaf al-Ashraf

Kanz al-'Ummal by 'allāmah 'Alā' al-Din Ali al-Muttaqī ibn Ḥisām al-Hindī (d. 975 AH) Mo'assasat al-Risāla edition, Lebanon

Lisān al-'Arab by 'allāmah Abū al-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn known as ibn Manzūr (d. 711 AH) Dār Ihya' al-Turāth al-'Arabī edition, Beirut

Lisān al-Mizān by Aḥmad ibn Ali ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalāni (d. 852 AH) Mo'assasat al-A'lami edition, Beirut

Majma' al-Baḥrayn by al-Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ṭurayḥi (d. 1085 AH) Maktab Nashr al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya edition, Qumm

Majma' al-Zawā'id by al-Ḥāfiẓ Nūr al-Dīn Ali ibn Abu Bakr al-Haythami (d. 807 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya edition, Beirut

al-Maḥāsin by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Khālīd al-Birqī (d. 274 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya edition, Tehran

al-Muḥṭaḍar by al-Shaykh Ḥasan ibn Sulaymān al-Ḥilli (one of the luminaries of the ninth century after hijra) al-Ḥaydariyya edition, al-Najaf al-Ashraf

Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ by al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Abu Bakr ibn 'Abd al-Qādir al-Rāzi (d. 721 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut

al-Mudawwanat al-Kubrā by al-Imām Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179 AH) al-Sa'āda edition, Egypt

Mir'āt al-'Uqūl by the erudite scholar 'allāmah al-Mawlā Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisi (d. 1111 AH) Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya edition Tehran

Mustadrak Safinat al-Bihār by al-Shaykh Ali al-Namāzi al-Shāhrūdi (d. 1405 AH) Jāmi'at al-Mudarrisin edition, Qumm

al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥākim al-Nīsābūri (d. 405 AH) Dār al-Ma'rifa edition, Beirut

Mustadrak al-Wasā'il by al-Shaykh Mīrzā Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad Taqī al-Ṭabṛasi al-Nūri (d. 1320 AH) Mo'assasat Āl al-Bayt ('alayhim al-Salām) li Iḥyā' al-Turāth edition, Beirut

Musnad Aḥmad by al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH) Dār al-Ṣādir edition, Beirut

Ma'ādin al-Ḥikma by 'Alam al-Hudā Muḥammad ibn al-Fayḍ al-Kāshāni (d. 1115 AH) Maktabat al-Ṣadūq edition, Tehran

Ma'āni al-Akḥbār by al-Shaykh Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 381 AH) Jāmi'at al-Mudarrisin edition, Qumm

Mo'jam al-Buldān by al-Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Abū 'Abdallāh Yāqūt ibn 'Abdallāh al-Ḥamawī (d. 626 AH) Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī edition, Beirut

Mo'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth by al-Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim al-Mūsāwī al-Khū'ī (d. 1413 AH) Ṭab'at al-Najaf al-Ashraf

Mo'jam al-Maṭbū'āt al-'Arabiyya by Yūsuf Ilyān Sirkīs (d. 1351 AH) Bahman edition, Tehran

al-Muqni'a by al-Imām al-Muḥaqqiq Muḥammad ibn al-Nu'mān al-'Akbari al-Baghdādi nicknamed al-Mufid (d. 413 AH) Mo'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmi edition, Qumm

Makārim al-Akhlāq by al-Shaykh Raḍi al-Dīn Abū Naṣr al-Ḥasan ibn al-Faḍl al-Ṭabṛasī (d. 548 AH) Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-Raḍi edition, Qumm

al-Makāsib by al-Shaykh ‘*allāmah* al-Anṣārī Murtaḍā ibn al-Mawlā Muḥammad Amin al-Dizfūlī (d. 1281 AH) Majma’ al-Fikr al-Islāmi edition, Qumm

al-Malāḥim wa al-Fitan by al-Sayyid Raḍī Allāh Abū al-Qāsim Ali ibn Mūsā ibn Tāwūs (d. 644 AH) Manshūrāt al-Raḍī edition, Qumm

Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-Faqīh by al-Shaykh Abū Ja’far al-Ṣadūq Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 381 AH) Jāmi’at al-Mudarrisin edition, Qumm

Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib by al-Shaykh Mushir al-Din Abū Ja’far Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn Shahrāshūb al-Māzandarāni (d. 588 AH) al-Maṭba’at al-Ḥaydariyya edition, al-Najaf al-Ashraf

Mawsū’at al-Fiqh by al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ḥusayni al-Shīrāzi (d. 1422 AH) Dār al-‘Ulūm edition, Beirut

Mizān al-I’tidāl by al-Imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabi (d. 748 AH) Dār al-Ma’rifa edition, Beirut

Naẓm Durar al-Ṣimṭayn by Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Zarandi al-Ḥanafī (d. 750 AH) (in manuscript form at the library of Imām Amīr al-Mo’mineen, peace be upon him, in Iṣfahān)

Naqd al-Rijāl by al-Sayyid Muṣṭafā ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Tafrashī (one of the luminaries of the eleventh century after hijra) Mo’assasat Āl al-Bayt (‘alayhim al-Salām) li Iḥyā’ al-Turāth edition, Qumm

Hadiyyat al-‘Ārifin by Ismā’īl Bāshā al-Baghdādi (d. 1339 AH) Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī edition, Beirut

Wasā’il al-Shi’a by the highly erudite scholar ‘*allāmah* Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmili (d. 1104 AH) Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī edition, Beirut

Yanābi’ al-Mawaddah by al-Shaykh Sulaymān ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qandūzi al-Ḥanafī (d. 1294 AH) Dār al-Uswa edition, Qumm

Endnotes

¹ Sheikh Mufid, *al-Muqni'ah*, p205

² Mahmoud Abū Rayyah, “*Shaykh al-Muḍirah Abū Horayrah al-Dūsi*” citing from “*al-Waḥy al-Muhammadi*”, p232.

³ The Holy Qur'an, The Elevation (7):96

⁴ The Holy Qur'an, Table Spread (5):66

Chapter One

¹ The Holy Qur'an, The Elevation (7):157

² The Holy Qur'an, The Counsel (42):13

³ al-Ṭousi, *Tahdheeb al-Aḥkām*, vol.6 pp95-96 chapter46

⁴ al-Ṣadūq, *Amāli* p679 hadith1

⁵ *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* (dictionary of) vol.4 p78

⁶ al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol.74 p254 chapter10 hadith1

⁷ *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol.74 p240 chapter10 hadith1

⁸ al-Timimi, *Ghurur al-Ḥikam wa Durar al-Kalim*, p339 hadith7738 ‘The Just Government’

⁹ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letters 10

¹⁰ al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmili, *Wasā'il al-Shi'a*, vol.17 p45 chapter12 hadith2

¹¹ Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol.29 pp223, 241

¹² Kulayni, *al-Kāfi*, vol.1 p59, hadith4

¹³ Kulayni, *al-Kāfi*, vol.1 p57, hadith13

¹⁴ Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol.89 p81 chapter8 hadith9 citing Tafsir al-‘Ayyāshi

¹⁵ al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmili, *Wasā'il al-Shi'a*, vol.28 p353 chapter10 hadith46.

¹⁶ Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol.89 p84 chapter8 hadith16

¹⁷ Kāshāni, *Ma'ādin al-Ḥikmah*, vol.1 p244. Ibn Abi al-Ḥadid, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* vol.9 p118

¹⁸ The Holy Qur'an, Elaborated (41):6

¹⁹ The Holy Qur'an, The Criterion (25):7

²⁰ The Holy Qur'an, Jonah (10):14

²¹ Noori, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol.18 p259 chapter55 hadith5

²² Sheikh al-Mufid, *al-Irshad* vol. 1 pp148-149

-
- ²³ The Holy Qur'an, The Estates (8):16
- ²⁴ The Holy Qur'an, The Family of 'Imrān (3):152
- ²⁵ The Holy Qur'an, The Family of 'Imrān (3):155
- ²⁶ *al-Kāmil fi al-Tāreekh*, vol.2 p173
- ²⁷ al-Ṣadūq, *Amāli*, p237 no. 8 majlis 32. al-Ṭabrasi, *A lām al-Warā*, vol.1 p227. *Tāreekh al-Ṭabari* vol.2 p341
- ²⁸ The Holy Qur'an, The Bee (16):90
- ²⁹ The Holy Qur'an, The Night Journey (17):70
- ³⁰ The Holy Qur'an, The Prophets (21):107
- ³¹ The Holy Qur'an, The Confederates (33):6
- ³² *al-Kāfi*, vol.7, p374, hadith11. *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.19 pp267-268 chapter30 hadith35593. *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.18 p327 chapter23 hadith22863
- ³³ *al-Irshād*, vol.1 p205
- ³⁴ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol.18 p332 chapter34 hadith6
- ³⁵ *Wasā'il al-Shi'a*, vol.29 p260 chapter24 hadith1
- ³⁶ *Wasā'il al-Shi'a*, vol.29 p261 chapter24 hadith2
- ³⁷ Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History*, p446.
- ³⁸ Gandhi, *My Religion*.
- ³⁹ al-Ḥizb al-Shiyū'i fi al-Mizān pp4-19
- ⁴⁰ al-Ḥizb al-Shiyū'i fi al-Mizān pp4-19
- ⁴¹ al-Ḥizb al-Shiyū'i fi al-Mizān pp4-19
- ⁴² al-Ḥizb al-Shiyū'i fi al-Mizān pp4-19

Chapter Two

- ¹ The Holy Qur'an, The Elevation (7):157
- ² *Tafsir al-Qummi*, vol.2 p228. Ibn Abi al-Ḥadid al-Mu'tazili: *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol.14 p54 para 1
- ³ The Holy Qur'an, The Estates (8):30
- ⁴ The Holy Qur'an, Morning Brightness (93):1-3
- ⁵ The Holy Qur'an, Ḥajr (15):95
- ⁶ The Holy Qur'an, The Pen (68):1-2
- ⁷ The Holy Qur'an, Yāseen (36):69
- ⁸ The Holy Qur'an, Yāseen (36):1-3
- ⁹ The Holy Qur'an, The Mount (52):29

-
- ¹⁰ The Holy Qur'an, The Estates (8):30
- ¹¹ The Holy Qur'an, The Criterion (25):6
- ¹² The Holy Qur'an, Women (4):145
- ¹³ The Holy Qur'an, The Pleader (58):20
- ¹⁴ The Holy Qur'an, Repentance (9):61
- ¹⁵ The Holy Qur'an, The Confederates (33):57
- ¹⁶ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letters: 45 Extract from a letter of his, peace be upon him, to 'Othmān ibn Ḥunayf al-Anṣārī who was his commissioner in Baṣra.
- ¹⁷ Ibn Abi al-Ḥadid, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* vol.13 p279
- ¹⁸ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sayings: no. 9
- ¹⁹ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.16 p232 chapter9
- ²⁰ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.1 p211
- ²¹ The Holy Qur'an, The Family of 'Imrān (3):153
- ²² *Oyoon al-Athar* vol.2 p422
- ²³ *Makārim al-Akhlāq* pp18-19 chapter1 Para 2
- ²⁴ *Makārim al-Akhlāq* p19 chapter1 Para 2
- ²⁵ *Musnad Aḥmad* vol.3 p364, *Musnad Jābir ibn 'Abdallāh. Bihār al-Anwār* vol.20 p175 chapter15
- ²⁶ al-Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Sunan al-Nabi* p413; see also *al-Manāqib* vol.1 p192 where this humanitarian supplication is attributed to the Battle of Uḥud and *al-Manāqib* vol.1 p215 where it is said that he said this supplication when he faced the fiercest vexation by the tyrants of Quraysh – Abu Jahl and his ilk – and similarly that he uttered this supplication at the Battle of the Conquest.
- ²⁷ *Sunan al-Nasā'i*, vol.8 p33. *Makārim al-Akhlāq* p17 chapter1 Para 2
- ²⁸ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol. 21 p105 chapter26
- ²⁹ The Holy Qur'an, Joseph (12):92
- ³⁰ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol. 21 p104 chapter26. Abu Sufyān's home was in the highest part of Mecca and Hakim ibn Ḥazzām's home was in the lowest part of Mecca. They were the chiefs of the pagans and became Muslims on the day that Mecca was conquered.
- ³¹ *A'lām al-Warā'* p108 *al-Rukn al-Awwal* chapter4
- ³² *al-Kāfī* vol. 2 p108 hadith9
- ³³ For more information see al-Majlisi's *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.21 p364 chapter53
- ³⁴ The Holy Qur'an, The Apartments (49):4

-
- ³⁵ The Holy Qur'an, the Family of 'Imrān (3):110.
- ³⁶ *Makārim al-Akhlaq* p21 chapter1 Para 2
- ³⁷ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.16 p8 chapter5
- ³⁸ *al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya* vol.4 p418
- ³⁹ al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* vol.9 p117
- ⁴⁰ al-Qāḍi Ayyād, *al-Shifā bi Ta'rif Huquq al-Muṣṭafā*, vol.1 p124
- ⁴¹ Ibn al-Bīṭriq, *al-'Umdah*, pp335-336 para 36 hadith561
- ⁴² al-Maghribi, *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, vol.1 p152
- ⁴³ al-Aḥsā'i, 'Awālī al-Li'ālī', vol.1 p54 para 4 hadith61 and vol.2 p21 al-Maslak al-Rābi' hadith43
- ⁴⁴ Ibn al-Bīṭriq, *al-'Umdah*, p317 hadith532
- ⁴⁵ *al-Khiṣāl* pp490-491 hadith69
- ⁴⁶ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.8 p300 hadith1 and, p258 hadith1
- ⁴⁷ al-Jawāhiri, *Jawāhir al-Kalām* vol.36 p124
- ⁴⁸ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 167 At the beginning of his Caliphate.
- ⁴⁹ *Mostadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol.8 p304
- ⁵⁰ *Mostadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol.8 p303
- ⁵¹ *Mostadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol.8 p303
- ⁵² *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.62 p65
- ⁵³ *Mostadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol.8 p301
- ⁵⁴ al-Irbili, *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol.1 p11
- ⁵⁵ al-Mufid, *al-Irshād*, vol.1 p145
- ⁵⁶ See: al-Ṭabrasi, *A'lām al-Warā* p118. and also Ibn Hishām, *Sirat al-Nabi*, vol.4 p101 *Ghazwat Ḥunayn*
- ⁵⁷ al-Ḥimyari, *Qurb al-Isnād* p44
- ⁵⁸ al-Ṭabrasi, *Makārim al-Akhlaq* p25
- ⁵⁹ The Holy Qur'an, The Confederates (33):21
- ⁶⁰ al-Aḥsā'i, 'Awālī al-Li'ālī' vol.2 p256 chapter2 hadith1
- ⁶¹ al-Barqi, *al-Mahāsīn* vol.2 p319, hadith46
- ⁶² Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p132
- ⁶³ Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.40 p76 chapter91 extract from hadith113
- ⁶⁴ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p132

-
- ⁶⁵ Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol.38, 74, Chapter 60
- ⁶⁶ Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol.40 p319 chapter98 hadith3
- ⁶⁷ Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol.40 pp338-339 chapter98 hadith23
- ⁶⁸ al-Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol.43 p321 chapter13 hadith5
- ⁶⁹ al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmili, *Wasā’il al-Shi‘a*, vol.18 pp322-323 chapter2 hadith12
- ⁷⁰ al-Nūri, *Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, vol.13 p392 chapter4 hadith2
- ⁷¹ al-Ṣadūq, *man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqih*, vol.3 p182 hadith 3683
- ⁷² The Holy Qur’an, The Family of ‘Imrān (3):164
- ⁷³ The Holy Qur’an, Friday (62):2
- ⁷⁴ The Holy Qur’an, The Heifer (2):129
- ⁷⁵ The Holy Qur’an, The Heifer (2):151
- ⁷⁶ *Makārim al-Akhlāq* p20; *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.16 p233 chapter9 hadith35
- ⁷⁷ *Makārim al-Akhlāq* p21
- ⁷⁸ *Makārim al-Akhlāq* p21
- ⁷⁹ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.16 p235 chapter9
- ⁸⁰ *Wasā’il al-Shi‘a* vol.12 pp108-109 chapter75 hadith5
- ⁸¹ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.16 p229 chapter9 extract from hadith35
- ⁸² *Makārim al-Akhlāq* p16 chapter1 Para 2
- ⁸³ al-Nūri, *Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, vol.8 p268 chapter13 hadith3
- ⁸⁴ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.22 p34 chapter37
- ⁸⁵ *Makārim al-Akhlāq* p17 chapter1 Para 2
- ⁸⁶ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.16 p236 chapter9
- ⁸⁷ The Holy Qur’an, The Pen (68):4
- ⁸⁸ *Makārim al-Akhlāq* p23 chapter1 Para 2
- ⁸⁹ The Holy Qur’an, The Star (53):3-5

Chapter Three

- ¹ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.3 p62
- ² al-Irbili, *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol.1 p148
- ³ al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi, *Tāreekh Baghdād*, vol.13 p186 hadith7165 Pub. (Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya edition, Beirut)
- ⁴ al-Hākīm al-Naisāburi, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, vol.3 p137 hadith4637 First edition 1411 A.H. 1990 (Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya Beirut)

-
- ⁵ Abu Na‘im, *Hilyat al-Awliyā*, vol.1 p64 (Fourth Edition Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabi.) *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* vol.5 p637 hadith3723,(Dar Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabi edition, Beirut.) and *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī*, vol.10 p155 (Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya edition, Beirut.)
- ⁶ *Tāreekh Baghdād*, vol.7 p11 hadith3475 (Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya edition, Beirut.) and al-Mināwi, *Fayḍ al-Qadir*, vol.4p357 (al-Maktabah al-Tijāriyyah al-Kubrā edition, Egypt.)
- ⁷ *Nahj al-Balāghah*; Aphorisms: 236
- ⁸ *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.16 p278 chapter9 hadith116
- ⁹ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.40 p323 chapter98 hadith6. also Ibn Sa’ad, *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra*, vol.8 p23. Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tāreekh Dimishq*, vol.42 p376. al-Dhahabi, *Tāreekh al-Islam*, vol.3 p637. Ibn Kathir, *bidāyah w nahāyah*, vol.7 p378.
- ¹⁰ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.40 p323 chapter98 extract from hadith6
- ¹¹ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.40 p323 chapter98 extract from hadith6
- ¹² Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p98
- ¹³ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.40 p325 chapter98 hadith7
- ¹⁴ Khūrnaq is a famous place outside Hira; al-Ḥimyari, *Mo‘jam al-Buldān* vol.2 p401
- ¹⁵ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.40 p334 chapter98 hadith15. *Kashf al-Ghummah* vol.1 p173
- ¹⁶ *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.40 p327 chapter98 hadith9
- ¹⁷ *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.41 p102 chapter107 hadith1
- ¹⁸ *Mustadrak al-Wasa’il* vol.16 pp299-300 chapter72 hadith14
- ¹⁹ *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.40 p318 chapter98 hadith2
- ²⁰ *al-Ikhtiṣās* p153
- ²¹ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p95
- ²² The Holy Qur’an, The Family ‘Imrān (3):133
- ²³ The Holy Qur’an, The Family ‘Imrān (3):114
- ²⁴ The Holy Qur’an, The Prophets (21):90
- ²⁵ The Holy Qur’an, The Believers (23):61
- ²⁶ *Tahdheeb al-Aḥkām* vol.2 p41 chapter4 hadith81
- ²⁷ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p95.
- ²⁸ *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.40 p322 chapter98

-
- ²⁹ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.40 p322 chapter98 extract from hadith4
- ³⁰ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.40 p322 chapter98
- ³¹ al-Kulayni, *al-Kāfī*, vol.6 p438
- ³² *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.18 p322 chapter2 hadith11
- ³³ *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* vol.2 p200
- ³⁴ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.41 p117 chapter107 hadith24
- ³⁵ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.41 p117 chapter107 hadith24
- ³⁶ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p111
- ³⁷ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p111
- ³⁸ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.41 p118 chapter107 extract from hadith25
- ³⁹ *al-Kāfī* vol.8 p165 chapter8 hadith176
- ⁴⁰ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermons33; part of a speech he made when he set off for the Battle of Basra.
- ⁴¹ al-Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd* p174 chapter28 hadith3
- ⁴² *al-Kāfī* vol.1 p410
- ⁴³ The Holy Qur'an, The Table (5):42
- ⁴⁴ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.101 p273 Chapter3 hadith5
- ⁴⁵ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.101 p273 chapter3 hadith6
- ⁴⁶ *al-Makāsib al-Muḥarramah* vol.1 p239 al-mas'alah8: p246 Ḥukm al-Hadiyyah
- ⁴⁷ *ibid.* vol.1 p246 Ḥukm al-Hadiyyah
- ⁴⁸ *ibid.* vol.1 p246 Ḥukm al-Hadiyyah
- ⁴⁹ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermons: 224 About keeping aloof from oppression
- ⁵⁰ al-Mufid, *al-Fuṣūl al-Mukhtāra* pp135 and 224
- ⁵¹ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 pp108-109
- ⁵² *Nahj al-Balāghah* vol.2 p216 Sermon 224
- ⁵³ *al-Iktisās* p151
- ⁵⁴ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.40 p106 chapter91 hadith117
- ⁵⁵ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p109
- ⁵⁶ Ibn Abi al-Ḥadid, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* vol.2 p200.
- ⁵⁷ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p113
- ⁵⁸ The Holy Qur'an, The Elevation (7):85

-
- ⁵⁹ al-Irbili, *Kashf al-Ghummah* vol.1 p174; Ibn ‘Asākir also narrates this in *Tāreekh Dimashq* vol.69 p225 under his entry on Sawdah at no. 9363; in *al-Isti‘āb* vol.3 p1111 ibn ‘Abd al-Birr narrates something similar on the authority of Abu Ishāq al-Subay‘i.
- ⁶⁰ al-Irbili, *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol.1 p175
- ⁶¹ Noori, *Mustadrak al-Wasā’il* vol.17 p359 chapter11 hadith8
- ⁶² *Safeenat al-Bihār* vol.1 p669
- ⁶³ al-Hindi, *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, vol.10 p283 no. 29456
- ⁶⁴ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letters: 40 Letter to one of his commissioners.
- ⁶⁵ al-Sadūq, *al-Āmālī*, p304 Majlis 62 hadith8
- ⁶⁶ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letters: 20
- ⁶⁷ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 26 His instructions to Zakāt collectors.
- ⁶⁸ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 167 At the beginning of his Caliphate.
- ⁶⁹ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 53 An order to al-Ashtar al-Nakha‘i when Imam Ali appointed him as governor of Egypt and its provinces.
- ⁷⁰ *Nahj al-Balāghah* Letter 31 His testamentary instruction to al-Hasan ibn Ali, peace be upon him, which he wrote to him in the presence of witnesses.
- ⁷¹ *al-Kāfi* vol.8 p69 hadith26
- ⁷² *Safeenat al-Bihār* vol.2 p499
- ⁷³ The Holy Qur’an, Byzantium (30):60
- ⁷⁴ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.33 p430 chapter26 hadith639
- ⁷⁵ al-Mufid, *al-Fuṣūl al-Mukhtārah* p97
- ⁷⁶ al-Sharif al-Raḍi, *Khaṣā’is al-A‘immah* p75
- ⁷⁷ al-Mufid, *al-Fuṣūl al-Mukhtārah* pp220, 224
- ⁷⁸ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.41 p49 chapter104 extract from hadith1
- ⁷⁹ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.32 p124 chapter1 hadith100
- ⁸⁰ For more details on this see *al-Ghadir* by ‘Allamah Amini.
- ⁸¹ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p261. Al-Qutb al-Rāwandi, *al-Kharā’ij wa al-Jarā’ij* vol.1 pp225-226 chapter2 and vol.2 pp746-747 chapter15. Al-Ṣadouq, *al-Khiṣāl* vol.2 pp644-645 hadith26. Al-Ṣaffār, *Baṣā’iral-Darajāt* p306 chapter16 hadith15.
- ⁸² The Holy Qur’an, The Night Journey (17):71
- ⁸³ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.41 pp286-287 chapter114 hadith7; al-Qandūzi narrates something similar in *Yanābi‘ al-Mawaddah* vol.1 p218 no. 35

-
- ⁸⁴ Ibn Ṭāwoos, *al-Tarāʾif*, pp454-455
- ⁸⁵ Ibn Abi al-Ḥadid al-Muʿtazili, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* vol.12 p283
- ⁸⁶ The Holy Qurʾan, Ṭāhā(20):61
- ⁸⁷ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *Manāqib Āl Abu Ṭālib*, vol.2 p96, citing Ahmad ibn Hanbalʾs *Musnad*.
- ⁸⁸ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol.54 p231 chapter1 hadith188. The verse is no. 169 from The Holy Qurʾan, The Family of ʿImrān.
- ⁸⁹ *Safeenat al-Biḥār* vol.1 p586. Sulaymān al-Ḥilli: *al-Muḥtaḍar* p88
- ⁹⁰ *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* vol.20 p63 no. 428
- ⁹¹ *Wasāʾil al-Shiʿa* vol.28 p215 chapter27 hadith34594. [This is to show how seriously the matter is taken; how offensive it is to God.]
- ⁹² *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil* vol.18 p106 chapter23 hadith22201
- ⁹³ al-Qāḍi al-Maghribi, *Daʿāʾim al-Islām*, vol.2 pp459-460 hadith1620
- ⁹⁴ *Jāmiʿ al-Shetāʾ*, vol.2 p712
- ⁹⁵ *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil* vol.17 p142 chapter1 hadith20985
- ⁹⁶ *al-Kāfī* vol.7 pp269-270 hadith44
- ⁹⁷ *Thawāb al-Aʿmāl* p211
- ⁹⁸ *Tahdheeb al-Ahkām* vol.10 pp86-87 chapter6 hadith101 and p215 chapter15 hadith52
- ⁹⁹ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.32 p807 chapter1 hadith2. *Tāreekh al-Ṭabari* vol.3 p451. al-Balādhuri, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* p207 and other sources
- ¹⁰⁰ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.32 p33 chapter1 hadith19
- ¹⁰¹ *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.41 p299 chapter114 hadith29
- ¹⁰² The Holy Qurʾan, Ṭāhā (20):97
- ¹⁰³ *Safeenat al-Biḥār* vol.1 p262
- ¹⁰⁴ *Safeenat al-Biḥār* vol.1 p262
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p263
- ¹⁰⁶ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.32 p398 chapter11 hadith370
- ¹⁰⁷ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.97 p364 chapter5 hadith6
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p259. Ibn Abi al-Ḥadid, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol.7 p37
- ¹⁰⁹ *al-Kāfī* vol.8 p182 hadith204. *al-Iktisāṣ* p151
- ¹¹⁰ *Safeenat al-Biḥār* vol.1 p676

-
- ¹¹¹ *al-Kāfi* vol.3 p186 hadith3
- ¹¹² al-Mufid, *al-Ikhtisās* p152
- ¹¹³ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p111
- ¹¹⁴ *al-Ikhtisās* p151
- ¹¹⁵ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.41 p122 chapter107 hadith29
- ¹¹⁶ *al-Manaqib* vol.2 p110
- ¹¹⁷ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.41 p50 chapter104 extract from hadith2
- ¹¹⁸ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.32 pp229-230 chapter4 hadith181
- ¹¹⁹ The Holy Qur'an, The Apartment (49):9
- ¹²⁰ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.41 p50 chapter104 hadith2
- ¹²¹ *Safeenat al-Bihār* vol.2 p133
- ¹²² *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.41 p50 chapter104 hadith2
- ¹²³ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.41 p50 chapter104 extract from hadith2
- ¹²⁴ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 pp260-261
- ¹²⁵ *al-Manāqib* vol.2 p114
- ¹²⁶ *al-Manāqib* vol.2 p114
- ¹²⁷ The Holy Qur'an, The Faithful (23):96
- ¹²⁸ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p113
- ¹²⁹ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.41 pp203-204 chapter110 hadith18
- ¹³⁰ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p112
- ¹³¹ *al-Manāqib* vol.2 p112
- ¹³² Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p106
- ¹³³ *al-Ikhtisās* p157
- ¹³⁴ *al-Ikhtisās* p159
- ¹³⁵ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.41 p55 chapter105 hadith2
- ¹³⁶ The Holy Qur'an, The Stories (28):83
- ¹³⁷ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p104
- ¹³⁸ *al-Manāqib* vol.2 p110
- ¹³⁹ *al-Manāqib* vol.2 p108. Ibn Kathir, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, vol.4 p205.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Tareekh al-Ṭabari*, vol.2 p402
- ¹⁴¹ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.1 p375
- ¹⁴² The Holy Qur'an, The Apartments (49):13

-
- ¹⁴³ al-Baḥrāni, *Tuḥaf al-‘Uqūl* p34
¹⁴⁴ al-Baḥrāni, *Tuḥaf al-‘Uqūl* p34
¹⁴⁵ Ibn Abi al-Ḥadid, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol.2 pp200-201
¹⁴⁶ *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ* p151
¹⁴⁷ *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ* p152
¹⁴⁸ Ibn ShahrĀshoub, *al-Manāqib*, vol.2 p259
¹⁴⁹ *al-Manāqib* vol.2 p259
¹⁵⁰ The Holy Qur’an, The Cave (18):51
¹⁵¹ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.32 p34 chapter1 hadith22
¹⁵² *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.32 pp5-6 chapter1 hadith1
¹⁵³ al-Irbili, *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol.2 p218
¹⁵⁴ The Holy Qur’an, The Table (5):82

Chapter Four

- ¹ *Nahj al-Balāghah* Letter 31, Part of his testamentary instruction to al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali, peace be upon them, which he wrote to him in the presence of witnesses.
- ² The Holy Qur’an, The Heifer (2):256
- ³ The expression in italic paraphrasing the Qur’anic verse 28:21
- ⁴ The Holy Qur’an, Stories (28):85
- ⁵ The Holy Qur’an, Victory (48):27
- ⁶ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.21 p130 chapter26 extract from hadith22
- ⁷ The Holy Qur’an, The Heifer (2):256
- ⁸ The Holy Qur’an, The Heifer (2):257
- ⁹ The Holy Qur’an, The Elevation (7):157
- ¹⁰ The Holy Qur’an, The Town (90):10
- ¹¹ The Holy Qur’an, The Enwrapped (73):19; The Holy Qur’an, Mankind (76):29
- ¹² The Holy Qur’an, The Criterion (25):57
- ¹³ The Holy Qur’an, Mankind (76):3
- ¹⁴ The Holy Qur’an, The Confederates (33):6
- ¹⁵ In *Tafsir Nūr al-Thaqalayn* vol.4 p237 in the exegesis of surah al-Aḥzāb (The Confederates) there is a plethora of holy aḥadith which say this.
- ¹⁶ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.2 p273 chapter33 hadith7

-
- ¹⁷ *Nahj al-Balāghah* Letter 31 Part of his testamentary instruction to al-Ḥasan ibn Ali, peace be upon him, which he wrote to him in the presence of witnesses.
- ¹⁸ *Safeenat al-Biḥār* vol.2 p431
- ¹⁹ *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.15 p66 chapter19 hadith1
- ²⁰ al-Yamāmah: settlements to the east of Mecca. It is said that it is part of Yemen. See *al-Qāmūs* and *Majmi' al-Baḥrayn*
- ²¹ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 45: The letter Imam Ali, peace be upon him, wrote to 'Othmān ibn Ḥunayf al-Anṣārī who was his Commissioner in Baṣrah.
- ²² *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.9 p52 chapter7 hadith1 1501 where it is narrated on His authority, peace be upon him: "Whoever's hunger has been sated of an evening while his neighbour goes hungry does not believe in me ..."
- ²³ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sayings: 328
- ²⁴ *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.9 p12 chapter1 hadith6
- ²⁵ *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.9 p373 chapter2 hadith1
- ²⁶ *al-Kāfi* vol.5 pp318 -319 hadith95
- ²⁷ al-Mufid, *al-Amāli*, 187-188, Majlis3, hadith14
- ²⁸ *Tafsir Nūr al-Thaqalayn* vol.4 p240al-Aḥzāb, hadith23
- ²⁹ *al-Kāfi* vol.1 p406 hadith6
- ³⁰ *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol.18, p242
- ³¹ *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol.18, p319
- ³² *Tafsir al-Qummi* vol.1 p94 The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqara: Ahkām al-Ribā
- ³³ *Ma'āni al-Akḥbār* p52 hadith3
- ³⁴ al-Mufid, *al-Amāli*, 187-188, Majlis3, hadith14
- ³⁵ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.17 p207 chapter2 hadith1
- ³⁶ *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.26 p247 chapter3 hadith4
- ³⁷ *al-Kāfi* vol.5 p93 hadith3. *Tahdheeb al-Aḥkām*, vol.6 p184 chapter81 hadith6
- ³⁸ *al-Kāfi* vol.5 p94 hadith7. *Tahdheeb al-Aḥkām*, vol.6 p184 chapter81 hadith4
- ³⁹ *Tahdheeb al-Aḥkām* vol.6 p211 chapter84 hadith11
- ⁴⁰ The Holy Qur'an, The Heifer (2):280
- ⁴¹ *Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi* vol.1p155 The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqara hadith520
- ⁴² *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.13 p400 chapter9 hadith7
- ⁴³ *al-Kāfi* vol.5 p280 hadith6

-
- ⁴⁴ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.17 p111 chapter1 hadith1
- ⁴⁵ 'Awāli al-Li'āli vol.3 p180 Qism 2 hadith3
- ⁴⁶ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.17 p111 chapter1 hadith4
- ⁴⁷ Jurji Zaydān
- ⁴⁸ A fourth century AH historian
- ⁴⁹ *Tāreekh al-Tamaddun al-Islāmi*, vol.1, pp117-119
- ⁵⁰ al-Ḥurr al-Āmili, *Wasā'il al-Shia*, vol. 17, p42
- ⁵¹ *Tāreekh al-Tamaddun al-Islāmi*, vol.1, pp120-121
- ⁵² For more information see *al-Iṣlāḥ al-Zirā'i fil al-Islām* [Agricultural Reform in Islam] by the author
- ⁵³ The Holy Qur'an, Throngs (39):9
- ⁵⁴ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.1 p177 chapter1 hadith55
- ⁵⁵ *Tafsir al-Qummi* vol.2 p401 footnote
- ⁵⁶ al-Ṣadūq, *Amāli* p60 Majlis 14
- ⁵⁷ *Diwān al-Imām Ali* p24
- ⁵⁸ *al-Maḥāsin* p229 hadith165
- ⁵⁹ al-Amir Warrām al-Ashtari, *Tanbih al-Khawāṭir wa Nuzhat al-Nawāzīr*, hadith2 p176
- ⁶⁰ *al-Makāsib* vol.1 p13
- ⁶¹ The Holy Qur'an, The Scatterers (51):56
- ⁶² The Holy Qur'an, The Elevation (7):31
- ⁶³ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.59 p267 chapter88 hadith42
- ⁶⁴ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.59 The sections on medicine, curing the illnesses, and the merits of medications.
- ⁶⁵ by Abu al-'Abbās al-Mustaghfiri (332-350 AH) born and died in the city of Nisf near Samarqand
- ⁶⁶ by al-Mirza Muḥammad al-Rāzi al-Najafi born in 1318 AH
- ⁶⁷ by 'Abdallāh and Ḥusayn sons of Buṣṭām who are among the luminaries of the fourth century AH
- ⁶⁸ by al-Khalili (2 volumes)
- ⁶⁹ *Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā* vol.1 p85 chapter22 hadith11
- ⁷⁰ *Jāmi' al-Akhbār* p101 para 58
- ⁷¹ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.100 p220 chapter1 hadith19

-
- ⁷²*man lā yahḍuruḥu al-faqih* vol.3 p384
⁷³*Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.14 p161 chapter5 hadith8
⁷⁴ The Holy Qur'an, The Light (24):32
⁷⁵*Tabṣira al-Muta'allimin* p179 Kitāb al-Nikāḥ para 3
⁷⁶ The Holy Qur'an, Women (4):3
⁷⁷ al-Sadūq, *al-Amālī* p423 al-Majlis 66 hadith1
⁷⁸*Makārim al-Akhlāq* p424
⁷⁹ The Holy Qur'an, The Heifer (2):179
⁸⁰ The Holy Qur'an, The Table (5):38
⁸¹ The Holy Qur'an, Women (4):43
⁸² The Holy Qur'an, The Table (5):6
⁸³ The Holy Qur'an, The Jinn (72):18
⁸⁴*Wasā'il al-Shi'a*, vol.28 pp252-253 chapter4 hadith5

Chapter Five

- ¹ The Holy Qur'an, Explained (41):34
² The Holy Qur'an, The Heifer (2):208
³ The Holy Qur'an, The Estates (8):61
⁴ The Holy Qur'an, The Chargers (100):2-3
⁵*Tafsir Majma' al-Bayān* vol.10 p424
⁶*al-Kāfi* vol.5 p27 hadith1
⁷*al-Kāfi* vol.2 p337 hadith4
⁸ The Holy Qur'an, The Apartments (49):9
⁹*al-Kāfi* vol.5 p28
¹⁰*man lā yahḍuruḥu al-faqih* vol.2 p52
¹¹*al-Kāfi* vol.5 p30 hadith1
¹²*Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.26 p14 chapter1 hadith11
¹³ Muhaqqiq al-Hilli, *Sharā'i' al-Islām*, vol.1 p238
¹⁴*Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.15 p67 chapter20 hadith2
¹⁵*Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.15 p68 chapter20 hadith4
¹⁶*Jawāhir al-Kalām* vol.21 p95
¹⁷*Jawāhir al-Kalām* vol.21 p95
¹⁸*al-Kāfi* vol.5 p31 hadith5

-
- ¹⁹ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.11 p45 chapter18 hadith4
- ²⁰ *Oyoun Akhbār al-Riḍā*, peace be upon him, vol.2 p93
- ²¹ The Holy Qur'an, The Shrouded (74):42-43
- ²² The Holy Qur'an, The Light (24):37
- ²³ The Holy Qur'an, Ṭāhā(20):132
- ²⁴ The Holy Qur'an, Women (4):115
- ²⁵ The Holy Qur'an, The Family of 'Imrān (3):115
- ²⁶ The Holy Qur'an, The Estates (8):15
- ²⁷ The Holy Qur'an, Ṭāhā(20):52
- ²⁸ The Holy Qur'an, The Bee (16):128
- ²⁹ *al-Kāfī* vol.5 p36 hadith1
- ³⁰ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.11 p82 chapter32 hadith5
- ³¹ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.11 p83 chapter32 hadith6
- ³² *Tahdheeb al-Aḥkām* vol.6 p151 chapter67 hadith1
- ³³ The Holy Qur'an, Women (4):94
- ³⁴ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.11 pp90-91 chapter35 hadith1
- ³⁵ *Tahdheeb al-Aḥkām* vol.6 p152 chapter68 hadith1
- ³⁶ The Holy Qur'an, Women (4):141
- ³⁷ *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.26 p14 chapter1 hadith11
- ³⁸ *Da'ā'im al-Islām* vol.1 p376
- ³⁹ *al-Kāfī* vol.5 p47 hadith1
- ⁴⁰ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.11 pp113-114 chapter47 hadith6
- ⁴¹ *al-'Odad al-Qawīyah* p57
- ⁴² *al-Mahāsīn* p263 chapter34 hadith327

Chapter Six

- ¹ The Holy Qur'an, The Bee (16):90
- ² *'Awāli al-Li'ālī* vol.4 p103 hadith150
- ³ The Holy Qur'an, The Woman Tested (60):8-9
- ⁴ *Nahj al-Balāghah* Sermon 200; On the treason and treachery of Mo'āwiyah and the fate of those guilty of treason
- ⁵ *al-Kāfī* vol.2 p337 hadith4
- ⁶ The Holy Qur'an, Repentance (9):5

-
- ⁷ *al-Kāfi* vol.5 p38 hadith3
- ⁸ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.18 p256 chapter51 hadith7
- ⁹ The Holy Qur'an, Women (4):94
- ¹⁰ al-Ṣadūq, *al-amāli*, p639
- ¹¹ The Holy Qur'an, Sheba (34):28
- ¹² The Holy Qur'an, The Elevation (7):158
- ¹³ The Holy Qur'an, Women (4):75
- ¹⁴ *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.26 p14 chapter1 hadith11
- ¹⁵ The Holy Qur'an, Women (4):97
- ¹⁶ *al-Kāfi* vol.5 p43 hadith1
- ¹⁷ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.11 p89 chapter34 hadith12489
- ¹⁸ The late Marji' Sayyid Muhammad Shirazi (may Allah bless him), *al-Fiqh*, vol.47 p131, case 32
- ¹⁹ The Holy Qur'an, The Night Journey (17):15-16
- ²⁰ *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.11 p30 chapter9 hadith1
- ²¹ The Holy Qur'an, The Estates (8):15-16
- ²² *man lā yahḍuruḥu al-faqih* vol.3 pp565-566 hadith4934
- ²³ The Holy Qur'an, The Prophets (21):92
- ²⁴ The Holy Qur'an, The Faithful (23):52
- ²⁵ The Holy Qur'an, The Apartments (49):13
- ²⁶ *Tafsir al-Qummi* vol.2 p322
- ²⁷ *Tafsir al-Qummi* vol.2 p322
- ²⁸ The Holy Qur'an, The Prophets (21):92; The Holy Qur'an, The Faithful (23):52
- ²⁹ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.2 p272 chapter33 hadith7
- ³⁰ *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.25 p386 chapter1 hadith4
- ³¹ *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.29 p10 chapter1 hadith3
- ³² *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.17 p446 chapter46 hadith5
- ³³ *al-Khiṣāl* vol.1 p338 hadith40
- ³⁴ *al-Khiṣāl* vol.2 p436 hadith22
- ³⁵ *al-Khiṣāl* vol.2 p436 hadith23
- ³⁶ al-Ṣadūq, *al-Amāli* p210 Majlis37 hadith9
- ³⁷ *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol.17, 402, Chapter 5, hadith19

³⁸ The Holy Qur'an, The Family of 'Imrān (3):200

³⁹ al-Noori, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* vol.11 p27 chapter6 hadith3

⁴⁰ The Holy Qur'an, The Woman Tested (60):8-9

⁴¹ *Tafsir Majma' al-Bayān* vol.9 p449

⁴² *Nahj al-Balāghah* Letter 53 A letter he wrote to al-Ashtar al-Nakha'i when He appointed him as Governor of Egypt and its provinces

⁴³ The Holy Qur'an, The Confederates (33):21

⁴⁴ *Tafsir Majma' al-Bayān* vol.9 pp449-451

⁴⁵ The Holy Qur'an, The Woman Tested (60):13

⁴⁶ See *Tafsir Majma' al-Bayān* vol.9 p457

Chapter Seven

¹ The Holy Qur'an, Women (4):59

² As opposed to his actual caliphate which began immediately after the Prophet died.

³ al-Ṭūsi, *al-Amāli* p728 extract from hadith5

⁴ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 45: The letter Imam Ali, peace be upon him, wrote to 'Othmān ibn Ḥunayf al-Anṣārī who was his Commissioner in Baṣrah, when the Imam learned that his commissioner was invited to a banquet and he accepted the invitation.

⁵ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 45: The letter Imam Ali, peace be upon him, wrote to 'Othmān ibn Ḥunayf al-Anṣārī who was his Commissioner in Baṣrah.

⁶ The Holy Qur'an, The Pleader (58):22

⁷ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 45: The letter Imam Ali, peace be upon him, wrote to 'Othmān ibn Ḥunayf al-Anṣārī who was his Commissioner in Baṣrah.

⁸ *Nahj al-Balāghah* Sermon 209, What he said in Baṣra when he went to see al-'Alā ibn Ziyād al-Ḥārithi who was one of his companions

⁹ As mentioned in Chapter Three

¹⁰ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 45

¹¹ *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.27 p131 chapter10 hadith20

¹² *Wasā'il al-Shi'a* vol.27 p140 chapter11 hadith9

Chapter Eight

¹ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 19

² *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 20

³ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 21

⁴*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 25

⁵*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 25

⁶*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 27

⁷*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 27

⁸*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 27

⁹*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 27

¹⁰*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 27

¹¹*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 40

¹²*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 46

¹³ Tr: Interpretation as per Ayatollah Muhammad Shirāzi's commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, (Beirut: Dār al-'Ulūm, 1429 AH), 574

¹⁴ The Holy Qur'an, Women (4):59

¹⁵ By making it too long

¹⁶ By rushing it too much

¹⁷ The Holy Qur'an, The Array, (61):3

¹⁸ The Holy Qur'an, The Heifer, (2):156

¹⁹*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 53

²⁰*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 76

²¹ al-Majlisi interprets this as, "Allow everyone ample face time..." See *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 33, 498 (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Wafā', 1983),

²²*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 67 A letter he, peace be upon him, wrote to Qutham ibn 'Abbās, his commissioner in Mecca

²³*Makārim al-Akhlaq* p16

²⁴*man lā yahḍuruḥu al-faqih* vol.2 p610 hadith3213

Chapter Nine

¹*Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.97 p80 chapter1 hadith37

²*Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.27 p217 chapter9 hadith18

³*Khāṭimat al-Mustadrak* vol.3 p216

⁴*Riyāḍ al-'Ulamā' wa Hiyāḍ al-Fuḍalā'* vol.1 p276 (al-Khayyām edition, the holy city of Qumm)

⁵*al-Kāmil fi al-Tāreekh* vol.8 p81 (Dār al-Ṣādir edition Beirut, Lebanon 1399 AH 1979 CE)

⁶*A'yān al-Shi'a* vol.5 p179 no. 425

-
- ⁷ *Rijāl al-Kashshi* p260 no. 682 and *Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p7
- ⁸ *Mizān al-I'tidāl* vol.1 p493 no. 1857
- ⁹ *A'yān al-Shi'a* vol.5 p104 no. 257
- ¹⁰ *Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p10
- ¹¹ al-Baghdādi, *Hidāyat al-'Ārifīn* vol.1 p69; al-Tehrāni, *al-Dhari'a ilā Taṣānif al-Shi'a* vol.22 p6 no. 5743
- ¹² al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* vol.16 p222 no. 155, Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mizān* vol.4 p238 no. 642 and *Fihrist Ibn Nadīm* p226
- ¹³ *al-Kunā wa al-Alqāb* vol.1 p446
- ¹⁴ Amini, *al-Ghadir* vol.3 p399 and *Mo'jam al-Maṭbū'āt al-'Arabiyya* vol.1 p336 and al-Zarkali, *al-A'lām* vol.2 p155
- ¹⁵ al-Khawānsāri, *Rawḍat al-Jannāt* vol.3 p19 (al-Ḥaydariyyah edition Tehran 1390 AH)
- ¹⁶ *A'yān al-Shi'a* vol.1 p191 Discussion 11.
- ¹⁷ *al-Shi'a wa Funūn al-Islām* p113 4th edition (Dār al-Mu'allim li al-Ṭabā'ah 1396 AH, Egypt)
- ¹⁸ al-Shākiri, *Rub' Qarn ma' al-'Allāma al-Amini* p168; Ibn' Asākīr, *Tāreekh Medina Dimashq*
- ¹⁹ *Rawḍat al-Jannāt* vol.2 p168 no. 163 (al-Ḥaydariyya edition Tehran 1390AH)
- ²⁰ *A'yān al-Shi'a* vol.4 p7 no. 12
- ²¹ *al-Shi'a wa Funūn al-Islām* p173
- ²² *Hidāyat al-'Ārifīn* vol.1 p248 and *Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p31
- ²³ *Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p31
- ²⁴ *Rijāl al-Najashi* p87 no. 210; *Rijāl ibn Dawud* p42 no. 114; al-Tafrashi, *Naqd al-Rijāl* vol.1 p150 no. 126/301
- ²⁵ *al-Shi'a wa Funūn al-Islām* p117
- ²⁶ Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya* vol.12 p20 (Dar Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabi edition Beirut)
- ²⁷ *Rub' Qarn ma' al-'Allāma al-Amini* p161
- ²⁸ al-Ḥamawi, *Mo'jam al-Buldān* vol.3 p104 ; al-Sam'āni, *al-Ansāb* vol.3 p106
- ²⁹ *Bihār al-Anwār* vol.1 p8
- ³⁰ *Khātimat al-Mustadrak* vol.2 p264
- ³¹ *Amal al-Āmil* vol.2 p288 no. 860

-
- ³²*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p37; *Mustadrak Safeenat al-Biḥār* vol.8 p117 and *Sunan al-Nabi* p28 no. 32
- ³³*Amal al-Āmil* vol.2 p87 no. 230
- ³⁴*Khātimat al-Mustadrak* vol.2 p264
- ³⁵*al-A' lām* vol.3 p104; *Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p40; al-Ṭabrasi, *Tafsir Jawāmi' al-Jāmi'* vol.1 p13 no. 41
- ³⁶*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p40; *Siyar A' lām al-Nubalā'* vol.16 p454; *Amal al-Āmil* vol.2 p95 no. 262
- ³⁷*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p45; *Amal al-Āmil* vol.2 p216 no. 650; al-Khū'i, *Mo'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* vol.14 p304 no. 9362
- ³⁸*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p48 *Fihrist Muntakhab al-Din* p384
- ³⁹*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p80; *Sunan al-Nabi* p24 no. 18; *Amal al-Āmil* vol.1 p181 no. 188
- ⁴⁰*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p132; Husayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Sunan al-Nabi* p24 no. 19; *Amal al-Āmil* vol.1 p85 no. 81
- ⁴¹*Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* vol.4 p230 no. 387
- ⁴²*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p168
- ⁴³*Khātimat al-Mustadrak* vol.2 p269; *al-Dhari'a* vol.2 p329; *al-A' lām* vol.4 p136
- ⁴⁴*Amal al-Āmil* vol.1 p118 no. 122; *Mo'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* vol.12 p388 no. 8053
- ⁴⁵*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p171; *Khātimat al-Mustadrak* vol.2 p271; *Amal al-Āmil* vol.2 p336 no. 1037
- ⁴⁶*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p206; *Amal al-Āmil* vol.1 p129 no. 138
- ⁴⁷*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p215; *Khātimat al-Mustadrak* vol.2 p54 no.2
- ⁴⁸*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p275
- ⁴⁹*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p286; *Tara'if al-Maqāl* vol.1 p83 no. 266; *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* vol.4 p198 no. 377
- ⁵⁰*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p350
- ⁵¹*Shuhadā' al-Faḍīlah*, p354; *Mustadrak Safeenat al-Biḥār* vol.5 p271
- ⁵²*Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.72 p38 chapter35 extract from hadith36
- ⁵³*Tafsir al-Qurṭubi* vol.9 p350 at the exegesis of the Almighty's words: ﴿they sought victory, and frustration was the lot of every powerful obstinate transgressor﴾ The Holy Qur'an, Abraham (14):15

APPENDIX

The Fourteen Infallible (*ma'şoom*) 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- Kādim (a.s.)	15Dhil-Ḥajja 128H/745CE	25 Rajab 183H/800CE	Kādimiyyah, 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	Kādimiyyah, Iraq
10. Imam Ali ibn Muhammad, al-Hādī (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-Nisa' 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 with you the two weighty entities (*thaqalayn*) – the book of Allah and my family; the people of my house – the *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-Ḥalabi’s edition); and vol.15 p.179-180 of the Egyptian edition with al-Nawawi’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, boulaq, 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)
- tafsir* of ibn Kathir: vol.4, p113 (dār iḥyā’ 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-Ṭabarāni, p137
- al-durr al-manthur* of al-Siyouti: vol.2, p60, and vol.6, pp 7, 306. Dhakhā’ir al-‘Uqbā, p16
- al-ṣawā’iq al-muḥriqah*, pp147, 226 (Muhammadiyah edition), p 89 (al-Maymaniyyah edition, Egypt)
- al-mu’jam al-ṣaghīr* of al-Ṭabarāni, vol.1, p135
- osud alghābah fi ma’rifat 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-Haythami, vol. 9, pp 162-163
- al-jāmi’ al-ṣaghīr* of al-Siyouti, vol.1, p353 (Egypt edition)
- al-manāqib* of al-Khawārizmi al-Ḥanafī: p223
- farā’id al-simṭayn*, al-Ḥamwini 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-ashraf* of al-Balādhiri, vol.2, p110
- kanz al-ommal*, 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 Omar wanted to order the date system, he asked, “From which day should we start the calendar?” Imam Ali, peace be upon, 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

And the day that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, emigrated was on the 3rd of Rabee‘ I.

Of course, according to the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon him, 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 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.

¹ Ṭareekh al-Ṭabari, vol.2 p110

² Ṭareekh 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

* * * * *

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	ḏ = 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 ^c.

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.

Ṭ 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 ^{◌◌} 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.

* * * * *



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 shari'ah.

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 Oşool (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 (*qard al-ḥasanah*), intellectual institutions such as centres for research and studies, seminaries, *ḥawzahs*, libraries, as well as religious centres such as mosques and *ḥusayniyyahs*.

* * * * *

Publications by *fountain books*

1. *Fundamentals of Islam*

In the first part of this brief discourse the author outlines and briefly discusses *Oṣool al-Deen* (the fundamental principles or beliefs of Islam), which are *Tawḥeed* (the indivisible Oneness of Allah), *‘Adl* (the Divine Justice of Allah), *Nobowwah* (the belief in Prophethood), *Imāmah* (leadership of mankind), and *Mi‘ād* (resurrection or belief in the hereafter). The author also addresses the subject of the Prophet’s eternal miracle – the glorious Qur’an.

In the second part of this publication author goes on to address *Foroo‘ al-Deen* (the essential principles and practices of Islam), which are not only the well-known ten acts of worship such as prayers, fasting and hajj but also other aspects of the teachings of Islam that are significantly relevant in modern times; issues such as the human community, social order, politics, the economy, the armed forces, the justice system, culture, media, education, health, and social freedoms. Through this discussion the author establishes that a government based on the teachings of Islam would provide the most favourable system of government for mankind.

In the third and final part of this work, the author discusses the third component that a Muslim is required to adhere to, namely the Islamic morals and etiquettes (*akhlāq* and *ādāb*). Here, the author briefly outlines and discusses the ‘four pillars’ of Islamic ethics and the ‘two pillars’ of its etiquettes. The author then lists conducts and behaviours that Islam prescribes as one of obligatory, forbidden, unethical, or the recommended moral conduct. This basic yet concise book serves as a good introduction to Islamic beliefs and principles.

2. *Islamic Beliefs for All*

In this book the author discusses the five fundamental principles of Islam in some details. These principles are *Tawḥeed* (the indivisible Oneness of Allah), *‘Adl* (the Divine Justice of Allah), *Nobowwah* (the belief in Prophethood), *Imāmah* (leadership of mankind), and *Mi‘ād*

(Resurrection). The unique aspect of this book is the author's subtle approach in addressing the issues concerned and the simple examples given to illustrate the discussion. This authoritative work is not only important to Muslims, but it would also be of interest to those non-Muslims who seek to explore Islam and its doctrine. The simplicity of this book makes it a valuable resource for Religious Education.

3. What is Islam? An introduction to principles and beliefs

To attempt to summarize the Islamic faith in a book of this size is a tremendous challenge. This was the aim of the late Grand Ayatollah Muhammad al-Shirazi, one of the most eminent Islamic authorities of modern times. Through the use of clear and concise language within a "question and answer" format, the author has sought to convey the richness and profound spirituality of the Islamic message in all its aspects to the widest possible audience. The late Sayyid Shirazi covers all the main aspects of Islam, from the fundamental beliefs such as the Oneness of God and His justice and Prophethood to topics such as ablutions, praying, fasting, and performing the Hajj pilgrimage. In addition, the text also discusses a selection of diverse subjects such as Islamic law, economics, politics, the Islamic view of society, the issue of freedom in Islam, and so forth. This work serves as a useful resource for Muslims who want to learn more about their religion, and also for non-Muslims who seek a concise introduction as to what Islam is all about.

4. The Family

In this book the author highlights the problems he observes primarily in Islamic societies and particularly in the West today from the phenomenon of unmarried young men and women through to birth control and contraception. He surveys the idea of marriage in various religions, cultures and schools of thought while also discussing the issue of polygamy from the Islamic perspective. In his endeavours to provide practical solutions to today's social problems, the author calls for simplicity in the process of marriage and draws our attention to the Islamic teachings and laws in this pivotal aspect of life.

As well as being a call to the Muslim world to revert to the true teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, this book also serves as a preamble to others who seek answers to the some of the social problems of today. Islam promises success in every area of human life from individual to social levels, the practicality of which has been historically proven.

5. *The Qur'an: When was it compiled?*

In this book the author addresses the issues concerning the timing of the compilation of the Holy Qur'an, on what and whose instructions and authority this task was carried out, and ultimately who accomplished its compilation in the form that it is available today. In this work the author presents undisputable evidence to address these crucial questions. Through historical, methodical and logical analyses, the author establishes how and when the compilation of the Holy Qur'an was achieved. In Part Two of the book the author presents Prophetic traditions (*hadith*) on the virtues of reciting and learning the Holy Qur'an.

6. *War, Peace and Non-violence: An Islamic perspective*

In this work the author addresses three significant issues, which have come to be associated with Islam. Through his extensive knowledge of the teachings of Islam, the author presents the Islamic stand on war, peace and non-violence, as found in the traditions and teachings of the Prophet of Islam, which could serve as exemplary models for mankind. Detailed accounts of the traditions of Prophet in his dealings with his foes during times of war or peace are presented in this book, giving the reader a clear insight into the way and basis upon which the Prophet of Islam conducted his socio-political affairs.

7. *The Islamic System of Government*

In this introductory book the author outlines the basic principles of government based on the teachings of Islam. The author begins with the aim and objectives of the government according to Islam and the extent of its authority in that framework. He then addresses, from the Islamic

viewpoint, the significance and fundamental nature of issues such as the consultative system of government, judicial system, freedoms, party political pluralism, social justice, human rights and foreign policy. The author concludes by outlining the socio-political policies of a government such as education, welfare, health, and crime, as well as matters such as the government's system of income distribution, and authority.

8. *If Islam Were To Be Established*

This book may serve as the Muslim's guide to the Islamic government. If an Islamist opposition group has a plan for an Islamic government, this book would help to check various aspects of the plan. In the absence of such a plan, this book serves as a useful outline. To the non-Muslim, the book presents a glimpse of the typical Islamic system of government while also serving as a yardstick for all who wish to check the practices of any government that asserts to have implemented an Islamic system of government.

9. *The Bible and Christianity: an Islamic view*

Part one of this book presents some of the encounters there have been between Muslims and Christians. In the second part of this work the author presents some of his discussions with fellow Christian scholars in gatherings at his residence in Karbala, Iraq. The debates concerned their understanding of Islam and its doctrine as well as their own religious beliefs. In this presentation the author demonstrates how he invited non-Muslims to Islam through a calm yet rational and intellectual medium through the use of simple arguments.

Presented in part three of this book is the author's brief research and analysis into the Bible. Through his findings he states his contention with various biblical stories, particularly those in relation to past Prophets. In his discussion, the author uses reason and sound evidence to validate his arguments. Part Four of this work presents some of the Qur'anic verses about Jesus Christ and his noble mother Mary, peace be upon them.

This book makes an interesting read, given the simple yet thought provoking arguments that are put forth at various stages.

10. The Rights of Prisoners according to Islamic teachings

In general, Islam considers imprisonment as a case of last resort. According to Islamic teachings there are only a few offences that would lead to imprisonment. Any chastisement prescribed by Islamic teachings may only be implemented if the relevant criteria and the preconditions are met. If the criteria are not met, then the prescribed punishment may not be executed.

In this book the author addresses issues such as the fundamental nature of freedom, the rights of a prisoner, and the harmful effects of imprisonment on the individual as well as on society in general. The book goes on to discuss the kind of offences that would lead to imprisonment under an Islamic system. The author also cites a few cases from Islamic History in order to demonstrate the attitude an Islamic ruler should take towards an offence, which may have been committed, and identify possibilities of waiving relevant punishments. This work also discusses the issue of torture and mental and physical ill treatment that is often carried out under the guise of interrogation or for the purpose of extracting confession from a detainee or a suspect.

This brief work presents the teachings of Islam with respect to the rights of those when imprisoned, and shows that the teachings of Islam are designed, by the designer and maker of mankind, for the benefit of mankind wherever he may be.

11. Husayn - The Sacrifice for mankind

This is a collection of articles about a unique individual who, through his remarkable sacrifices, managed to change the course of history and the direction that mankind was heading toward. He is none other than Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family. Imam Husayn stood up to tyranny and oppression and gave everything he had, including his life and the lives of his most beloved sons and brothers as well as those of his closest

allies, in order to awaken the masses, reform society, and rectify the distortion that had been inflicted on Islam.

The articles in this work cover some aspects of the aims and objectives of Imam Ḥusayn's movement, the difference between his strategy and that of his brother Imam Ḥasan in facing tyranny and despotism, the examples he set, and the lessons that are learnt from the events that lead up to the tragedy of Karbala fourteen centuries ago. Above and beyond the benefits of his movement, the personality of Imam Ḥusayn peace be upon him as reflected by the many narrations and teachings of Prophet Muhammad is also discussed. Included in this work are a number of questions and answers about the commemoration ceremonies observed by the Muslims around the world on the occasion of Ashurā'.

12. The Guide to Ḥajj Rites

This handbook is a comprehensive but easy to use companion that guides the reader through all the stages of the Ḥajj pilgrimage. It addresses all aspects of the Ḥajj programme and the rites that must be observed during the pilgrimage. It is a must for anyone who intends to go to the Ḥajj pilgrimage.

13. Aspects of the Political Theory of Imam Shirazi

The author, Muhammad G. Ayyub is an Islamist political activist well-known within the Iraqi circle who has established a long history of political struggle over the past four decades. He was attracted by the views of the Imam Muhammad Shirazi in the fields of social and political science. Prompted by the endeavours and views of Imam Shirazi, the author chose to write this book in order to introduce the reader to views that have remained relatively unknown amongst Muslim activists and reformists. This work covers aspects of Imam Shirazi's views on politics such as freedom of expression, party-political pluralism, social justice, peace and non-violence, human rights, the concept of consultative system of government, as well as the issue of the concordance of the various sects of the Muslim community.

14. The Qur'an Made Simple

The Noble Qur'an is the final and greatest of the books of Allah. It is not merely a compilation of chronicles of an ancient people, nor a group of Prophets. Nor is it solely a book of morals. It is certainly not a simply a book of science, and it is not solely a book of rules and laws. Rather, The Noble Qur'an it is a set of arguments in the Divine dialect setting out exactly why the reader should recognise Allah, glorified be He, submit to Him, and follow the Divine religion. These arguments are rational, addressed to the mind, and spiritual, addressed to the heart.

In the Divine words the Noble Qur'an is a book 'of guidance', guiding man from darkness to light, from evil to good, from ignorance to knowledge, from uncertainty about the origin and the end, and about man's role in the world, to certainty and conviction.

This volume that has been published is the translation of the last three parts or *juz'* of the Noble Qur'an, and the associated commentary by the late Imam Muhammad Shirazi, elucidating the Qur'anic text to produce a clear, succinct, and easy to follow explanation of the divine scripture.

15. The Prophet Muhammad, a mercy to the world

This book offers an easy introduction to the life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. It endeavours to convey a glimpse of those illuminating moments in the life of the Prophet that helped bring about one of the greatest transformations in the history of mankind. The book highlights what kind of person the Prophet was, and how his conduct with friends and foes, in peace and war, provided an impeccable example for generations to come.

16. The Shi'a and their beliefs

Shi'a Muslim beliefs and practices in various aspects of the Islamic doctrine and religion are presented in this work. The Shi'a Muslims' primary concern is to be in total harmony with the teachings of both the holy Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him and his pure progeny. It is therefore paramount that every aspect of their belief and practice is in line with those teachings.

In presenting and discussing the Shi'a belief and its origin, this work also shows the precise compatibility of every single aspect of the Shi'a belief and practice with the Book and the *Sunnah*. Extensive references are given citing major references such as the *sihah* and *masanid*. In this way it can be seen that none of the Shi'a beliefs deviate from any one of the teachings of the holy Qur'an or of the Prophet.

17. Ghadir Khumm

Seventy days before his demise, the Prophet Muhammad delivers an historic sermon at Ghadir Khumm. In his speech to the nation, the Prophet addresses the issue of his succession, and identifies as to who can succeed him and why. In the most defining action of his mission, and on specific instructions from the Almighty, the Prophet then goes on to formally appoint his successors and the leaders of the Muslim nation after him. The Prophet points out that his divinely-chosen successors are twelve in number. Prophet Muhammad stresses that only under the leadership of his divinely-appointed successors, mankind would attain happiness and prosperity in this life and in the hereafter, but without the guidance of the prophet and his appointed successors, mankind would not attain eternal salvation.

After the delivery of his momentous and unique sermon at the site of Ghadir Khumm, the Prophet Muhammad then goes on to seek Shari'ah-binding pledge of allegiance from those present for his first successor. Some 120,000 had gathered on that day by Lake Khumm.

The full text of the Prophet's Ghadir Khumm sermon is presented in the original Arabic along with the English translation.

There were those, however, who had drawn up other plans for the Prophet's succession and they had their own agenda. They swore to do anything possible to undo whatever the prophet has done.

An insight is presented into the circumstances that followed the momentous event of Ghadir Khumm.

18. Islamic Law

Islam is a complete way of life that addresses every aspect of the human life, ranging from personal and family matters to social, economic, political, and spiritual issues. The teachings of Islam are devised to aid mankind to attain prosperity in this life and in the Hereafter. To achieve this goal, an individual needs to conduct his or her affairs, behave and respond according to the teachings of Islam in all aspects of life.

An individual therefore should learn the teachings of Islam on those issues that he or she may come across in life. Some of these teachings may be readily available, and if not, he or she must endeavour to learn or seek the answers to one's queries. Every conduct that a Muslim does according to the teachings of Islam constitutes an act of worship, no matter what aspect of life it may concern.

In a concise and informative manner, this work presents the teachings of Islam one may need to know and practice. It combines the essence of the traditional *risalah* together with the benefits of contemporary additions, which in turn makes it a practical and a must have book.

This work consists of books one and two. The rulings concerning ritual cleanliness, daily prayers, fasting, hajj, and *zakah*, are given in book one, while in book two the rulings for other domains such as culture, freedom, human rights, social and family, peace and non-violence, health and medical issues, food and drink, economics, immigration, morality and ethics are presented.

Teachings of Islam

www.ImamShirazi.com

A site dedicated to the cause of Islam, Muslims and Mankind

Islam aims to bring about prosperity to all mankind. One of the leading authorities on Islam today, Imam Shirazi, calls upon all Muslims to adhere to the teachings of Islam in all domains in order to regain their former glory and the salvation of mankind. These teachings include:

- PEACE in every aspect.
- NON-VIOLENCE in all conducts.
- FREEDOM of expression, belief, etc.
- PLURALISM of political parties.
- CONSULTATIVE System of Leadership.
- The RE-CREATION of the single Muslim nation - without geographical borders, etc. between them, as stated by Allah:

“This, your community is a single community and I am your Lord; so worship Me.”

- The REVIVAL of Islamic brotherhood throughout this nation:
“The believers are brothers.”
- FREEDOM from all the man-made laws, and restrictions as the Qur'an states:

“... and (Prophet Muhammad) releases them from their heavy burdens and from the shackles that were upon them.”