

INDICATORS OF PIETY, PART V¹

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ABSTRACT: This series – *Indicators of Piety* – focuses on the advantages of piety (*taqwa*) in Islam. Piety is one of the most vital merits a person can have since it is related to the intention behind all actions and is required to reach salvation. While parts I and II probed into the merits of piety and explored its definition and the factors that contribute to its formation, parts III and IV demonstrated the characteristics of the pious and defined the faithful as those who will achieve true success in this world and the next. This part delves into the qualities of loving God and loving others for His sake, our duties towards the entire community of the Ahlul Bayt, and the importance of truthfulness, justice, and keeping promises.

In the previous discussions we considered faith as one of the pillars of piety, and studied the external signs that help decipher a faithless person. We then assessed a number of external practices of a faithful person: how they handle household expenses, how they are able to withstand calamities, and how deeply they understand their religion.

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

We now turn our attention towards the internal signs of faith, and a quality that is arguably the most important part of a person's faithfulness but is often sadly neglected, namely, the strong link between a person's love for God and their love for other people, both for the sake of God and for Godly reasons. Its basic premise is that if one sincerely loves God, then he or she will be able to love or dislike others for the His sake, rather than for any personal or selfish reasons.

Loving God and loving others for the sake of God

Imam Muhammad al-Jawad has narrated that God said to some of the prophets:

You practiced abstinence from the world but this was not for Me – it was so that you could be laid back and not have to be concerned with a worldly life. You detached yourself from it to gain honour and fame. But have you disliked someone or befriended someone for my sake?²

A faithful person is someone who forges his relationships for the sake of God. Prophet Muhammad sheds further light on this when he quotes an incident from the life of Prophet Musa:

God asked Prophet Musa: "Have you ever performed an action for Me only?" Musa replied: "I have prayed for You, fasted for You, and given charity for You!" God stated: "As for your prayer it is a proof for you on the Day of Judgement [to support you], your fasting is a

² *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 66, p. 238. The hadith reads as follows:

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ الثَّانِي قَالَ أَوْحَى اللَّهُ إِلَى بَعْضِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ أَمَا زُهِدَكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا فَتَتَجَلَّكَ الرَّاحَةُ وَ أَمَا انْطَاعَكَ إِلَيَّ فَتَعَزُّزَكَ بِي وَ لَكِنْ هَلْ عَادَيْتَ لِي عَدُوًّا أَوْ وَالَيْتَ لِي وَلِيًّا

shelter for you, your charity is a shade and your alms-giving is light...this was all for you. So what have you done for Me?” Musa asked: “Then tell me, what action is just for You?” God replied: “Have you loved someone because of Me?” Upon hearing this Musa realised that the best of deeds is to love for the sake of God and to dislike for the sake of God.³

In another narration Imam al-Baqir narrates from Prophet Muhammad:

O people! That which I have made lawful will remain lawful until the Day of Judgement...Indeed one of the greatest factors that leads to faith is to love another faithful person. When the believers love each other for the sake of God, they become like one body; when one part of the body suffers pain the rest of the parts will not find rest; they will work harder to support the injured part.

In this regard Sa'di, the famous Iranian poet, states: “The children of Adam are parts of one body, created from one essence; when one part becomes afflicted the other parts cannot remain at ease.”⁴

The faithful are parts of one body, each playing an integral role for the health and survival of that body. It is only when all the parts unite and work together that the body can survive and thrive.

³ *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il*, vol. 12, p. 220. The hadith reads as follows:

وَرَوَى أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَالَ لِمُوسَى عَ هَلْ عَمِلْتَ لِي عَمَلًا قَطُّ قَالَ صَلَّيْتُ لَكَ وَ صُمِمْتُ وَ تَصَدَّقْتُ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى لَهُ أَمَّا الصَّلَاةُ فَلَاكَ بَرْهَانٌ وَ الصَّوْمُ جَنَّةٌ وَ الصَّدَقَةُ ظِلٌّ وَ الرِّكَازَةُ نُورٌ فَأَمَّا عَمَلِي عَمِلْتَ لِي قَالَ مُوسَى عَ ذُلِّي عَلَى الْعَمَلِ الَّذِي هُوَ لَكَ قَالَ يَا مُوسَى هَلْ وَالَيْتَ لِي وَلِيًّا فَعَلِمَ مُوسَى أَنَّ أَفْضَلَ الْأَعْمَالِ الْخُبُّ فِي اللَّهِ وَ الْبُغْضُ فِي اللَّهِ

⁴ This poem also appears on one of the walls of the United Nations building in New York.

Prophet Muhammad once asked his companions: “Which handle of faith is the strongest?” The companions gave different answers – some said prayer, others said alms. Finally they conceded and asked him to tell them the answer. He declared:

To love for God’s sake and to dislike for God’s sake.⁵

Once a person embodies this characteristic, other noble qualities follow. It is our nature as humans to follow what we love and refrain from what we dislike. Thus, if the fundamental issue of loving and disliking things according to God’s preferences is engrained in a person, then all their other loves and dislikes will fall into line.

In *Misbah al-Shari‘ah*,⁶ Imam al-Sadiq is quoted to have said:

A person who loves for the sake of God is a lover of God.
And a person that is loved by others for the sake of God is
the beloved of God.⁷

A person who can lead his life in a way that other faithful people love him will ultimately be loved by God. This is because other faithful ones will love him for the sake of God and they love him because they see him as a person close to God. Imam al-Sadiq then quotes Prophet

⁵ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 66, p. 243. The hadith reads as follows:

[الكافي] عَنْ الْعِدَّةِ عَنِ الْبَرْقِيِّ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِيْسَى عَنْ حَرِيزٍ عَنْ أَبِي الْحَسَنِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ يَحْيَى فِيمَا أَعْلَمَ عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ مُدْرِكٍ الصَّلَافِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص لِأَصْحَابِهِ أَيُّ عَزَى الْإِيمَانِ أَوْثَقُ فَقَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ وَ قَالَ بَعْضُهُمُ الصَّلَاةُ وَ قَالَ بَعْضُهُمُ الزَّكَاةُ وَ قَالَ بَعْضُهُمُ الصِّيَامُ وَ قَالَ بَعْضُهُمُ الْحَجُّ وَ الْعُمْرَةُ وَ قَالَ بَعْضُهُمُ الْجِهَادُ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص لِكُلِّ مَا قُلْتُمْ فَضْلٌ وَ لَيْسَ بِهِ وَ لَكِنْ أَوْثَقُ عَزَى الْإِيمَانِ الْحُبُّ فِي اللَّهِ وَ الْبُغْضُ فِي اللَّهِ وَ تَوَالِي أَوْلِيَاءِ اللَّهِ وَ التَّبَرِّي مِنْ أَعْدَاءِ اللَّهِ

⁶ This is a well-known book in Arabic on ethics and spirituality which has also been translated into English under the name *The Lantern of the Path*.

⁷ *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il*, vol. 12, p. 220. The hadith reads as follows:

مُصَنَّبِاخِ الشَّرِيعَةِ، قَالَ الصَّادِقُ ع الْمُحِبُّ فِي اللَّهِ مُحِبُّ اللَّهِ وَ الْمُحِبُّوبُ فِي اللَّهِ حَبِيبُ اللَّهِ لَا يَتَخَذَانِ إِلَّا فِي اللَّهِ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص الْعَزْءُ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ فَمَنْ أَحَبَّ فِي اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا أَحَبُّ اللَّهِ وَ لَا يُحِبُّ عَبْدٌ اللَّهَ إِلَّا أَحَبَّهُ اللَّهُ

Muhammad again as saying: “A person will be raised with the one that he loves.” In other words, if people truly love the holy personalities, they will be raised with them. In yet another narration, Prophet Muhammad states:

The best of people in this world and the Hereafter – apart from the Prophets – are those that love God and love one another for the sake of God. Any other type of love will become enmity on the Day of Judgement.⁸

Once a person sincerely loves God, he will also love that which is associated with God. In a common-place example, when a loved one dies, people often hold onto certain belongings of the deceased, such as clothing, and look at these belongings to remember the deceased. According to Prophet Muhammad all non-Godly love will become enmity on the Day of Judgement.

Manifestation on the Day of Judgement

The Qur'an states: “*On that day, friends will be one another's enemies, except for the God-wary.*” (43:67)

The pious remain friends even in the Hereafter and do not forget one another. But the love that is mixed with desire and selfishness will become enmity; in fact, this can also be seen in this world as well. Imam Ali has said: “The most pleasant thing in heaven is to love God and to love for the sake of God.”⁹ When a person reaches heaven he will be

⁸ *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il*, vol. 12, pp. 220 & 221. The hadith reads as follows:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص أَفْضَلُ النَّاسِ بَعْدَ النَّبِيِّينَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ الْمُحِبُّونَ لِلَّهِ الْمُتَحَالِفُونَ فِيهِ وَكُلُّ حُبٍّ مَعْلُومٍ يُورِثُ بُغْداً فِيهِ عداوةً إِلَّا هَذَيْنِ وَهُمَا مِنْ عَيْنٍ وَاحِدَةٍ يَرِيدَانِ أَبَداً وَ لَا يَنْقُضَانِ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ الْأَخْلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ لِأَنَّ أَصْلَ الْحُبِّ التَّبَرُّؤُ عَنْ سِوَى الْمُحْبُوبِ

⁹ *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il*, vol. 12, p. 221. The hadith reads as follows:

أَطْيَبُ شَيْءٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَ أَلَذُّ حُبٍّ لِلَّهِ وَ الْحُبِّ فِي اللَّهِ وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

able to enjoy those bounties that he was able to carry along with him to heaven that were earned by him in his worldly life. If someone arrives in the arena of the Hereafter with enmity and selfishness then those cannot exist in the bliss of Paradise.

Prophet Muhammad has said, "I swear by He in whose hands my life lies, you will not enter heaven until you believe; and you will not believe until you love one another."¹⁰

Those who love each other for the sake of God will have radiant faces on the Day of Judgement, and they will be on pulpits of light; they will not fear when people around them will be terrified, and they will not grieve when others will be grieving. "*Look! The friends of Allah will indeed have no fear nor will they grieve*" (10:62).¹¹ These 'friends' of God are those very ones that love God and love others for His sake.

Broader implication of loving others

Imam Ali has said, "Whoever desires that his faith becomes complete, his love must be for God, and his hatred, his pleasure, and his displeasure must all be for God."¹²

When a faithful person loves someone else it should not be for any selfish reason such as a familial relationship or friendship, but should be

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 222. The hadith reads as follows:

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَا تَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى تَحَابُّوا

¹¹ Ibid., p. 225. The complete hadith reads as follows:

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ لَأُنَاسًا مَا هُمْ بِأَنْبِيَاءَ وَلَا شُهَدَاءَ لِمَكَانِهِمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ قَتِيلَ مَنْ هُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَتَخَابَتُونَ بِرُوحِ اللَّهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَرْحَامٍ بَيْنَهُمْ وَلَا أَمْوَالٍ يَتَعَاطَوْنَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ عَلَى وُجُوهِهِمْ لَنُورًا وَإِنَّهُمْ لَعَلَى مَنَابِرٍ مِنْ نُورٍ لَا يَخَافُونَ إِذَا خَافَ النَّاسُ وَلَا يَحْزَنُونَ إِذَا حَزَنُوا ثُمَّ قَالَا هَذِهِ آيَةُ آلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ يَجْلَلِي الْيَوْمَ أُطُلُكُمُ بِطَلِي يَوْمَ لَا ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلِّي

¹² Ibid., p. 228. The hadith reads as follows:

وَقَالَ عَمَّنْ أَحَبُّ أَنْ يَكْمَلَ إِيْمَانَهُ فَلْيَكُنْ حُبُّهُ لِلَّهِ وَبُغْضُهُ وَرِضَاؤُهُ وَسَخَطُهُ لِلَّهِ

for that person's position and closeness with God. Theoretically this means that we may end up loving another child more than our own children. A good example of this is the love we hold for the children of Imam al-Husayn, whom the faithful would certainly claim are dearer to them than their own children due to the closeness of Imam al-Husayn's children to God. Thus, if a child other than a person's own child shows a higher potential for spiritual greatness than one's own child but lacks some means to reach that potential, then a faithful person should be inclined to facilitate for that child to grow and develop, through financial or other means. Prophet Muhammad has also said:

God's love is necessary for people who love each other for the sake of God, for people who become friends for the sake of God, for people who visit each other for the sake of God, and for people who give to each other for the sake of God.¹³

Imam Ali also describes the importance of loving others in the following way:

Our Shi'as are those who help each other for our sake, who love each other for our sake, who visit each other and see how they can revive our message. They are they who when they become angry they do not commit any injustice, and when they are happy they are not extravagant. They are a source of blessing for those

¹³ Ibid., p. 225. Hadith reads as follows:

قَالَ ص يَقُولُ أَلَا وَ حَقَّتْ مَحَبَّتِي لِلَّذِينَ يَتَحَابُّونَ مِنْ أَجْلِي وَ قَدْ حَقَّتْ مَحَبَّتِي لِلَّذِينَ يَتَصَادَفُونَ مِنْ أَجْلِي وَ قَدْ حَقَّتْ مَحَبَّتِي لِلَّذِينَ يَتَرَاوَزُونَ مِنْ أَجْلِي وَ قَدْ حَقَّتْ مَحَبَّتِي لِلَّذِينَ يَتَبَادَلُونَ مِنْ أَجْلِي

around them, and a source of peace for those they interact with.¹⁴

A good Shi'a, in the words of Imam Ali, can be judged by what he is prepared to do for his fellow believers. Furthermore, a good Shi'a, when loving someone will not ignore their mistakes and sins, and when disliking someone will not disregard their good acts and noble deeds. Rather, they will assess and judge everything from the point of view of God's wishes and commandments.

A foundation of Islam

In one narration Imam al-Baqir has said:

Islam is founded upon five things: prayer, alms, fasting, Hajj, and *wilayah*. And nothing has been emphasised in the way *wilayah* has been emphasised. People have accepted the first four but have abandoned this last one.¹⁵

When Imam al-Baqir mentions those who have abandoned *wilayah*, he refers to two groups of people:

1. Those who do not follow the leadership and authority of the Ahlul Bayt; for example, some sects of Muslims.

¹⁴ Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi*, v.2, pp. 236-237

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع قَالَ قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع شَيْعَتُنَا الْمُتَبَاذِلُونَ فِي وَلَائِنَا الْمُتَحَاثُونَ فِي مَوَدَّتِنَا الْمُرَاوِرُونَ فِي إِخْيَانٍ أَمَرْنَا الَّذِينَ إِنْ غَضِبُوا لَمْ يَظْلَمُوا وَإِنْ رَضُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا بَرَكَتَهُ عَلَى مَنْ جَاوَزُوا سِلْمَ لِمَنْ خَالَطُوا

¹⁵ *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 18. Hadith reads as follows:

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع قَالَ بَنَى الْإِسْلَامَ عَلَى خَمْسٍ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَالصَّوْمِ وَالْحَجِّ وَالْوَلَايَةِ وَ لَمْ يَتَذَرِ شَيْءٌ كَمَا نُودِيَ بِالْوَلَايَةِ فَأَخَذَ النَّاسُ بِأَرْبَعٍ وَ تَرَكُوا هَذِهِ يَعْنِي الْوَلَايَةَ

2. Those Muslims who, whilst they are apparent followers of the Ahlul Bayt, do not realise that wilayah is a duty towards the whole community of the Ahlul Bayt.

The same idea is alluded to in the famous visitation prayer *Ziyarah 'Ashura* in which it states:

Indeed I am at peace with whosoever is at peace with you and I am at war with whosoever is at war with you; I am an enemy to whosoever shows enmity to you and I am a friend to whosoever shows friendship to you...

O Aba Abdillah! Indeed I seek nearness to God, and to Prophet Muhammad, and to Imam Ali, and to Lady Fatimah, and to Imam al-Hasan, and to you, through your love and through the love of your friends.

If we are truly lovers of Imam al-Husayn, then we should not be in conflict with any of his followers.

Wilayah, a concept and a practice

It is interesting to note that Imam al-Baqir has mentioned the concept of wilayah alongside four practical acts. This is because wilayah is not merely a concept, but rather has a strong practical application. Similarly, *tawalli* (loving the infallibles and all that is associated with them) and *tabarri* (disliking the enemies of the infallibles and all that is associated with them) are both mentioned along with eight other acts of Islam as the 'branches of religion'. It is therefore not enough to merely love the Ahlul Bayt and their followers, but it requires an extra step for it to manifest into action. If someone wants to perform a service for a member of the Ahlul Bayt then it would be proper to perform that

service to one of the followers of the Ahlul Bayt and the community of the Ahlul Bayt.

Qualities of a faithful

We now turn our attention to some of the most important qualities of a faithful that would lead to a closeness with God and success in this world. Imam Zayn al-Abidin was asked by his companion Abi Malik: "Tell me about all the laws of religion." The Imam replied: "To speak the truth, to judge with justice, and to keep promises."

Human beings make decisions and pass judgements all the time, on a daily basis. According to this saying of Imam Zayn al-Abidin, any such decision must be based on justice, and not on any selfish whims or personal inclinations. If a Muslim and non-Muslim have a dispute, then one must always side with the party that is correct, regardless of faith. The qualities of truth and justice are more important than anything else:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاةُ قَوْمٍ عَلَى أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O you who have faith! Be maintainers, as witnesses for the sake of Allah, of justice, and ill feeling for a people should never lead you to be unfair. Be fair; that is nearer to God-wariness, and be wary of Allah. Allah is indeed well aware of what you do. (5:8)

In the same way, the keeping of promises is another vital quality of a faithful person. Promises, whether verbal or written, and whether in our favour or against us, must always be upheld. Islam states that if society does not adhere to this principle, it should not follow that a faithful

person also abandons it. Whosoever can embody these qualities would surely become a point of reference for people of all faiths.

The best of deeds

Imam al-Sadiq has reported: “The master of all actions is three: to treat others with fairness, to share your wealth with your brother [in faith], and to remember God in every situation.”¹⁶

When dealing justly with their own selves, the faithful do not assume they are always right and do not look for weak arguments to prove their case. The faithful are also those who seek out opportunities to share their wealth with others. They remember God at all times and in all situations, whether in ease or in difficulty. The remembrance of God is not necessarily a verbal remembrance by chanting His name or religious invocations; rather, it means to accept and implement whatever He has commanded and to abandon whatever He has forbidden, because to remember God is to act according to His will. Such habits are more difficult to master than saying even the night prayers (*salat al-layl*) because these habits may be required in a range of difficult situations.

The role of intellect

Prophet Muhammad is quoted as saying, “The master of all actions in both worlds [this world and the Hereafter] is the intellect. And everything has a pillar and the pillar of a faithful person is his intellect. Proportionate to his intellect is his worship of his lord.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi*, v.2, p. 144

¹⁷ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 1, p. 96. Hadith reads as follows:

سَيِّدُ الْأَعْمَالِ فِي الْبَارِئِ الْعَقْلُ وَ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ دَعَامَةٌ وَ دَعَامَةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ عَقْلُهُ فَيَقْدِرُ عَقْلُهُ تَكُونَ عِبَادَتُهُ لِرَبِّهِ

A faithful person will ensure that his actions are in conformity with reason, and not just emotions. God provides each human being with two proofs: an external one, i.e. the Prophets and Imams, and an internal one, i.e. the intellect. The prominence of the intellect is a key feature of the Shi'a school of thought within Islam. The Shi'a school of thought has a proud tradition of intellectual sciences, including subjects such as philosophy, whereas some other schools of Islamic do not give the intellect the prominence it deserves. The Ahlul Bayt encouraged their followers to be rational and logical, and to make their judgements according to the requirements of reason. In *al-Kafi*, there is a divine saying (*al-hadith al-qudsi*), in which, addressing the intellect (*al-'aql*) God says: "I command you and forbid you. I reward you and punish you."¹⁸ The intellect is thus the fundamental factor in regulating the life of a faithful person.

False worship

Imam al-Sadiq warns his followers on how to discern a true believer:

Do not be deceived by their prayers and their fasts, for surely a person often may pray and fast but if it is taken away from him then he feels very bad. Rather, test them with two things: truth in speech and discharging their trusts.¹⁹

Religious people are sometimes attached to their acts of worship merely through habit. For example, a person who fasts regularly is told that due

¹⁸ *Al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 10.

¹⁹ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 104. Hadith reads as follows:

لَا تَغْتَرُوا بِصَلَاتِهِمْ وَلَا بِصِيَامِهِمْ فَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ يُبَالِغُ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالصَّوْمِ حَتَّىٰ لَوْ تَرَكَهُ اسْتَوْخَشَ وَلَكِنْ
اخْتَبَرُوهُمْ عِنْدَ صِدْقِ الْحَدِيثِ وَآدَاءِ الْأَمَانَةِ

to ill health he cannot fast, and thus may feel depressed even though it is the commandment of God that one's health takes precedence over fasting. Such a person must consider whether he genuinely fasted for God or for some feeling of personal satisfaction. The faithful person will perform acts of worship, but for the right reasons, i.e. in submission to God and His commands, whatever they may be. Furthermore, the faithful person will have the quality of honesty in all situations and discharge trusts with utmost loyalty.

Similarly, we sometimes find that some religious people rely on inner feelings and emotions rather than what Islam has commanded. At times of sin they may say they feel especially spiritually exalted. Or, for example, they prefer to pray alone rather than in congregation as they claim it gives them a better sense of concentration. This could be the wares of Satan. Islam would advise them to follow the teachings of the religion rather than any inner feelings that may be easily misinterpreted.

On the importance of perfecting the character before indulging into any deep religious science, Amr bin Abi al-Miqdam reports from Imam al-Baqir: "Learn truth before learning any hadith."²⁰

Abu Kahmas narrates that he met Imam al-Sadiq and conveyed the greetings (*salam*) of Abdullah ibn Abi Ya'fur.²¹ The Imam said:

May peace be upon you and upon him. When you next see Abdullah then pass my *salam* to him and tell him: "Indeed Ja'far son of Muhammad says to you: 'Observe that which Ali did to make him so close to the Prophet,

²⁰ Ibid., Hadith reads as follows:

فِي أَوَّلِ دَخَلَةٍ دَخَلْتُ عَلَيْهِ تَعَلَّمُوا الصِّدْقَ قَبْلَ الْحَدِيثِ

²¹ One of the great companions of Imam al-Sadiq and an important narrator of hadith.

and you do the same. For surely Ali reached such a stage with the Prophet of God through truthful speech and discharging of trusts.²²

Imam Ali was extremely close to Prophet Muhammad through these two qualities. In fact, truth and honesty affect worship in brining it a step higher. Furthermore, the God being worshipped is known as *al-Haqq* (the Truth); therefore, for a person to consider his worship as effective whilst remaining dishonest would not make sense. Again, Imam al-Sadiq states:

Do not pay attention to the lengthy bowing (*ruku*) and prostration (*sujud*) of a person, for these things may be just out of habit and were he to abandon these things he would feel bad about it. Instead pay attention to the truth of his speech and how he discharges trusts.²³

A person's lengthy prayers do not necessarily be a true sign of goodness. The Prophet explains this further:

Should I tell you about the best traits of this world and the Hereafter? They are: to forgive someone that has wronged you, to reach out to someone that has cut off ties with you, and to do good to one who has done bad to you.²⁴

²² *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 104. Hadith reads as follows:

قُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي يَحْيَى يَقُولُ بِقُرْبِكَ السَّلَامُ قَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ إِذَا أَتَيْتَ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ فَأَقْرَبُهُ السَّلَامَ وَفَلَّ لَهُ إِنَّ جَعْفَرَ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ يَقُولُ لَكَ انْظُرْ مَا بَلَغَ بِهِ عَلِيٌّ ع عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص فَالْزَمُهُ فَإِنَّ عَلِيًّا ع إِنَّمَا بَلَغَ مَا بَلَغَ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص بِصِدْقِ الْحَدِيثِ وَآدَاءِ الْأَمَانَةِ

²³ *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 105. Hadith reads as follows:

قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع لَا تَنْظُرُوا إِلَى طُولِ رُكُوعِ الرَّجُلِ وَ سُجُودِهِ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ شَيْءٌ اِغْتَاذَهُ فَلَوْ تَرَكَهُ اسْتَوْحَشَ لِذَلِكَ وَ لَكِنْ انْظُرُوا إِلَى صِدْقِ حَدِيثِهِ وَ آدَاءِ أَمَانَتِهِ

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 107. Hadith reads as follows:

Such amazing character traits are known as *makarim al-akhlaq* (the most sublime characteristics) and the Prophet has said that his mission was to perfect such traits. A person that is able to recognise their own mistakes and shortcomings is indeed in a very special position and should be praised, because that is the first step to self-reform.

We can be sure that a person who is honest, humble, suppresses anger, avoids emotions, and is kind to the people who have done bad to him is very close to Allah. At the time of the Prophet there were a number of companions that were clearly the friends of God. One of them is Salman al-Farsi, who left his family, possessions, and status to find the truth. Salman first became a Christian and then heard that there would be a Prophet at end of time in the Arabian Peninsula. When he then took it upon himself to travel there and look for him, Salman accepted Islam after meeting the Prophet, and from the onset it seems he possessed an immense level of faith as he was searching for the truth, even though he merely required the presence of the Prophet and the Qur'an to link himself properly to God.

Similarly, the famous companion Abu Dharr, about whom the Prophet said that the sky had not provided shade over anyone more honest than Abu Dharr.²⁵²⁶ One of the beauties of those who revert to Islam is that they have demonstrated their concern and search for truth, regardless of

أَلَا أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى خَيْرِ أَخْلَاقِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَصِلُ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ وَتُعْطِي مَنْ حَزَمَكَ وَتَغْفُو عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَكَ

²⁵ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 10, p. 123. Hadith reads as follows:

قَالَ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ الْغِفَارِيِّ قَالَ عَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ص يَقُولُ مَا أَظْلَمَتِ الْخَضِرَاءُ وَلَا أَقْلَمَتِ الْغُبَرَاءُ ذَا لَهْجَةٍ أَصْدَقَ مِنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ

²⁶ History tells us that the night in which Abu Dharr assisted the Prophet to escape from Mecca, he hid the Prophet under a blanket as his enemies were searching for him. When the enemies of the Prophet approached Abu Dharr and asked him who was under the blanket, such was his honesty that he replied it was the Prophet. The enemies did not believe him and did not investigate any further.

their upbringing, family, and environment. The revert brothers and sisters have passed a test that born Muslims may not have not experienced.

We ask God to grant us success in acquiring these characteristics and ethics, and to inspire us with sincerity, repentance, and guidance. We ask God to help us in being always seeking the truth and then committing ourselves to the truth which has been discovered.

HEALTHY PERSONALITY IN OUR YOUTH: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: The aim of the prophets' mission and the revelation of the Holy Qur'an is to train an individual and develop a healthy personality by forming a constructive relationship with God, one's self, society, and the environment. In order to achieve this sacred purpose, humankind is granted revelatory teachings of the Qur'an and narrations from the Infallibles. According to Islamic teachings, without connection with God, any claim to have a healthy personality is unfounded. A person's mental health is measured by his distance from or closeness to God. This article describes the concept of a healthy personality and its outcomes, with an explanation on the relationship of the healthy personality with prayer and servitude to God. Among the salient points of this article is the concept of personality in psychology and the role of a healthy personality in the observance of Islamic values.

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Introduction

From the Qur'anic perspective, a person acts according to his character; his choices, behaviours, reactions, friendships and enmities, and how he expresses his emotions are rooted in his personality and identity. The healthy personality is the root of positive and constructive behaviours and emotions; similarly, the unhealthy personality is the source of irrational and improper behaviour. One's personality should be balanced so as to enjoy the pure life and feel secure, satisfied, and happy because *"Whoever does righteous deeds, man or woman, and has faith, verily, to him will We give a good and pure Life, and We will bestow on such people their reward according to the best of their actions."* (Nahl, 97). On the other hand, God said, *"Everyone acts according to his own disposition,"* (Israa, 84). In other words:

The believers who seek healing from the Qur'an and gain mercy from it, on the other hand, the oppressors who do not gain anything from the Qur'an but damage and harm, and mean people who are too proud while enjoying blessings, and disappointed when facing problems, all act according to their mentality and personality; mentalities which have been formed as influenced by heredity, personality, parents, educational and upbringing, and a person's habits.³

On the basis of religious teachings and psychological findings, there is a permanent relationship between a healthy personality and proper behaviour based on faith. In this study, we demonstrate this relationship on the basis of evidence – Qur'anic verses and hadiths. The research

³ Makarim Shirazi, Nassir, *Nemunah Qur'anic Interpretation*, vol. 12, p 245.

method used in this study is analytic-descriptive. The Qur'an, hadiths, and literature in the field of psychology constitute the most important sources of this study.

Personality in contemporary psychology and Islamic psychology

Understanding personality is the ultimate goal of modern psychology. In one sense, personality includes the entire realm of psychology. All psychological schools of thought, such as psychoanalysis, behaviourism and humanism, define personality from their own perspective. According to Pervin and John, "Personality represents those characteristics of the person consisting of fixed patterns of thought, emotion, and behaviour."⁴ Warren⁵ regards personality as a set of emotional, physical, and intellectual characteristics that distinguish people from one another. Shamlou believed that personality "consists of an organized set and a unit composed of relatively fixed and permanent characteristics which together distinguish a person from other people."⁶ Allport⁷ wrote, "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual which consists of psychosomatic systems that determines thoughts and behaviours of man." According to Miley, "Personality is a psychological totality that determines a particular person."⁸

To Islamic scholars, there is a strong relationship between personality and Qur'anic anthropology which considers the human being composed

⁴ Pervin, Lawrence A. and Oliver P. John. *Personality (Theory and Research)*, translated by Muhammad Ja'far Jawadi and Parwin Kadiwar, p.3 and See: Yusuf Karimi, *The Psychology of Personality*, p. 10.

⁵ Warren, H.C.1930 A.D.

⁶ Shamlou, Sa'id, *Schools of Thought and Theories in the Psychology of Personality*, p 10.

⁷ Allport.

⁸ Miley, Roberto, *Development, Emergence, and Transformation of Personality*, translated by Mahmoud Mansour, p. 17.

of body and soul. Imam Muhammad Ghazali viewed personality as the result of interaction between everyone's behaviour and thought (outward appearance and inner state). These two components mutually influence each other, and the rise or fall of each depends on the other.⁹ Allamah Majlisi considered man's personality consisting of soul and body and regarded its authenticity and identity as the rational soul that every person defines as "I".¹⁰ Believing that the man is composed of body and soul, Allamah Mahdi Naraqi stated, "Man's physical body is mortal, but his soul is immortal and eternal"; all Islamic scholars agree on this theory."¹¹ Allamah Ja'fari underlined, "What must be adopted from the Islamic psychology in defining man is his spiritual and heavenly aspects." Thus, he regarded understanding man's true personality and nature as depending on his metaphysical dimension.¹² Considering the verse, "*Say: Everyone acts according to his own disposition,*" (Israa:84), some consider disposition equal to the concept of "personality" in psychology and define it as follows, "Personality refers to a set of intentions, moods, needs, mental ways, and states,"¹³ and they believe that the primary meaning of "disposition" is man's mental structure, saying, "Man's disposition consists in the man's unified mental structure which is shaped through the interaction of genetics, environment, and willpower; such that it interprets the environmental stimuli consistent with himself and reacts to them in a particular way."¹⁴ As for the definition of disposition, Raghib Isfahani wrote, "Basically disposition (*shakilah*) is

⁹ Rafi'i, Behruz, *Views of Muslim Scholars on Education and its Principles*, p.165.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*, p 166.

¹² Ja'fari, Mohammad Taqi, *Islamic Psychology*, p 35.

¹³ Ahmadi, Ali-Asghar, *Personality Psychology from Islamic Perspective*, pp.12-14

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p 25

derived from the root (*shikl*) meaning restraining the animal and (*shikal*) refers to the animal's rein." Since everyone's temperaments, characteristics, and habits bind him to act or behave in a particular way, it is called disposition. According to Mudarrisi:

People differ in the extent of their gain and benefit from the revelation. The origin of these differences is their personality which arises from their various traits and habits. Although God has granted man a particular ability and knowledge so that he can develop his personality constructively, he is trapped in his immature personality and takes a hostile stance against the truth. This behaviour and confrontation with divine teachings result from his abnormal personality, traits, and habits.¹⁵

From the Islamic perspective, the genuine and essential motivation for having a healthy and secure personality is love for the absolute perfection, and the only manifestation of absolute perfection, or infinite perfection, is the Almighty God. That is, His essence, which includes all perfection and attributes of glory and beauty unconditionally.¹⁶ According to Imam Khomeini:

Man's soul does not get content with any rank and extent of perfection. This search for perfection is continuous and increasing. The one who sees perfection in the sultanate becomes fond of a greater power after he rises to power, and the one who is fascinated with and fond of a beautiful

¹⁵ Mudarrisi, Sayyid Muhammad Taqi, *Hidayat Qur'anic Interpretation*, p. 299

¹⁶ Misbah, Mohammad Taqi, *The Requirements of the Islamic Management*, p. 209, See: Dolatkah, Muhammad, *Motivation of the Secure Personality from the Islamic perspective*, Ma'rifat, No. 38, p 40

and attractive appearance will be fond of a more beautiful one when he finds it. From this brief explanation, you should find out about details. Thus, all people unanimously refer to this fact that they love absolute perfection.¹⁷

Many Muslim scholars consider personality equal to disposition. Interpreting the verse “*Everyone acts according to his own disposition*” (Israa: 84), the late Allamah Tabatabai wrote:

This verse views man’s behaviour as an outcome of his disposition. That is, no matter what man’s action is, it is in accordance with his temperament. As the Persian saying goes, “What seeps out of the jug is what is inside it.” By analogy, the relationship between disposition and action is the one between soul and body, namely the body embodies and reveals the soul’s mission through its organs and their actions. This principle that there is a special relationship between the soul’s features and bodily actions has been proved through both experience and scientific investigations. It has been proved that a courageous and brave person’s actions are never the same as those of a timid and fearful one. When encountering a fearful and daunting scene, the timid person acts differently from the courageous. Likewise, there is no resemblance between the actions of a generous or magnanimous person and those of a miserly and mean one. Similarly, that there is a relationship between man’s intrinsic qualities and his physical constitutions. People with particular physical constitutions have a short fuse and are naturally interested

¹⁷ Khomeini, Sayyid Ruhullah. *Forty Hadiths*, Hadith no. 11

in revenge, and those with some others are vulnerable to the demands of the gluttony and sexual instinct, becoming impatient. This is also the case with other features and characteristics.¹⁸

Our needs

Self-knowledge is one of the most important principles of success and happiness. The one who does not know where he is from, where he is going to, and for what purpose he has been created is confused about the interpretation of his life. Imam Ali considers “man’s ignorance about himself” the worst kind of ignorance.¹⁹ Lack of self-knowledge and ignorance of one’s dignity can be considered the roots of social, behavioural, psychological, and emotional problems because man’s goals, aspirations, and expectations are defined according to his definition of himself. Thus, understanding man and his lofty needs prepares the grounds for perceiving the pure life. Aside from basic needs, lofty needs are the most fundamental human needs.

According to the religious culture, man’s spiritual needs are regarded as one of his most important needs met only through intimacy with God and constant remembrance of Him. According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, “higher-level needs manifest only when lower level needs are satisfied to some extent.”²⁰ However, we should not forget that “some people who are strongly committed to a cause may sacrifice all their property and life willingly; for example, those who ignore their physiological and security needs, fight against the enemy, and fast for

¹⁸ Tabatabai, Sayyid Mohammad Hussain, *Al-Mizan Qur’anic Interpretation*, translated by Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Musawi Hamadani, vol. 13, p 263.

¹⁹ Tamimi Amadi, Abdul-Wahid, *Tasnif Ghurar-ul-Hikam wa Durar-ul-Kalim*, p. 223, no. 2936.

²⁰ Yusuf Karimi, Karimi, p.151.

long hours under the most difficult circumstances.”²¹ To Maslow,²² a healthy and secure man has satisfied his basic needs sufficiently, and his fundamental motivation is “self-actualization” – which is the constant flourishing of one’s abilities, talents, and competencies throughout his life.²³ According to Chahen, five behavioural patterns indicate mental health: 1. a sense of responsibility, 2. self-confidence, 3. goal-orientedness, 4. personal values; that is, one has a particular philosophy, based on his beliefs and goals, that leads to his happiness as well as prosperity of his beloved, and 5. individuality and uniqueness; that is, one distinguishes himself from others so that he neither ignorantly conforms with the demands of others nor is rejected by them.²⁴

However, the meaning of a person’s higher needs and mental health in Islamic thought differs greatly from that in such scientific and philosophical fields as humanism because they differ completely in their view on God, the hereafter, the creation of man, salvation, misery, lifestyle, ethics, goals, aspirations, and values of life. According to Abdullah Nasri: “From the Qur’anic perspective, the world was not created in vain, rather all its constituent elements have been created for a specific purpose,”²⁵ and the purpose of creation of man (al-Baqarah: 30) is his potential to actualizing all his talents and be a vicegerent of God. The goal of the creation of man is worship of, and servitude to, God. Thus, in Islam the ideal mental health is to achieve the desired human

²¹ Schultz, Duane, and Schultz, Sydney Ellen, *Theories of Personality*, Translated by Yahya Sayyid Muhammadi, p 364.

²² A. Maslow 1908-1970.

²³ Dolatkah, Muhammad, *ibid*.

²⁴ Motahhari, Jamshid, *Toward Mental Health*, Ma’rifat, No. 46, p 22.

²⁵ Nasri, Abdullah, *The Philosophy of Creation*, p 268.

perfection, namely proximity of God.²⁶ According to Sayyid Abul Qasim Husseini: "...the purpose of the divine prophets' call and its acceptance by people is to achieve mental development; everyone who treads this path enjoys an ideal and healthy mentality."²⁷ Ayatullah Mutahhari wrote:

A person seeks something and when he attains it, he loses his eagerness for it, and instead he loathes and becomes bored with it. The reason for this is that what he has sought in his heart was not this; he has wrongly considered it his desired goal. People want absolute perfection and hate limitations – which are defects and desires – because no matter what type of perfection he achieves, at first it was the spark of the infinite perfection that led him to this limited perfection. He thinks it is his desired, lost perfection; although when he achieves it, he finds it inferior to what he wanted because his desired goal was more perfect than what he was seeking. If a person attains his absolute perfection, namely what has been placed within him, he will become relaxed and will no longer feels bored and disgusted because there is no limitation and flaw there.²⁸

In the Qur'an, God said, *"Indeed, those who have said, 'Our Lord is Allah' and then remained on the right course - the angels will descend upon them, [saying]: Do not fear and do not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised."* (Fussilat: 30). A lofty need of man is to worship; this has an inner state and an outward

²⁶ Rahman Mir-Derikwandi, *Major Models and Theories of Mental Health*, Ma'rifat, No. 112, p 62.

²⁷ Hosseini, Sayyid Abul-Qasim, *The Principles of Mental Health*, p 37.

²⁸ Mutahhari, Mortida, *The Collection of His Works*, vol. 3, p 761-768.

appearance. The outward appearance refers to the very specific acts of worship, and its inner state consists in being sincere, attentive while performing acts of worship, remembering God and revering Him, pinning all hopes on and being attached to His divine essence, trusting and finding peace in His eternal essence, and fading before His unique essence. For example, if the outward appearance of prayer is mixed with its inward state, it acquires its truth and influences man through helping him develop a healthy personality and regulating his intrapersonal and interpersonal behaviours. In this way, this divine issue becomes the pillar of religion²⁹ and means of the believers' ascension;³⁰ it makes the pious attain proximity to God,³¹ perfects the sincerity of the sincere,³² darkens the face of Satans,³³ and distinguishes believers from disbelievers.³⁴ The Prophet said, "God, the Almighty does not pay any heed to the prayer in which one's heart does not accompany his body."³⁵ The truth of prayer includes both an inner state and an outward appearance. Resorting to either of these two independent of the other does not mean prayer.³⁶

The healthy personality from the Islamic Perspective

The question of whether there is a completely healthy personality has historical precedence and has remained unanswered in psychology so far. According to Islamic teachings, any claim to have a healthy personality

²⁹ Kulaini, Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub, *al-Kafi*, vol. 7, p. 25, no. 7.

³⁰ Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, *Bihar-ul-Anwar*, vol. 82, p. 303, no. 2, Section 4.

³¹ Kulaini, Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub, *ibid*, vol. 3, p. 265, no. 6. Payandeh, Abul-Qasim, *ibid*., no.1878.

³² Tabarsi, Fadl ibn Hassan, *Majma'-ul-Bayan*, vol. 7, p. 447, on the verse no.45 of the Qur'anic chapter 'Ankabut.

³³ Payandeh, Abul-Qasim, *ibid*., p. 551, no.1877.

³⁴ *ibid*., p. 661, no.1098.

³⁵ Naraqi, Mulla Ahmad. *Mi'raj-u-Sa'adah*, p. 637.

³⁶ Khalili, Mustafa, *The Role of Prayer in the Personality of Young People*, p 10.

with no connection with God is false. Human mental health depends on the degree of remoteness from or proximity to the absolute power. Here are some characteristics of a healthy personality from the religious perspective:

1. **Goal-orientedness:** The one with a healthy personality believes that he was not created in vain (*al-Dhariyat*: 56), a life without purpose is meaningless, and his life is meaningful. He believes that the return of all people is to Him (*al-Baqarah*: 156). The origin and the end of the universe are clear to him. The purpose of man's creation is his attaining the status of vicegerent of God (*al-Baqarah*: 30) which means the actualization of human attributes and those that God is pleased with. These attributes are actualized through industry (*al-Baqarah*: 208; *al-Ma'idah*: 35; *al-Tawbah*: 20; *al-Ankabut*: 69), self-refinement and self-purification (*al-Shams*, 9-10), and servitude (*Hud*: 26).
2. **The belief in the immortality and eternity of man:** Death is not the end of life, but a bridge from this world to the hereafter (*al-Baqarah*: 82, *Ale-Imran*: 107; *Hud*: 33).
3. **The belief in man's two dimensions:** In addition to the physical dimension, man has an immaterial aspect called the soul. (*al-Hijr*: 29, *Sad*: 72). The belief in soul is the border between paganism and faith.
4. **The one with a healthy personality seeks the truth and knowledge:** He is a talented learner. (*al-Baqarah*: 31; *al-Alaq*: 1-5; *Taha*: 114).
5. **Self knowledge:** The root of all social and personal problems is disregard for self-knowledge. The one who does not know himself

is incapable of establishing relationships with himself and others. Because he does not know himself, he does know his Lord either. A stage of self-knowledge is to know that he is infinitely able to rise or fall spiritually. He can be worse than animals or better than angels. Through control and regulation of instincts and servitude to God, he can attain the rank of human dignity (*al-Teen*: 4-8) and can achieve the status of God's vicegerent. The one who merely values his animal dimension becomes a full-blown animal; his thoughts and behaviours become animal-like. According to Imam Ali, "[Such a person] resembles a fattened animal that all its efforts are targeted at eating."³⁷ Man must be aware of his animal desires and tendencies such as self-love and sexual desires as well as his human tendencies like his search for truth, virtue, and beauty as well as his inclination to God and worship and his desire for immortality and power.

6. **Willpower and freedom:** The power to choose is regarded as the basis for man's dutifulness, reward and punishment for his actions, his morality and immorality, and his responsibility (*Insan*: 3, *al-Ra'd*: 11, *al-Anfal*: 53). Without belief in man's willpower and freedom, it is meaningless to evaluate his behaviour.
7. **Dynamism and self-actualization:** The one with a healthy personality does not abandon any effort to develop his talents. (*al-Baqarah*: 286; *al-Najm*: 39). He is constantly thriving and is not content with any extent of development because he knows that human talents are infinite.

³⁷ *Nahj-ul-Balaghah*, translated by Mohammad Dashti, letter no.45.

8. He believes that it is **the individual and social behaviours that determine man's happiness or wretchedness** since "*Allah never changes the grace He has bestowed on any people until they first change that which is in their [own] souls.*" (*al-Ra'd*: 11; *al-Anfal*: 53).
9. Two other features of a healthy personality are **feeling responsible and suffering from others' ignorance and error**. He will not remain silent in the face of corruption. Prophet Mohammad is a striking instance of such a person, "*Maybe you kill yourself with grief that they do not believe.*" (*al-Shu'ara*: 3).
10. Other indications of a healthy personality include **insight, patience, and invitation to patience**. People deprived of insight are occasionally provoked by the sedition caused by those who seek this world and endeavour to eliminate justice and humanity. They are clear examples of "*those who are void of wisdom*", "*those who do not know*", and "*those who do not think*". They stand against the true monotheists and torture and persecute them, and they stubbornly continue to oppose the righteous.
11. Good problem-solving skills. When faced with an unpleasant event, he makes every effort to overcome it. You will never hear him complain and moan. Instead of "why", he uses "how". His question is how he can solve his problem. According to Imam Ali, "Whenever a Muslim is in trouble, he should not complain of God, rather he should complain to his Lord Who controls and

manages all affairs.”³⁸ He also said, “*Whoever is impatient, his affliction becomes greater.*”³⁹

12. **Being pleased and content with what the Almighty God has decreed.** As a result, he is not envious of anybody, does not become anxious, and looks at the world realistically. His prayer is, “O’ God! Enable me to speak leniently and have a tender, soft heart.” Those who do not control their emotions with regards to Allah’s decree have failed to act according to the conduct of the Ahlul Bayt.

13. **What motivates him to take an action is not others’ approval and admiration of him.** He only takes his duty, God’s satisfaction, and proximity to Him into account. He is so magnanimous that if all people in the world praise or reprimand him, he is not influenced by them and does not give up doing his duty. The Imam said to Jabir Ju’fi:

You are not our friend, but if all people in the city say that you are a bad man, you do not become upset, and in contrast, if all people unanimously say that you are a good man, you are not delighted; instead you should assess yourself against God’s Book.⁴⁰

14. Contrary to those who are impressed by material manifestations of this world and are trapped by the latest fashions, those with a healthy personality do not pay heed to these things because they

³⁸ Harrani, Hasan ibn Ali. *Tuhaf-ul-'Uqul*, p. 81

³⁹ Tamimi Amadi, Abdul-Wahid, *ibid.*, no. 5625

⁴⁰ Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, *ibid*, vol. 75, p. 163

have perceived the grandeur of the Almighty God and consider this world trivial and insignificant.

15. **He is greatly energetic, as opposed to being to lethargic.** Day and night, he tries to live better. You always see him smiling, and like the great lady of Islam, Lady Zainab, at the peak of the hardships and crises, he remains calm and relaxed, and regards the worst incidents as pleasant.
16. His usual conduct is humility before and obedience to God and people (*Ale-Imran*: 199; *al-Anbiya*: 20, *al-Baqarah*: 45).
17. **Optimism.** (*Sad*: 27), and instead of thinking negatively, he thinks positively.
18. He behaves well towards everyone, particularly his relatives. (*al-Baqarah*: 83, 263; *Taha*: 44; *al-Ma'un*: 17).
19. He observes and listens carefully, and his heart is open to new perspectives. He makes the best use of his competencies and talents. He does not leave his intellectual, spiritual, and physical faculties idle and treads the path of growth and ultimate perfection. In order to heal his inner spiritual ailments, he uses the Qur'an. "*Say: For those who believe it (the Book) is guidance and healing.*" (*Fussilat*: 44)", "*Whosoever does right, whether male or female, and is a believer, him verily we shall quicken with a pure life.*" (*Nahl*, 97), and "*He who turns away from remembrance of Me, his will be a difficult life.*" (*Taha*: 124). He constantly sees himself in the presence of God, the Beneficent, and is into prayer, invoking God in solitude. He views himself as nothing before God and does not know any way to the development and perfection of his soul other than joining the boundless Divine Mercy and constantly connecting with His unique

essence. Through worship of God, he illustrates and reaches the zenith of servitude.

Thus, the person with a healthy personality views life as meaningful and loves prayer for the purpose of elevating his soul and understanding the truths in the universe. From the Qur'anic perspective, those who have a deep belief in God, prayer, the Unseen, and Resurrection are accustomed to worship of God and prayer (*al-Baqarah*: 3-4, 110). These enjoy a good mental health and amazing peace of mind. (*al-Baqarah*: 277). In the most difficult conditions, they do not give up performing prayers, and even their diligence and hard work are the fruits of their constant spiritual connection with God because prayer and all religious behaviours are formed in the context of deep knowledge and awareness. (*al-Nisa*: 162, *al-A'raf*: 170). The true praying people believe in all divine promises and perform religious obligations only to gain satisfaction of God and enjoy His endless divine blessings (*al-Ma'idah*: 12).

Religion and the development of a healthy personality in our youth

Undoubtedly, adolescence and youth play a special role in shaping personality. That is why in hadiths, the importance and superiority of this age range have been emphasized. The Prophet said, "Make the most of your youth before your old age."⁴¹ Addressing teachers and parents, he also said, "I recommend that you treat adolescents and young adults well because they have a tender heart that absorbs virtues. God has appointed me as a prophet to give people glad tidings of the Divine mercy and warn

⁴¹ Payandeh, Abul-Qasim, *ibid.*, p. 226, no. 372.

them of His punishment. Youths accepted my words and entered into a covenant of affection with me, but the elderly refused to accept my call and opposed me.”⁴² Likewise, according to him, “The devout young person is as superior to the devout old person as the prophets are to other people.”⁴³ Imam Sadiq also said, “Young people’s hearts are more tender than those of the elderly.”⁴⁴

Socrates was asked, “Why do you associate with young people most?” He replied, “The twigs can be set right, but the hardwoods that are not fresh are inflexible.”⁴⁵ Young people can be influenced easily; therefore, all those who work for either rectification or corruption of society pay careful attention to them.

Religion certainly plays a fundamental role in shaping the personality of young people, and there are many unanswered questions that only religion can answer. Thus, for the young people who have turned away from religion, life is meaningless. According to Erickson, “The identity that a young person seeks to encounter is “Who am I?” “What role should I play in society?” “Am I a child or an adult?”⁴⁶

Young people have many questions as to the nature of the world, their relationship to the world, the purpose of creation and life, the best way of life, and choosing values and beliefs. All these questions contribute to the formation of a young person’s identity, and he searches for some criteria for judging his and others’ behaviour. If he does not find answers to his

⁴² Falsafi, Muhammad Taqi, *Al-Hadith*, vol. 1, p. 350. See: idem., *Young People in Terms of Intellect and Emotion*, vol. 2, p. 248.

⁴³ Payandeh, Abul-Qasim, *ibid.*, p. 589, no. 2050.

⁴⁴ Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, *ibid.*, vol.12, p. 280.

⁴⁵ Khalili, Mustafa, *ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴⁶ Muhammadi, Muhammad Rida, *Important Aspects of the Adolescent’s Personality* Ma’rifat, No. 38, pp. 28-39.

questions, he faces an identity crisis. At this stage, religion plays an effective and constructive role. It invites man to God and the origin of perfection, and it forms the personality. It also grants him stability and peace of mind and prevents him from perplexity.

On the other hand, family is an influential factor in the development of man's personality; it significantly contributes to the development of young people's identity through inheritance and the choice of training methods.

In addition to the family, society and one's willpower play an essential role in establishing the identity of adolescents and young people.⁴⁷

Addressing his son Imam Hasan, Imam Ali wrote:

Adolescents' hearts resemble an empty land that accepts any seed it is sowed with. Therefore, before your heart is hardened, and your brain is trapped, I have taught you good manners so that you may embark on your tasks resolutely; tasks that experienced people endured their hardships, and you have been spared the ordeal of experiencing them again.⁴⁸

The only elements that grant man security, trust, and confidence and relieve his anxieties are remembering God and enjoying a strong support in life: "*Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest!*" (*al-Ra'd*: 28).

In this regard, the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatullah Khamenei, said:

Attention to and love for God gives meaning to man's life; it bridges his mental gaps and brings him success in all aspects of

⁴⁷ Lotf-Abadi, Hussain, *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 2, pp.214-215.

⁴⁸ *Nahj-ul-Balaghah*, letter no.31.

life. The reason why in some countries such as the United States, aspects such as money, military power, and even knowledge, cannot bring about happiness, and psychological problems stem from alienation from God and spirituality.⁴⁹

According to American psychologist and philosopher in the early twentieth century, William James:

The religious faith changes how the world seems to man and offers man new elements in addition to the tangible ones in the structure of the world. It changes the lifeless and cold material world into a world replete with life, reason, and awareness. The religious faith transforms man understanding of the world and creation. Moreover, inclination to the sacred truth and reality deserving worship lies in the nature of every human being. Human desires are not limited to material ones, and spiritual tendencies are not merely suggestions that are acquired. This is the truth that science confirms.

He also added:

However much our motives and stimuli to our desires originate from the material world, most of our desires and wishes are derived from the other world because most of them do not match worldly estimations.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, increased anxiety, worry, anxiety, obsession, and psychosis are achievements of atheists and disbelievers in their lives. *“He who turns*

⁴⁹ The Iranian Supreme Leader's Speech 8/8/1995 A.D.

⁵⁰ Nabati, Muhammad, *The Impact of Religion on the Reduction of Stress*, Keyhan Newspaper: (<http://kortan.wordpress.com>).

away from remembrance of Me, his will be a difficult life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment.” (Taha: 124).

Robert J. Ringer wrote:

Today’s western people have reached the conclusion that life without spirituality brings about mental suffering and pain and makes man’s soul lifeless and feeble. It deprives man of sustained pleasure and happiness. The high rate of crime, sexual offence, and moral corruption; the disintegration of the family and the great number of street adolescents and young adults driven out of home, the resort of liberal societies to drugs, alcohol, ecstasy pills, and violence to provide false joy for people all indicate this fact and show the relentless pain the West is suffering from, such as the decline of adolescents, and some of them are satisfied with the killing of fellow human beings and regard this work as sport and recreation.⁵¹

Sayyed Hossein Nasr wrote in this regard:

In the current western lifestyle, there is an inclination toward inviting people to live in the present moment – free from the history and the past – and to indulge in the momentary honour and instantaneous sensual pleasure. The worship of sports heroes as well as the desire for constantly breaking records and persistently overcoming the nature represents one aspect of this concern. However, a more destructive aspect of this trend can be seen in the use of drugs, alcohol, and unrestricted sexual relationships. In addition, the

⁵¹ Mohammadi, Li-Rida. *Joy in the Liberalism*, Purseman, no. 43.

importance given to sports is not at all unrelated to the desire for sensual pleasures. All these factors imply young people's loss of faith and belief in moral standards.⁵²

Accordingly, all non-divine schools of thought have tried to extinguish the flames of inner feelings or at least reduce them. For this reason, they have offered so-called solutions as refuge such as the unconditional freedom of the young people in satisfying carnal desires and animal instincts, as well as leading and directing them to bars, and hundreds of other methods that waste opportunities that eventually leads to their destruction. However, after young people turn to these seemingly strong refuges, they collapse, and they discover them to be false and imaginary because they did not see their goals achieved through satisfaction of their sensual desires.

Violence and sexual abuse of children are two factors that threaten the security and health of families. The worst kind of rape is incest it is feared that it might gradually become acceptable. According to a report by a Swedish organization, "About six out of ten rapes that occur at home are usually done by the biological father. Similarly, in the United States, many studies conducted since the mid-1970s about rape have confirmed the prevalence of sexual assault and incest against women and children. This is done very commonly by fathers, brothers, step- or half-brothers or step-fathers. Sexual abuse of children in the UK has also risen up 90 percent."⁵³

There is also an exponentially growing trend in corruption in American schools. Accordingly, each year the rate of moral corruption is raised and

⁵² Nasr, Abdullah, *The Young Muslim and The Modern World*, p 342.

⁵³ *Modernism and Incest*, Howra', no. 17, p. 23.

accelerated in these schools. In the United States, sexual and moral corruption is combined with the violence that results from carrying weapons and has created unbearable scenes.⁵⁴ Thus, developing a healthy personality goes hand in hand with the development of morality and spirituality.

⁵⁴ Risalat newspaper, no. 6286, 11/7/2007 A.D., p 18.

A CONVERSATION WITH ABRAHAM: EXPLORING THE IMAGE OF GOD IN THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN

FATEMAH MEGHJI

ABSTRACT: The patriarch Abraham has a special place as a central figure in all three monotheistic religions. Although essentially the “One” God that all monotheistic religions consider as their Lord, the God of Abraham in the Old Testament, Bible, and the Qur'an are arguably very different Gods. In all of the Abrahamic religions, at the most fundamental level, God is ‘the maker of heaven and earth’. Despite many other shared elements, the image of God and His characteristics diverge on other points. As the father of monotheism, Abraham's perception of God in each text serves as an important portal into the image of God in each. In this part, God's image and characteristics in both the Old Testament and the Qur'an will be compared and contrasted in regards to “seeing” God, His knowledge, His all-hearing quality, and His justice, and how these aspects contribute to an image of Him.

Preamble

For this paper, I have chosen to focus primarily on the image of God and Abraham in the Old Testament (where the story is located in the

Book of Genesis), and various verses from the Qur'an¹. These are the primary texts that concern Abraham. Further, as opposed to considering them in conversation with one another as many traditional Islamic commentaries have done, I would like to consider them juxtaposed to one another in order to highlight the differences that the Bible and the Qur'an portray in their image of God, with a special focus on the stories of their forefather Abraham/Ibrahim.² I will highlight the differences between these stories with reference to God and how they contribute to an image of Him. This discussion will include the image of God in the stories concerning Abraham, the conversations between God and Abraham, and their relationship. I wanted to avoid the discussion transforming into a biographical sketch of Abraham and have thus chosen instead to focus on his understanding of God (i.e. God's image and characteristics), and then Abraham's relationship with God. As the

¹ I have specifically chosen to consider Biblical canonical texts only so as to limit the discussion. In *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, the canon has been described as: "The literature that survived in the religious communities of both Judaism and early Christianity, and was recognized as sacred scripture, was that which was believed by those communities to have continuing validity for their faith, identity, conduct, and mission."¹ The Book of Genesis (from the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament) is unanimously considered reliable by both Jews and Christians. However, being that Judaism also has the Oral Torah, the Hebrew Bible is not the only primary text that contributes to its discussion on Abraham. Thus, we have chosen to focus only on the shared element, i.e. the Old Testament. The Qur'an is the primary text of Islam that has unanimous validity amongst Muslims. While the *ahadith* literature could also be argued to be a primary text, there is no consensus as to which *hadith* can be considered reliable. Thus, we have also omitted discussions primarily related to the *hadith* literature.

² Two pieces of pseudepigrapha relevant to this discussion that have not been considered, are the Testament of Abraham and the Apocalypse of Abraham, both of which give very interesting accounts of Abraham, his perception of, and his relationship with God. See: <http://wesley.nnu.edu/sermons-essays-books/noncanonical-literature/noncanonical-literature-ot-pseudepigrapha>. For a brief discussion on Abraham in one specific midrash (part of the Oral Torah), please see: "The Call of Abraham: A Midrash Revisited" by Paul Mandel (Indiana University Press, Proof texts, Vol. 14, No. 3 (September 1994), pp. 267-284)

primary reason for religion is humanity's relationship with God, it is also pertinent and relevant to focus the discussion on this aspect of Abraham which is at his very essence as the forefather of monotheism.

In order to avoid confusion, taking inspiration from Sheri Lowin³, Abraham will refer to Biblical references and Ibrahim will refer to Qur'anic references. God or Allah will always be referred to as God.

PART I: God's image and characteristics

1. *"Seeing" God*

Of the many shared stories of the Old Testament and the Qur'an, is the destruction of Lut/Lot's people. Both in Islamic and Christian tradition, Abraham/Ibrahim and Lot/Lut are related to each other. The angels who have set out to destroy the people of Lot, stop on their way to give the good news of a son to Abraham/Ibrahim and his wife. The laughter of Sarah upon hearing this news is well-known in both Christian and Islamic tradition. The general gist of the story is extremely similar. However, there are key differences with regards to God Himself that can be drawn from looking closer at the narrations of this event.

In the Biblical rendition of events, God manifests Himself to Abraham and appears to him on earth:

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little

³ Sheri Lowin, "Making of a forefather: Abraham in Islamic and Jewish Exegetical Narratives", Adobe Digital Editions.

water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.”⁴

It is not clear whether God eats, since there are three men accompanying him and Abraham only asks for three “measures” of food to be prepared.⁵ Later, “when he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.”⁶ Although it cannot be said that these quotes limit God’s existence to a body (as it is not clear that God actually ends up eating or washing His feet), it is clear that there is some image or appearance of God that manifests itself to Abraham. If we are to take the story at face-value, this seems to be the case. Further, other cases exist in the Old Testament where God also descends upon mankind and speaks to men, interacting with them on various levels. In fact, He even comes in a physical form and wrestles with Jacob (known in the Islamic tradition as Ya’qub), the descendent of Abraham. After wrestling with God, Jacob says: “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.” God’s descent to earth is commonplace in the Bible, and further helps to support the idea that Jesus, as one of the components of the Trinity, came to earth in the form of a human.

Thus, it can be rather strongly determined that the God of Abraham in the Old Testament can be seen and communicated directly with on earth, in a manner that resembles normal human interaction. (It is important to note here that this does not mean the God of the Old

⁴ Genesis NRSV, 18:1-6

⁵ In the Qur’anic rendition of events, Ibrahim prepares food for the three men, who are angels in the Qur’anic version, but they do not eat of it. This causes Ibrahim to fear them and realize that they are not human, but rather angels, and then a conversation with regards to his future child and the destruction of the people of Lot ensues.

⁶ Genesis NRSV, 17:22.

Testament is limited to a body, it just means that He appears with a body to mankind with a certain image.)

Juxtaposed to this, the Qur'anic version reads:

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ جَاءَ
بِعِجْلٍ خَنِيذٍ فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا
تَخَفْ إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَى قَوْمِ لُوطٍ

*Certainly Our messengers came to Abraham with the good news, and said, "Peace!" "Peace!" He replied. Presently he brought [for them] a roasted calf. But when he saw their hands not reaching for it, he took them amiss and felt a fear of them. They said, "Do not be afraid. We have been sent to the people of Lot."*⁷

In the Qur'anic rendition of events, there is absolutely no mention of God's physical presence or manifestation in front of Ibrahim. In fact, God, as the narrator, clearly omits Himself physically from the scene, saying that His messengers came to Ibrahim (on behalf of Him). Although the Qur'an does speak of conversations between God and Ibrahim, it never denotes or implies that this conversation takes place in a manner similar to that of human interaction, or that God ever appears in any form to any man. In fact, God's communication with His Prophets is always through some sort of intermediary; never directly. This point has been made clear in several verses of the Qur'an, the most explicit of which says:

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا
فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلِيُّ حَكِيمٌ

⁷ *The Qur'an*, 11:69-70 trans. Ali Quli Qara'i, (London: ICAS Press, 2004), www.tanzil.net.

It is not [possible] for any human that Allah should speak to him except through revelation or from behind a curtain, or send a messenger who reveals by His permission whatever He wishes. Indeed He is all-exalted, all-wise.⁸

Further, a physical manifestation or image of God that is perceivable goes against the image of God in the Qur'an (i.e. if we are to take the Qur'an literally):

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنظُرْ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ نَرَىٰكَ
وَلَا كُنْ أَنْظُرَ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ نَرْتَنِي فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ
جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

When Moses arrived at Our tryst and his Lord spoke to him, he said, "My Lord, show [Yourself] to me, that I may look at You!" He said, "You shall not see Me. But look at the mountain: if it abides in its place, then you will see Me." So when his Lord disclosed Himself to the mountain, He levelled it, and Moses fell down swooning. And when he recovered, he said, "Immaculate are You! I turn to You in penitence, and I am the first of the faithful."⁹

In another verse, the Qur'an states:

لَّا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

The sights do not apprehend Him, yet He apprehends the sights, and He is the All-attentive, the All-aware.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid, 42:51

⁹ Ibid, 7:143.

¹⁰ The Qur'an, 6:103.

God will not physically show himself to any Prophet or person and cannot be seen. Moses (at face-value) requests this and is denied. This can be clearly deduced from several verses of the Qur'an, and is one of the key differences in the story of Abraham in the Bible and the Qur'an.

2. God's knowledge

As the story progresses in the Bible and delves into the discussion of the punishment of Lot's people, the image of God simultaneously becomes more convoluted. In Genesis, God says:

*I must go down and see whether they have done
altogether according to the outcry that has come to me;
and if not, I will know.*¹¹

This passage seems to imply that God will not know what the people are doing until He has gone 'down' and seen it for Himself. i.e. He is not all-knowing. This is in contradiction with the idea that God is omniscient, a characteristic held unanimously amongst the Abrahamic faiths. How scholars of the faith bring this into harmony with instances in the text that seem to suggest otherwise (like this), is a topic for elsewhere. Nevertheless, Abraham does not seem able to fully comprehend God's justice, and this becomes apparent when he questions God's punishment of Lot's people:

*So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom,
while Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Then
Abraham came near and said, "Will you indeed sweep
away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are
fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away*

¹¹ Genesis NRSV, 18:21.

the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake." Abraham answered, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." Again he spoke to him, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." Then he said, "Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." He said, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." Then he said, "Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.¹²

Here, God speaks to Abraham as though He has no knowledge of the people of Sodom, or how many righteous exist amongst them. The entire passage consists of "if" clauses related to what God will find once

¹² Ibid, 18:22-33.

he enters the city, and within this passage there is no indication that God is omniscient or that He already knows what He will find. Rather, the opposite holds true, and neither in the words or actions of Abraham or God do we understand His omniscience.

The Qur'anic delivery of this conversation reads quite differently:

قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لُوطًا قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن فِيهَا لَنُنَجِّيَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ مِنَ
الْغَائِبِينَ وَلَمَّا أَن جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ
وَلَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّا مُنْجُونَكَ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَكَ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ

*And when Our messengers came to Abraham with the good news, they said, "We are indeed going to destroy the people of this town. Its people are indeed wrongdoers." He said, "Lot is indeed in it." They said, "We know better those who are in it. We will surely deliver him and his family, except his wife: she shall be one of those who remain behind." And when Our messengers came to Lot, he was distressed on their account and in a predicament for their sake. But they said, 'Do not be afraid, nor grieve! We shall deliver you and your family, except your wife: she will be one of those who remain behind.'*¹³

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاءَتْهُ الْبُشْرَى يُجَادِلُنَا فِي قَوْمِ لُوطٍ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ اغْرُضْ عَنْ هَذَا إِنَّهُ قَدْ جَاءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ وَإِنَّهُمْ آتِيهِمْ
عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ مَرْدُودٌ

So when the awe had left Abraham and the good news had reached him, he pleaded with Us concerning the

¹³ The Qur'an, 29:32-33

*people of Lot. Abraham was indeed most forbearing, plaintive, [and] penitent. "O Abraham, let this matter alone! Your Lord's edict has certainly come, and an irrevocable punishment shall overtake them."*¹⁴

Thus, in the Qur'anic version, not only is God omniscient but Ibrahim is rebuked by God's messengers when he mentions Lot's safety. There is no room to argue that God did not know who was amongst the people of Lot or that He might not save them. God's knowledge of who exists amongst the people of Lot predates their destruction, and this knowledge does not require his descent into the city. In other instances, Ibrahim even affirms and acknowledges God's omniscience verbatim. For example, in one instance, whilst Ibrahim and Ismail are building the house of God (albeit after the destruction of Sodom), the Qur'an quotes Ibrahim's acknowledgement and belief in God's omniscience:

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

*As Abraham raised the foundations of the House with Ishmael, [they prayed]: 'Our Lord, accept it from us! Indeed You are the All-hearing, the All-knowing.'*¹⁵

While describing God to the polytheists, he says:

وَحَاجُّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالُوا نَحْجُوهُ فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

His people argued with him. He said, 'Do you argue with me concerning Allah, while He has guided me for

¹⁴ Ibid, 11:74-76.

¹⁵ Ibid, 2:127.

*certain? I do not fear what you ascribe to Him as [His] partners, excepting anything that my Lord may wish. My Lord embraces all things in [His] knowledge. Will you not then take admonition?*¹⁶

In another prayer to God for children, Abraham says:

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِي وَمَا نُعْلِنُ وَمَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

*Our Lord! Indeed You know whatever we hide and whatever we disclose, and nothing is hidden from Allah on the earth or in the sky.*¹⁷

This is consistent with the overall message of the Qur'an where God is consistently seen as an actor who is knowledgeable over His creation and everything related to them i.e. He is all-knowing. In fact, God's omniscience is a theme and characteristic mentioned hundreds of times in the Qur'an.¹⁸

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

With Him are the treasures of the Unseen; no one knows them except Him. He knows whatever there is in land and sea. No leaf falls without His knowing it, nor is there

¹⁶ Ibid, 6:80

¹⁷ Ibid, 14:38

¹⁸ For a full overview of the characteristics and names of God in the Qur'an, related to his knowledge, see p. 14-18 of "The Image of god in the Qur'an" in the book: *God: Existence & Attributes* by H.I. Mohammad Ali Shomali.

*a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or
withered but it is in a manifest Book.*¹⁹

3. God, the All-Hearing

Related to God's knowledge and omniscience is His ability to hear everything. Interestingly enough, this seems to be a characteristic of God that is accepted throughout both the Qur'an and the Old Testament, especially in scenarios related to Abraham/Ibrahim. Referring back to the passages quoted, although God apparently wants to go down to see if the people of Sodom have indeed transgressed, His knowledge of what has occurred seems to be according to the "outcry that has come to [Him]"²⁰ indicating that He can hear those who call to Him, no matter where they might be (even if He supposedly cannot confirm the veracity of these cries). In the story of Hagar's pursuit for water for her and Abraham's son Ishmael, the Old Testament says:

*And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of
God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her,
"What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God
has heard the voice of the boy where he is."*²¹

This is similar to the Qur'anic image of God, where, complementing His knowledge, is His ability to be all-Hearing. As mentioned, Ibrahim also refers to Allah as the "all-Hearing". In fact, God is described as all-Hearing in the Qur'an 46 times.²² In one particularly strong passage, the Qur'an says:

¹⁹ The Qur'an, 6:59

²⁰ Genesis NSRV, 18:20

²¹ Ibid, 21:17

²² See: The Image of God in the Qur'an, p. 16.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرُ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

*Have you not regarded that Allah knows whatever there is in the heavens and whatever there is in the earth? There is no secret talk among three, but He is their fourth/ companion [, nor among five but He is their sixth, nor less than that, nor more, but He is with them wherever they may be. Then He will inform them about what they have done on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed Allah has knowledge of all things.*²³

4. A just God

The question of God's justice is often a question of controversy, especially when it is related to His destruction of a nation that may include innocent people. Justice is an ideal that the righteous do not compromise on, and an ideal explored in both the Bible and the Qur'an, especially with regards to Abraham/Ibrahim. There is no room for God to be unjust, in both the Biblical and Qur'anic tradition.

In the case of the destruction of Lot's people in the Bible, even Abraham questions God's justice (as read above), and although he is usually so submissive that he does not press for an explanation, he finds the issue so grave that He would risk angering the wrath of God. However, this God is also one that voices concern about Abraham's reaction, and contemplates keeping the news of the destruction from Abraham.

²³ The Qur'an, 58:7

The Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; so that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”²⁴

What is so interesting about this specific quote is that God decides to tell Abraham about the destruction of Lot’s people so that Abraham can charge his own children “to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice”. It is because Abraham must charge his own children to the way of the Lord that God must tell him of the destruction of the people of Lot. Righteousness and justice are God’s way. However, Abraham does not seem to understand this, and questions God about his destruction of the people of Lot, asking if He would “sweep away the righteous with the wicked?”

However, in both the Biblical and Qur’anic narratives, the righteous of the people of Lot (i.e. his family save his wife) are saved, and in the end, God’s justice prevails. Although some commentators suggest that it is God complying with Abraham’s request to save the righteous, it could also be suggested that regardless of His conversation with Abraham, God would have acted in the same way, and that he was simply allowing Abraham to voice his thoughts in order to emphasize the fact that God is just and that God would not do anything against justice. Perhaps it indicates a misunderstanding of God on the part of Abraham as opposed to God’s pending injustice. Or, it could indicate Abraham’s

²⁴ Genesis NRSV, 18:17-19.

misunderstanding of justice itself. Perhaps God wanted to ensure that Abraham understood and believed that God is not one to act unjustly. Therefore, He chose to have a conversation with Abraham about the destruction in order to remove any doubts that could have possibly come to Abraham's mind. Justice is not an ideal to be reckoned with and its importance, especially with relation to God, shows itself in this narrative: Justice befits God and is His way. Anything less than justice from God would be a problem. Although at first glance, the passage may seem to indicate that God is not just, looking closer, this claim can be negated as we do not know what God would have done had Abraham not voiced his concern.

Interestingly enough, the issue of justice is not brought up by Abraham in the narrative concerning the sacrifice of his son (which at face-value seems to be an oppressive command from God). In that case, Abraham submits whole-heartedly to God, doing as He commands. Some have commented on this seeming inconsistency²⁵, however, both the Qur'an and Bible do not consider this unjust. After all, the outcome was that his son was not killed; rather, it was just a test to see whether Abraham/Ibrahim would submit to the will of God (which, God knew he would). However, in the case of the destruction of Lot's people, Abraham seems to question God's justice explicitly only if there are innocent people amongst them.

In the Qur'anic narrative, we also see a vague mention of Abraham pleading to God with regards to the people of Lot. As we saw earlier, the angels tell Abraham that they know better who is amongst the people of Lot than Abraham knows himself. With this divine

²⁵ See Mordecai Roshwald's "Two Dialogues of Abraham with God" in *Modern Age*.

knowledge, it is implied that they know very well what they are doing, and there is no question of them erroneously destroying anybody whom they are not supposed to or knowingly acting in an unjust manner. In fact, we do not see a questioning of God's justice in any way. Rather, we only see an affirmation of it. In another interesting exchange in the Qur'an, God clearly indicates the importance of justice and says that His covenant does not extend to those in Ibrahim's progeny who are of the unjust:

وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

*And when his Lord tested Abraham with certain words, and he fulfilled them, He said, 'I am making you the Imam of mankind.' Said he, 'And from among my descendants?' He said, 'My pledge does not extend to the unjust.'*²⁶

Other instances in the Qur'an also emphasize God's justice and that he does not oppress or do anything that is unjust. This is also discussed in "The Image of God in the Qur'an"²⁷. Thus, in both the Bible and the Qur'an, God's justice is one of His fundamental characteristics.

²⁶ The Qur'an, 2:124.

²⁷ "The Image of God in the Qur'an", *God: Existence and Attributes*, P.45

ALLAMAH AL-HILLI ON IMAMATE IN HIS *KASHFUL MURAD*, PART II

TRANSLATED BY KARIM AGHILI

ABSTRACT: An Imam who surpasses all people in every honourable quality whether it be knowledge, courage, piety, or wisdom, and who leads justly leads people and guides them towards morality is a blessing and grace of God. In Shi'i Islam, the concept of Imamate refers to the necessity of having a divinely-appointed leader who will lead the Islamic nation after the Prophet's death. The previous part of this series displayed the responses to objections raised against Imamate from prominent scholar Allamah Hilli's *Kashf ul-Murād*, expanded on from Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's *Tajrid al-I'tiqād* – the first treatise on Shi'i theology. *Kashful Murad* is one of the most widely read of Allamah al-Hilli's publications as it is the first commentary written on Allamah al-Tusi's work. This part continues with discussions on the proofs for the Imamate of Ali, his superiority to the companions, the Imamate of the eleven Imams after him, and rules concerning those opposed to his leadership.

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

Al-Tusi: God said, “*Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle...*” (5:55). The specific characteristics in this verse are combined only within Ali.¹

¹ *al-'Umdah*, p. 167; *al-Ghadir*, vol. 2, pp. 47-52-53 and 59.

Allamah al-Hilli: This is another proof for the Imamate of Ali, as God says, “Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat (alms tax) while bowing down (5:55). This verse will be used as a proof and to draw a conclusion from it hinges on some premises:

The word *innama* (only) is used for restriction (*hasr*), which is affirmed both textually (*naqlan*) and rationally (*‘aqlan*). All the Arab lexicographers are unanimous that it is used for restriction. As for the rational proof, since the word *innama*, is made up of *inna* (affirmation) and *ma* (negation); and its combining forms denote the same meanings in its compound form based on the principle of *istis-hab* (presumption of continuity)² and based on the unanimous agreement of the Arab lexicographers that *inna* and *ma* have the same meanings in their compound form. It is incorrect to assume that these two words denote the same meaning. They do not include those who are not mentioned in the verse and negate those who are mentioned. The meaning of *hasr* (restriction) refers to affirming those who are mentioned in the verse and negating those who are not mentioned.

The word *‘wali’* (guardian) refers to a person who is most qualified to exercise authority (*tasarruf*),³ which is demonstrated by the

²Translator’s note: Juristically, *istishab* applies in a situation where a person was in a state of certainty about a certain state of affairs, and then doubts whether or not that state of affairs still holds true. The principle dictates that a person assume that state of affairs still holds true.

³Translator’s note: *Wilayat al-tasarruf* means the possession of authority which thereby entitles the *wali* (one who is more entitled to exercise authority) to act in whatever way he judges best, according to one’s discretion, as a free agent in the management of the affairs of the community. The *wilayat al-tasarruf* can be exercised only by one so designated by *al-wali al-mutlaq* (the Absolute Authority i.e., God) or by one who is explicitly appointed by the Prophet in the position

lexicographers as seen in the following examples: A king is a guardian who has no guardian, or the avenger of blood, or the guardian of the one who is dead. Another example can be cited from Imam Ali, who said, "If any woman gets married without the permission of her guardian (*wali*), her marriage is invalid."⁴

"...*the believers...*" (5:5) refers to a few believers, because God characterizes them with such impeccability that they are exclusive to some of them. If the verse refers to all the believers, then the guardian (*wali*) and the one under the tutelage of the guardian (*mutawalli*) would have been one and the same; each of the believers would have been both the guardian and the one under the tutelage of the guardian.

Given the above-mentioned premises, we conclude that:

1. It is Ali who is intended in this verse, because it is unanimously agreed that those who allocate the verse to some of the believers say that what is intended by some of the believers is surely Ali. Therefore, interpreting the verse as referring to someone other than him would amount to a violation of the consensus.⁵
2. Either Ali is the only one meant or he is part of it. The latter has been refuted.

of *al-wali bi-al-niyabat* (authority through deputation). Consequently, the Imam who is designated by the *nass* as *wali* possesses the *wilyat al-tasarruf* and is recognized as the ruler over the people.

⁴ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 37, p. 239.

⁵ *Tafsir* (the Qur'anic commentary) of al-Tha'labi in manuscript form, p. 74; *Manaqib* of ibn al-Maghazali, p. 311.

3. All the commentators of the Qur'an agree that Ali is indicated in this verse, because it was revealed when he gave his ring in charity to a beggar while bowing down during prayer.

Al-Tusi: The repeatedly and widely transmitted Hadith (tradition) of Ghadir.

Allamah al-Hilli: The Hadith of Ghadir is another proof for the Imamate of 'Ali. It is reported that the Prophet said on the Day of Ghadir when he returned from the Farewell Pilgrimage: "O Muslims, do I not have a greater claim [more authority] on you than you have on yourselves?" They said, "Yes." Then he said, "For whomever I am his master, Ali is his master. O God, be the friend of whoever is Ali's friend and the enemy of whoever is 'Ali's enemy; love whoever loves 'Ali and hate whoever hates him; help whoever helps him and forsake whoever forsakes him."⁶

This tradition has been narrated by all the Muslims as an authenticated hadith, although there is difference as to whether it indicates the Imamate of 'Ali.

The Imamate of 'Ali in this hadith is proven with the word "mawla," which means having a greater authority (*awla'*). In the beginning of the hadith "O Muslims, do I not have a greater claim on you than you have on yourselves?" indicates this meaning. And with regard to both linguistic convention (*'urf al-lughah*) and usage of mawla, the word mawla has been repeatedly used as it is used in the verse: "[Your abode

⁶ *al-'Umdah*, p. 139; *Manaqib* of Ibn al-maghazali, pp. 25-26; *al-Ghadir*, vol. 1, pp. 14-151

is/ the Fire: That is the proper place to claim you..." (57:15),⁷ that is, it has a greater claim on them.

Al-Akhtal, the Loquacious,⁸ also says using the word *mawla*: "You became its master (*mawla*)⁹ from among all the people. It is more befitting that the Quraysh should revere you and praise God."

The Arabs also use the word *mawla* with the same meaning:

The master (*mawla*) of the slave (*'abd*) refers to a person who is worthier of having authority (*tasarruf*) or control (*tadbir*) over the slave.

Mawla is a homonym shared by certain meanings, none of which is intended here except *awla*, or '*having a greater authority*'.

Either only *awla* or other meanings of the word *mawla* are intended; it is not possible that *awla* is not intended, because the meaning '*having greater authority*' truly applies to the word *mawla* in this hadith.

Al-Tusi: The widely transmitted *Hadith al-Manzilah* (*Hadith of Rank*).

Allamah al-Hilli: Another proof for the Imamate of Ali is the following hadith, *Hadith al-Manzilah*: "O 'Ali, your rank (*al-manzilah*) in relation to me is that of Aaron to Moses except that there shall be no prophet after me'.¹⁰ Though this hadith is *mutawatir* by the Muslim scholars, there are differences as to whether it refers to the Imamate of Ali.

⁷ The Qur'an, 57: 15

⁸ Poet of the Umayyad period (661–750), esteemed for his perfection of Arabic poetic form in the old Bedouin tradition.

⁹ the master of the tribe of Quraysh

¹⁰ *al-'Umdah*, pp. 173-185; *Musnad* of Ahmad, vol. 3, p. 32; *Fada'il al-sahabah*, vol. 2, p. 633; *al-Ghadir*, vol. 1, p. 51, and vol. 3, pp. 197-201.

All the positions of Aaron in relation to Moses are possessed by 'Ali in relation to the Prophet, because the view that only one position is intended in the hadith is refuted here, because the word *al-manzilah* is a common or generic noun designating a whole kind or genus. Moreover, the reason for this refutation is that exception (*istithna*) is characterized by plurality (*al-kathrah*) and generality; and non-generality (*ghayr al-'umum*) is not intended in the hadith because of the excluding exception (*al-istithna al-mukhrij*), which excludes the thing excepted (*al-muthtathna*) from the general term, i.e., that from which the exception is made (*al-muthtathna minh*). If it had not been for the exception, the rank of prophethood would have been necessarily included.

An example can be given of a number. If one says: "I owe him twenty pounds except one, that from which the exception is made is 19 and that which is accepted is one." The main point is that the rank of prophecy is not shared by Imam 'Ali, and one who holds that plurality without generality intended in this hadith is rejected because all the ranks of Aaron are intended. If it had not been for the excluding exception, it would not have been possible to understand what was meant by the hadith. One of the ranks of Aaron was the succession to Moses after him if he had lived after Moses, as he was rightfully the successor to Moses during his life.¹¹

¹¹ Other positions that can be understood from the Qur'an are indicated in the following verses:

- "Be my vicegerent over my people."

- "Appoint for me a minister from my family: my brother Aaron."

"Though him, strengthen me."

"Make him a partner in my mandate."

Imam Ali holds the position of vicegerent, minister, aid, and partner, except for prophethood.

Al-Tusi: Ali was appointed by the Prophet as his deputy in Medina in which Muslim scholars unanimously agree on.

Allmah al-Hilli: The Prophet appointed Ali as his deputy in Medina, although the hypocrites spread false rumours about this. When Ali heard them, he went the Prophet and said, "O messenger of God, the hypocrites thought you had appointed me as your deputy because you found me to be a burden and wanted to get rid of me." The Prophet said, "These people are liars. I left you in Medina to represent me in my absence. So return and continue to be my deputy. Are you not content to be to me what Aaron was to Moses except that there will be no prophet after me?"¹² His deputyship in Medina continued; no one else became the deputy of the Prophet in Medina. It is unanimously agreed that whenever the deputyship of the others in Medina was renounced, by the same token their deputyship in other cities was renounced as well. Ali's task as a representative was established.

Some may object by saying that the Prophet appointed a group as deputies in Medina and other cities; however, they are not Imams from Shi'a point of view. The Prophet deposed some of his deputies during his lifetime, and no one among the Shi'as and the Sunnis believed in the Imamate of the others who had not been deposed except in the imamate of `Ali, rendering Ali as distinguished from others.

Al-Tusi: The Prophet said, "You are my brother, executor, and the successor after me; and the judge in my religion."¹³

¹² *al-'Umdah*, pp. 173-185; *Musnad* of Ahmad, vol. 1, p. 177, *al-Ghadir*, vol. 3, p. 199.

¹³ *al-Shafi fi'l-imamah*, vol. 3, p. 76; *Masadir Nahj al-balaghah*, vol 1, pp. 121-151; *al-Muraja'at*, p. 223 cited from *Kanz al-'ummal*, *Musnad of Ahmad* etc.

Allamah al-Hilli: This hadith is an explicit specification on the authority and succession of 'Ali.

Al-Tusi: After the Prophet, Ali was the most meritorious (*al-afdal*) in the Muslim community, and the imamate of one who is less meritorious is rationally unacceptable.¹⁴

Allamah al-Hilli: Ali was more meritorious than the others, and therefore he deserved to be the Imam, because the preference of the unqualified over the qualified is irrational.

Al-Tusi: Because of Ali's miracles, such as pulling the gate of Khaybar off its hinges,¹⁵ conversing with a snake,¹⁶ lifting a rock from the mouth of the well,¹⁷ fighting the jinn,¹⁸ sending back the sun¹⁹ and so forth, he is true in his claim to the Imamate.

Allamah al-Hilli: Ali worked many miracles; thus he alone is entitled to Imamate. He is true in his claim.

What is widely transmitted is that he opened the gate of Khaybar, while seventy strong men could not put it back in place;

¹⁴ *al-Shafi fi'l-imamah*, vol. 1, p. 326; *al-Dhakhirah*, p. 429, *al-Iqtisad*, p. 190, *Risalah fi'il-imamah*, p. 431; *Anwar al-malakut*, p. 206; *al-Lawami' al-ilahiyyah*, p. 261.

¹⁵ *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah* of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 1, p. 21; *Tahqiq* of Muhammad Abu'l-Fadl Ibrahim vol. 20; *al-Irshad* of al-Mufid, pp. 175-177; *Tarjamat al-Imam 'Ali*; *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir, vol. 1, p. 156-226, nos. 218-290.

¹⁶ *Madinat al-ma'ajiz*, vol. 2, pp. 40-41.

¹⁷ *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 1, p. 21; *Tahqiq* of Muhammad Abu'l-Fadl, vol. 20, *al-Irshad* of al-Mufid, p. 175.

¹⁸ *Madinat al-ma'ajiz*, vol. 2, pp. 64-66; *al-Bihar*, vol. 39, pp. 175-177 cited from *al-Manaqib*, *al-Irshad* of al-Mufid; *al-Khara'ij*, and *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir, vol. 2, p. 361, no. 862.

¹⁹ *Fath al-bari fi sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 168; *al-Sawa'iq al-muriqah*, p. 128; *al-'Umdah*, p. 435 nos. 665-666; *al-Sirat al-halabiyyah*, vol. 3, p. 44; *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir, vol. 2, p. 283 no. 807; *al-Ghadir*, vol. 3, pp. 126-141.

He conversed with a snake on the pulpit of Kufah. He asked Imam 'Ali a question. The Imam said that he was one of the rulers of the jinn, whom a case had confused, and the Imam gave him the answer;

When he headed toward Siffin, a terrible thirst came upon his followers, and he ordered them to dig a well near a hermitage. There they found a big rock they were unable to remove. Then Ali dismounted his horse and pushed it many yards away. The water then gushed out and they quenched their thirst. Afterwards, Ali returned it back where it had been. During this moment, someone was observing this and approached Ali to embrace Islam. When Ali asked him what prompted him to become a Muslim, replied, "This hermitage was built to seek out the one who would remove that rock for water to gush out from underneath. A long time passed and those who had lived in this hermitage before me did not attain that knowledge."²⁰

Imam Ali fought the jinn and killed a large number of them when they intended to harm the Prophet when he set out against Banu al-Mustaliq. He also sent back the sun twice.²¹ These and many other well-known events indicate the truth of the one who worked these miracles.

As for the second premise, widely transmitted because no one doubts that he claimed the Imamate after the Prophet.

²⁰ He later was martyred as a follower of 'Ali in the Battle of Siffin in Syria

²¹ *al-Irshad* of al-Mufid, pp. 181-183; *al-Sawa'iq al-muhriqah*, p. 128; *Tarjamat al-Imam 'Ali*, *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir, vo. 2, pp. 283-306, *al-Manaqib* of al-Khwarazmi, p. 306; *Yanabi' al-mawaddah* of al-Qanduzi, p. 138-139; *Waq'ah Siffin*, pp. 151-152, 1st ed. Cairo.

Al-Tusi: Because of the previous unbelief of the others except Ali, they are not qualified for the Imamate,²² therefore he is appointed for the Imamate.

Allmah al-Hilli: This is another proof for the Imamate of 'Ali; except him, those for whom the Imamate is claimed, such as Abbas and Abu Bakr, were unbelievers before the advent of the Prophet. Therefore, they are not qualified for the Imamate as God says: "*My pledge does not extend to the unjust*" (2:124).²³ What is intended by "*pledge*" here is the pledge of the Imamate, because it is the answer to the supplication of Prophet Abraham.

Al-Tusi: According to the verse: "*...and be with the Truthful*" (9:119).²⁴

Al-Hilli: This is another proof for the Imamate of Ali,²⁵ and it is the verse: "*O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah, and be with the Truthful*" (9:119). God commands being with the truthful, and this is a quality of the infallible; no one except him is known to be truthful, and it is unanimously agreed that there was no infallible except Ali after the demise of the Prophet.

Al-Tusi: According to the verse: "*...those vested with authority among you.*"²⁶

²² *al-'Umdah* of Ibn al-Batriq, pp. 222 and 416; *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 6, pp. 143-144, Matabi' al-shu'ab, Beirut, 1378; *al-Shafi fi'l-imamah*, vol. 3, pp. 137-142, *al-Ghadir*, vol. 7, pp. 306-329.

²³ The Qur'an, 1: 124

²⁴ The Qur'an, 9: 119

²⁵ *Shawahid al-tanzil* of al-Hakim al-Haskani, vol. 1, p. 341, al-hadith 350-357; *al-Durr al-manthur* of Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, vol. 4, p. 316.

²⁶ The Qur'an, 4: 59

Allamah al-Hilli: This is another proof for the Imamate of ‘Ali: “*O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you*” (4:59).²⁷ He commanded following and obeying those vested with authority, and what is intended by *ulu’l amr* (those vested with authority) are the infallible ones, because no one else except the infallible one has the superiority (*awlawayyah*) which necessarily requires obeying him, and it is unanimously agreed that there was no one infallible except ‘Ali after the demise of the Prophet.

Al-Tusi: According to the Qur’an: ‘...*those vested with authority among you*’.²⁸

Al-Hilli: This is another proof for the Imamate of Ali. God says, “*O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you*” (4:59).²⁹ He commanded people to follow and obey *ulu’l amr* (those vested with authority) indicating that they are the infallible ones, since no one other than an infallible possesses superiority (*awlawayyah*) that necessarily requires obeying him. And it is unanimously agreed that none other than Ali was infallible except Ali after the demise of the Prophet.

²⁷ *Shawahid al-tanzil* of al-Hakim al-Haskani, vol. 1, p. 189, al-hadith 202, 203 and 204.

²⁸ The Qur’an, 4: 59

²⁹ *Shawahid al-tanzil* of al-Hakim al-Haskani, vol. 1, p. 189, al-hadith 202, 203 and 204.

THE QUR'AN IN THE WORDS OF IMAM SAJJAD¹

NAFUSEH ZARVANDI RAHMANI² & JAVAD ZARVANDI³

TRANSLATED BY: SABA BHIMANI AND FATIMA TAVANA
KERMANI

ABSTRACT: The Qur'an is the main text of Islam for the purpose of guiding human beings to perfection and felicity, a book that leads the ignorant to the light. The Qur'an without the Ahlul Bayt and the Ahlul Bayt without the Qur'an cannot enable a person to achieve the highest goal – the two must correspond with one another. This article offers a collection of sayings by Imam Zain al-Abideen al-Sajjad, the fourth Shi'a Imam, regarding various aspects of the Qur'an in his supplication "Upon Completing a Reading of the Qur'an" from his collection of supplications called *Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya*. These sayings revolve around topics such as the Qur'an as a manifestation of God's light, the most beautiful speech, and as guidance for humankind. The Imam also teaches us the importance of familiarizing ourselves with it and reflecting on it.

¹ *Bayyinah*, vol. 7, Issue 68, pp. 38-50

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Introduction

The Qur'an is believed to be the divine immortal miracle and proof of God, the heavenly and revealed word that offers a complete code for people to live a rewarding life and to gain salvation in the next. It sets the guidelines for any person. Every generation of Muslims found new sources of strength, courage, and inspiration from it, and is a compass in the turbulent journey of life.

To become familiar with this comprehensive book needs expression and interpretation by Qur'anic experts. The Prophet Muhammad, who was the trustee of revelation and the real commentator of the Qur'an, on different occasions and with different expressions (such as the Hadith of Thaqalayn) as well as prior to his death, introduced the family of the Prophet (the Ahlul Bayt) as on par with the Qur'an; both are presented as valuable jewels among the Muslims. The relation between this family (*Itrat*) and Qur'an is mutual; on the one hand the Qur'an introduces the Ahlul Bayt as the best people, and on the other, it introduces them as the most knowledgeable about the facts and culture of the Qur'an. Imam Sajjad, the fourth Imam and great grandson of the Prophet, had a deep relationship with the Qur'an.

When we examine Imam Sajjad's words about the Qur'an, it is apparent that he was a manifestation of its teachings, since he followed its guidelines completely.

Imam Sajjad was known to be the ornament of the pious, the master of the worshippers, and one of the bright stars of the divine training. *Sahifah al-Sajjadiyeh*, a compilation of his prayers, is an ocean of divine knowledge and culture, an instance of divine shafts and Qur'anic light. Supplication number 42, called "Upon Completion of Reading the

Qur'an" is a vast treasure of Qur'anic sciences and facts and a strong proof of the introduction of Qur'an, the one who brought it, its scholars, and qualified educator of the house of its revelation.⁴ The following offers glimpses of his description of the Qur'an based on this prayer.

The Qur'an, a manifestation of God's Light

The manifestation of the Qur'an is like a light that illuminates the hearts of believers. Imam Sajjad introduces it as the Light. In the first phrase of this prayer, he says: "O Allah, You have helped me to complete Your book, which You sent down as a light."

But who is this light intended for? In the third phrase, he says: "You appointed it a light through following which we may be guided from the shadows of error and ignorance."

The Qur'an contains references to itself with the attribute of light: "*And we have sent to you clear light.*" (174:4)

About the immortality of the light of Qur'an, Imam Sajjad says: "And You appointed it a light of guidance whose proof is not extinguished before the witnesses."

Also in the seventh phrase of this supplication, he says: "They acquire light from its lamp, and beg not guidance from any other."

The Qur'an, a guidance for humankind

The Qur'an is the book for leading human beings to perfection and felicity, and that leads the ignorant from darkness to the light.

⁴ Tawzeeh Duaye 42 Sahife Sajjadiyeh ba nigahi be kamal ilmi Qur'an, Ahmed Reza Gha'yi, Magazine Safineh, 58/6

In the third phrase of the prayer, Imam Sajjad says: “And a guidepost of deliverance, so that he who repairs straight way to its prescription will not go astray and he who clings to its preservation’s handhold will not be touched by the hands of disasters.”

In the seventh phrase, he says: “O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household and make us one of those who hold fast to its cord, seek haven from its ambiguities in its fortified stronghold.”

In the third phrase, Imam Sajjad continues: “A light of guidance whose proof is not extinguished before the witnesses...O Allah, just as You have appointed our hearts as its carriers...so also bless Muhammad, its preacher, and his Household, its guardians, and place us among those who confess that it has come from You, lest doubt about attesting to it assail us.”

If we look carefully at these words that have originated from the Ahlul Bayt, we find that it is the secret of sending down the Qur’an, the reason of its legitimate continuity, its proof to certify the Prophet Muhammad, and at last the proof of Qur’an’s continuity and immortality from the viewpoint of knowledge and guidance.

It is obvious that there is no knowledge without scholars, as Allah says in the Qur’an: “...and most surely you are made to receive the Qur’an from the wise, the knowing God.” (27:6)

So it is God who preserves, protects, and sustains the Qur’an: “...nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed.”(53:3-4)

The Qur’an is the best source for the truthfulness of the Prophet’s claim. It originated from the natural knowledge of God. It expresses the

truth and enables one to gain knowledge, develop into a better human being, and attain closeness to God. Furthermore, it is the separator of speech (a separator which separates the right from the wrong); it is not idle talk, it has an appearance and a reality, its appearance is order and its reality is knowledge, its outside is beautiful and refreshing and its inside is deep, its wonders are innumerable and its marvels are not exhaustible. It is a text in which there are lights of guidance and bright torches of wisdom, and for who is familiar with the attributes (Qur'anic truth) it is the guide of the (right) culture.⁵

The Qur'an, the best word and the most beautiful speech

Imam Sajjad says: "O Allah, You have helped me complete Your book, which You sent down as a light and appointed as a guardian over every book You have sent down, preferring it over every narrative which You have recounted."

The Qur'an is the God's word and the manifestation of His knowledge, so it is superior to all the words and speeches: "*Allah has sent down the best of discourses, a scripture [composed] of similar motifs*". (39:23) As stated by the Prophet: "The superiority of Qur'an over other speeches is similar to the God's superiority over His creatures."⁶ In this case Imam Ali says: "The Qur'an is the best narrative."⁷

The Qur'an, the cure of the pains

God says in the Qur'an: "...and we reveal of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers." (17:82)

⁵ Same, quoted from Mulla Mohsin Faiz Kashani, 1

⁶ *Bihar al-Anwar*, Mohammad Baqir Majlisi, 92

⁷ *Sharhe Nahjul Balagha*, Abdul Majid bin hebatulallah ibn Abil Hadid Motazali, 153/7,8

But for whom and when? In the 3rd phrase of his prayer Imam Zayn al-Abideen says: "...a healing for him who turns ear toward hearing it with the understanding of attestation."

In the eighth phrase, the Imam says: "O Allah,... make the Qur'an our mediation to the noblest stations of Your honour, a ladder by which we may climb to the place of safety, a cause for our being repaid with deliverance at the Plain of Resurrection, and a means whereby we may reach the bliss of the House of Permanence."

The greatness of the Qur'an

Imam Sajjad quotes from the Prophet: "If a person who has received Qur'anic knowledge from God thinks that God has given a better one to somebody else, in fact he has taken a great truth small, and a small thing great."⁸

In the ninth phrase Imam Sajjad notes the greatness of the Qur'an and says: "O Allah, bless Mohammad and his Household, lessen for us through the Qur'an the weight of heavy sins, give to us the excellent qualities of the pious, and make us follow the tracks of those who stood before You in the watches of the night and the ends of the day, such that You purify us from every defilement through its purification and make us to follow the tracks of those who have taken illumination from its light."

The Qur'an, the scale of justice

Imam Sajjad considers the Qur'an as a criterion of justice: "...and a just balance whose tongue does not incline away from truth..."

⁸ *Al-Kafi*, 605/2

The Qur'an points to this subject: *"O you who believe! Be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably, act equitably, that is nearer to piety, and be careful of your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is aware of what you do."* (5:8)

Addressing the Prophet, it says: *"...and say: I believe in what Allah has revealed of the book, and I am commanded to do justice between you."*(42:15)

With respect to justice as the basis for forming a family the Qur'an says: *"But if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then marry only one."* (4:3)

It is also the base of the economic relations: *"And give full measure and weight with justice."* (6:152)

And also ask for justice to settle conflicts: *"Make peace between them and seek justice, surely Allah loves those who act equitably."* (49:9)

The status of revelation

In relation to sending down the Qur'an to the Prophet's heart, Imam Sajjad states: *"...a revelation which You have sent down, a sending down, upon Your Prophet Muhammad (Your blessings be upon him and his Household). You appointed it a light through following which we may be guided from the shadows of error and ignorance..."* The very place of the settling and manifesting the light nature of Qur'an was the open and pure heart of the Prophet.

Imam Sajjad says in another part: *"...a book which You have distinguished very distinctly for Your servants, a revelation which You*

have sent down, a gradual sending down, upon Your Prophet Muhammad (Your blessings be upon him and his Household).”

And in the Qur’an: “...and most surely this is the revelation from the Lord of the worlds.” (Shuara, 26:192)

The occult sciences of the Qur’an

The Qur’an is the word of God and its truth originates from the pure essence of God based on His essential knowledge.

The fifth phrase of the prayer points to this subject: “O Allah, You sent it down upon Your Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and his Household) in summary form, inspired him with the science of its wonders to complement it, made us the heirs of its knowledge as interpreters, made us to surpass him who is ignorant of its knowledge, and gave us strength over it to raise us above those not able to carry it.”

Furthermore, in the second phrase Imam Sajjad says: “...a separator through which You have separated Your lawful from Your unlawful, a Qur’an through which You have made plain the approaches to Your ordinances.”

According to Imam Ali the Qur’an is the manifestation of God, so we can see the tracks of God’s power and knowledge in it: “So the pure God is manifested for them in His book, while they cannot see Him as well as what He has showed them from His power in His book.”⁹

The necessity of reflecting upon the Qur’an

Zohri says: “I heard that Imam Ali ibn-al Husayn said: ‘The verses of Qur’an are a hidden treasure; hence, whenever the treasure is opened it

⁹ *Nahj al-Balaghah*, Sermon 145

is appropriate to look at whatever is inside it.”¹⁰ The Qur'an is the book of life and is full of innovative points; thinking about its verses is central to gaining from it.

In this relation Imam Sajjad says in the tenth phrase of the prayer: “And for what negligence has caused to roll up of the scrolls of self-scrutiny an unfold, until You bring to our hearts the understanding of the Qur'an's wonders and its restraining examples which mountains, despite their firmness, were too weak to carry!”

Also in the fourth phrase he says: “Place us among those who observe it as it should be observed, serve You by adhering in submission to its univocal verses, and seek refuge in admission of both its metaphorical passages and its manifest proofs.”

Familiarity with the Qur'an

Zuhari quotes from Imam Sajjad: “If all the people between the East and the West die, I will not fear because Qur'an is with me.”¹¹

In different places he pointed about the Qur'an as a companion: “O Allah, just as You have appointed our hearts as its carriers and made known to us through Your mercy its nobility and excellence, so bless Mohammad, its preacher, and his Household, its guardians, and place us among those who confess that it has come from You, lest doubt about attesting to it assail us, or deviation from its straightforward path shake us.” (6th phrase)

In another place he says: “O Allah, bless Mohammad and his Household and appoint the Qur'an for us an intimate in the shadows of

¹⁰ *Al-Kafi*, 609/20

¹¹ *Ibid.*, the chapter of Fadl al-Qur'an, volumn 13

nights and a guardian against the instigations of Satan and confusing thoughts, for our feet an obstruction from passing to acts of disobedience, for our tongues a silencer without blight preventing a plunge into falsehood, for our limbs a restrainer from committing sins.” (10th phrase)

The necessity of pleasant recitation

Imam Sajjad emphasizes on the importance of correct recitation of the Qur'an as well as performing the duties. In the 6th phrase he says: “O Allah, since You have given us help to recite it and made smooth the roughness of our tongues through the beauty of its expression, place us among those who observe it as it should be observed.”

Recitation of Qur'an must be followed by a deep reflection on its verses. In this case Imam Zain al-Abidin says: “Make me stand in awe of Your threat, take precautions against Your leaving no excuses and Your warning and tremble at the recitation of Your verses!”¹²

God says: “...and recite the Qur'an in a measured tone.” (73:4)

Imam Sajjad was a model of good recitation as said by Naufili: “In the presence of Imam Musa bin Ja'fer, I was talking about sound and voice. The Imam said: “During the recitation of the Qur'an by Ali bin Husayn, if someone would pass by, he would become unconscious by hearing his sweet voice. And if the Imam revealed something from its real beauty people, would not be able to bear its beauty.”

Naufeli says, “I asked the Imam: ‘Did not the Prophet say his prayers with people? Or did he not recite the Qur'an in a loud voice?’ And the

¹² Sahifa Sajjadiyah, 122/47

Imam replied, 'The Prophet dealt with the people and his followers according to their capacity.'¹³

In another hadith Imam Sadiq says, 'Of all people Ali ibn Husayn had the best voice in reading the Qur'an. People carrying water while passing by his house would always stand at his door and hear his recitation. Imam Baqir was also known for his pleasant voice during recitation.

With respect to commentary on *tartil*, Imam Sadiq said, '*Tartil* is that when you read the Qur'an, you halt and when you recite it, and you recite in a beautiful voice.'¹⁴ To comment on this verse Imam Ali says, 'It means you read it clearly; neither read it like poetry with speed nor like a novel slowly.'¹⁵ Regarding this, the Prophet says: 'There is an ornament for everything and nice voice is the ornament of the Qur'an.'

Reading the Qur'an properly is one of the ways of understanding its meaning. It also motivates a person to reflect on its verses. Only when it is read beautifully its benefits appear and profit is gained from the moral of its stories. Qur'anic stories and its speeches are only prolific when it is recited in a proper manner.¹⁶

The extent of reciting the Qur'an

When the first verses were sent down, the Prophet was appointed to recite them, and in another command God asks the Prophet and the

¹³ *Al-kafi*, 615/2

¹⁴ Tafseer Safi, 45/1

¹⁵ Imam Ali az nigahe Qur'an, Muhammad Rahmani, Magazine Bayyenat, no. 4/151, quoted from Khoi, Sharhe Nahjul Balagha, 7/8

¹⁶ Sharhe Nahjul Balagha, ibn Maisam Bahrani 3, the translation of Qurban Ali Muhammadi Muqaddam, Ali Asghar Nawayi, Yahya Zade, Abdul Ali Sahebi, Muhammad Sururi Majd

believers: “...therefore read what is easy of the Qur’an.” (73:20) Zuhari says, “I asked Imam Sajjad: ‘Which practice is the best?’ He said: ‘The entrant who leaves again.’ I asked: ‘A leaving entrant?’ He said: ‘Starting the Qur’an and completing its reading, starting again and completing it (like a traveller who arrives in a place in the middle of his way and leaves again and continues.’”¹⁷

The Qur’an and the people of the end of time

When Imam Sajjad was asked about Tawhid, he said: “God knew that at the end of time people will come who will think a lot, therefore God revealed Surah al-Tawheed and the verses of Surah al-Hadid until ‘*and He knows best what is in the breasts*’. So whoever attempts to go outside this boundary will perish.”¹⁸

Conclusion

Imam Sajjad has expressed different aspects of the Qur’an eloquently in his *Supplication on Completing a Reading of Qur’an*. The Qur’an is the book of revelation sent down by Divine message on the Prophet’s heart over a period of 23 years, and he introduced it to people by its reciting and reading. It is the highest word of God based on the basis of its content it has been emanated from the infinite knowledge of God. It is the most authentic source of Islamic sciences, an eternal miracle of Prophet and the only heavenly book which has remained immune from distortion. Humans are incapable of bringing even the smallest chapter like it.

¹⁷ *Al-Kafi*, chapter Fazl Hamil Qur’an, Volumn 7

¹⁸ Tafseer Safi, 866/2

IMAM SADIQ: ROLE MODEL FOR HUMANITY, PART II

RASOUL JA'FARIAN

TRANSLATED BY FATEMEH SOLTANMOHAMMADI

ABSTRACT: Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sādiq was renowned by both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims for his virtues, education, and accomplishments. He was above all known for teaching Shi'a Islamic fiqh, called Ja'fari jurisprudence, and his all-encompassing information which had a great academic influence. Part I included a brief biography of his life, his conduct, and his deep knowledge in jurisprudence; it also delved into the state of the Shi'as during his time as well as his political confrontations with the Ghulat, or extremists, who held ideas that resulted from overstating particular Islamic beliefs. This part continues with material on Shi'a jurisprudence according to Sunni narrations, the Imam's hadith collections, his debates, and his political confrontations given the pressures facing the Shi'a during that time.

The bolster of Shi'a jurisprudence according to Sunni narrations

The era of Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq was the era of expansion of the knowledge of the Ahlul Bayt in various fields. This matter applies more to Imam Sadiq because part of his Imamah coincided with open political atmosphere, a result of a political vacuum caused by the destruction of the powerful Umayyid Empire and the rise of the Abbasids. The

Imam directed the total and complete attention of the Shi'as towards the Ahlul Bayt and discouraged them from documenting other peoples' narrations; this act was the most important reason behind the formation of Shi'a jurisprudence. Its importance was relayed to a certain extent before and during Imam Baqir's lifetime. Nonetheless, here we will conduct an overview of the point emphasized by Imam Sadiq regarding this matter. The Imam said the following in a narration: "O Shi'a, ponder upon the effects of the Messenger of God and his way of life and the effects of the holy Imams from the Ahlul Bayt."¹

Likewise, Imam Sadiq told Yunus bin Dhabyan: "Oh Yunus, true knowledge is with us, the family of the Prophet, for we have inherited the ways of wisdom and the method of detecting right from wrong."²

In *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, Shaykh Hurr Amuli wrote a chapter titled: "The Obligation to Refer to an Infallible in all Jurisprudential Matters"³ which entails narrations from the Imams regarding this subject.⁴

A follower of Imam Sadiq, Aban bin Taghlib explains the Shi'a faith as such:

The Shi'a are the people whom when a difference of opinion regarding a saying from the holy Prophet arises, they take the words of Amir al-Mo'minin and when a difference of opinion regarding a saying from Imam Ali

¹ *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 18, p. 23 and 61, narrated from *Rawdha al-Kafi*, p. 5:

ايتا العصابة عليك باثار رسول الله (ص) و سنته و آثار الائمة الهداة من اهل بيت رسول الله (ص).

² *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, vol. 18, p. 48:

يا يونس ان اردت العلم الصحيح فعندنا اهل البيت فاتا ورثنا و اوتينا شرع الحكمة و فصل الخطاب .

³ باب وجوب الرجوع في جميع الاحكام الى المعصومين

⁴ *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 41.

arises, use the narration of Ja'far bin Muhammad al-Sadiq.⁵

Yunus bin Ya'qub told Imam Sadiq, "I heard you prohibit the science of theology." In response the Imam said, "I said: Woe to him who abandons that which I say and goes toward that which they want to go towards."⁶ For this reason the Imam would advise his followers to keep an eye out for each other; moreover he said, "God bless he who revives our instructions."⁷

Imam Sadiq would recount his tradition for his Shi'a and Sunni students and they would in turn record his narrations. The Sunnis would report the narration beginning with: "From Ja'far bin Muhammad, from his fathers, from the Messenger of God" and with the citation and chain of narration. The Shi'as cited their sources beginning with "From Abi Abdullah" without citing the chain of narration due to the Shi'a belief in the infallibility of the Imams and the authoritativeness (*hujjiyah*) of their sayings. Nonetheless, the Imam insisted that his narrations were none other than the Prophet's own narrations:

My narration is my father's narration and my father's narration is my forefathers' narration and my forefathers' narration is Ali ibn Abi Talib's narration and Amir al-

⁵ Rijal al-Najashi, p. 9:

الشيعة الذين اذا اختلف الناس عن رسول الله اخذوا بقول علي و اذا اختلف الناس عن علي اخذوا بقول جعفر بن محمد

⁶ Kafi, vol. 1, p. 171; Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 18, p. 45:

انما قلت ويل لهم ان تركوا ما اقول و ذهبوا الى ما يريدو

⁷ Refer to Tarikh Jurjan, p. 170, 264, 265, 405, 570:

رحم الله من احبى امرنا

Mu'minin's narration is the Prophet's narration and the Prophet's narration is Allah's command.⁸

Abu Zuhrah struggled to gather a set of leading narrators for Imam Sadiq to link him, other than through his pure lineage, to the Prophet; the only instance he found was with the name of Qasim bin Muhammad bin Abi Bakr.⁹ However, if Imam Sadiq were to narrate like other renowned narrators of that era – such that we see in *Tadhkirah al-Huffadh* that each narrator mentions at least ten people as their leading narrators (*shaykh al-riwayah*) – through leading narrators other than his family line to the Prophet, he would have introduced his leading narrators, which he did not do. Rather, we find that he has only narrated traditions from his forefathers, which we cannot consider them as leading narrators.

The Imams emphasized this matter from the very beginning; that they do not have leading narrators and their knowledge originates from a source other than that of normal narrators. In describing this, Amir al-Mu'minin says:

My righteous genealogy and pure family is the most patient of people in their childhood and the most knowledgeable of people in their adulthood. We, the Ahlul Bayt, have received our knowledge from the knowledge of Allah and decree that which Allah has decreed and have heard the Prophet's truthful sayings. If you follow us and our works you will be guided through our insights; the

⁸ Kashf al-Ghummah, vol. 2, p. 170; Kafi, vol. 1, p. 5:

حديثي حديث ابي و حديث ابي حديث جدي و حديث جدي حديث علي بن ابي طالب و حديث علي
حديث رسول الله (ص) و حديث رسول الله (ص) قول الله

⁹ al-Imam Sadiq, Abu Zuhra, p. 88-90.

flag of justice is with us, thus whoever follows it will reach the truth and whoever turns their back to it will drown in misguidance.¹⁰

Imam Sadiq said:

With us, the Ahlul Bayt, is something that with it we have no need of people but people have need of us. With us is a book that the holy Prophet dictated and Amir al-Mo'minin transcribed; a book that contains all jurisprudence including the lawful (*halal*) and unlawful (*haram*) rulings.¹¹

In this case, it would be unfair for anyone to introduce Shi'ism as a composition of various opinions and ideas, prone to many illusions.¹²

Thus, Imam Sadiq says the following when examining the common narrators of his time:

After the Prophet, people chose the way of the heart; thus they changed the religion of Allah and swerved it away from its actuality, and they added things to it and took away from it. Therefore, that which is currently in their

¹⁰ 'Aqd al-Farid, vol. 4, p. 67, narrated from al-Imam al-Sadiq, Muhammad Jawad Fadhlullah, p. 90:

ألا إن إبرار عترتي واطائب ارومتي أحلم الناس صغاراً و أعلمهم كباراً ألا و أنا أهل البيت من علم الله علمنا و بحكم الله حكمنا و من قول صادق سمعنا فإن تتبّعوا آثارنا تهتدوا ببصائرنا، معنا راية الحق من يتبعها لحق و من تأخر عنها غرق.

¹¹ Kafi, vol. 1, p. 241, narrated from al-Imam al-Sadiq, Fadhlullah, p. 95:

إن عندنا ما لا نحتاج معه إلى الناس و إن الناس ليحتاجون إلينا و إن عندنا كتاباً أملاء رسول الله و خطاً على (ع) صحيفة فيها كل حلال و حرام.

¹² Abu Zuhrah, al-Imam Abu Hanifah, p. 111

hands is the distorted version of that which was revealed by Allah.¹³

Narrations (*riwayah*) of Shi'a Imams have penetrated Sunni jurisprudence as well and many of their narrators (*muhadithin*) have narrated traditions from Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq, in which a portion of them have been cited in their collection of traditions (*hadith*) and a great number of traditions can be found in Sunni books that at times are similar – at times in exact wording or similar content – to narrations reported from the Ahlul Bayt.¹⁴

Collections of hadith in the time of Imam Sadiq

After the passing of the Prophet, writing hadith was banned such that for many years after people were reluctant to write narrations. Even some Sunni narrators would refrain from writing hadith in the third century of Hijrah.¹⁵ In opposition to this method, from the very beginning, the family of the Prophet encouraged their companions to write hadiths and preserve it from going extinct.¹⁶ Like the way of his forefathers, Imam Sadiq also emphasized this point. Although during the time of the Imam a group of people had started to gather traditions (*hadith*) and write them, many were still reluctant regarding this matter. Alongside mentioning that Imam Sadiq was an advocate for writing

¹³ Tusi, *ibid.*, p. 140:

إِنَّ النَّاسَ بَعْدَ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ رَكِبَ اللَّهُ بِهِ سِتَّةَ مَن كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ فَغَيَّرُوا وَبَدَّلُوا وَحَرَّفُوا وَزَادُوا فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ وَنَقَصُوا مِنْهُ فَمَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ الْيَوْمَ إِلَّا وَهُوَ مَتَحَرِّفٌ عَمَّا نَزَلَ بِهِ الْوَحْيُ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ.

¹⁴ Refer to al-Shaykh Muhammad Qansuh, *al-Riwayat al-Mushtarikah*, published by the Organization for Islamic Propagation.

¹⁵ *Tadhkirah al-Huffadh*, vol. 1, p. 461 and 382-441; *Jami' al-Bayan al-'Ilm*, vol. 1, p. 78-79; *Sunan al-Darimi*, vol. 1, p. 119 and 120.

¹⁶ *Tabaqat al-Kubra*, vol. 6, p. 168; *Taqeed al-'Ilm*, p. 89-90; *Rabi' al-Abrar*, vol. 3, p. 294; *al-Taratib al-Idariyah*, vol. 2, p. 246 and ... and refer to article on the History of Writing Hadith, Nur 'Ilm, Second Edition, Issues 9, 11 & 12.

hadith, Abu Zuhrah claims that this matter was prevalent at the time, such that Malik bin Anas compiled his hadith collection *al-Mawta* during that time.¹⁷ If we accept that Malik wrote *al-Mawta* during that period, it is clear that such an act was contradictory to the societal norm of that time, such that Abu Hanifah has refused even the slightest act regarding this subject. He said, "I have seen the study of the reporters of hadith (*rijal al-hadith*) and have learned traditions from them, but Ja'far bin Muhammad is a book." When Imam Sadiq heard of this talk he laughed and said, "He is right. I am a book; I have read the book of my ancestors and the book of Ibrahim and Musa."¹⁸

Relying on his forefathers' books shows that the Imam inherited a book from his ancestors and this in itself is an explicit conformation of this truth: that Shi'a jurisprudence was backed by written traditions from the time of the Prophet. In this regard, tens of narrations have been reported in Shi'a books of narration which proves the Imams would narrate traditions from this book of narrations for the people and at times were insisted upon people to see it.¹⁹

Many traditions have been reported from Imam Sadiq in regards to encouraging companions to record traditions in which this, in and of itself, shows that the inclination to write traditions at the time of the Imam was very weak. It has been reported that Imam Sadiq said, "Write whatever you know and distribute it amongst your brothers, and when you are to die, leave your books for your children as inheritance."²⁰

¹⁷ Abu Zuhrah, *al-Imam al-Sadiq*, p. 95

¹⁸ *Rawdhat al-Jannat*, vol. 8, p. 169

¹⁹ *Furu' Kafi*, vol. 7, p. 95-98 and 77; *Makatib al-Rasul*, p. 73 and 76; *Rijal Najashi*, p. 255

²⁰ *Kashf al-Mahajjah*, Ibn Tawus, reported from *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 2, p. 150; *Kitab al-'Ilm*:

اكتب و بث علمك في اخوانك فان مت فوزت كتبك بنیک

Imam Sadiq and Sunni debates on jurisprudence

The Shi'a jurisprudential school of thought in some ways differs from that of Sunni jurisprudence. During the period of Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq, jurisprudence was expanding various debates on the implementation of general jurisprudential laws upon new issues; furthermore, issues that still did not have a ruling were brought forth. During this time, the necessity for *ijtihad* (decision-making process in Islamic law through personal effort) arose among the Sunni school of thought and they started the process of deduction and deriving certain rules (*istinbat*) from narrations to find ruling.

The Sunni's main problem was the lack of sufficient resources for narration.²¹ The existing narrations – also memorized by people scattered in various and remote cities – in terms of content had many disparities among them. It was these narrations that made the problem even more drastic and it was for this reason that the Sunni scholars, through deeming the acts of the caliphs and companions (*sahabah*) lawful and even the generation of Muslims born after the death of the Prophet (*tabi'een*), that Sunnis scholars were able to solve this matter to a certain extent. In regards to the weakness in narrated traditions in sects other than Shi'a Islam, Imam Sadiq said:

These individuals who consider themselves to be experts in Islamic Law (*faqih*) and scholars of Islam, and have derived (*istinbat*) all the jurisprudential and religious issues and all that which the people are in need of do not know anything of the knowledge of the Messenger;

²¹ The main reason for this was that after the passing of the Prophet, writing narrations (hadith) was forbidden.

nothing from the Prophet has reached them. When inquiries regarding the rulings on the lawful and unlawful acts are asked from them, no trace from the Prophet is found with them in that matter.²²

This weakness in Sunni narrations and their reliance of the acts of the *sahabah* and *tabi'een* weakened their jurisprudential foundation, since the differences of opinions and preferences between the *sahabah* and the *tabi'een* were so great that gathering the views and Islamic rulings (*fatwa*) was made very difficult. Abu Zuharah writes the following about the era Abu Hanifah and Imam Sadiq resided in:

During that time, narrations that pertained to rulings of the companions were so numerous that the Islamic jurists were completely engaged in the matter, such that they considered their narrations their guiding light in deriving religious rulings and were strongly influenced by it.²³

In addition to relying on the companions' and *tabi'un's* way of life (*sirah*), Sunni scholars also introduced another source for religious rulings; the most important of which was *qiyas* (the process of deductive analogy). In justification of relying on *qiyas*, a Sunni scholar proposed the lack of corpus of *ahadith* and clear legal injunction (*nass*).²⁴ Imam Sadiq expressed this exact viewpoint at the time and in continuation of

²² Tafsir 'Ayyashi, vol. 2, p. 321, ط اسلاميه; *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, vol. 18, p. 40:

يُظَنُّ هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ أَنَّهُمْ فَقَهَاءُ عَلَمَاءُ أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ اثْبَتُوا جَمِيعَ الْفَقْهِ وَالَّذِينَ هُمَا يَحْتَاجُ إِلَيْهِ الْإِمَامَةُ وَ لَيْسَ كُلُّ عِلْمٍ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ عِلْمُهُ وَ لَا صَارَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (ص) وَ لَا عَرَفُوهُ وَ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ الشَّيْءَ مِنَ الْحَلَالِ وَ الْحَرَامِ وَ الْأَحْكَامِ يَرُدُّ عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَسْأَلُونَ عَنْهُ وَ لَا يَكُونُ عَنْدهُمْ فِيهِ إِثْرٌ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ.

²³ al-Imam Abu Hanifah, p. 105:

و لَقَدْ كَثُرَ الْمَأْثُورُ مِنْ فِتَاوَى الصَّحَابَةِ فِي ذَلِكَ الْعَصْرِ كَثْرَةً عَظِيمَةً شَغَلَتْ عُقُولَ الْفُقَهَاءِ وَ اتَّخَذُوهَا نَبْرَاسًا فِي اجْتِهَادِهِمْ فَتَأَثَّرُوا بِهَا فِي اجْتِهَادِهِمْ

²⁴ Mustafa Hamd al-Zurqa', al-Madkhal al-Fiqhi al-'A, vol. 1, p. 74, narrated from Nur 'Ilm Magazine, number 10, p. 55.

the aforementioned narration, in regards to the lack of Sunni traditions, he said:

They are ashamed of people ascribing ignorance and lack of knowledge to them and they do not like the inability to respond to peoples' questions; thus people obtain knowledge from them (Ahlul Bayt) and because of this they incorporated personal judgment (*ra'y*) and deductive analogy (*qiyas*) in God's religion and put aside the works of holy Prophet; and through this turned to innovations in religious matter (*bid'ah*).²⁵

In the abovementioned narration, the Imam stated the reason and cause of Sunni scholarship gravitating towards personal judgment and deductive analogy was their lack of narrations; this inclination in itself caused them to reject traditions.

Searching for a solution to solve their problem with the deficiency in hadiths through relying on personal judgment and deductive analogy was itself the reason why compliance to clear legal injunctions was replaced as the source of religious jurisprudence (*ahkam*) and religious rulings (*fatwa*); such a jurisprudence with the resources could not be an authentic jurisprudence and in accordance with the reports.

Imam Sadiq took an opposing stance towards this jurisprudential school of thought, and dedicated most of his cultural activities in battling with *ra'y* and *qiyas*, such that numerous narrations have been reported from the Imam in this matter, mentioned in the following:

²⁵ Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 18, p. 40:

و يستحيون ان ينسبهم الناس الى الجهل و يكرهون ان يسألوا فلا يجيبون فيطلب الناس العلم من معدنه
فلذلك استعملوا الرأي و القياس في دين الله و تركوا الآثار و دانوا بالبدع.

Abu Hanifah was amongst the individuals who preceded others in resorting to *ra'y* and *qiyas*; his jurisprudential school of thought was famous in Iraq for *ra'y* and this was because he did not consider the narrations reported by the Sunnis as authentic (*sahih*). Ibn Khaldun writes the following: "His [Abu Hanifah] entire selection of accepted narrations only reaches to seventeen or about the same range, as Malik has found and accepted three hundred narrations as authentic."²⁶

Abu Bakr bin Dawud says, "The entire selection of narrations of Abu Hanifah is around one hundred and fifty traditions."²⁷

Abu Hanifah's inclination towards *ra'y* and *qiyas* and abandoning clear legal injunctions was the result of two reasons:

1. He was willing to narrate and adhere to them as he considered the available traditions and reports as unauthentic.
2. From the time he turned to *ra'y* and *qiyas*, such sources made him needless of even *nusoos* (clear legal injunctions), such that he abandoned even the quantity that based on his opinion was authentic and reliable, and altogether turned over to *ra'y* and *qiyas*.

Iraq, considered the centre for the *ra'y* school of thought, was a Shi'a-populated country; clashes between the Shi'a and followers of *ra'y* was unavoidable, and it was along these lines that Imam Sadiq worked to repudiate the basis of *ra'y*, *qiyas*, and *istihsan* (juristic preference).

In popular narrations reported in relation to Imam Sadiq's debate with Abu Hanifah, the Imam advised him to avoid deductive analogy in

²⁶ Introduction of Ibn Khaldun, p. 434, Beirut Edition

²⁷ Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 13, p. 416.

religion and reminds him in a few matters that qiyas can by no means be answer the problem. The Imam asks him, "Is adultery more important or the killing of a soul?" Abu Hanifah replied: "The killing of a soul." Imam Sadiq said, "God commanded four witnesses in adultery and two witnesses in murder for proof of allegation and this is contrary to condition of qiyas." Then he asked: "Is prayer more important or fasting?" He said prayer. The Imam said: "A woman is not obligated to fulfill the prayers not done during menstruation but still must complete the fasts not made and this cannot be rationalized with qiyas."²⁸

Other similar examples have been mentioned in narrations as well.²⁹ Through this, the Imam showed how the use of qiyas can lead a jurist in deriving religious rulings and holding opinions that counter fixed and clear religious jurisprudence of Islam. Muwaffaq Makki reported this narration in the book of Abu Hanifah; it would seem the debate took place between Abu Hanifah and Imam Baqir, rather than Imam Sadiq, and moreover, it seems that Abu Hanifah brought the examples for Imam Baqir. In the face of the Imam's protests, he showed that he does not agree with *qiyas*.³⁰

The Imam would discourage his followers from participating in gatherings with those who believed in personal judgment, since they risked falling under their influence.³¹ Many narrations from the Imam displayed his condemnation of actions based on qiyas³² and he did not

²⁸ Hilliyyah al-Awliya', vol. 3, p. 197; Abu Zuhrah, al-Imam al-Sadiq, p. 296; Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 18, p. 29.

²⁹ Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 18, p. 30; al-Ihtijaj, p. 196, t Najaf, Wafayat al-A'yan, vol. 1, p. 471.

³⁰ Refer to, Abu Zuhrah, al-Imam Abu Hanifah, p. 69.

³¹ al-Mahasin, p. 205, hadith 356; Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 18, p. 16.

³² Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 18, p. 23-29; Kafi, vol. 1, p. 58; 'Ilal al-Sharayi', vol. 1, p. 81-83; Rijal al-Kashi, p. 189 and 163-164.

hide his deep concern from those who narrated traditions from him while acting upon qiyas.

Dawud bin Sarhan says: "I heard the following from Imam Sadiq who said":

At times I report a tradition for someone and discourage him from arguing and disputing in Allah's religion and deductive analogy (*qiyas*); then when he leaves me, he interprets my words contrary to that which intended.³³

Certainly if Imam Sadiq did not stand against qiyas and its followers and innovators with such determination, Shi'a jurisprudence, which did not have much distance with followers of ra'y in Iraq, would have been influenced by it and would have lost its authenticity. On the contrary, however, we see how Shi'a jurists widely followed the clear legal injunctions (*nusoos*) and placed it as their permanent method of deducting religious rulings; throughout time, based on these clear legal injunction, expressed secondary rulings (*ahkam far'i*) and presented a rich jurisprudential school of thought, based on strong principles and rules which was a process that Shaykh Tusi, in *al-Mabsut*, played a pivotal role in.

In regards to the problem with citation, Sunnis had many difficulties lying ahead of them. For this reason, Abu Hanifah did not trust them, since most methods of narration were not trustworthy and non-Shi'a jurisprudence was dependent upon a collection of false traditions where reliance upon was hard.

³³ Tusi, Ikhtiyar Ma'rifah al-Rijal, p. 239, 170-238:

اتى لاحد الرجل بالحديث و انهاه عن الجدل و المراء في دين الله و انهاه عن القياس فيخرج من عندي فيتاؤل حديثي على غير تأويله.

However, the Shi'a were reliant upon infallibility (*'ismah*) and the gracious source of the Ahlul Bayt in which Amir al-Mu'minin stood at the head, and from this point holds no complications. Many Sunni scholars held no reservations or doubt in the truth of the matter. Abu Hanifah himself accepted a substantial portion of narrations reported from the Ahlul Bayt.³⁴ Indeed, one day he heard a tradition from Imam Sadiq, and then left his presence. He was asked: "Why didn't you ask Ja'far bin Muhammad about his link to the holy Prophet?" Abu Hanifah said, "I accept the tradition in this form."³⁵

The source that the Shi'a relied on was acceptable by Sunnis since Imam Sadiq would narrate traditions through his forefathers, the origin of which would reach Imam Ali and then after to the Prophet himself. Imam Ali spent many years in the presence of the Prophet and was a trusted jurists and narrator for all jurists and narrators (*muhadith*).

During the time of the Banu Umayyads, works left by Imam Ali were forgotten through means other than Shi'ism and it was only his family who preserved his works. Generation after generation, they were able to pass it on to the Shi'a through their children.

Abu Zuhrah says the following, while pointing out the elimination of many of Imam Ali's sayings: "It is irrational that they curse Ali on the pulpit and yet allow his narrations to be used amongst the people as a rich source, full of Islamic knowledge...Thus, his works only remained amongst his family..."

³⁴ Refer to al-Athar, when Ahmad bin Hanbal was asked about this chain of narration, from Musa bin Ja'far from Ja'far bin Muhammad from Muhammad bin Ali from Ali bin Husayn bin Ali from Ali bin Abi Talib from the Prophet, he said: "If this chain of narration is read to an insane man he will become sane. Refer to Manaqib ibn Shar Ashub, vol. 2, p. 378.

³⁵ Amali, Shaykh Mufid, p. 21-22.

And because of this we conclude that the knowledge of the narrations from Imam Ali was preserved in its entirety in his family, such that his children have completely or almost completely reported the traditions that he narrated from the Prophet and also his religious rulings and jurisprudence.³⁶

Imam Sadiq believed that the works of the Prophet were only completely in the hands of the Ahlul Bayt, because when others spoiled it, they held the complete and untouched works. The narrator says, "I told the Imam":

Oh son of the Prophet, did the Prophet deliver all which was necessary during his time? He said: 'Yes, He delivered all that which was necessary until the Day of Judgement.' I said: 'Has anything been lost from it?' He said: 'No, it has remained with the family of the Prophet.'³⁷

Political pressures facing the Shi'a

During Imam Sadiq's time, only during the third decade of the second century Hijri was it that a relative freedom existed; even during that decade the actions of the Imam and the Shi'a were monitored. However, before that through the Banu Umayyads and after that through Mansur, the Abbasid caliph, the harshest pressures were enforced on the Shi'a, such that the courage to voice any sort of self-expression was taken away from them. It has been reported in narrations:

³⁶ Abu Zuhrah, al-Imam al-Sadiq, p. 195.

³⁷ Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 18, p. 23:

اصلىك الله اتى رسول الله (ص) الناس بما يكتفون في عهده؟ قال: نعم و ما يحتاجون اليه الى يوم القيامة. فقلت: فضاء من ذلك شئ؟ فقال لا هو عند اهله

A companion of Abu Ja'far al-Thani (the tenth Imam) asked him: 'Because of the harsh suppression during their time, our scholars refrained from narrating traditions and sufficed to only writing them down. Now that there are books at our disposal, can we narrate traditions?' The Imam said: 'The traditions in those books are authentic and you may narrate from them'.³⁸

This narration portrays the political pressures on the Ahlul Bayt and their followers during the aforesaid era. The Shi'a scholars did not even have the opportunity to narrate traditions from the Imams. To protect themselves from Mansur's persecution, the Imam's companions were forced to do *taqiyyah* (a form of religious dissimulation) and be cautious of the smallest form of recklessness on their part. This restriction led to the abandonment of knowledge of the Ahlul Bayt and their religious rulings to a certain extent. Aban ibn Taghlib said to the Imam:

'I was sitting in the Mosque and people were asking about jurisprudential issues from me and would not leave me until I answered their questions. And if I expressed your viewpoints to them problems would arise. What should I do?' The Imam said, 'Tell the people that which you know from their viewpoints'.³⁹

Imam Sadiq's continuous emphasis on *taqiyyah* was in and of itself proof of the political pressures. The danger of invasion on the Shi'a was

³⁸ Kafi, vol. 1, p. 53; Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 18, p. 58.

³⁹ Tusi, *ibid.*, p. 330.

so close that the Imam announced the abandonment of taqiyyah equivalent to the abandonment of prayer.⁴⁰

Concerning this, the Imam told Mu'alla ibn Khunays (who was killed by the rulers of his time): "Oh Mu'alla, keep our affairs secret, and do not divulge it publicly, for whoever keeps it secret and does not reveal it, God will exalt him in this world."⁴¹

Nevertheless, narrations exist showing the extents of pressures were such that the Shi'a would even walk by each other without showing any regard for one another.⁴² Regarding the agents of Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, it has been said, "Mansur had spies in Madinah and would kill those people who would socialize with the followers of Ja'far."⁴³

During this era, charging someone with being a Shi'a was enough to put an end to the security of their lives and wealth and would leave them confined and tortured.⁴⁴

Imam Sadiq and political issues

A. Zayd's uprising

During Imam Sadiq's time, the major political events that took place was the Alawi movement (Zayd ibn Ali's uprising and Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Hasan and his brother's uprising in 145 and 146 AH) and the Abbasid movement, in which the Banu Umayyad dynasty collapsed

⁴⁰ Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 12, p. 254 and 255; Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 9, p. 459 onward.

⁴¹ Mukhtasar Basa'ir al-Darajat, p. 101; Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 9, p. 465:

يَا مَعْلَى أَكُمُ امْرَأًا وَلَا تَذَعُهُ فَإِنَّ مِنْ كُمْ امْرَأًا وَلَا يَذِيعُهُ اِعْزَهِ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا.

⁴² Tusi, ibid., p. 378, Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 12, p. 297-300; Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 19, p. 32.

⁴³ Tusi, ibid., p. 282 and refer to p. 283:

كَانَ لَهُ بِالْمَدِينَةِ جَوَاسِيسٌ يَنْظُرُونَ عَلَى مَنْ اتَّفَقَ شِيعَةُ جَعْفَرٍ فَيَضْرِبُونَ عَنْقَهُ.

⁴⁴ al-Mahasin, p. 119; Hayat al-Imam al-Baqir (as), vol. 1, p. 256.

afterwards and the Banu Abbas took over. Another event was the division between the Abbasids and Alawis, originating prior to Aal Abbas's rise to power.

We cannot comprehensively describe the important political and religious events that formed since the beginning on the first century Hijri by the Alawis and Abbasids (Banu Hashim); however, we will try explain that portion of events that are somehow related to Imam Sadiq.

The admiration that the Alawis (especially the Fatimids) included lovers of the Ahlul Bayt that the Aal Abbas did not have. This situation had different reasons, where the most important of them were the Prophet's encounters. Furthermore, the issue of Imam Ali's Imamate, a crucial matter, at least for the Shi'a, increased this admiration. The Fatimids were the only remaining survivors left from the Prophet.

After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, it was Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah that held a social-political status for a while. However, Imam Sajjad's academic and ethical figure slowly created a place for itself in society and became the distinguished figure of the Ahlul Bayt. He was the only son of Husayn ibn Ali that survived the tragic events of Karbala and with remaining alive he prevented the line of descendants of Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet, from breaking through Imam Husayn.

Abdullah ibn Abbas was a notable academic figure throughout Islamic history who heard the Prophet's words first-hand and was considered one of the greatest narrators during his time. Until he was alive (68 AH) there were no differences between the Alawis and Bani Abbas, though afterwards the differences slowly began to form. In the beginning of the second century, the Abbasids decided to achieve independence from the

Alawis and privately attempted to encourage the public to follow them. However, they were unsuccessful, since the public believed the descendants of Ali as the only survivors of the Prophet's lineage. The virtuousness of the Ahlul Bayt, especially after the events of Karbala, deeply increased their societal dignity.

The movement that Zayd ibn Ali ibn Husayn started emphasized the importance of the Alawis amongst the people of Iraq. Zayd ibn Ali was Imam Baqir's brother and even with Imam Baqir's great importance in academic standing in the society, a significant opportunity and revolutionary movement was not made for Zayd; although he was amongst the narrators and because of being Alawi was recognized by the people of Iraq.

Imam Baqir passed away in 114 AH. After him, Imam Sadiq, the sixth Imam of Shi'a Islam, drew people to his attention. In the later portion of the second decade of the third century Hijri, Zayd decided to protest against the governor after a series of differences and verbal disputes with Hashim ibn Abdul Malik. In the month of Safar (122 AH) in Kufa, he initiated a revolutionary movement in which he was martyred after two days of military conflict.⁴⁵ What is important for us is Imam Sadiq's reaction regarding Zayd's uprising and the emergence of the Zaydiyyah sect that arose in Iraq after Zayd's martyrdom.

According to Shi'a narrations, Zayd believed in the Imamah of the Shi'a Imam, including Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq, such that it has been reported from him: "Ja'far is our Imam in *halal* (permissible) and *haram*

⁴⁵ There are differences of opinion regarding the history of Zayd's martyrdom.

(forbidden).”⁴⁶ And in a narration, Imam Sadiq has said the following about Zayd: “May Allah bless him; He was a believing man and a knowledgeable man and righteous man, who if victorious would have remained faithful and if he attained governance, he knew who to give it to.”⁴⁷

With the many traditions on this subject, one cannot mention Zayd ibn Ali without any connection to Imam Sadiq. At the same time, it is not unlikely that even though he had accepted Imam Sadiq’s leadership (*imamah*), he initiated this revolution without taking into consideration the Imam’s orders and without claiming leadership for himself. In this movement, he led an insurgence against Banu Umayyah, which was a symbol of ignorance for him, where for close to eighty years there were struggles between both families over the caliphate.

In some narrations from Imam Sadiq, the report of Zayd’s martyrdom in an area called Kanasah in Kufa was foretold.⁴⁸ And in another narration, Imam Sadiq gave his approval of some Shi‘as who sought to disassociate (*tabarrī*) from Zayd.⁴⁹ Both parts of this narration have been reported in Sunni sources and even though they are authentic, they do not portray the Imam’s approval of the uprising, especially since certain criticisms have been made against Zayd’s uprising in al-Kafi and other Shi‘a collections of traditions.

⁴⁶ Tusi, *ibid.*, p. 361 and refer to p. 356; Rijal al-Najashi, p. 130; Kifayah al-Athar, p. 327 and refer to Kariman, *sirah* and *qiyam* Zayd ibn Ali, p. 49 onward.

جعفر امامنا في الحلال والحرام

⁴⁷ Tusi, *ibid.*, p. 385:

رحمه الله اما انه كان مؤمنا وكان عالما وكان صدوقا اما انه لو ظفر لوفى اما انه لو ملك يعرف كيف يضعها.

⁴⁸ ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha, vol. 1, chapter 25; Amali Saduq, Majlis 10, p. 40; Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 1, p. 468; Sirah wa Qiyam Zayd ibn Ali, p. 468.

⁴⁹ Khitat al-Miqrizi, vol. 4, p. 307; Nameyeh Daneshwaran, vol. 5, p. 92; Fawat al-Wafayat, vol. 1, p. 210.

After Zayd's uprising and especially after the rise of the Bani Abbas, Bani al-Hasan, and Bani al-Husayn separated from each other, and using Zayd and his son Yahya as a pretence, they brought a member of Bani al-Hasan, named Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hasan ibn Hasan ibn Ali, to power. Slowly they gathered a group of Shi'a in which the label of 'Zaydiyyah' was given to them. We will see later the strong differences and fiery arguments that took place between the Ja'faris and Zaydis which led the Zaydis in targeting accusations against Imam Sadiq; it has been reported in narrations that the Zaydis accused Imam Sadiq of not believing in *jihad* (holy war) for the sake of Allah. The Imam, however, denied these accusations and said: "However, I do not want to put aside my knowledge for their ignorance."⁵⁰

B. Imam Sadiq, Abu Salamah, and Abu Muslim's summon

Imam Sadiq put much effort into training his companions, such that in jurisprudence and narration, they are considered to be the founders of the Ja'fari school of thought. The Imam's efforts against the existing governing rule and public claims of his right to the imamah and leadership of the Muslims were limited. He believed military aggression against the armed rulers without making preliminary preparations (especially cultural matters) would lead to failure. To perform this task, starting a Shi'a movement that believed in Imamah was necessary for victory against the rulers. Otherwise a simple and hasty uprising would not only endure but would allow others to take advantage of it.

Similar to how the Bani Abbas benefited from the movements led by Zayd, and after him, Yahya ibn Zayd in Khorasan, with the slogan, "To

⁵⁰ Furu' al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 332; Tahdhib, vol. 2, p. 43; Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 2, p. 32:

ولكني اكره ان ادع علمي الى جهلهم

please the family of Prophet Muhammad,” along with these efforts, they murdered a group of people who were advocates of Abu Hashim ibn Muhammad ibn Hanifah’s succession.

The outcomes of these acts later revealed for Ja’fari jurisprudence became the foundation of a strong Shi’a sect that would grow day by day. However, the Zaydiyyahs and Khawarij, who mainly worked in the political realm, did not last for long. They were culturally limited and slowly lost their relatively powerful stature and started to decline. The Bani Abbas finally found political and military triumph and held the reins of the vast Islamic empire. This was while Bani Hashim’s candidate was from the Bani Hasan, named Muhammad ibn Abdullah, where we will discuss his uprising later on. In this section, we will only discuss the portions that relates to Imam Sadiq and the Bani Abbas.

Bani Abbas’s chief act of inviting and summoning people was in the hands of two people: Amu Salamah al-Khallal, who was famous for being the vizier of Aal Muhammad (descendants of Muhammad)⁵¹ and Abu Muslim Khorasani. The movement’s slogan was “To please the family of Prophet Muhammad” and with hearing this slogan, people would think of only one person from the Alawis. But the Alawis’ political weakness and the Bani Abbas’s ongoing struggle changed events to their advantage. Also, the cipher was in the hands of Abu Salamah al-Khallal who had Saffah and Mansur ready in Kufa, and just when the Banu Umayyids fell, he got the peoples’ allegiance for Saffah. However, sometime later he was killed after being accused of advertising for the Alawis and working to replace the Abbasid with the Alawis. In

⁵¹ al-Wuzara wa al-Kuttab, p. 84; He and Abu Muslim were considered to be of the Mawali (non-Arab Muslims).

that situation, no opportunity was available for Imam Sadiq; and Nafs al-Zakiyyah (Muhammad ibn Abdullah), who held a favorable political position at the time, could not withstand the Abbasids. On this account, there was no opportunity for the Alawis to make any serious political efforts that were optimistic.

Imam Sadiq believed Abu Salamah's invitations had no basis, hence in response to a letter Abu Salamah wrote to the Imam, he said: "Abu Salamah is the *Shi'a* (follower) of another individual."⁵² According to some reports, Abu Salamah wrote a letter in this regard to Imam Sadiq and in response the Imam wrote back: "You do not invite me and neither is this time, my time."⁵³

In either case, the Imam's reaction towards this movement was caution and disagreement with the summoning, such that he advised Abdullah ibn Hasan regarding Nafs al-Zakiyyah to do the same. Abu Salamah's allegiance to Bani Abbas and their inability to completely disassociate with this matter showed they were not serious about their invitation. Even if one assumes he was committed to his invitation, the ability to follow through with such a task, with the presence of individuals like Abu Muslim and the Abbasids, was not achievable and accepting it would lead to nothing but destruction.

⁵² Muruj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 269; al-Wuzara' wa al-Kuttab, p. 86.

⁵³ Refer to Hayat al-Imam al-Ridha, p. 49:

ما انت من رجالى و لا الزمان زمانى

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN IMAM MAHDI AND IMAM HUSAYN, PART III¹

MOHAMMAD ALI SHOMALI

ABSTRACT: The previous parts offered an explanation on the close connection between Imam Husayn and Imam Mahdi in hadiths and why Imam Mahdi refers much to Imam Husayn in his universal mission for establishment of justice while putting the demand for the blood of Imam Husayn at top of his agenda. This part offers guidelines as to how a person can help Imam Mahdi by being a good follower of Imam Husayn. It will be argued that by showing the people the value of being a good follower of Imam Husayn, and in particular by showing complete commitment to observing and to establishing justice and other virtues, one can prove his love for Imam Husayn while simultaneously helping Imam Mahdi.

In an address to his companions in the night of Ashura, Imam Husayn said:

قد قال جدی رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله ولدی حسین یقتل بطف
بکربلاء غریبا وحیدا عطشاناً فریداً فمن نصره فقد نصرنی و نصر ولد الحجة

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

My grandfather, the Messenger of God, said: 'My son, Husayn, will be killed in Karbala while he will be alone, single, thirsty, and without any helper. Whoever helps him has helped me and has helped his son, *al-Hujjah* (Imam Mahdi).'²

The following offers an explanation on how helping Imam Husayn is a) helping the Prophet in preserving Islam and b) helping Imam Mahdi in establishing universal justice. Thus, the crux of the paper focuses on how helping Imam Husayn can prepare us for helping Imam Mahdi.

How to help Imam Husayn and hence Imam Mahdi

In one of the Ziyarats of Imam Husayn we recite:

Peace be to you, O son of the prophet. If I was not able to help you with my hands, if time has not let me be with you, then I am now coming to you with my help. Answering your call is my hearing, my heart, my sight, my body, my thoughts and my desires, all submissive to you, and to all Imams after you, those from your progeny who guide to Allah. So my help for you is ready.³

We are centuries away from Imam Husayn yet still we can join him and answer his call when he called out: "Is there any helper to help us?"

² *Ma'ail al-sibtayn*, volume 1, page 208

السلام عليك يا ابن رسول الله إن لم أكن أدركت نصرتك بيدي فما أنا ذا وإفد إليك بنصري قد أجابك قلبي وسمعي وبصري وبني وراي وهواي على التسليم لك والخلف الباقي من بعدك الأدلاء على الله من أولئك فنصري لكم معة

Bihar al-anwar, vol. 98, page 209, chapter 18

Reflecting on how we answer a call

What needs reflection is to see how your heart, your ear, your eye answers to a call. It seems clear that e.g. if I listen to that which prepares me to serve the cause of Husayn and act upon it, this would be my ear answering his call.

In the age that we live in, many problems come through ears and eyes, more than any other time. This is due to the fact that if in the past they had to be careful about the voice coming from few meters around, today we can hear voices and sounds that come from thousands of miles away. If you look at the past, what do you think the challenge of a young person was when it comes to the listening and hearing? The only challenge was that if he was in a meeting or gathering or place a sinful voice might be heard. However, in our age, we can be in a holy place and yet exposed to a haram voice through various devices. Furthermore, in the past, one could only listen to what was being said at that moment, though now voices are recorded and saved.

The amount of exposure to haram today is not comparable to the past. The same fact is true about our sight, thoughts, and desires.

A lover of Imam Husayn cannot have plans that disregard the beloved. Our desires and thoughts must be in line with helping Imam Husayn. We shall not think about useless matters let alone sinful ones. Our thoughts should be at Imam's service, thinking how we can help him, how we can bring more light to this world. Our concern must be how to promote values. A lover is the one who wakes up in the morning and the first thing he remembers is his beloved. It may even happen that he is in the middle of a conversation yet his heart and mind is somewhere

else with the beloved. When he goes to bed, he ends his day thinking about and remembering his beloved. Is Husayn's attraction and beauty less than a normal beloved? If we do not feel that irresistible attraction in Imam Husayn, the problem lies in the fact that we do not have proper knowledge (*haqqa ma 'rifatih*) of him.

A point that should not be neglected is that our Imams do not draw our attention to themselves. They act as mirrors and draw our attention to Allah. They are so transparent that when you think of them you remember Allah. They orient us towards Him. In *Ziyarat al-Jami'ah* we recite: "He who seeks Allah, starts with you."⁴ If someone wants to reach Allah in a very easy, fast, and convenient way it should be done through knowing and loving Prophet Muhammad and Ahlul-Bayt.⁵

Verbalizing our readiness to the Imam

We need to be able to honestly tell our Imam that we are ready for him, that he can count us, on all that we have, whether it is our talents, skills, and energy; and on our children and wealth.⁶ In Dua of 'Ahd we read:

⁴ The Arabic text reads as follows:

من اراد الله بدأ بكم

⁵ Of course, there are other prophets and holy people that we have respect and love for and they also can help us, but no one is as close to Allah as these people.

⁶ Sometimes some people cheat. They say all their belongings are for Imam Mahdi but still they resist to pay khums to Marraji' saying that I will pay it only to Imam himself after he comes and asks for it. This is not honesty. If you are honest and free from greed you would realize that giving khums to the Marraji's in this time and age is like paying to Imam himself and for sure Imam Mahdi would not be pleased if people do not make their khums available for good causes under the supervision of the people who have piety and at the same time the greatest knowledge of the teachings of Imams and the needs of the community.

O Allah, appoint me amongst his helpers, aides, and his protectors, those who hasten to fulfill his commands and obey his orders. Those who defend him and compete with each other to (fulfill) his will.⁷

We ask Allah to include us among those who respond to Imam Mahdi, implement his commands, and do what he wills without hesitating or waiting for his request for it to be done.⁸ If we know that our Imam wants something, we should want to hasten and rush to fulfil what he wants from us, without waiting for him to ask us. It is sufficient to know what is to be done without waiting for the Imam's order. If you know your father is thirsty you will not wait for him to ask you for water; you would immediately quench his thirst. Furthermore, we would want to compete with others to fulfil not only the Imam's commands, but also his will, before even expressing it.

What does our Imam want from us today?

A very important question arises here: How can we understand what our Imam wants from us today? This is something that we struggle with. I think we have many people in the world who are devoted to and work hard to spend everything they have for the sake of Allah and at the service of Ahlul Bayt and their cause, but sometimes you do not feel

⁷اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنْ أَنْصَارِهِ وَأَعْوَايِهِ وَالذَّائِبِينَ عَنْهُ وَالْمُسَارِعِينَ إِلَيْهِ فِي قَضَاءِ حَوَائِجِهِ، وَالْمُسْتَجِيبِينَ لِأَوَامِرِهِ وَالْمُحَامِلِينَ عَنْهُ، وَالسَّابِقِينَ إِلَى إِرَادَتِهِ

⁸Note that this dua was taught by Imam Sadiq long before the occultation started. In Islam we are not restricted to time as discussed before. In Islam, you can go beyond time and space. Imam Sadiq says you should pray in this way for 40 days in order to be able to join Imam in his mission and even if you die before he comes you will be brought back by Allah and will be able to join him.

that they are always making proper decisions or are making rapid progress year by year towards ideals. Many people have already done so many things to please Imam Mahdi but the problem is that they do not know exactly what to do and what he wants from us to do. They do not know what to prioritize to help our Imam.

There are the obvious duties that apply at all times: praying, fasting, hajj, taqleed, wearing hijab, eating halal food, and so forth. These are the responsibilities that from the time of the Prophet every Muslim must have done as we have in the hadith from Imam Sadiq:

What Muhammad announced permissible is permissible up to the Day of Judgment and what he said is prohibited will be so till the Day of Judgment.⁹

These are the things basic laws. What we need to understand is our time-specific social responsibilities, how to prepare our society and community for the coming of Imam Mahdi. The following offers a few reflections on how to understand what the Imam expects from us:

-To reflect on what he is going to do and prepare by moving in the same direction. In other words, we must consider what Imam Mahdi is going to establish, and then we should work towards it.¹⁰ When the

⁹ *Al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 58. Hadith reads as follows:

حلال محمد حلال الى يوم القيامة و حرامه حرام الى يوم القيامة

¹⁰ If you are waiting for a great teacher to come and educate you should prepare for his mission by bringing students together, making a classroom and other facilities ready for him and educating people as much as you could so that when he comes everything would be ready for him and he would focus on the things that no one else could do it and not just doing what you yourselves were supposed to do. Or if there is an epidemic disease and you are waiting for the greatest doctor to come you should prepare for his activities by cleaning and equipping the hospital, bringing together nurses and others who could help him together and register the patients and do

Imam sees that we have made good progress and preparation, then he can join us in the same path. But we have to make the first few steps.

As we saw in previous parts, one of the aims of Imam Mahdi, which is the aim of all prophets and is the standing at the top of his agenda is justice. Right under justice come dignity and honour because these are the most important rights that every human being deserves. If you have minimum amount of justice you have to respect dignity of people.

Now, let us reflect on the following phrase from Dua al-Iftitah:

Oh Allah, we bring to you our yearning for an honourable government by which you give dignity to Islam and its people, and humiliate hypocrisy and the hypocrites, and include us among those who invite people unto Your obedience, and lead people towards Your path. Through such a government, give us honour in this life and the hereafter.¹¹

If a government is not honourable, it cannot give dignity and honour to its citizens. You can never expect honour to come to you from the people who do not have honour for themselves. There is a very beautiful hadith that suggests this idea: “If someone doesn’t have any honour for himself, do not feel safe with respect to him.”¹²

examinations and initial treatments so that when he comes his time would not be wasted for you to get ready.

¹¹ The text of the dua reads as follows:

اللَّهُمَّ انا نرغبُ إليك في دَوْلَةٍ كَرِيمَةٍ نُعِزُّ بِهَا الْإِسْلَامَ وَ أَهْلَهُ وَ نُذِلُّ بِهَا التَّقَاتِ وَ أَهْلَهُ وَ نُجْعَلُنَا فِيهَا مِنَ الدُّعَاةِ إِلَى طَاعَتِكَ وَ الْقَادَةِ إِلَى سَبِيلِكَ وَ تَرْزُقُنَا بِهَا كَرَامَةَ الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ

¹² *Bihar al-Anwar*, volume 72, page 300, chapter 74, no. 11. Hadith reads as follows:

مَنْ هَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ نَفْسُهُ فَلَا تَأْمَنُ شَرَّهُ

A noble person never uses foul language even towards animals. A person who has honour for himself never walks out nude.¹³ Covering up even a little is recommended in Islam which indicates that a person should always honour himself. And a person who honours himself will honour others. Similarly, an honourable government will honour its citizens. For this reason, we ask Allah in our duas for an honourable government that treats people with dignity.

One of the features of the government we ask Allah for is that it exposes the hypocrites. It is them with whom we have problem with, not honest disbelievers. It seems that the main problem is with *nifaq* and not with *kufr*.¹⁴ We ask that the hypocrites are exposed so that they lose their respect and influence. The best way to face a person who is hypocrite is to show his true face to people.

Having asked for that, we then ask Allah to include us among those who invite others toward His obedience. The idea here is that we should not be satisfied by just being pious; rather we should also be calling others towards His obedience and leading towards His path. If we merely aim to be pious is not enough and may actually result in being in a lower level and failing to be pious. In the following dua in the Qur'an we read:

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

¹³ It is said that one of the scholars used to be fully dressed in his house all the time. Someone asked him why he did that while no one was there. He replied saying 'I am here.' He had such a respect for himself that he did not want to be without his dress of honour at any second.

¹⁴ The Qur'an tells us that the hypocrites are in the lowest level of the hell (4:145).

...Our Lord, Grant us comfort in our spouses and descendants, and make us leaders of the pious. (25:74)

We do not merely ask for piety. We ask to be the leader of the pious. This aim is for the purpose of being closer to Allah rather than for selfish reasons such as position or power.

Continuing with Dua al-Ifitah, we ask Allah to help us not only to obey Him, but to guide others to his obedience, by being equipped with piety and knowledge. We also ask Allah for honour in this life and the hereafter. We want to be proud to be Muslims. We want people of the world to have so much understanding of Islam, and pleased with the performance of Muslims, that they have respect for Muslims. This will not happen by itself. We can only achieve this by working towards establishing this honour for ourselves and our community. Imam Mahdi wants us to be honourable.

Whether it be education, family ties, punctuality, organization, trustworthiness, and helping others, we need to be the best at it. If on the other hand, we are disorganised, dishonest, unkind, and unprincipled we cannot bring honour to ourselves. Hence we cannot expect Imam Mahdi to suddenly come and give us honour in this life and the hereafter. *Every step towards bringing honour to this community prepares for Imam Mahdi.* We should not see anything happening that would bring disrespect to our community.

In addition to establishing justice by not violating others' rights, not even doing injustice to animals, we need to bring honour to ourselves and treat others the same. We need to be a polite and respectful community, whether it be in the home, classroom, or workplace so that

anyone who looks at us says that this person must be a follower of Husayn. We need people to see the conduct of Imam Husayn in us.

Another important point for us is to act as a community. We cannot afford to be separated as we cannot help Imam Mahdi individually. We need to come together and form a solid group at his service. The Imam wants a strong community, not people who dislike or boycott each other:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

O you who have faith! Be pious and be with the truthful people. (9:119)

In addition to believing and having piety, we should also be in the company of truthful people. This shows not only the importance of being truthful, but also the importance of being a community:

وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

By Time! Indeed man is in loss, except those who have faith and do righteous deeds, and enjoin one another to [follow] the truth, and enjoin one another to patience. (103:1-3)

In addition to the importance Allah gives to time, we also realize that it is not enough for us to be believers and do righteous deeds. We need to come together and enjoin truthfulness and patience. If one was about to get angry or to give up, others should invite him to patience. With this

mutual help we can be saved. It is only when we are together that we can gain Allah's support.¹⁵ Similar to the above verses, Allah says:

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ

While being one of those who have faith and who enjoin one another to patience, and enjoin one another to compassion. (90:17)

We should invite each other to patience, mercifulness, and truthfulness; establish it among ourselves and then extend it to others to benefit from it. If we form such a community, Allah will bless this community with much support and will guide it so as to quickly achieve its aim. Allah says in the Qur'an that if you are pious and careful of your duties towards Him, He will teach you (2:282) and give you a criterion by which you can distinguish between right and wrong (8:29). Therefore, we should attain communal piety for Allah to guide our community and direct it towards our goals.

Conclusion

In this part, we studied how we can help Imam Mahdi by learning from the example of Imam Husayn and being a good follower of his. In particular, we studied why and how we should start establishing justice among us so that we can be used as instruments of establishing justice by Imam Mahdi. An unjust person cannot be a helper of the Imam whose goal is establishing justice all over the world. We should establish

¹⁵ Imam Ali said: "Allah's hand (of protection) is with the community (*jamaa'ah*; a united group of people). You should beware of division because the one isolated from the group is (a prey) to Satan just as the one isolated from the flock of sheep is (a prey) to the wolf. (*Nahj al-Balaghah*, Sermon number 127)

justice among ourselves and then for others. Justice is both for enemies and friends. We are expected to be fair with respect to everyone. Then we studied that the right of people to be treated with honour and dignity as one of the important things you should observe as a just person. Again we need to achieve this honour for ourselves and then treat others with honour and respect. We need also to form a united community in order to help Imam Mahdi.