

Keys to the Qur'an

Volume 2
Commentary on Surah Al Imran

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri



Publisher: Zahra Publications

ISBN-10 (Printed Version): 1-873938-34-9

ISBN-13 (Printed Version): 978-1-873938-34-8

ISBN (E-Book Version): 978-1-919826-49-3

<http://www.zahrapublications.pub>

First Published in 1993

© Haeri Trust and Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in critical articles or reviews, no part of this eBook may be reproduced in any manner without prior written permission from Zahra Publications.

Copying and redistribution of this eBook is strictly prohibited.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	i
Book Description	ii
About Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	1
Chapter 3: <i>Surat 'Ale-'Imran</i> : Introduction.....	2
Chapter 3: <i>Surat 'Ale-'Imran</i> : Commentary	7
Chapter 3: <i>Surat 'Ale-'Imran</i> : Summary.....	141
eBooks By Zahra Publications.....	146

Book Description

Surat 'Ale-'Imran is one of the most comprehensive and detailed chapters of the Qur'an. It demonstrates the meaning of hypocrisy, courage and belief, using the historical setting of the Battle of Uhud, one of the early Muslim campaigns, to show how people behave in different circumstances and justify their behavior.

This chapter unveils truth and insight regarding the human self, society, this world and the Next Life.

About Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Acknowledged as a master of self-knowledge and a spiritual philosopher, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri's role as a teacher grew naturally out of his own quest for self-fulfillment.

He travelled extensively on a spiritual quest which led to his eventual rediscovery of the pure and original Islamic heritage of his birth, and the discovery of the truth that reconciles the past with the present, the East with the West, the worldly with the spiritual – a link between the ancient wisdom teachings and our present time.

A descendant of five generations of well-known and revered spiritual leaders, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri has taught students throughout the world for over 30 years.

He is a gifted exponent of how the self relates to the soul, humankind's link with the Divine, and how consciousness can be groomed to reflect our higher nature.

The unifying scope of his perspective emphasizes practical, actionable knowledge that leads to self-transformation, and provides a natural bridge between seemingly different Eastern and Western approaches to spirituality, as well as offering a common ground of higher knowledge for various religions, sects and secular outlooks.

He is a prolific author of more than thirty books relating to the universal principles of Islam, the Qur'an, and its core purpose of enlightenment.

Acknowledgements

This series¹ began in 1981 as part of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an in the United States and Europe. Numerous people had helped and worked to realize the original editions of these commentaries.

Considerable editing and modifications were carried out by Muna H. Bilgrami. Aliya Haeri's dedication and loyalty was invaluable in coordinating and supervising both the first series as well as the present series. Contributors to the present edition include Batool Ispahany, Kays Abdul Karim Mohammed, Dr. Salah al-Habib, Luqman Ali, Hasan Jobanputra, Christopher Flint and Syed Muyhi al-Khateeb. Special thanks are due to Dr. Yaqub Zaki for reading through the texts and for his helpful suggestions. Without the encouragement and enthusiasm of Dr. Omar Hamza's love of the Qur'an, this present edition would not have been possible.

¹ In this eBook, we provide English translation of the Qur'anic *ayat* (verses; signs). Only the original Arabic text of the Qur'an is referred to as "The Qur'an". The Arabic text and diacritics have been removed because they do not render accurately in some eReaders.

Chapter 3: *Surat 'Ale-'Imran*: Introduction

The Qur'an was revealed in an instant, issuing forth from a realm beyond time. Its unfolding within the domain of time, however, occurred over a span of twenty-three years, for it was necessary for the message to be fully absorbed, integrated and applied existentially. The message was, and continues to be, that Allah is the Reality behind all that one witnesses. He is beyond description and beyond perception by the senses. He has Attributes, but nothing can be associated with Him. He can only be alluded to. We are therefore taught to talk about Allah only in terms of His Attributes, not of His Essence.

The Qur'an came as a complete revelation, as one unit in space, as one instant in time, like a bolt of lightning that hits the sleeper and stuns him into wakefulness. It descended as a stream of truth upon the heart of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, his family and his righteous Companions;² for the Muhammadan application of the truth of the Qur'an is the vital complement. To try to understand the Qur'an without the Prophet would have been comparable to an attempt to use a medical manual with no previous medical experience: the manual is of little use to one who has no training. To know the meaning of reality one must follow a particular path of application. Thus, Islam is based on both the Qur'an and the Prophetic way (*Sunnah*).

All the basic principles of knowledge are contained in this book. It is an existential guide for perpetual life. The message of the Qur'an is based on balance, on living a life which inevitably leads to a better future, materially and morally, both on an individual and a social level.

The purpose of the Qur'an is for its message to be absorbed by the hearts of men. If there is no impact, then the remedy is only palliative. Superficial use of the Qur'an may be likened to a person who, hearing that vitamins are useful for the body's health, takes some indiscriminately. The vitamins are likely to be of some benefit, but they would have been far more useful had he known his specific condition and the properties of the vitamins, how they interact and enhance

² It is customary, whenever the name of the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned, to invoke the peace and blessings of Allah upon him, his family and his righteous Companions.

each other as well as how they might occasionally counteract one another. With this knowledge he would have been able to benefit maximally by taking the correct type and dosage. We hope to approach and use the Qur'an in this way.

The ability to derive meaning and knowledge from the Qur'an depends upon having the correct approach, and a humble, pure intention to attain knowledge. The assumption that one already knows something can be a hindrance. Therefore, one must be bereft, recognizing one's poverty, ignorance, weakness and need for knowledge and transformation. To approach the Qur'an, the seeker must possess the right courtesy (*adab*) which will serve as a key to awaken the knowledge of the Qur'an already contained within the heart.

Drawing from the Qur'an, penetrating into it, integrating it into one's life and thus learning from it, require both outer and inner courtesy (*adab*). If we approach the Qur'an with courtesy and love, it will unfold to us its values.

To gain the blessings and mercy of Reality through this ultimate, complete and balanced book of wisdom, one must appreciate its historical context and the overall environmental and ecological situation at the time of its descent. This includes understanding the civilization and culture of the time and place of its revelation, and more specifically, the nature of the people and their nomadic values. The Arab nomads of the Prophet's time, like nomads in general, were highly sensitized to their environment, for they had little protection from it. Because of the extreme harshness of their environment, the Bedouin Arabs lived continually on the verge of moral danger; they had therefore developed extremely alert, agile and intuitive minds which were highly attuned to everything around them. Furthermore, the nomadic system of the Bedouin people was in constant conflict with the civic system of the city dwellers. Whenever the nomadic and sedentary cultures met, conflict as well as renewal occurred.

The qualities most highly valued in nomadic cultures were nobility, courage and generosity. The people of the desert were self-reliant and fiercely independent. They would not bow to another human being. The leader emerged naturally, and was recognized because of his qualities and character. In this system it was likely that the next leader would come from the present leader's clan or be related to him. In nomadic culture, the home, or tent, of the tribal chief was always

open, and yet it was customary for people not to go begging, so as not to demean themselves. Thus, generosity was naturally balanced with integrity, self-esteem and patience.

The Qur'an arose amidst the Arab culture and a simpler way of life than ours, but its universal message enlivened the hearts of diverse people, even during the Prophet's lifetime. It is helpful if we are aware of the environment in Mecca and Medina at the time of the Qur'anic revelation in order then to apply it to the social and cultural situation of our time, for the Qur'an is a guide book in an actual prescriptive sense.

The Muhammadan path, as it evolved over the course of time, is inextricably linked, step by step, to the revelation of the Qur'an. It began with the acknowledgement of the Oneness of God and it ended with the establishment of a very strong community in which individuals, having completely recognized the laws governing human relationships, interacted in a manner that allowed each one to develop spiritually to his or her full capacity. The righteous Companions followed their Prophet Muhammad and thereby became established in their knowledge of God.

The Prophet saw in everyone the highest possible potential to be awakened to the higher inner knowledges. He recognized in all situations, even those which appeared to other men as afflictive, nothing other than Allah's mercy and compassion. He had the ability to see the ignorance that veils the hearts of men and causes them to act incorrectly, and he acted with understanding towards them. He worked to purify men's hearts, to help them evolve towards awakening to the inner life.

The few Muslims who were with the Prophet in the beginning were constantly subjected to oppression and opposition. The Prophet, wanting to save his small group of original followers, recommended that many travel to a place of safety, since living in Mecca had become impossible; for as their numbers grew so did opposition to them. The atmosphere had become increasingly polarized and hostile. The Muhammadan light, translated into a code of conduct, had become a major threat to the tribal habits of a people who took fierce pride in their ancestral ways. Their factional loyalties often led them to resort to brute force, with total disregard for logic, reason and human values. This polarization in Mecca would lead inevitably to violence.

In contrast to the clans in Mecca, some of the people of Medina saw light and usefulness in the message of Islam. Whereas the people of Mecca regarded the Prophet as no more than the son of one of their own kind, and could not accept his prophethood, the people of Medina, an agrarian people who were settled and more receptive, welcomed the Prophet and his followers, who upon arrival immediately began to build a mosque and homes: they embarked upon creating a community. But with a community also came problems: 'Surely We have created man in affliction' (90:4).

The Family of `Imran (*Surat 'Ale `Imran*) was revealed mostly around the second or third year after the migration to Medina, although certain passages came somewhat later. Its dating has been deduced from the references to events which occurred at that time, namely the Battle of *Uhud*. A major part of the chapter deals with the topic of hypocrisy. If one looks into one's own heart, one will occasionally witness how deep and subtle hypocrisy can be. An important lesson in The Family of `Imran is how to break free from the evil of hypocrisy.

The Battle of *Uhud*, the second major battle between the young Muslim community and the Quraysh of Mecca, revealed a wide range of human weaknesses amongst the followers of the Messenger Muhammad. Curiously, the word *Uhud* is linguistically connected to *Ahad*, which is a Divine Attribute meaning 'the One'. *Uhud* thus could imply a comprehensive exposition of divine unity which takes place on the battlefield. In truth every moment is *Uhud*, but we generally escape to relative short-term safety, unaware that eventually we must face the enemy. 'With your Lord alone on that day shall be the place of rest' (75:12). There is no escape. 'Whither to fly?' (75:10); and, 'O man, surely you must strive hard toward your Lord until you meet Him' (84:6). By what power and grace can one possibly escape?

It is up to us to perceive the plot of the One (*Ahad*) which was exemplified during the era of the Prophet at the Battle of *Uhud*. We need to delve into its meaning and grasp its truth, for much of what appears to be real is nothing but illusion, and the more we pursue illusions the more we are confused. The truth is that everything emanates from one source and returns to it. Life in this world pushes, pulls, encourages and entices us towards that source. This is the meaning of Allah's mercy and the perfection of His natural laws. Multiple manifestations all emanate from One Essence.

To behave with propriety towards the Creator, we must behave with propriety towards ourselves. But in order to check and balance oneself until that fine point of deep propriety is reached, we need to attain a state of spontaneous awareness. For this it is necessary to follow the example of others who have reached the goal, like tuning a musical instrument to the correct pitch using a tuning fork.

To discover subtle hypocrisy one need only look into one's own heart. There, within the self, one will find all the contradictions of conflict and duality. Yet out of this torment one can reach enlightenment: a person who has not experienced internal conflict is unlikely to be awakened to the knowledge of, and adherence to, the source of harmony within.

The commentary on The Family of `Imran contained within this volume differs from the traditional approach of Qur'anic commentators, for we intend to share its eternal values and its constant applicability within the deep realm of truth. Towards this end, much of the historical background which is widely available has not been included. However, where historical information is necessary to help illuminate the verse, it has been referred to.

We will examine the linguistic roots of numerous key terms so as to highlight their different facets as well as their specific meanings in the context in which they are used. We will allow ourselves to roam through the incredibly rich, delightful garden of communication and transformation; it is to be hoped within properly observed boundaries.

Chapter 3: *Surat 'Ale-'Imran*: Commentary

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

1. Alif Lam Mim

Just as creation appears to have a physical structure, so does the Qur'an. From non-existence the letters come into being by a stroke of the pen. The letters are the foundation of the words which make up its sentences and thus impart meaning, just as the variegated forms of creation are contained within various systems that also provide meaning. From the One comes an infinite number of creational possibilities which indicate their truly infinite and unfathomable Source.

2. Allah, [there is] no god but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting by Whom all things subsist.

The chapter begins by affirming what is most important in creation, namely (*tawhid*), that is, unity, the Oneness of Allah. The Qur'an asserts that there is only one Creator from whom creation emerges. The most exalted definition and highest description of this Creator is that He has no other partner. There is no deity but Allah, the Absolute Creator.

Another description of Allah is that He is forever sentient or living. How can we experience life and death unless there is an immutable foundation, forever holding both in Its grasp. How is it that we are alive? We must be deriving life as well as all our other attributes (singular *sifah*) from a Reality which contains all these attributes. The reason that man seeks to prolong his life unnaturally is, in fact, because he is worshipping – albeit misguidedly – the Everlasting Who is within us. All attributes are from Allah, through whose grace everyone is constantly given the opportunity of knowledge and awakening. The Qur'an says, 'All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Allah, the Sovereign King, the Sacred, the Mighty, the Wise' (62:1).

Every created entity in this existence is glorifying, worshipping and adoring the Attributes of Allah, the Controller of all. Everyone wants to possess these Attributes, because man desires Allah; yet we already have Allah, we are already in the embrace of Allah. There is no escape

from that One Reality; there is no escape from the laws of Allah which are the manifestation in creation of His Attributes.

It is up to us to experience His laws, not in a dualistic or fragmentary fashion, but as a totality, until we see nothing but Allah manifesting Himself through His different Attributes. If a particular event seems to be incongruous, we need only reflect upon its cause to understand it. If the event conforms to its context, then it has followed His laws. If we were to think, hear and see correctly and naturally, then everything around us would be coherent. Whatever appeared incomprehensible, once examined, would reveal its inner meaning.

Every cause has an effect, and every effect stems from a cause, except for the One-and-Only Source, Allah. Allah is Self-Subsisting, beyond cause and effect. Everything except Allah falls within laws that can be understood. All of creation emanates from a root, from a cause that encompasses and controls it all without being tarnished, touched or affected by it. This is the puzzle into which we are born, and we are given our entire lifetime to solve it. Its solution is its dissolution.

By submitting and dissolving the self into the truth that lies within, we unify our actions and intentions fully. Then we will find that every experience is covered by the mercy of Allah, thereby deepening our faith along the path. By this faith our certainty will be increased, and we will be led to the realization that this life is an emanation indicating its source and its natural return to it. Life then becomes an experience to be valued and respected, because one respects the Giver of the experience. Life is not acceptable unless it is put experientially into the right perspective. Life is only a training-ground where man may come to know the meaning of the words, 'Allah, there is no god but Him, the Living, the Self-Subsisting, by Whom all things subsist.'

3. He has truthfully revealed the Book to you, verifying that which came before; and He revealed the Torah and the Gospel.

In this verse the Prophet Muhammad and all who truly follow him are addressed by Allah. The Qur'an as revealed to Muhammad confirms the truth of the earlier books of the Torah and the

Gospels. The message of these divinely inspired Books is from the same One Source, but revealed at different times, for different civilizations or cultures. The books of Moses and Jesus were adequate for their time, and the teachings of Jesus superseded what remained of the oral Talmudic tradition.

The Qur'an of Muhammad supersedes all previous revealed teachings. It is the final message, as it encompasses the collective prophetic consciousness. The Arabic language of the Qur'an and the continuous chain of transmission of its teachings ensures its authenticity and safeguards it. Attempts to interpret the Qur'an and the Prophetic path in order to justify a personal prejudice, or wrongly to reinforce unjust actions, continue. Despite this, Islam remains preserved as it was originally and the behavior of Muslims can always be judged against it by whoever has been given its light.

4. Aforetime, a guidance for mankind, and He revealed the Discrimination. Surely, those who disbelieve in the revelations of Allah shall suffer a severe punishment. And Allah is Mighty, the Lord of Retribution.

The Qur'an has several names, two of which are 'The Book' (*al-Kitab*) and 'The Discrimination' (*al-Furqan*). The Book of Knowledge and understanding is based on discrimination, the differentiation between what is right and what is wrong. By reading this Book, we learn to differentiate between truth and falsehood, transience and permanence.

What is emphasized in this verse is that the knowledge of Allah is the highest priority. Whoever denies the signs of Allah, whoever denies the proof of the existence of the Creator, whoever denies the interconnectedness of everything in this creation, whoever denies the one power from which stem different manifestations and apparently opposing values or attributes, is in a state of affliction and pain, that is, 'severe punishment' (*`adhab shadid*). Ignorance underlies all pain. Once the reason behind the outcome of a given situation is known, immediate relief and comfort are found, though the difficulty of the situation may not yet be resolved. Through thorough knowledge of any situation, acceptance becomes possible, and with this acceptance positive, successful action can be undertaken.

Understanding and acceptance are aspects of discrimination, of recognizing what is what. If one fails to see the one thread behind the many woven patterns, the result is continual suffering, difficulty and affliction.

5. Surely nothing in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Allah.

The Living, Self-Subsistent Reality (*al-Hayy al-Qayyum*) is also the All-Hearing, All-Seeing and All-Knowing Reality. Nothing is hidden from Allah. Where can one turn that Allah and His manifestations do not exist? Where can one hide from that which gives one life? Wherever one goes, one's life-support system is already there. How can one say that one has no knowledge of Allah – for where is it that Allah is not? The answer is truly that such a place does not exist. Anyone who recognizes this fact knows that wherever one turns there is the face of Allah. If man is at all times aware that Allah sees what is in his heart, he will naturally labor to purify his heart. He will seek to reveal what is in it so that it might thereby be rendered wholesome and pleasing to Allah, for there is nothing more purifying than revealing one's heart to someone who is willing to listen.

The hypocrisy (*nifaq*) of one who knows that nothing is hidden from Allah will evaporate by continual exposure to air and light. The Arabic verbal root from which the word for hypocrite springs means 'to tunnel'. Like a mole in a tunnel the hypocrite cannot be easily caught, because the tunnel has more than one exit hole. It is a secret underground tunnel which one may enter by one hole and come out through another. One is always justifying one's prejudices and veils – never catching the self out. By recognizing that Allah knows everything, the labyrinth is unearthed. A technique for reducing hypocrisy is to think of one's heart, one's inner thoughts and motivations as exposed. In truth, every cell within a man reflects his true intentions. Nothing in the heavens or on the earth is hidden from the Reality which encompasses them both, and yet is beyond them.

6. He shapes you in the womb as He pleases; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise.

Man himself is a form, a picture (*surah*), a representative of Reality. He is an example of Reality, because he encompasses within himself the meaning of everything that he experiences;

he is a microcosm of creation. If man did not contain within himself the potential to understand everything outside himself, how then could he understand the external world? There is within us a micro-world which enables us to reflect the macro-world outside. This is how He has 'shaped you in the womb'. The Arabic verbal root for 'wombs' (*arham*) means 'to be merciful or compassionate' (*rahima*). The womb with its function of propagation is a great manifestation and direct proof of Allah's ongoing mercy. The word for 'womb' also means 'relationship, kinship'. It is important for everyone to extend mercy and generosity to their family. The person who has embraced Islam, but whose family has not, should try to share his faith with his family, not by forcing it upon them, but by gentle words and guidance whenever possible. The enemy is not the family itself but the ignorance based on culture and habit that has been allowed to take hold over the family. It is actions that are evil, not people.

There are seven factors which affect the make-up of the individual. The first is to do with the character of one's parents: there is no doubt that one inherits physical and other characteristics from one's predecessors. Another factor is the act of conception itself; this relates to the love between the parents and the depth of their relationship. The third factor is the mother's diet and overall physical, mental, emotional and spiritual state while the child is developing in the womb. The fourth factor concerns the conditions at the moment of birth; the way in which this transition occurs is critical. To be born under the glaring lights of a hospital operating theatre, surrounded by unknown people who are preoccupied with their own problems, is not the best way to enter life. Traditionally, in the past, children were born at home, where the mother was at ease in her own environment, with her own people who treated her lovingly. The fifth factor is the child's treatment during the first two years, including the diet, love, attention and warmth that the mother gives it, the love that exists between both the parents and the baby. The sixth element is the child's upbringing, grooming and social environment. A child who is brought up in a criminal environment is more likely to take to crime, while one brought up in an environment of love, honesty and harmony is more likely to repeat aspects of the same pattern.

The seventh factor is the most important one: a person's power of will and clarity of objective in life. One may have inherited genetically certain weaknesses or physical handicaps or been born into a deprived or criminal environment. One may be aware of all this and yet have the strength and determination to go through life, overcoming the past and rising above those limitations.

Man is like a holographic image: he is potentially a reflection of Reality, if he chooses to be. A holograph is an image produced on a photosensitive plate through the use of a laser beam; a holographic image not only reflects the object from which it is made, but it also behaves as if it were the object itself. The degree to which man can reflect the highest Reality is as accurate as the degree of his willingness to submit, surrender and be committed to Allah.

7. He it is Who has revealed the Book to you in which are decisively clear verses, the basis of the Book; others are allegorical. Those whose hearts are distorted follow the part which is allegorical, seeking dissention, and seeking to give it [their own] interpretation; but none knows its interpretation except Allah. And those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: We believe in it, it is all from our Lord. None remind except those who have innermost understanding.

If the Qur'an is regarded as a whole, there is no obscurity in its allegories or doctrine. The Qur'an is a clear book in which there is no doubt; doubt exists only in the minds of men because of their veils of ignorance.

The word 'basis' (*umm*) also means 'mother', implying that these verses are the source or foundation of the Book. Mecca was called 'the mother of villages' (*umma al-qura*), because it was a trading center. A closely related word in the Qur'an means 'unlettered' (plural *ummiyin*), meaning those who have not had a book, in particular the people of Mecca before Islam. It also refers to the inability of most of the Arabs of that time to read and write. Unlettered also means not formally taught, for the Prophet, according to tradition, had not been taught to read or write at the time the revelations of the Qur'an began. It is known that the Prophet spoke numerous dialects and understood foreign languages, and encouraged the teaching of reading and writing. Many prisoners captured by the Muslims in battle were offered the opportunity of gaining their freedom by teaching the Muslims to read and write. It is said that in each of the nine mosques of Medina there was at all times someone available to teach people to read and write.

'Those whose hearts are distorted' deviate by turning away from Reality. Through knowledge one sees that there is no turning away from the path of Allah, for there is no other way. Man has come from Allah, he is sustained by the grace of Allah, and he is returning to that everlasting

Source. If the heart is not completely at one with Reality, it will remain confused. If the heart is not fused to that awareness then it becomes confused.

People who study the Qur'an without the correct courtesy of humility and openness of heart will not derive benefit. They see only what is doubtful, which increases their own confusion. They are seeking 'dissension', because they are subject to temptations which cause distraction. If man recognizes what has confused him, he is able to avoid it the next time he is confronted by a similar situation.

There is no dispute or doubt about the real way once one is fully on that path. The Prophetic life-transaction (*din*) is not open to discussion. Those who are true to Islam, who have surrendered to Reality, cannot be in discord. Dispute arises because of lack of accord, hence discord. A man who has submitted to Allah is in the hand of Allah, the hand of absolute justice. If someone has entered into an argument, it is because he did not possess full discernment or discrimination (*furqan*) in the situation. Islam is truly the house of peace based on love and justice. It is at peace with its inhabitants and at war with those in ignorance and those who deny Allah.

Those whose hearts are wandering will cause distraction, confusion and dissension 'by seeking to give it their own interpretation (*ta'wil*)'. They talk according to their own whims, 'but none knows its interpretation except Allah'. No one knows the roots of a thing except He who puts forth the roots and 'those who are firmly rooted in knowledge'. The ones who are firmly rooted in their trust in Allah will come to know more and more about the meanings of the manifestations of Reality. All power, actions and attributes come from the Lord and Sustainer. His mercy pervades all creation.

Knowledge and wisdom are but the beautiful and subtle veils of a higher reality. They produce a greater state of awareness and deeper understanding. The Prophet has said, 'The leaders of guidance are among my progeny (*Ahl al-Bayt*) and some of my Companions (*Sahabah*)'. He whose right actions are clear, whose tongue always speaks the truth, whose heart is straight, and who guards his stomach and his sexual urge is one who is firmly established in knowledge. These people were not confused or in doubt. Confusion is a result of one's ignorance of cause

and effect and the inconsistent relationship between intention and action. The confused person can only blame himself, seek knowledge and then take refuge in patience.

When Umm Salamah heard the Prophet repeat the supplication, 'O Lord Who turns the heart, establish my heart in Your way (*din*)', she asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, will the hearts turn again?' 'Yes,' he said, 'Allah has not created man from the children of Adam but that his heart is between His two fingers. If He wills He makes it straight and if He wills He makes it deviate.' Man cannot be arrogant about his faith (*iman*). One can never claim that one knows (for higher knowledge is limitless), or that one's knowledge is complete. Allah says, 'But none feels secure from Allah's plot [i.e. subtle ways], except those who are at a loss' (7:99). Man must be constantly vigilant and diligent. The worst situation is to gain a little knowledge and then to feel arrogantly secure.

All that we experience comes from 'our Lord' (*Rabbana*). The Lord is that entity which brings us up to our full potential. A related word from the same root word as Lord means 'upbringing, education, edification' (*tarbiyah*), but there is no equivalent word for 'lord' in the English language that can adequately convey the idea of nurturing, and the process of gaining wisdom and fulfillment through being fostered and guided by Allah's Attribute of Lordship.

'None remind except those who have innermost understanding.' The word for 'innermost understanding' (*lubb*) also means 'essence, core', or 'reasoning mind'. Sometimes it connotes an understanding connected to the heart, but in the case of this verse it has the further connotation of achievement. The ability to remind depends on the ability to remember, to recall the original sub-genetic information that man is dependent upon Allah, Who has created out of love. If man is continually concerned about external manifestations in the realm of duality, he cannot reflect upon the One Source. The inner meaning of all our activities is life relates to discovering this truth, through surrender and understanding.

In the Qur'an some verses are absolutely clear and some are allegorical, appearing to be obscure. Qur'anic commentators often conjecture as to whether certain verses are allegorical or not. When the Qur'an is examined as a whole there is no obscurity; there is metaphor and symbolism, but there is no obscurity: 'These are the verses of the Qur'an, the verses of a clear Book' (27:1). The

leaders of the Prophetic House related that ‘the understanding of the Qur’an is by the Qur’an, because parts of the Qur’an explain other parts’. The Qur’an is complete unto itself and contains the entirety of meaning within itself.

Allah tells us that the clear verses are the basis of the book. What is allegorical or obscure may be understood in the light of what is clarified elsewhere. As we stated earlier, the word for ‘basis’ also means ‘mother’ as well as ‘source, origin, foundation, essence, matrix’. A closely related word means ‘one who remains in the natural condition of his surroundings’. This word came to refer to the Arabs in particular, and because they did not read or write, it came by extension to mean ‘unlettered’. When this word was used in the Qur’an (7:157) to describe the Prophet Muhammad, the ordinary meaning was that he was not taught in any formal sense, but that he had a natural connection to life and its source, and had therefore a primal, natural ability to ‘read’. The Qur’anic description of ‘unlettered’ also emphasizes that the Prophet was not formally educated, but that his authority was based upon revealed knowledge.

One of the meanings of the Arabic word translated in this verse as ‘interpretation’ (*ta`wil*) is ‘opinion.’ If, for example, on a cloudy day someone comments that it is a good day, he probably means that in his opinion the day will be full of benefit. The listener, on the other hand, may interpret what he said as sarcastic, because the sky is obviously overcast. The first person might then say to the listener he has misinterpreted the speaker’s words, (*awwalta kalami*), implying that the listener has read into them what he wanted to hear. Personal opinions regarding the meanings of the Qur’an must be guarded against. Some of the verses do not allow for interpretation while others lend themselves to a great number of meanings, both broad as well as deep. There are many pitfalls in interpreting according to one’s own opinion.

An explicit example of a clear verse is, ‘O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that perhaps you may guard yourselves with fearful awareness’ (2:186). There is no doubt about the interpretation of this verse, nor room for different opinions about its meaning. An example of an allegorical verse is, ‘Looking toward their Lord’ (75:23). One may ask how this is possible, for Allah cannot be seen, as He established with Moses: ‘You will never see Me’ (7:143). The intellect allows one to understand that ‘seeing Allah’ refers to knowledge of Allah. The latter verse forces one to look deeply into

the meaning of 'looking towards' in the former verse thereby finding that it also means 'directing one's attention towards'. Prophetic traditions may also be used to reinforce the understanding of the Qur'an. In this case a famous sacred tradition relates, 'The eyes cannot see Me, but the heart of the believing slave sees Me.'

Many verses that use worldly or linguistic terms are inadvertently given a physical interpretation. For example, the word for 'throne' (*'arsh*) in the verse, 'Then He [Allah] established himself on the throne' (*Thumma istawa 'ala al-'arsh*, 10:3). The mind conjures up a giant-like being acting as puppeteer for the whole world, seated on an enormous throne. If we delve into the meaning of the Arabic word for 'throne' we will find that it means 'that upon which everything rests', indicating a foundation. Another example, mentioned many times in the Qur'an, is that Allah possesses all riches. Because man treasures his own insignificant trinkets, he may imagine an enormous treasure box, full of Allah's glittering treasures. In reality, however, Allah's treasures comprise the entire creation, comprising that which man comprehends as well as what he cannot comprehend.

There is a story related about an inquirer who asked Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq to explain a certain verse on three different occasions. Each time he received a different answer. Finally he queried the Imam about the differing interpretations and the Imam answered him thus: 'O Jabir, the Qur'an has an inner lining, and for that inner lining there is another inner lining, and for that inner there is another inner and yet another. O Jabir, there is nothing further from the intellect of man than the interpretation of the Qur'an.' Ja'far al-Sadiq's explanation illustrates that many verses can be interpreted from different angles and in subtle ways. While all of the interpretations are correct, at the same time care must be exercised so that one's opinion does not conceal a true reflection of the universality of the verse.

The entire Qur'an is a continuous exposition of the different facets of Reality. In a sense it is like man's life, the beginning, the middle and end of which may be very different, yet interconnected. Likewise, the lives of individuals may appear to be radically different, but if we look at this multiplicity as a manifestation of a reality that has unchanging boundaries, we find written therein decrees which cannot be changed, decrees such as birth and death. There is a limit to the freedom we can exercise because of the natural boundaries that have been determined.

How can man comprehend his cause except by allegory (*mithal*) and deep reflection which results in the remembrance of his origin? The Qur'an is not meant to confuse us, but a person whose heart is not clear reflects the confusion contained therein. A man or woman of Allah does not see anything other than clarity in the Qur'an. If there are areas within it which are not understood, it could be that either the verse has been abrogated or that it contains an unfamiliar aspect of divine law. It could also be unclear because it requires more reflection before the various meanings interconnect.

Clear understanding of certain parts is the foundation for wider understanding: it is by means of light that we can distinguish shades of light. The way to approach the Qur'an is to take from it what is understandable and put it to use; if this is not done, one will not progress. If one fails to transfer the teachings into physical action, then our approach to the Book is faulty and we will be further deprived of knowledge.

8. Our Lord, do not allow our hearts to deviate after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from your Presence. Surely, You are the Generous Bestower.

People who have tasted the sweetness of faith pray to their Lord and Sustainer for their hearts to be guided. Having tasted this sweetness and having seen the light of guidance (*huda*), they guard themselves. Their prayers are a reflection of their intention to protect themselves and keep their hearts safe. They beseech their Lord not to let them be misguided after they have seen the mercy (*rahmah*) of guidance, for they recognize this guidance as a gift from Allah, which, if lost, can never be replaced.

9. Our Lord, surely You are the Gatherer of mankind on a day about which there is no doubt. Most certainly Allah will not fail to keep [His] promise of the appointed time.

The people of faith have no doubt about the signs of Allah, nor do they give in to their whims. By remembering the Day of Reckoning, they remain aware at all times of the transient nature of this life. Remembrance of death is a means to freedom from the veils of the self and from constant justification of one's habitual actions. It is quite natural for us to continue our past habits and find good reasons and explanations for us to do so. The self has the knack of

justifying what it wants. Without going back to the source as a reference point, one will find a justification for any action. That reference point can only be activated if we are in submission to Allah and in a state of spontaneous awareness. If, while experiencing anger, suspicion, greed or confusion, one is able to shut everything out and go into total inner silence and submission, one would be able to improve one's actions. Neutralization from within will bring about a positive result in one's direction.

This verse relates to us that those who have faith (*iman*) and are established in knowledge (*rasikhun fi al-'ilm*) constantly remember that they will be gathered up on the Day of Reckoning. A person who lives with such remembrance will live in a manner which is detached but still present, exposed to his Creator and open to judgment at all times. He will not be enslaved by the world, and its attachments or its attractions. He lives as a free man because he is a slave only to Allah.

10. The wealth and children of those who disbelieve will not avail them against Allah. They are fuel for the Fire.

In direct opposition to the way of life led by those who believe is the way of life of those who deny Allah. They fail to recognize the profundity of death, and have little or no belief in the reckoning after death. Whoever denies that this creation has come from, is sustained by, and is accountable to one Creator, has no refuge in his wealth or in his offspring – he is 'fuel for the Fire' (*waqud al-Nar*). Man's entire experience in the outer world is subject to unstoppable change. Because of this, some seek security in material accumulation. Certainly, such accumulation may bring about a certain element of comfort or pleasure, but once a person succeeds in gathering material wealth, insecurity and problems from other quarters will creep in.

Our understanding, knowledge and behavior is very much subject to the condition of our hearts. The more hardened the heart, the more mechanistic and uninspired our lives become.

11. Like the people of Pharaoh and those before them. They rejected Our signs, so Allah destroyed them because of their wrong actions. And Allah is severe in requiting wrong action.

The people of Pharaoh and those who came before them denied the supreme sovereignty of Allah. Every effect has its cause, and this effect in turn becomes the cause of another effect. Life's experiences are all interrelated in a network. The transgression and disbelief of these people and their abuse of physical power and wealth resulted in a natural punishment. Their diligence was directed only towards their materialistic pursuits, and though the level of their outer technology was very high, it nevertheless did not save them: their inner technology – spiritual enlightenment – was missing.

12. Say to those who disbelieve: You shall be overcome and driven to Hell. What a miserable place of rest!

Tell the people who deny that Allah pervades, prevails over and controls all, that if they do not pursue a life that leads to the acknowledgement of this truth, they will experience the torment and agitation of the Fire. There is no resting place within fire, which is the description of Hell. Those who have not awakened in this life will be very rudely awakened on the Day of Reckoning.

If one is not aware of one's own basic motives and actions, it is unlikely that one would be aware of Allah's justice in all situations. The term 'luck' really implies our lack of knowledge of all the parameters that determine a desirable outcome. When a person describes an occurrence as luck, it means that his or her individual path crossed favorably with an overall environmental direction, and this conjunction was conducive to bringing about the end which he or she desired. Bad luck is the reverse of this process. A person has a certain objective, but does not know all the factors at play in the situation; at a certain point there is a clash with powerful, unknown factors which are in opposition to the achievement of the desire. These factors prevail, the objective fails – and we call this bad luck! The more one is aware and has knowledge, the less one sees 'good luck' or 'bad luck'. Rather, one sees efficiency or inefficiency.

The ignorant seeks to protect his ego, and is both unwilling and unable to see the situation as it is. The person who does not know and knows that he does not know is far better off than the person who thinks he knows, because he is more open to knowledge.

A prophetic saying states, 'People are the enemy of what they do not know'. Man by nature loves knowledge (*'ilm*). The search for knowledge is a great motivating factor in life. Indeed, man loves the Attributes of Allah, and one of His main Attributes is the All-Knowing (*al-'Alim*). The egotistic and selfish person will gloss over his areas of ignorance rather than admit he does not possess knowledge. If one does not start with knowledge of one's own self and inner state then one has not yet begun the process of spiritual growth.

13. Indeed there was a sign for you in the two armies [which] encountered each other. One party was fighting in the way of Allah and the other was an unbelieving force who saw the former as twice as many as themselves. And Allah strengthens those whom He pleases with His aid. Surely, there is a lesson in this for those who have insight.

The Qur'an moves back and forth in time, while its central message is timeless. It does not allow one to fall into the trap of historical perspective, for its truth is for all time.

The chapter of The Family of 'Imran was revealed soon after the Battle of *Uhud*, which occurred in the third year after the Migration (*Hijrah*) from Mecca to Medina. The Battle of Badr was still fresh in the minds of the people. Historical references estimate that the Prophet had 313 men with him at Badr and that they had eight swords, six shields and two horses. On the other hand, the enemy was estimated to number about a thousand, all on horseback. The Muslims were ill-equipped outwardly but well-equipped inwardly, trusting that this life was only one fleeting moment in the manifestation of eternity. Without being suicidal, they were not afraid of death: they were men of Allah and therefore unafraid of Allah's creation.

Of the two groups fighting, one was fighting for Allah's sake. The other group was made up of clans who imagined the Muslims were greater in number than they actually were. The courage and fearlessness of the Muslims caused them to appear far more numerous. The light of Allah will prevail with the people who serve the cause of Allah and who always strive to move towards higher values. This is 'a lesson for those who have insight'.

Anything that is done outside the laws of nature and of what is permissible is transgression. *Shaytan* (Satan) means one who is 'cast out,' or has 'exceeded the bounds' of Allah. In the

garden, where there was no duality, Adam did not know what a lie was. When the *Shaytan* arose to entice him, Adam assumed that his voice was true Reality and therefore believed him. He did not believe the *Shaytan* to be an enemy, because the realm of opposites, of duality, had not yet arisen.

14. The love of desires, of women and sons, hoarded treasures of gold and silver, well-bred horses, livestock and tilth, is made fair-seeming to mankind. This is provision for the life of the world, while with Allah is the more excellent abode.

This verse is a compelling statement about the nature of man. Worldly desires seem attractive in his eyes. Man naturally loves gold and silver because they are signs of wealth. 'Well-bred horses and tilth' were also signs of wealth in the Prophet's time. Nowadays, however, man's wealth is measured by pieces of paper or electronic numbers. The strongest desire in a normal man is for intimacy with a woman, because in that state he becomes almost mindless, or to put it another way, with her he can experience a selfless bliss. A similar state is attained by emptying the mind in meditation. It is understandable that when one's mind is disturbed one seeks a physical form of relief. Disturbed men often have a stronger sexual drive than those who are in inner peace, but eventually that disturbance may take them to a point where they become sexually impaired.

Recreation and play are necessary in life. The fact that we have been created in order to know the Creator and then die can be searing if contemplated unceasingly. Play should, however, be contained, otherwise man will only bring harm to himself and others. The boundary in the case of relationships between man and woman is a contract within which each party fulfils their part. She accords him authority in exchange for protection and support. A man's responsibilities are different from a woman's. If they were the same, then role confusion would ultimately dismantle the normal, primal family structure. Much of what we are experiencing with the troubled youth in the West today is a result of role confusion and the dilution or loss of traditional family values. The glamorous image of the working woman in the factory or office has been created to make available a cheap work-force and to increase material productivity. Family culture, meanwhile, has broken down. Today children come home from school to an empty house and a microwave oven, instead of to a mother and companionship. Is it any wonder that drugs, alcohol and sexual promiscuity are ravaging the youth of today? When the biological process of birth takes over

within the woman, the man, if he is of noble disposition, understands, protects and loves her so that the child who comes into the world will be someone who will live a life worthy of Allah's highest creation.

The Prophet said, 'O people, you are in a house of truce.' In this short life war is being waged between right and wrong, between this life and the next. The intentions and resultant actions of each individual will decide the outcome. Therefore we live in a state of truce. When asked, the Prophet explained that in the house of truce people are informed about the news of the purpose of creation, and they are encouraged to cut themselves off from this world by weaning themselves away from their love of it.

Excessive love and attachment to worldly desires are the cause of enslavement. The cure is moderation and taking the middle road until the desires are fulfilled or have fallen away from one's heart. For example, man is not necessarily disrespectful of Allah because he loves gold, for it is a material which exists naturally in His creation and inherently possesses noble qualities. What is wrong with possessing gold is the danger of arrogance, power and deprivation of others that its hoarding and accumulation bring. `Ali ibn Abi Ṭ alib said, 'The one who is abstemious (*zahid*) is not one who owns nothing; rather, he is the one who is not owned by anything.' There is no merit in possessing nothing, but there is great merit in not being owned by anything.

Desire and attraction are natural phenomena which cannot be resisted. Every person wants to increase his or her wealth. If we are willing to reflect honestly upon our motives, then, through experience, we will recognize the affliction that results if our motives are not pure. If we use the provisions (*mata'*) of this world as useful tools for this short journey, then we are likely to be spared the agony of separation from them. What matters is our intention rather than the action itself. Those who forget that there is an end to this world, and a life to come after it, are described elsewhere as follows: 'And the *Shaytan* has made their deeds fair-seeming to them and thus turned them from the way' (27:24). Allah also says, 'The evil of their actions is made fair-seeming to them; and Allah does not guide the unbelieving people' (9:37). Actions have a way of justifying themselves; a person's ugly deeds may be small at first, but if unchecked, they will increase with each day.

Thus spiritual seekers often go to the desert, where life can be lived more frugally. When the need for clothing and food is less, one can turn one's attention away from the world more easily. In a cold climate, however, one is totally enslaved to the elements, and because outer protection and order must be established first, the outer prevails over the inner. Purification starts from the outer layer and works its way inwardly to the subtle core, until one finds that the outer and the inner are totally connected. One who has attained inner peace will naturally avoid situations which are not conducive to one's spiritual growth.

'With Allah is the more excellent abode.' Allah has given us a long rope which we may use either to return to Him or to strangle ourselves. The man of insight (*basirah*) does not see grey areas; he sees people either covering up reality (which is the meaning of *kufr*) or being intoxicated by the experience of unity (*tawhid*). Distinction between these two states becomes clearer as one's insight or inner vision sharpens.

We return to the place where we began: the excellent abode. Through a highly intricate and natural electro-chemical process, we originated from earthly elements. Our bodies were sustained by food from the earth, and to that earth they will return. The other part of our being, our spirit, is meant to be purified, to become aware of duality – of good and bad, health and sickness, poverty and wealth – and to recognize that there is one force from which all creation emanates.

15. Say: Shall I inform you of what is better than all that? For those who guard fearfully are gardens with their Lord beneath which rivers flow – they abide in them forever – and pure mates, and Allah's pleasure. Allah perceives mankind.

This verse relates to the previous verse. The love of possessions, the desire to increase one's wealth and the number of one's offspring, all the things that are part of this worldly existence, have been made attractive to man. But the worthiest abode is where there is no change, where there are none of the transient afflictions of this world. Possessions are like treasures put into a boat. The more weight in the hull, the greater the risk of sinking in a stormy sea. A strong and efficient mast and sail – analogous to spiritual strength – are needed to carry it to the destined shore. Possessions are neutralized by spiritual strength.

On the other hand, if the boat has a strong mast but carries little in its hold, it can travel swiftly across the sea, but it will arrive empty. The Muhammadan path is the middle road: 'And thus We have made you a middle nation' (2:143). It is not a path of outer asceticism or renunciation. The world is to be interacted with; its positive aspects are to be made use of directly, while its negative aspects are out of bounds and to be avoided. The Prophet is the teacher from whom we learn where the boundaries lie, as well as how to avoid transgressing them.

Better than the love of worldly things are the gardens in the presence of the Lord 'For those who guard fearfully'. The word *taqwa* means 'to guard oneself with fear and caution so as to avoid being led astray'. Caution implies prior exposure to a similar situation, thus those who guard fearfully have already been afflicted in the world: they have tried to find solace and comfort in the stuff of this world and have been disappointed. They are cautious about every situation in order to prevent an undesirable outcome, and, because of their sincerity, they are forgiven if they inadvertently participate in an unfortunate situation. Those who continue to take refuge in some aspect of the world – its wealth, its people, its political power – are continually plagued by the nagging fear that one day the security to which they are holding on will no longer be there. Their plastic cards will be redundant because of a massive and universal power shutdown!

'The gardens beneath which rivers flow' are gardens of meaning, condition or state. In this life the experience of physical gardens can give us a taste of a paradisiacal inner state, a sense of being in a marvelous and fulfilling ambience. The experience however, does not endure, and people in the midst of the most wonderful and fabulous experiences can be miserable and sad. Something within tells them that the moment of pleasure is not going to last, that they will have to leave. The pleasure is recognized as transient, and thus they cannot totally abandon themselves to it. The heavenly, which is to say permanent, garden is forever fed by subtle and hidden underground rivers. Those invisible waters are preserved forever in the Garden of the next world.

'Pure mates' (*azwaj mutahhara*) implies no duality in the Garden; the opposites (*zawj*, means a pair) are joined. In this world man seeks woman, the poor seeks wealth and the ill seeks health. In the next life all seeking is finished. The opposites are continued in pairs; there is no longer any conflict of the two. If a man of faith (*iman*) harbored any unfulfilled desires, those desires would be neutralized to bring about an ultimate equilibrium.

The state of the Garden is described as being like receiving gifts one had not imagined possible. Reality knows the condition of everything, where it is deficient and why. Deficiencies of this world exist in order that we will strive for efficiency, which arises from wisdom and is achieved through the use of the intellect (*`aql*). One learns how to safeguard one's being and how to be successful. Efficiency clearly indicates the boundaries of action: one is free to act, but only within the limits of general laws which prescribe the paths of action in this world. If one transgresses these bounds, one's freedom is curtailed. If one abuses nature beyond a certain point, the ecology will collapse. The destruction may be so great as to annihilate us in order to effect a return to normal. Allah's will is that we discover that this creation is Allah's, and that we are nothing other than His beloved slaves.

Love of this world can only end in disaster. If the disaster does not occur as several minor or major setbacks or disasters in this life, it will occur as one final calamity at the moment of one's death, because whoever loves this world will not want to leave it. Disappointments in this life caution us against investing in what is transient. The things of this world are a provision, not to be renounced, but to be used and consumed along the journey. For this reason the people of self-knowledge (*`irfan*) constantly avoid forming habits. A seeker on the path of self-knowledge may even change the place where he lays his head at night every few days in order not to become complacent in his behavior. A state of continual change prevents him from becoming too familiar with his surroundings, and so he constantly remembers that his life is transient, that at any given moment he may die. The point of this remembrance is not to produce anxiety or discomfort, but to be grounded in a deeper state of inner peace and tranquility, irrespective of one's outer struggle or circumstance.

A verse of the Qur'an says, 'O you who believe! Answer Allah and the Messenger when you are called to that which gives you life. Know that Allah intervenes between man and his heart, and that to Him you shall be gathered' (8:24). Allah is talking to the people of this world, implying that this physical existence is only an example of the real life which is eternal. Each one of us wants to live forever, a desire whose source is divine, but the One who lives forever is the one-and-only Ever-Living (*al-Hayy al-Qayyum*). As created beings we are perishing, but the source of the Ever-living is within us. Once we discover the truth of this, we understand that what we are really adoring and worshipping is the Ever-Living, though this worship of the Eternal is

sometimes transformed into actions which are limited to self-preservation. Naturally, it is incumbent upon everyone to preserve their physical well-being as much as possible, for whoever loves the Creator will love what He has given into one's care, yet with the light of intellect one must realize that the body is born to perish. We must therefore strive to live a balanced life, taking care of both our existential and spiritual needs, of both body and soul.

Those who fearfully guard themselves (*muttaqin*) say that they trust in Allah through reason and natural instinct (*fitrah*). They understand that there can be no major conflicts in nature that will not be resolved by one force dominating another. For example, we all recognize that we are dying even though we do not want to die. This is a conflict which will not be resolved until we become disillusioned with the nature of our ego-self (*nafs*). When the lower self is surpassed by the higher self through self-knowledge and enlightenment, the conflict is resolved.

The greatest crime one can commit against oneself is to become forgetful of Allah and the truth of His Book. Forgetting Allah comes from forgetting death. When a person says that he has discovered the truth, he is really admitting that the truth was there all the time, but the path he was previously following did not lead to it. He has also discovered that he can never find total fulfillment with any human being. Speaking of humankind, the Qur'an says, 'One of you is an enemy to the other' (2:36). Within us are the forces of both evil and good. If one does not act to purify the self, the forces within will produce a Jekyll and Hyde syndrome – with Hyde eventually taking over.

As man grows in faith, his worldly wisdom and sense of discrimination also grow. He becomes more diligent with his use of time and the tools he has been given to work with. His increased sensitivity produces greater effectiveness.

16. Those who say: Our Lord, surely we believe, so forgive our faults and save us from the punishment of the Fire.

The real meaning of forgiveness can be decoded from the Arabic root for forgiveness (*istighfar*), which is *ghafara* meaning 'to cover, protect, correct'. Seeking forgiveness means seeking protection from the results of past errors, and safety from continuing to act erroneously and

therefore harmfully. We know the meaning of fire as a physical manifestation without which we cannot survive. Even our nervous system is based on electrical impulses which are a subtle form of fire. Without the fire of the sun, the ecological balance of the earth could not survive. Inner fire is tasted by everyone in the form of anger, anguish, mistrust, greed, hate and jealousy. When time stops, as it eventually will, the experience of this Fire, if it has been fuelled or fed continuously in this life, will then be an ongoing experience in the next level of consciousness. In that zone one will not be able to act, only to be acted upon, because the next life is the realm of non-change. Only in this life do we have a measure of freedom to take the initiative.

Freedom is meaningless unless there is constriction. Similarly, a person cannot know the meaning of truth unless he knows what a lie is. While Adam was in the state of the Garden he did not know the duality of truth and falsehood. When the *Shaytan* made him experience the meaning of a lie, it was through this event that consciousness rose. The fall of Adam was in one sense, therefore, his rise. Had he not fallen, he would have remained in a state of hapless and indiscriminating bliss, similar to that of animals. But once he recognized the trap, he was also shown freedom. As the children of Adam we come into this life in order to gain this recognition experientially. Though we often claim to act for Allah, we know that essentially our obedience to Him is motivated by our own desires: 'if you do good, you do good for your own souls; and if you do evil, it shall be for them' (17:7).

17. The patient, the truthful, the humbly obedient, those who spend and those who ask forgiveness before dawn.

Patience (*sabr*) is of two types, negative and positive. Being patient with evil whilst one is able to overcome it is to misuse patience. Only when it is impossible to take any action against evil should one wait until the right time or else remove oneself from the situation.

One should be patient with one's aspirations and expectations. Past habits cannot be changed in a few days just as bad posture which has developed over a lifetime cannot be put right in a week. Everything has its own time for healing and reaching fruition. Allah has indicated this by the analogy that He created the heavens and earth in six days (periods). Everything must follow its course, once it has emerged from the uncreated state.

Once one has begun to tread a positive path, patience is very important, because the lower self regularly returns to trick us. *Shaytan* is always present and in order to overcome him we must learn his tricks. Sometimes he comes to us through our emotions, sometimes through reason which encourages us to act wrongly. The secret of being patient is to be impatient with the self, impatient with our faults, our lack of awareness, our heedlessness, greed and laziness. Where we must exercise particular patience is with other people's faults, teaching them with compassion and understanding.

'Those who are truthful' (*sadiqin*) means those who are awakened to their original, naturally noble disposition. Our origin is truth, which each one of us is programmed to seek. When a person knows himself he is steadfast in moments of weakness as well as in moments of strength. With this in mind, one recognizes that gratefulness is especially necessary in moments when life is difficult, when one is most vulnerable and has no outward security. These are in fact the best times. When those times have passed, one looks back upon them as the foundation of one's inner strength. The truth is that we have come from the unknown and we are returning to that unknown; during this journey it is our duty to come to know. If we always keep this in mind, if we admit to our ignorance and face our weaknesses diligently, positively and joyfully, we will overcome them. If instead we hide them, by blowing up the balloon of the ego, death will eventually explode the myth we have created. But if we are constantly able to deflate the ego-self, then death will pose no fear, because, like the transition from sleep to wakefulness, the transition of death will be apparent. The soul simply leaves the body behind and moves into a domain where neither time nor space exists.

Another derivative from the verbal root of the word meaning 'those who are truthful' is 'giving alms' (*sadaqah*). It is as though by giving charity one is confirming the truth that one owns nothing. When beggars in the East come to any house demanding, 'Give us from the wealth of Allah!', they may sound rude and presumptuous, but what they ask for is their due. Wealth belongs to Allah. Those who are entrusted with it are given the great responsibility of using it properly to help those to whom it has not been given. The beggar in his demand asks how the householder dares to sleep while excess surrounds him and how, when he dies, he will account for it. Alms means giving in order to reflect the truth of Allah's generosity, which is infinite.

‘The humbly obedient’ (*al-qanitin*) are those who express their servitude to Allah. The act of lifting the hands in supplication (*qunut*) is an outer manifestation of obedience to and humility before Allah. If a person inwardly obeys the natural laws, accepts them and works within them, not against them, his inner attitude will be expressed outwardly in gratitude, submission and contentment.

‘Those who spend’ their wealth and energy on what matters, give what they cherish, not what they no longer want. For example, a parent may take a dreadful job in order to give his son a good education only to find that after his graduation the boy runs away from home. The son may have done so because the father did not spend of what matters: compassion, understanding, love and attention, rather than money or formal education. We often give what we think is important, not what the situation requires.

‘Those who ask forgiveness before dawn.’ *Ashar* is the last part of the night before dawn, when all is quiet and inner focusing is easy. But what is the use of supplicating, praying and meditating at that time if, during the rest of the day, we are in turmoil and confusion? Before dawn all the outer elements are still. The time lends itself to deep and subtle reflection. The Qur’an says, ‘Maintain the prayer from the declining of the sun to the darkness of night and the morning recitation; surely the morning recitation is witnessed’ (17:78)

18. Allah bears witness that there is no god but He, as do the angels and those who possess knowledge, maintaining His creation with justice. There is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise.

There is nothing worthy of worship but Him. He is the unique Singular (*Ahad*). He is not just the One (*Wahid*), for one implies a second and is the beginning of enumeration. Singularity precedes this, being that Reality from which all manifestation and action have come. Reality witnesses Itself, being Self-sustaining, Self-supporting, Self-knowing and Self-hearing. Allah is the witness to Himself. If we truly want to witness, then we must stop witnessing anything other than Him, for anything other is only a manifestation of Him. The angels witness that there is no god but He because they have no option. They are the powers or forces that participate in holding together the visible parts of this cosmos. Those who have faith and search within themselves come to

Chapter 3: *Surat 'Ale-'Imran*: Summary

The message of the Chapter of The Family of `Imran is the message of the Qur'an. This message is based on Unity, the Oneness of Allah: 'Allah, there is no god but Him, the Living, the Self-Subsisting,, nothing in the earth or heavens is hidden from Allah...He fashions you in the womb as He pleases. There is no god except Him ... the Almighty, the Wise ... Sovereign Master of the kingdom ... the Forgiving, the Merciful.'

The Family of `Imran, like the rest of the Qur'an, moves back and forth between essential statements about the nature of Reality and the psycho-social condition of man. Upon reflection, one will notice that in a sense it copies the nature of man's consciousness which also moves back and forth, from lesser or greater introspection to lesser or greater degrees of social involvement, though everyone is both inwardly and outwardly involved at all times. Even in times of complete physical isolation, deeply engrossed in a meditative state, one's physical body is still interacting with the environment. And even in times of the most active social involvement, one is still connected to one's inward subtle processes. The inward and the outward are but two sides of one being.

Unity (*tawhid*) relates to pure consciousness and unified beingness. There is no way to attain such a state except by believing in it and by continuous struggle with good actions. For this reason, the Book is important as a technical manual of guidance. Through belief and purification comes the experiential certainty that 'there is no god but He'. As simple as the path to this ultimate state seems, the attractiveness of the world is a lure which continually diverts man's attention: 'Alluring for mankind is the desirous love of women, offspring, stored-up treasure of gold and silver ... that is the pleasure of the life of the world.' The only way for him to avoid its snares is by patiently guarding his heart, examining his intentions with scrupulous honesty, and turning again and again to Allah: 'They said, Our Lord, forgive us for our wrong actions and extravagance ... and help us against those who disbelieve.'

In The Family of `Imran, Allah has described the various levels and degrees of faith which exist among mankind, as well as the changes which take place within the heart of the one who

possesses faith. The heart is never fixed or stationary. Fixation only occurs in the realm outside time, and ultimate certainty is only achieved through death, when one no longer has any freedom to act. The closer one is to the point of death, the more one is likely to become certain of Reality.

What, then, does faith (*iman*) mean? Can it be translated into knowledge, or is it just a kind of superstitious belief? Faith may begin blindly, but if it does not lead to truly awakened belief, then it has very little value. Faith is only as strong as the connection between the believer and the One in Whom he believes and trusts. Faith and trust open up the door to knowledge and correct actions. With these elements as foundation stones, transformation can begin.

One cannot be connected to Allah unless one is also connected to Him through His creation, for where is it that Allah is not? A person who claims to be connected only with Allah and not His creation is insincere or ignorant, because such a statement implies separation, and there is none, as Allah says, 'We are nearer to him than his jugular vein' (50: 16).

Faith in Allah purifies the believer. True Islam is based on the purity of hearts. What is the degree of their abandonment, freedom and availability? Do hearts yearn for the things of this world while they are unable to obtain them? The heart reflects the degree of knowledge and unity. Faith is increased by the practice of guarding oneself carefully before Allah, for one realizes that this is necessary.

It is impossible for one to judge whether someone has acted out of faith or not, because one does not know the changes that another's heart has undergone. All that can be said is that a person's actions at a particular moment are a reflection of his inner state, be it one of weakness, confusion and hate, or strength, direction and love. A person's actions are the reflection of a moment and may very well be different in the future. Criticism should be made only of a person's actions and not of the person himself, because these actions stem from intentions which may be good or bad.

Though the central action in The Family of 'Imran is the Battle of Uhud, the chapter also contains the essential Qur'anic narrative about the Prophet Jesus. Most of this narrative describes the miraculous circumstances of his birth, and the miracles which he wrought to jolt the people who had been mesmerized by an elite rabbinical group.

The Battle of Uhud had a shock effect upon the young Muslim community, which had become over-confident after their stunning victory at Badr. The loss to the Meccan force, headed by Abu Sufyan, provided the motive for the revelation of many verses which gave subtle indications and knowledge about the battle of the higher and lower aspects of man's self. In Arabic the term for this battle is *jihad*. Now *jihad* is usually translated as 'holy war', but it actually means 'struggle in the way of truth'. The Prophet Muhammad explained that the physical battle in defense of the truth is the minor *jihad*. The major jihad, he said, was the struggle against the lower self. Thus, enclosed within the verses dealing with the Battle of Uhud is direct knowledge about the battle against the lower self.

From the Qur'an's instruction about the self in The Family of 'Imran we can grasp the meaning of the verse, 'Certainly the self bids to trouble' (12: 53). We come to understand the self more deeply, as the locus of human experience, in its dual capacity for good and evil. In our time, particularly in the world culture of techno-usury, the fog of 'civilized' illusion is thick. Many people recognize the ills, but few see the remedies. Even though unsullied goodness is rarely seen, so many personifications of evil have passed across the world stage that logic dictates the necessity for the emergence of a higher level of the self. If this were not the case, humanity would no longer exist, for the side of the scale against life would have tipped over long ago.

'The signs of Allah that We recite to you in truth' are continually flashing before us, but if we cannot stand the light of truth, then we are blinded by the after-images of worldly existence, and we merely grope about without direction. Stunned by the demands and desires of the lower self, unable to transform them by a higher degree of awareness, we completely miss the greatest miracle of all: existence itself. Our stale perception, however, constantly clouds this wondrous, continuously unfolding miracle; 'They have hearts that do not understand and eyes that do not perceive' (7: 179).

Hypocrisy (*nifaa*) is the key malady, because it is the one which the ego-self (*nafs*) relishes. In hypocrisy, the lower self finds an excuse and an escape; the hypocrite hides in the tunnel of his own fabrication. Hypocrisy is very elusive and difficult to trap at the source. Even some of the best among the believers were afflicted by hypocrisy in the Battle of Uhud. We must never

consider ourselves above others, 'None feel secure from Allah's plan except the people who are at a loss' (7: 99). Allah's plan and decree is to awaken us to Allah.

Reality tests and afflicts us in order to purify and awaken us. During the most difficult times we have indeed the best opportunity to reflect upon the reasons why conflicts occur. During ordinary and uneventful times habits are in control, and little knowledge is gained. During times of trouble and change, however, we are forced to submit, and from that submission we learn the meaning behind events and gain wisdom and subtle knowledge.

The Family of `Imran is a more detailed description of the events recounted in the chapter The Time (*Al-'Asr*). 'Throughout time, man is at a loss, except those who believe, act correctly, exhort to truth and exhort to patience' (103: 1-3). The key theme is man's hypocrisy and confusion. An object can be seen most clearly when it has sharply defined shadows; that which is transparent is not seen at all in dim light. The greater the shadow, the more obvious the profile. The shadow of hypocrisy loomed long and large across the scene of events in the early days of Islam, and could therefore be spotted by the believers.

The subtle hypocrisies that we harbor were present in the early community of Medina. Just as those who doubted and did not manifest true trust in Allah existed in the early community, so they exist within the communities of Muslims today. The way of Allah does not change. If it were to change, there would be chaos and constant disruption in creation. If it were to change, there would be no relationship or continuity between past, present and future.

The Family of `Imran describes the central pivot upon which Islam, civilization, culture and humanity in general rest; the community of believers in Allah. The worth of a community can be judged by its objective and orientation. The primary desire and goal of the first Muslim community was the knowledge of unity. The community of early Islam in Medina not only experienced the knowledge of unity, but lived it; and many were transformed by it. They were 'unifiers' (*muwahhidin*) in the true sense. They believed that the source of the entire creation is One and that the whole of creation is sustained by, and reverts back to, the One Lord. They recognized the Attributes of Allah as they were manifested in the realm of experiential reality.

After their faith and understanding of the oneness of Reality, the second force which connected the Muslims of Medina was their trust in the Prophet Muhammad and their love and loyalty to him. By their love and faith in Allah, inner transformation occurred. By love of, and obedience to, the prophetic teaching, the community and society of believers emerged.

`Ali was asked what guarding oneself before Allah meant, and he replied, 'It means that you obey Him, and you do not disobey.' To obey Allah is, as we said earlier, to obey the physical as well as the spiritual laws. The dominating spiritual law is that the individual must evolve spiritually. The physical laws are easier to discern – if we abuse nature we will pay the price. `Ali continued by saying, 'That you remember Him and do not forget, and that you are grateful to Him and do not deny Him'.

This state of gratitude is the state of the content heart. The more content the heart is, the more access it has to higher knowledge. A person whose heart is empty and free, a condition which occurs after gratitude, is more likely to succeed in attaining knowledge. Allah has said in the Qur'an that those in gratitude will increase. This process can be rationally observed and tested. Action and reaction are equal and opposite, and therefore the person whose heart is in a state of gratitude must find success and fulfillment to the extent of that gratitude, whether worldly or spiritual. We all know of unjust people who are very successful in the worldly sense, and this success may seem unfair to us at first glance, but if we look deeply, we will discover that they are grateful for what they have. Allah's laws apply to everyone. Though they may be the greatest rascals, their gratitude brings them worldly success. But this success comes with limitations, the most important being that it is restricted to this realm of existence alone, whereas the purpose of creation is to evolve and be ready for life hereafter.

Allah has created out of love and in order to be known. The knowledge of Allah begins by understanding with the intellect the relationship between cause and effect. This knowledge is called unity of action. Then comes the unity of attributes. Here one perceives the attributes in all their diversity and multiplicity, yet knowing that they emanate from but one source. For this knowledge, both head and heart are needed. Lastly comes the knowledge of the unity of essence which can be attained only through a pure heart which is transformed by selfless actions and constant awareness and remembrance of Allah, the ultimate Guide and Merciful One.

eBooks By Zahra Publications

General eBooks on Islam

Living Islam – East and West

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Ageless and universal wisdom set against the backdrop of a changing world: application of this knowledge to one's own life is most appropriate.

The Elements of Islam

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

An introduction to Islam through an overview of the universality and light of the prophetic message.

The Qur'an & Its Teachings

Journey of the Universe as Expounded in the Qur'an

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The Qur'an traces the journey of all creation, seeing the physical, biological and geological voyage of life as paralleled by the inner spiritual evolution of woman/man.

Keys to the Qur'an: Volume 1: Commentary on Surah Al-Fatiha and Surah Al-Baqarah

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The first two chapters of the Qur'an give guidance regarding inner and outer struggle. Emphasis is on understanding key Qur'anic terms.

Keys to the Qur'an: Volume 2: Commentary on Surah Ale-'Imran

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A commentary on the third chapter of the Qur'an, the family of 'Imran which includes the story of Mary, mother of 'Isa (Jesus).

Keys to the Qur'an: Volume 3: Commentary on Surah Yasin

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Commentary on chapter *Yasin*. This is traditionally read over the dead person: if we want to know the meaning of life, we have to learn about death.

Keys to the Qur'an: Volume 4: Commentary on Surahs Al-`Ankabut, Al-Rahman, Al-Waqi`ah and Al-Mulk

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The Shaykh uncovers inner meanings, roots and subtleties of the Qur'anic Arabic terminology in these four selected Surahs.

Keys to the Qur'an: Volume 5: Commentary on Juz' `Amma

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Insight into the last *Juz'* of Qur'an, with the objective of exploring the deeper meanings of Qur'anic Revelations.

The Essential Message of the Qur'an

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Teachings from the Qur'an such as purpose of creation, Attributes of the Creator, nature of human beings, decrees governing the laws of the universe, life and death.

The Qur'an in Islam: Its Impact & Influence on the Life of Muslims

`Allamah Sayyid M. H. Tabataba`i

`Allamah Sayyid M. H. Tabataba`i shows in this gem how the Qur'an contains the fundamental roots of Islam and the proof of prophethood as the Word of God.

The Qur'anic Prescription for Life

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Understanding the Qur'an is made accessible with easy reference to key issues concerning life and the path of Islam.

The Story of Creation in the Qur'an

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

An exposition of the Qur'anic verses relating to the nature of physical phenomena, including the origins of the universe, the nature of light, matter, space and time, and the evolution of biological and sentient beings.

Sufism & Islamic Psychology and Philosophy

Beginning's End

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This is a contemporary outlook on Sufi sciences of self knowledge, exposing the challenge of our modern lifestyle that is out of balance.

Cosmology of the Self

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Islamic teachings of *Tawhīd* (Unity) with insights into the human self: understanding the inner landscape is essential foundation for progress on the path of knowledge.

Decree and Destiny (Original and a Revised Version)

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A lucid exposition of the extensive body of Islamic thought on the issue of free will and determinism.

Happiness in Life and After Death – An Islamic Sufi View

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This book offers revelations and spiritual teachings that map a basic path towards wholesome living without forgetting death: cultivating a constant awareness of one's dual nature.

Leaves from a Sufi Journal

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A unique collection of articles presenting an outstanding introduction to the areas of Sufism and original Islamic teachings.

The Elements of Sufism

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Sufism is the heart of Islam. This introduction describes its origins, practices, historical background and its spread throughout the world.

The Garden of Meaning

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This book is about two gardens, one visible and fragrant, the other less visible but eternal. The beauty and harmony of both gardens are explicated in this magisterial volume, linking outer to inner, physics to metaphysics, self to cosmos.

The Journey of the Self

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

After introducing the basic model of the self, there follows a simple yet complete outline of the self's emergence, development, sustenance, and growth toward its highest potential.

The Sufi Way to Self-Unfoldment

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Unfolding inner meanings of the Islamic ritual practices towards the intended ultimate purpose to live a fearless and honorable life, with no darkness, ignorance or abuse.

Witnessing Perfection

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Delves into the universal question of Deity and the purpose of life. Durable contentment is a result of 'perfected vision'.

Practices & Teachings of Islam

Calling Allah by His Most Beautiful Names

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Attributes or Qualities resonate from their Majestic and Beautiful Higher Realm into the heart of the active seeker, and through it back into the world.

Fasting in Islam

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This is a comprehensive guide to fasting in all its aspects, with a description of fasting in different faith traditions, its spiritual benefits, rules and regulations.

Prophetic Traditions in Islam: On the Authority of the Family of the Prophet

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Offers a comprehensive selection of Islamic teachings arranged according to topics dealing with belief and worship, moral, social and spiritual values.

The Wisdom (Hikam) of Ibn `Ata'allah: Translation and Commentary

Translation & Commentary by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

These aphorisms of Ibn `Ata'Allah, a Shadhili Shaykh, reveal the breadth and depth of an enlightened being who reflects divine unity and inner transformation through worship.

The Inner Meanings of Worship in Islam: A Personal Selection of Guidance for the Wayfarer

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Guidance for those who journey along this path, from the Qur'an, the Prophet's traditions, narrations from the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and seminal works from among the *Ahl al-Tasawwuf* of all schools of thought.

The Lantern of The Path

Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq

Each one of the ninety-nine chapter of this book is a threshold to the next, guiding the reader through the broad spectrum of ageless wisdom, like a lantern along the path of reality.

The Pilgrimage of Islam

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This is a specialized book on spiritual journeying, offering the sincere seeker keys to inner transformation.

The Sayings & Wisdom of Imam `Ali

Compiled By: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Translated By: Asadullah ad-Dhaakir Yate

Carefully translated into modern English, a selection of this great man's sayings gathered together from authentic and reliable sources.

Transformative Worship in Islam: Experiencing Perfection

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri with Muna H. Bilgrami

This book uniquely bridges the traditional practices and beliefs, culture and language of Islam with the transformative spiritual states described by the Sufis and Gnostics.

Talks, Interviews & Courses

Ask Course ONE: The Sufi Map of the Self

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This workbook explores the entire cosmology of the self through time, and maps the evolution of the self from before birth through life, death and beyond.

Ask Course TWO: The Prophetic Way of Life

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This workbook explores how the code of ethics that govern religious practice and the Prophetic ways are in fact transformational tools to enlightened awakening.

Friday Discourses: Volume 1

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The Shaykh addresses many topics that influence Muslims at the core of what it means to be a Muslim in today's global village.

Songs of Iman on the Roads of Pakistan

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A series of talks given on the divergence between 'faith' and 'unbelief' during a tour of the country in 1982 which becomes a reflection of the condition occurring in the rest of the world today.

The Connection Between the Absolute and the Relative

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This is a 1990 conversation with Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri, in which he talks about wide-ranging topics on Islam and presents it as the archetypal, universal, Adamic path that began when humanity rose in consciousness to recognize duality and began its journey from the relative back to Absolute Unity.

The Spiritual Path: A Conversation with Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri On His Life, Thought and Work

Professor Ali A. Allawi

In this wide-ranging conversation with Professor Ali Allawi, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri talks about his life story and the spiritual journey that he embarked on and the path he has been on ever since.

Poetry, Aphorisms & Inspirational

101 Helpful Illusions

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Everything in creation has a purpose relevant to ultimate spiritual Truth. This book highlights natural veils to be transcended by disciplined courage, wisdom and insight.

Beyond Windows

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Offering moving and profound insights of compassion and spirituality through these anthologies of connections between slave self and Eternal Lord.

Bursts of Silence

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Inspired aphorisms provide keys to doors of inner knowledge, as well as antidotes to distraction and confusion.

Pointers to Presence

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A collection of aphorisms providing insights into consciousness and are pointers to spiritual awakening.

Ripples of Light

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Inspired aphorisms which become remedies for hearts that seek the truth.

Sound Waves

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A collection of aphorisms that help us reflect and discover the intricate connection between self and soul.

Sublime Gems: Selected Teachings of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani

Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani

Spiritual nourishment extracted from Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani's existing works.

Autobiography

Son of Karbala

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The atmosphere of an Iraq in transition is brought to life and used as a backdrop for the Shaykh's own personal quest for self-discovery and spiritual truth.

Health Sciences and Islamic History

Health Sciences in Early Islam – Volumes 1 & 2

Collected Papers By: Sami K. Hamarneh

Edited By: Munawar A. Anees

Foreword By: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Health Sciences in Early Islam is a pioneering study of Islamic medicine that opens up new chapters of knowledge in the history of the healing sciences. This two volume work covers the development of Islamic medicine between the 6th and 12th centuries A.D.