

PROPHETIC TRADITIONS IN ISLAM

On the Authority of the Family of the Prophet



COMPILED BY

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri



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Book Description

TRANSLATED BY

Asadullah adh-Dhakir Yate

THIS COLLECTION OF verses from the Qur'an and traditions from the Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) and the Imams is unique for it makes available for the first time in English a comprehensive selection of Islamic teachings arranged according to topics that deal with belief and worship as well as the social and spiritual values which Islam upholds.

Prophetic Traditions in Islam – On the Authority of the Family of the Prophet contains a wealth of wisdom, knowledge and inspiration for all who seek to know more about Islam and the process of refining one's character and conduct. Taking as its source the gnosis and science transmitted by Allah on the tongue of the Prophet Muhammad, it presents fundamentals of the legal parameters and spiritual truths of Islam.

From [this book] one can learn a great deal about the Islamic conception of God and prophecy, of worship and virtue, of the character of the Shi'ah Imams and even of early Islamic history. Furthermore, one can also learn much about the human state, its origin and end, and the meaning of terrestrial existence and our role here on earth. The book therefore addresses itself not only to the lovers of the Ahl al-Bayt and all Muslims, but in fact to all human beings, whatever their background may be, as long as they are attracted to the world of the Spirit and are in quest of meaning in their transient lives here on earth.

- from the foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr

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

Editor's Note

While it is customary to include invocations of peace and blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad and his family whenever his name is mentioned, these have not been included in the text for reasons of space. Nonetheless such prayers are implicit in the mention of his name and we trust the reader will naturally invoke Allah's blessings upon the Prophet and his family.

Any commentary on the traditions appears in italics.

It may be of interest to the reader to note from the full title of one of the primary sources of *hadith* for this collection – *al-Muhajjah al-Bayda' fi Tahdhib al-Ihya'* by Muhammad ibn al-Murtada al-Fayd al-Kashani – that it owes much to Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali's opus *Ihya' `Ulum al-Din*. Al-Kashani based his own work on the format of the *Ihya'*, confirming its contents from the perspective of the Ahl al-Bayt. This means that while the chains of transmission (*asanid*) may differ the *hadith* are largely the same or similar in content.

NOTE ON THE E-BOOK VERSIONS OF THIS BOOK

Some eReaders do not support diacritics, and also to keep things simple, diacritics that appear in the print version of this book are not used in this eBook.

Preface

PRAISE BELONGS TO Allah, Who has taught us what we did not know, and praises and blessings be upon the seal of the prophets and messengers, Muhammad, the Messenger from the Lord of the Worlds, on his blessed and fortunate family, and on the chosen of his companions and whoever follows him and his correct path of behavior until the final day.

I present this book as a concise manual containing the fundamentals of the legal parameters and spiritual truths of Islam – taking as its source the gnosis and science transmitted by Allah on the tongue of Muhammad; I present it to whoever desires the path of success and prosperity in this world and in the world to come after death.

In this age, man is experiencing tremendously rapid shifts in culture, and is subject to much emotional and psychological disturbance. This results in a hurried, even frenzied mode of existence, a feeling of contraction in the breast and submission to the superficial and material. The best way out of this crisis is to return to a religion which contains a legal framework, a method of worship and a system of correct behavior and morality. I have sought to make this work concise in an attempt to be of the utmost benefit to both the scholar and the ordinary man.

I have laid particular emphasis on knowledge of the self, directives for the guidance of the intellect and refinement of behavior, and on those things which increase courtesy and unify one's intentions towards Allah. Also emphasized are those actions which enable the sincere to renounce the love of this world, to adorn themselves with praiseworthy qualities and to achieve illumination of the heart – for whoever knows his self knows his Lord. Through Islam, the slave recognizes and adopts good manners, lives his life according to the prophetic pattern, travels the path of worship and affirms His Oneness.

I ask Allah that He show us His mercy and His unbounded infinite justice; that He enable us to have mastery over the desires of the self and whatever leads it astray; that He crown our efforts with excellence and prosperity in this world and make them bear fruit in the next world, for

‘whoever is blind in this world, will also be blind in the hereafter, and more erring from the way’ [Qur’an 17:72].

Praise and thanks belong to the Sole God, the One, the Unique, the One on Whom all depend, Who neither begets nor is begotten, and none is like unto Him. I would like to thank sincerely all my brother believers who encouraged me and took part in the production of this work, in particular Hujjat al-Islam wa-al-Muslimin Doctor Sayyid Muhammad Bahr al-Ulum, for his encouragement and direction and his concern for the accuracy and correctness of the text. I would also like to express my gratitude to Doctor Jasim Husayn for his suggestions, for planning the form of the index and for researching many of the traditions. Similarly, I owe special thanks to Muhyi al-Din al-Khatib, who brought together and checked the book – my thanks together with my prayers for his health and blessings in this world and the next. Finally, I would mention all those brothers and sisters who participated in the production of this book.

I would like to conclude by begging forgiveness of the reader for any mistakes or shortcomings in this work, and I ask of the Creator that He grant me, my parents and all believing men and women, forgiveness. I seek forgiveness of Allah, there being no other god but Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the One Who gives and maintains life, and I turn to Him in repentance. There is no success except by Allah, the Sublime, the Mighty, and I ask for praise and blessings on our lord Muhammad and on his Family.

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Preface to the English Edition

OUR *DIN* is based on preoccupation with the knowledge of Allah, following the Prophet's path. As Muslims we are privileged to have the glorious Qur'an and the life and conduct of the Prophet Muhammad. While the Qur'an is an ever-fresh source of inspiration, the Prophetic way was its human manifestation.

In this volume I have endeavored to select what I considered most appropriate and useful from the Prophetic teachings, as narrated by the Prophet's household. Brevity and the transformative potential of these *ahadith* have been the guidelines. The source books of these teachings are easily available as they continue to be published as part of the Ahl al-Bayt traditions and teachings. However, there was a need for an easily accessible collection in English, and this we have undertaken to make available for the seeker.

Thanks are due to Muna Bilgrami for preparing this English edition for publication and to Luqman Ali Ansari for his help in checking the translation.

I request the reader to ponder upon these gems and to see how the divinely revealed truth manifests in the existential and transactional life.

SFH

November 1999

Foreword

In the Name of God, the Infinitely Good, the All-Merciful

THE COLLECTION OF the sayings or traditions of the Blessed Prophet of Islam, known as *Hadith*, constitutes an ocean of wisdom and is the source, along with the Noble Qur'an, of all that is authentically Islamic. These *Hadiths* were transmitted by numerous sources and assembled by Sunni and Shi'ah scholars of *Hadith*, or *muhaddithun*, with great care and deliberation into collections of which a number gained canonical authority in the Sunni as well as the Shi'ah world. Although the content of most of the *ahadith* or traditions is the same in both worlds, the Shi'ahs emphasize the significance of the family of God's last messenger or Ahl al-Bayt in the transmission of the words of the Blessed Prophet over all other lines. The Ithna 'Ashari collections contain, moreover, sayings of the twelve Shi'ah Imams as well, although a clear distinction is made between prophetic *hadith* (*hadith nabawi*) and the sayings of an Imam (*hadith walawi*).

To understand why these collections such as al-Kulayni's *al-Kafi* contain also the sayings of the Imams, it must be understood that according to Twelve-Imam Shi'ah doctrine, the Muhammadan Light (*al-nur al-Muhammadi*) also flows in the being of the twelve Imams, starting with 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and ending with the Mahdi – upon all of whom be peace. Therefore, although the revelation came to an end with the Blessed Prophet Muhammad – upon whom be blessings and peace – who is therefore called the 'seal of the prophets', the spiritual and esoteric function of the Blessed Prophet (*walayah*) continued within the being of the Imams who were also inheritors of the Blessed Prophet's religious authority without, of course, possessing his prophetic power and function. The sayings of the Imams, therefore, are seen by Shi'ahs as an extension of those of the Blessed Prophet and in many cases a commentary upon them, and they play a basic role in their religious life coming in importance only after the Noble Qur'an and prophetic *Hadith*. Moreover, many of the sayings of the Imams have also played a very important role in the Sunni world. The *Nahj al-Balaghah*, containing the sermons and sayings of 'Ali, is in fact as well known in the Sunni world as in the Shi'ah. It might be said that the sayings of the Imams belong to the whole of the Islamic world, providing a vast treasury of wisdom dealing with both the

outer and inner life of Muslims as well as with metaphysics, cosmology, psychology and eschatology.

Until now, however, much of this treasury has remained hidden from those not acquainted with Arabic and Persian and certainly from those whose knowledge of Islam is based only on sources in the English language. The present work is the first to deal with major aspects of Islam by drawing from this treasury along with the Noble Qur'an and prophetic *Hadith*. It provides a view of Islam on the basis of the vision of those attached to the Ahl al-Bayt and also as seen by the Ahl al-Bayt. The author, who hails from a well-known family of religious scholars from Iraq and Iran and who, having spent many years in the West, is well acquainted with present day spiritual needs of Western people and the best manner to present Islam to them, has chosen, judiciously, verses from the Noble Qur'an as well as traditions of the Blessed Prophets and the Imams to illustrate various aspects of Islam.

The book is organized in such a manner as to lead from a discussion of Islamic doctrines concerning God, the Blessed Prophet and the Imams, to the ritual aspects of the religion and finally to the spiritual struggle to refine one's character through the acquisition of virtue and removal of blameworthy traits. This last section concerns itself with issues that are very similar to those dealt with by the Sufis and reveals the close nexus between the inner dimension of Shi'ism and Sufism. But above all the book reveals the universality of the teachings of the Imams which belong not only to all Muslims, but, like the spiritual message of the Noble Qur'an and prophetic *Hadith*, to the whole of humanity.

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri is to be commended for his conceiving of the structure of the work and the selection of verses and sayings to illustrate each subject, as is the translator for rendering an original Arabic that is often condensed and abstruse into simple and clear English. The result is a work which introduces the English speaking reader for the first time to the world of the wisdom left by the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, The Noble Qur'an and much of the prophetic *Hadith* are of course already available in English, but even in their case, the author has brought a new dimension to bear upon the subject by revealing how those basic sources of Islam are seen by the Ahl al-Bayt and how the sayings of the Imams are integrated into their message.

From the pages that follow one can learn a great deal about the Islamic conception of God and prophecy, of worship and virtue, of the character of the Shi`ah Imams and even of early Islamic history. Furthermore, one can also learn much about the human state, its origin and end, and the meaning of terrestrial existence and our role here on earth. The book therefore addresses itself not only to the lovers of the Ahl al-Bayt and all Muslims, but in fact to all human beings, whatever their background may be, as long as they are attracted to the world of the Spirit and are in quest of meaning in their transient lives here on earth. Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri's book is therefore an important addition to Islamic literature as well as to religious literature in general in the English language. We congratulate him on the fruits of his efforts and pray that this book will bring about a better understanding of Islam in the West and also draw many hearts and minds closer to God.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr

Bethesda, Maryland

Rajab 1420 AH.

November 1999

Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

PRAISE BELONGS TO Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, and may His peace and blessings be upon the Master of all creatures, Muhammad, prince of messengers, and on his family, the elite and the fortunate, leaders of guidance and lamps in the darkness, and on his companions, and whoever follows him in the performance of good deeds to the Last Day.

I present to the reader in general, and to those wishing to drink from the purest sources of prophetic tradition in particular, a new book of distinctive character and methodology. The reader and the researcher may take from it material to quench their thirst for knowledge of their faith, and may find in it guidance for this life, so fraught with deceit, destructive ideas and conditions hostile to noble conduct.

The source material and background of this work

The prophetic pattern of behavior, known as the *sunnah*, is one of the two major sources of Islam – the other being the Qur'an. All the laws necessary for the establishment of human society are derived from these two sources, and indeed, the whole pattern of exemplary human behavior may be obtained from them. Much importance has been attached to the recording of prophetic traditions (*ahadith*, sing. *hadith*¹) and to presenting them in such a way as to benefit the *ummah* (the Muslim community) whether it be in the domain of politics, law, social behavior or moral conduct.

The first person to attach importance to the collecting of prophetic traditions was Imam `Ali ibn Abi Talib. Adhafir al-Sirafi has described how he once saw al-Hakam ibn `Uyaynah question Abu Ja`far Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Baqir. The latter was feeling averse to him and they fell to arguing over something. Abu Ja`far then sent his son to go and get the book of `Ali. He took out a great rolled up scroll and opened it, examining it until he had found the explanation of the

¹ The term *hadith* is nevertheless more commonly used in English to denote the plural.

matter in dispute. Abu Ja`far then said, 'This is the hand of `Ali and the dictation of the Messenger of Allah.' Then he went up to al-Hakam, saying, 'Go with Miqdad and transmit it as you wish to the right and the left, for by Allah, you will certainly not find more sure knowledge amongst people which has been revealed through the words of Jibril (Gabriel).'

The first person actually to write down the *hadith* was the Prophet's servant, Abu Rafi`, who later kept company with the Commander of the Faithful and became his treasurer and secretary in Kufa. He wrote the book *al-Sunan wa-al Ahkam wa-al-Qadaya*, ascribing his chain of transmission to the Commander of the Faithful in the various chapters on prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, purification, tax and legal affairs.²

The leading scholars of *hadith* made great efforts to collect and arrange the prophetic traditions; those belonging to the school of the Family of the Prophet were very painstaking in this field, relying on the twelve Imams of guidance as a valid source of narration because of their relation to the Messenger. Other sources of transmission were subject to the investigation of their content and chain of narration (*isnad*): if the chain was sound or trustworthy, then it was accepted, and if not, then it was rejected.

The result of the importance attached to the collection of *hadith* is that various valuable sources of material sprang up from the different Islamic schools of thought; these sources are relied upon by all scholars and researchers, who use them and refer to them whenever necessary.

In the Twelve Imam school, four books are of note:

– *al-Kafi*, by Muhammad Ya`qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi Abu Ja`far, d. 329 AH. 16,019 *hadith* attributed to the Family of the Prophet are mentioned in it.

– *Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih*, by Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn Babawayh al-Qummi Abu Ja`far, d. 381 AH. This book contains 9,044 *hadith* on law and prophetic behavior narrated by the Family of the Prophet.

² See *Ta`sis al-Shi`ah li-`Ulum al-Islam*, by al-Seyyid Hasan al-Sadi, pp. 279-80.

– *Tahdhib al-Ahkam*, by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn `Ali al-Tusi Abu Ja`far, d. 460 AH. 3,590 *hadith* are contained in this work, arranged into 393 chapters.

– *al-Istibsar fi Ahadith al-Ahkam*, by Abu Ja`far al-Tusi, who has been mentioned above. In it he has collected 5,511 *hadith* and arranged them into chapters on jurisprudence, worship and commercial transactions.

Thereafter came the leading scholars of the Twelve Imam school in the tenth century. Those specializing in the science of *hadith* wrote books which contained all the *hadith* narrated by the Family of the Prophet, including those recorded in the four books mentioned above. They became an important source in the field of *hadith* science and are listed below:

– *Bihar al-Anwar bi al-Ahadith al-Marwiyyah `an al-Nabi wa-al-A`immah min Alihi al-Athar*, by Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad ibn al-Maqsud `Ali al-Majlisi, d. 1110 AH. This book has been printed in 26 volumes.

– *al-Wafi*, by Muhammad ibn Murtada ibn Mahmud, known as Muhsin al-Fayd al-Kashani. This has been reprinted several times and consists of 14 volumes which contain the fundamental principles and ramifications of the prophetic law.

– *Mustadrak Wasa'il al-Shi`ah*, by al-Husayn ibn Muhammad al-Nuri Abu Muhammad, d. 1320 AH. Printed in several volumes, this work expands considerably on *Wasa'il al-Shi`ah*.

To these we may add the collections of *hadith* from the scholars of the four schools (all of which have been printed several times and been subject to scholarly commentary), the most eminent among them being the following:

– *al-Muwatta'*, by Malik ibn Anas al-Asbahi, the Imam of the Maliki school, d. 179 AH.

– *al-Masnad*, by Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal Abu `Abd Allah, d. 241 AH, from whose name the Hanbali school is derived.

– *Sahih al-Bukhari*, by Muhammad ibn Isma`il ibn Ibrahim Abu `Abd Allah al-Bukhari, d. 256 AH.

– *Sahih Muslim*, by Muslim ibn al-Hujaj ibn Muslim al-Qushayri Abu al-Hasan, d. 261 AH.

A number of voluminous works on the same subject appeared after these four books, the most significant being the following:

– *al-Mustadrak*, by Muhammad ibn `Abd Allah al-Naysapuri, known as Ibn al-Biya`d. 405 AH.

– *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, by Ahmad ibn al-Husayn ibn `Ali al-Bayhaqi Abu Bakr, d. 458 AH.

– *Kanz al-`Ummal*, by `Ala' al-Din `Ali ibn Husam al-Din, known as al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, d. 975 AH.

Yet the scholars of *hadith* have not restricted their efforts to mere recording, classification and arranging of the *hadith*, but have also produced work on a wide range of social, moral and philosophical topics, the more important of which are the following:

– *Tanbih al-Khatir wa Nuzhat al-Nazir*, by Abu al-Husayn Daram ibn Abi al-Fawaris `Isa al-Harithi, d. 650 AH.

– *Irshad al-Qulub*, by al-Hasan ibn Abi al-Hasan al-Daylami, a leading scholar of the seventh century AH. This book is arranged into 55 chapters on philosophy, wisdom, instruction and counsel.

– *Makarim al-Akhlaq*, by Abu Mansur al-Hasan ibn al-Shaykh Amin al-Din Abi `Ali al-Fadl ibn al-Hasan al-Tabrasi, one of the eminent scholars of the sixth century AH.

It is against this fertile background of literature that we may return to the present book, '*Prophetic Traditions – On the Authority of the Family of the Prophet.*' On reading this work we realize that the compiler has followed those who preceded him, believing it to be the best. He has given the texts of the *hadith* and while he had investigated the depth of meaning contained

therein he has not involved himself in lengthy commentary or explanation, which might have led to obscurity and obstructed the goal of such a book. This goal may be defined as an awareness of the relevance of the *hadith*; application of the *hadith* helps man towards the perfection of his humanity and faith, and to bear the responsibility of the prophetic message entrusted to him by Allah. In his capacity as vicegerent on earth, man must aim to establish a just society founded on mutual love and respect.

This work is characterized by four qualities: firstly, it contains collections of *hadith* pertaining to belief and to the formation of character. Particular emphasis on the part of the compiler is given to the education of man; by applying the teachings of the Messenger and the Imams of guidance, a person may become a healthy member of society and thereby establish the social order desired by Allah – for perfection engenders perfection, and someone who lacks something is in no position to give that thing to others. Secondly, in making his choice of *hadith*, which describe the various qualities of human perfection, the compiler has relied mostly upon those *hadith* which are connected to a practical application in life; moreover, his arrangement of the *hadith* according to subject matter lends support to his educational designs and constructive purpose. Thirdly, the author has lived in the West and has understood its negative aspects. Realizing that Western society is undergoing a moral and educational crisis, he has discovered that all spiritual values have been lost to the alluring culture of materialism, hollow in substance but filled with pomp and marked by a misleading superficial gloss. He is able, by his choice of *hadith*, to connect with the spirit of western man, who is only resisting the guidance of Islam because of his distrust and confusion. Finally, the enemies of Islam have tried to distort the truth of Islam and its call to a perfect social order by exaggerating certain of its aspects in order to alienate the ignorant – it is to such people that this work presents a sane and comprehensible outline of Islam, valid for this and all ages.

In addition to the above-mentioned characteristics, this work is distinguished by the fact that the *hadith* in the book awaken a spirit of earnestness, and encourage the reader to action. Moreover, the trustworthiness of the material is confirmed by the chains of transmission which accompany the *hadith* (not included in the text for lack of space, but available in the references). When we examine the sources relied upon by the compiler in his selection of *hadith*, we find that the majority are from among the most important and trustworthy collections. The authors of these

collections are from an elite of scholars and jurists, who are deemed to be completely acceptable according to the principles of veracity and authenticity; it is on these people that the researchers rely when producing their studies in this field. These sources are also readily available being recently – or still – in print.

Thus in assessing this work we recognize that it contains an important body of wisdom which is of a real and relevant nature when relied upon and applied to one's own situation. We hope that it will be an effective means of reaching the compiler's goal.

A few notes on the compiler are necessary to throw light on his character and the influences which caused him to immerse himself in the current of spirituality – a current which has become a distinguishing feature of all aspects of his life.

Shaykh Fadhlalla is the son of the late Shaykh Ahmad ibn al-Shaykh Muhammad Husayn ibn al-Shaykh Zayn al-`Abideen. His family, renowned for its knowledge and excellence since the end of the twelfth century AH, has been associated with the holy town of Karbala in Iraq, and other areas of Iraq, India and Iran.

The first of this family to achieve renown was Hujjat al-Islam al-Shaykh Zayn al-`Abideen ibn Muslim al-Mazandarani al-Ha'iri, who was born in Mazandaran in 1229 AH., where he studied with the outstanding scholars of his birthplace. In 1250 AH he moved to Iraq, alternating between Karbala and Najaf, where he studied in the religious institutions and learned from the leading scholars. He settled in Karbala in 1262 AH where he spent his time teaching, receiving people, leading the prayers and taking decisions on matters of jurisprudence³, achieving his greatest renown as an eminent jurist, Imam of the shrine of Imam Husayn, and as a guide for the people in their religious affairs. The late Hujjat al-Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin has described him as 'Shaykh of the jurists and legislators, and unique among religious guides'.⁴

³ My reference: *A`yan al-Shi`ah*, by al-Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin, p. 168/7, and *al-Dhari`ah ila Tasanif al-Shi`ah*, Aghabozorg al-Tehrani, 92/12.

⁴ Al-Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin, op. cit. p. 167/7.

He left several works for posterity, among them *Sharh Shara`i` al-Islam*, also known as *Zinat al-`Ibad fi al-Fiqh*, commented on by other scholars of repute, like Shaykh `Abd al-Karim Ha`iri Yazdi; *Dakhirat al-Ma`ad fi Takalif al-`Ibad*, a legal manual for his followers, arranged in the form of questions and answers and translated and printed many times in Arabic, Persian and Urdu; commentaries on other scholarly texts, including *Hawashi `ala Kitab Masalik al-Iffham Sharh Shara`i` al-Ahkam*, by al-Shahid al-Thani, d. 965 AH; and a book on the Principles of Religion.

Shaykh Zayn al-`Abideen sent Mulla Qadir Husayn to Bombay in 1873 CE in order to strengthen Islam and organize the Shi`ahs there. He played a leading role in the separation of the Khwaja Twelver Shi`ahs and the Isma`ilis in 1901 CE. He also sent Sayyid `Abd al-Husayn al-Mar`ashi Shushtari to Zanzibar in 1885 CE, to spread Islam and serve the Shi`ite communities there. Shaykh Zayn al-`Abideen died in 1309 AH in Karbala and was buried near the Bab al-Hajat graveyard, in the shrine of Imam Husayn. To this day he is accorded special distinction by his descendants.

After his death, his eldest son Shaykh Muhammad Husayn took his place as leader of the Friday prayers and teacher in the religious institutions of Karbala. His followers came from those areas in which his father had been known, and people would refer to him when seeking legal decisions. The late Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin described him as ‘a knowledgeable scholar, a man of excellence, a friend and a leader after the death of his father’⁵.

Shaykh Muhammad Husayn remained in Karbala until his death in 1340 AH, whereupon his eldest son, Shaykh Ahmad – and the father of the compiler of this book – took his place and became known for his excellence, knowledge, piety and scrupulousness. He became the prayer leader in the same place that both his father and grandfather had led the congregation, namely, in the shrine of Imam Husayn.

As a growing number of believers would consult him in matters of religion, and would follow his legal decisions, he made a commentary on the ‘Manual of Laws’ written by his father,

⁵ ibid. p. 26/6.

explaining any points of difference and elucidating those particularly complicated points of law which demanded new legal judgments. He was also interested in the sciences of astronomy, chemistry and astrology, and founded a thriving library in Karbala for the works of such sciences and other branches of knowledge. He died there in 1957 at the age of 80, and was buried in accordance with his will in a *wadi* which has since become the public cemetery of Karbala, rather than with the rest of his forbears within the compound of the shrine.

The late Shaykh Ahmad left six sons, of whom the youngest is Shaykh Fadhlalla. He chose to study modern academic subjects, thus departing from the family tradition of studying in religious institutions. Having attained the position of the second most distinguished pupil of sciences in Iraq for his grade, he left to study at a university in England, after which he became an engineer in the Iraq Petroleum Company in 1960. In 1966 he moved to Beirut where he opened an industrial and petroleum consultancy, and practiced in this professional capacity until 1975, the year of the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon. Because of the conditions governing his sphere of work, he began to move between Europe, America and Asia. During this period he was able to pursue his quest for self-knowledge and to rediscover the relevance the *Din al-Islam* to our much confused present age, until, by the late seventies, he broke off his commercial and engineering activities to devote himself unreservedly to uncovering and sharing the essential and transformative teachings of Islam . He thus embarked upon a period of intense activity, spending of his wealth and energy to enable seekers to discover Islam and to live it, and to this end he established a religious educational trust and publishing house. The trust ran a full-time residential school, opened for Westerners to learn Islam, as well as a correspondence course. While travelling and teaching extensively in Europe and America, he also travelled in the East, working with devoted people in Pakistan and India to establish schools, clinics and orphanages for the Muslims.

Many of his talks have been turned into books , in addition to which he has written several others, both in English and Arabic, among them: five commentaries on selected *surahs* of the Qur'an , *Beginning's End*, *The Journey of the Universe* , *Decree and Destiny*, *The Journey of the Self*, *Elements of Islam* , *Elements of Sufism* and others.

After this short description of the life and work of Shaykh Fadhlalla al-Haeri⁶, it should not be forgotten that works such as this have a profound influence on the formation of a Muslim's character, by strengthening and preparing him for his role in propagating the beliefs and behavior demanded by Islam – a role which must be undertaken by every Muslim who is seriously concerned with the state of his religion and the *Ummah* of Muslims.

In conclusion, I would like to call upon Allah to grant success to all who are working for the establishment of Islam and who are striving with sincerity and devotion to make its noble aims a reality.

Muhammad al-Sayyid Ali Bahr al-`Ulum

London

15 Sha`ban 1405 AH

6 May 1985

⁶ The name al-Haeri (al-Ha'iri) refers to the area surrounding the grave of Imam Husayn in Karbala.

Our System of Belief

Belief in Allah

The Way of Oneness

Allah, may He be exalted, says in the Qur'an:

Say: He, Allah is One. Allah is He upon Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And none is like unto Him. (112:1-4)

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. The Beneficent, the Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. (1:1-5)

Allah is He besides Whom there is no god, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting, by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge except what He pleases. His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great. (2:255)

Say: O followers of the Book! Come to a fair agreement between us and you, that we shall not serve any but Allah and [that] we shall not associate aught with Him, and [that] some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah. (3:64)

And your god is one God! There is no god but He; He is the Beneficent the Merciful. (2:163)

If there had been in them [the Heavens and the earth] any gods except Allah, they would both have certainly been in a state of disorder. (21:22)

...They were enjoined that they should serve one God only, there is no god but He. (9:31)

Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with iniquity, those are the ones who shall have security and they are the ones who go aright. (6:82)

Is there any doubt about Allah, the Maker of the Heavens and the earth? (14:10)

^^^

The Messenger of Allah has said, ‘Truly Allah resembles no “thing” and no “thing” resembles Him; everything which enters one’s imagination concerning Him is a misinterpretation.’⁷

It is related from Imam `Ali that he heard the Messenger of Allah say, ‘Truly Allah has said, “For one to whom I have granted belief in My Oneness, there is no other reward than the Garden”.’⁸

‘Whoever says “there is no god except Allah” with sincere belief will enter the garden, his sincerity being that “no god except Allah” safeguards him from what Allah has forbidden.’⁹

Imam `Ali has narrated that the Messenger of Allah said, ‘Whoever dies and has not associated any partners whatsoever with Allah will enter Paradise – be his deeds good or bad.’¹⁰ *Needless to say, this cannot be interpreted as a license to perform bad deeds, as long as one believes in the Oneness of God. Rather, it indicates, on the one hand, that sincerity of belief implies and produces a fundamental orientation towards the good; and, on the other hand, that all human actions are grasped as relativities in the dazzling light of the Divine Oneness.*

It is related by al-Sadiq that the Messenger of Allah has said, ‘The best of worship is the phrase “there is no god except Allah”.’¹¹

It is also related by him that Gabriel came to the Messenger of Allah and said, ‘O Muhammad, whoever of your *ummah* says “there is no god except Allah, Him alone, Him alone, Him alone”, will be content.’¹²

⁷ *al-Kashani, al-Muhajjah al-Bayda*, I,219.

⁸ al-Saduq, *al-Tawhid*, 18-30.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*

It is related on the authority of Imam `Ali that the Messenger of Allah said, ‘Allah has said that, “the words ‘no god except Allah’ are My fortress: whoever enters it gains protection from My torment”.’¹³

A Bedouin (a nomadic tribesman of the desert) came to the Prophet and said, ‘O Messenger, teach me something amazing in the realm of knowledge!’ The Messenger replied, ‘What have you achieved regarding the basis of knowledge that you ask about the amazing within this realm?’ The Bedouin then asked, ‘What is the basis of knowledge, O Messenger of Allah?’ He replied, ‘That you know Allah in truth.’ The Bedouin asked, ‘What is true knowledge of Allah?’ The Messenger replied, ‘That you know Him without making a companion with other-than-Him, without making a likeness, without setting up rivals with Him; that you know He is unique, the One, the Outward, the Inward, the First, the Last; that there is none comparable to Him and there is no equal to Him: this is true knowledge of Him.’¹⁴

Imam `Ali has said, ‘Praise belongs to Allah, Who cannot be perceived by touch nor by any investigation by means of the physical faculties. He cannot be understood by the five senses, and imagination cannot grasp Him. Anything sensed, felt or touched by the hand is created (and is therefore not the Creator). Allah is Sublime, the Powerful: whatever is desired by Him comes into existence.’¹⁵

Imam `Ali was asked, ‘How do you know your Lord?’ He replied, ‘By the way in which the action one intends is cancelled, and by the way one’s designs and resolutions are not realized. When I endeavor to do something, He comes between me and my endeavor; when I have

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ al-Tabarsi, *Mishkat al-Anwar*, 10.

¹⁵ *al-Tawhid*, 60.

decided to do something, the Decree and the Destiny act against my decision; thus have I understood that the organizer of my affairs is other than me.’¹⁶

He also said in his last instructions to his son, Hasan, ‘Know, my son, that if there were a partner with your Lord, then surely His messengers would have come to you and you would have seen the signs of His dominion and power; you would thus have come to know His actions and His attributes. He is the only God, just as He has described Himself; there is no rival to Him in His dominion, and He will never be caused to perish.’¹⁷

A Bedouin came up to Imam `Ali and asked him if he thought that Allah is one. ‘O Bedouin,’ he replied, ‘the statement that Allah is one has four divisions [of meaning]: two of them may not be applied to Allah, may He be exalted, and two are valid. As for the two which are not applicable, the first is when “one” refers to the question of number – and this is not permissible since that which has no second cannot be considered in terms of number. You realize, then, that he who says, “He is the third in the trinity”, is committing *kufr* (i.e. covering up reality). The second is the statement, “He is One from amongst mankind”, meaning one of a kind, or genre. This is not permissible, as it is tantamount to *tashbih* (likening Him to His creation) – may our Lord be glorified above this. As for the two which are valid when applied to Him; first there is the statement “He is One”, meaning that He has no likeness amongst things (in creation) – such is our Lord; the second is the statement “He is Oneness in concept”, meaning that He cannot be divided in existence, nor by the intellect or imagination – thus is our Lord.’¹⁸

`Ali, on whom be peace, delivered a discourse one day after the afternoon prayer: ‘Praise belongs to Allah, Who will never die and Whose wonders will never cease. Each day He is active in creation, producing amazing manifestations, which were non-existent previously. Praise belongs to Allah, Who does not give birth to anyone lest there be a partner in His glory; Who has not been born Himself lest He be (like all creation which was born into this world) doomed to die. Praise belongs to Him Whom the imagination of man cannot perceive, but rather can arrive

¹⁶ *al-Muhajjah al-Bayda*, II, 208.

¹⁷ Imam `Ali, *Nahj al-Balaghah*, III, 559; *al-Muhajjah al-Bayda*, I, 213.

¹⁸ Al-Saduq, *al-Khisal*, I, 2.

only at a shadow-like comparison of Him, and Whom vision cannot contain. He has no ending to His beginning nor limits to His remoteness; He has been preceded by neither time nor space, and is unaffected by increase or decrease; He cannot be described in terms of place, matter or space. When the prophets were asked about Him, they did not describe Him by ascribing limits or deficiencies to Him, but rather described Him according to His actions, and guided men to Him by His signs.’¹⁹

Islam

Allah, may He be exalted, says in His Book of wisdom, the Qur’an:

Surely the [true] religion with Allah is Islam. (3:19)

And whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him. (3:85)

This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion .(5:3)

^^^

A man of the Khath’am tribe asked the Messenger of Allah what was considered best in Islam. ‘Faith in Islam’, the Messenger replied, ‘followed by respect for one’s family, enjoining good and forbidding evil.’ When the man asked him what Allah hated most, he said, ‘Associating partners with Allah, breaking off relations with one’s family, enjoining evil and forbidding good.’²⁰

The Messenger of Allah said, ‘Truly Allah will help this religion by means of a corrupt man.’²¹ And elsewhere, Two qualities are not to be found in a Muslim: miserliness and bad behaviour.’²²

¹⁹ *al-Tawhid*, 31-32.

²⁰ *Mishkat al-Anwar*, 49.

²¹ al-Kashani, *al-Haq’iq fi Mahasin al-Akhlaq*, 51.

²² *al-Khisal*, I, 75.

Talking about Islam, Imam `Ali said, ‘Islam is surrender, and surrender is certainty; certainty is belief, and belief is affirmation, affirmation is execution [of one’s duty], and execution is virtuous action.’²³

‘There is no honor higher than Islam and no character more noble than that which has *taqwa* (respect and fear of Allah in one’s actions), and there is no refuge more secure than scrupulousness and self-restraint.’²⁴

‘Truly this religion of ours is the religion of Allah: He has chosen it for Himself, fashioned it for Himself and granted it to the best of His creation; He has set up the Pillars of its support on His love; He has brought other religions low by His power; He has abased all other faiths by His sublimity, humiliated its enemies by His nobility, and has defeated those who challenged it by His victorious strength. He has destroyed the pillars of falsehood by erecting the pillars of His religion, and has given the thirsty to drink from His fountain.’²⁵

‘Praise belongs to Allah, Who has laid down the laws of Islam and has made application of these laws easy for the one who takes them as the source of his life’s actions; Who has raised high its pillars over those who would try to overcome it, and has made it a place of security for whoever adheres to it, a place of peace for whoever enters it, a proof for whoever speaks by it, a witness for whoever disputes with another by it, a light for whoever seeks light by it, an understanding for whoever uses his intellect, a meaning for whoever reflects, a sign for whoever seeks to perceive, knowledge for whoever intends an action, a lesson for whoever takes counsel and acts by it, and a release (from the torment of the fire) for whoever gives in charity.’²⁶

‘Thus He has sent Muhammad, may peace be upon him, in truth to bring His slaves from worshipping idols towards worshipping Him, and from obeying Satan to obeying Him; he has

²³ *Nahj al-Balaghah*, IV, 685 & 744.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*, II, 453; I, 253; II, 318.

²⁶ *ibid.*

explained these matters and has established the laws by means of the Qur'an so that the slaves may know their Lord if they had been ignorant of Him, that they may establish themselves firmly in Him if they had been denying Him, and to strengthen their faith if they had been rejecting Him. He has manifested His glory to them through His Book and has shown them a measure of His power, yet without their having seen Him. He has struck fear into them by His force.'²⁷

Imam al-Baqir has said, 'Islam has been established on five principles: prayer, purification through giving away one's wealth, pilgrimage, fasting and governance by the laws of Allah.' He was then asked which of these things was the best. He replied, 'Governance by the laws of Allah. It is the key to all things, and the governor is the guide to them.' Then he was asked what followed next, so he said, 'Prayer, for truly the Messenger of Allah has said, "Prayer is the pillar of your religion", Next in order of excellence is the giving of one's wealth, since he [the Messenger] has mentioned these two matters together, and has mentioned prayer first. The Messenger of Allah has said, "One's wrong actions are effaced through the giving away of one's wealth".'

Imam al-Baqir proceeded to the next principle, in order of excellence: 'Pilgrimage to the house [of Allah, i.e. the Ka`bah] is incumbent upon men for the sake of Allah, upon everyone who is able to undertake the journey; and whoever disbelieves, then surely Allah is Self-sufficient, above any need of the worlds.' He was then asked, 'How is it that fasting is the last of all these matters?' He replied, 'Prayer, the giving away of wealth, pilgrimage and governance by Islam cannot be replaced by anything if they are not put into practice; yet fasting, if missed, shortened or excused by your travelling, is made up for by a corresponding number of days. Moreover, this deficiency is corrected through giving away charity to the needy, in which case you have nothing else to make up; nothing, however, can make up for the other four practices.'²⁸

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ al-Kulyani, *al-Kafi*, II, 19 & 46.

Sulayman ibn Khalid related that Imam al-Baqir said, ‘Shall I not teach you about the root and branches of Islam and the peak and crown of the matter? The root is prayer and its branches are purification by giving away one’s wealth; the crown of the affair is *jihad* (struggle undertaken in serving Allah by whatever action).’²⁹

It is related from Imam al-Sadiq that the Messenger of Allah said, ‘Islam is naked: its clothes are modesty and its beauty is dignity in manners; its nobility is good actions and its foundation is prudence. Everything possesses a foundation and the foundation of Islam is love of me and of my family.’³⁰

Faith

Allah has said in the Qur’an:

Surely [as for] those who believe and do good, they shall have gardens [of Paradise].
(85:11)

Allah will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in high degrees. (58:11)

Except such as repent and believe and do good, these shall enter the Garden. (19:60)

And they say: we believe in Allah and in the Apostle and we obey. (24:47)

Allah, there is no god but He; and upon Allah, then, let the believers rely. (64:13)

[As for] those who believe and do good, a good final state will be theirs and a goodly return. (13:29)

Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers and who keep aloof from what is vain. (23:1-3).

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ *ibid.*

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The Messenger of Allah has said, ‘Faith is a compact undertaken by the heart, an expression of this on the tongue and the putting into action of the fundamentals [of Islam].’³¹

‘The fruits of faith are three: loving for the sake of Allah, hating for the sake of Allah, and the feeling of modesty in front of Allah, may He be exalted.’³²

‘There are three things which, if practised, perfect the qualities of one’s faith: first, if one is content, one is not led to wrong action and falsehood; second, if one becomes angry, then his anger does not divert him from the truth; and third, if one has the power, one does not take over that which does not belong to him.’³³

The Messenger has said, ‘Above the highest station of faith is a special rank, and whoever has obtained this has obtained the goal, and is victorious. It is the rank of those whose inner thoughts are only directed to righteousness, so they are not worried if these thoughts become known and they do not fear punishment if they remain hidden.’³⁴

‘Whoever is made happy by his good actions and is saddened by his bad ones is a believer.’³⁵

‘There are over seventy gates to faith: the largest is the witnessing that there is no god except Allah and the smallest is the removing of an obstacle from the path.’³⁶ The Messenger of Allah was asked, ‘Which people possess the best faith?’ He replied, ‘Those whose hands are the most generous.’³⁷

³¹ al-`Inathi, *Adab al-Nafs*, II, 151-152.

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ *al-Khisal*, I, 47.

³⁶ *Mishkat al-Anwar*, 40.

³⁷ *ibid.*

‘Whoever assists the poor man and deals fairly with people of his own accord, is truly a believer.’³⁸

It is related on the authority of Imam `Ali that the Messenger of Allah said, ‘Whoever washes himself in the prescribed manner before prayer, prays correctly, purifies himself by paying out part of his wealth, controls his anger and his tongue, seeks forgiveness for his wrong actions and gives advice to his family, has perfected true faith, and the gates of heaven are open to him.’³⁹

And Imam `Ali said, ‘Faith is based on four pillars: patience, certainty, striving to perform what one believes in and justice.’⁴⁰

‘The best thing that one may request of Allah is belief in Him and His Messenger, and striving in His way, for this is the height of Islam.’⁴¹

‘A man’s faith indicates his good actions, and his good actions indicate faith, and through faith knowledge prospers.’⁴²

Imam `Ali has said, ‘Faith is that you prefer the truth (though it harms you) to the lie which benefits you; truth is that there is no excess in your speech in respect to your actions (that you say what you do not do), and that you fear and respect Allah when reporting the speech of others.’⁴³

Describing the qualities of the believer, Imam `Ali has said, ‘A believer’s serenity is in his face, his sadness is in his heart, the most expansive thing is his heart and the most humble his self (his

³⁸ *al-Khisal*, I, 47.

³⁹ *al-Tabarsi*, 39.

⁴⁰ *Nahj*, IV, 663; I, 265; II, 334.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *Nahj*, IV, 735 & 762.

personality) . He dislikes high rank and hates reputation. Great is his concern for the hereafter, and he avoids idle talk about others; he occupies his time fruitfully, is grateful to Allah and is extremely patient. He immerses himself in reflection, does not manifest his poverty to people, is of easy disposition, and flexible in nature – yet his character is more solid than a rock and more humble than a slave’s.’⁴⁴

Al-Sadiq was asked by Sama`ah about the difference between Islam and *Iman*. He replied, ‘Islam is part of *Iman* but *Iman* is not part of Islam. Islam is witnessing that there is no god except Allah and affirming that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; by it women have been married and inheritances apportioned in the proper manner; most people act in accordance with the outer aspects of it. *Iman* is guidance, and the establishment of Islamic qualities in the heart, and it manifests itself in one’s actions. *Iman* ranks higher than Islam. *Iman* shares with Islam in the outward, but Islam has no share with *Iman* in what is within, even though they have common qualities.’⁴⁵

In another *hadith*, Imam al-Sadiq explains the previous *hadith* in the following way: ‘The slave is a Muslim before he is a *mu’min* (one who has faith), and is not a *mu’min* until he is a Muslim. Islam comes before *Iman*; thus if a slave commits one of the punishable offences or one of the lesser offences which Allah has forbidden, he has left *Iman* and can no longer be described as having true faith, although the word Islam may still be applied to him. If he turns to Allah for forgiveness he returns to the safety of *Iman*, Only rebellious argument and claiming something is forbidden when it is allowed, or claiming something is allowed when it is forbidden, brings him outside the pale of both Islam and *Iman*.’⁴⁶

In describing the qualities of the believer, al-Sadiq has also said, ‘A believer should possess eight qualities; he must be honorable in the face of trials, patient when afflicted, thankful when

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ al-Kulayni, II, 25 & 47.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

things are going easy for him and content with what Allah has given him of His bounty; he should not oppress his enemies nor burden his friends; he himself feels tired but others feel rested as a result of his exertion. Surely knowledge is the close companion of the believer, kindness is his minister, intellect the general of his armies, gentleness his brother and good behaviour towards others his father.’⁴⁷

Fear of Allah and carefulness in one’s behavior (*taqwa*)

Allah, may He be praised, says in His Book:

Be careful of [your duty to] Allah with the care which is due to Him. (3:102)

Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good [to others]. (16:90)

Surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful [of his duty]. (49:93)

Those among them who do good and guard [against evil] shall have a great reward. (3:172)

And those who are careful of [their duty to] their Lord shall be conveyed in companies. (39:73)

And be careful of [your duty to] Allah and know that Allah is with those who guard [against evil]. (2:194)

Surely Allah loves those who are careful [of their duty]. (9:4)

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Commenting on Allah’s words, ‘Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good,’ the Messenger of Allah has said, ‘Allah has gathered the meaning of *taqwa* (fearful awareness of Allah in one’s every action) in this verse.’ He has also said, ‘Have *taqwa* of Allah,

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

for in it lies all goodness.’ Elsewhere he said, ‘Whoever desires to be the most noble of men let him have *taqwa* of Allah.’⁴⁸

‘If you carry out the obligatory duties of Islam, then you will be amongst those with the most *taqwa*.’⁴⁹

While advising Abu Dharr, the Messenger said, ‘Be very careful to undertake your actions with *taqwa*, for surely there is not loss in actions undertaken therewith. How could there be loss in something which is acceptable in the eyes of Allah? This is based on Allah’s verse: “Surely He accepts that which comes from the *muttaqin* (those with *taqwa*)”.’⁵⁰

‘Superiority in knowledge is more beloved of Allah, may He be exalted, than superiority in worship, and the most superior thing in your religion is carefulness in your behavior.’⁵¹

Imam `Ali has said, ‘There is no honor more worthy than Islam, nothing more noble than *taqwa* and no fortress stronger than carefulness in one’s behavior.’⁵²

It has been related from Imam `Ali that he said, ‘Whoever turns in prayer to our *qiblah* [direction of the Ka`bah] in Makkah, eats the animals we have sacrificed, believes in our Prophet, bears witness like us with the words, “There is no god except Allah,” and enters our houses, we apply the laws of the Qur’an and Islam to him. No one is superior to another except by his *taqwa*. Truly those with *taqwa* will have the best reward and the most pleasant ending with Allah.’⁵³

⁴⁸ *Mishkat*, 45-46.

⁴⁹ *ibid*.

⁵⁰ *al-Ashtari*, II, 62.

⁵¹ *al-Khisal*, I, 4.

⁵² *al-Ashtari*, II, 39.

⁵³ *Mishkat*, 44-47.

Imam `Ali was asked to describe the nature of this world. He replied, ‘For the allowed things that you enjoy there is a reckoning, and for the forbidden things punishment. If you saw death and its inevitability you would find consolation for loss in this world and its vain delights. Whoever is careful of his duty to Allah with the care due to Him, Allah will grant intimacy with Him without familiarity, riches without wealth, and strength without authority.’⁵⁴

‘Those with *taqwa* may be recognized by certain characteristics: they are true in speech and trustworthy, they keep to their agreements, they lack pride or miserliness, they maintain the ties of kinship, are merciful with the weak, keep little company with women, strive to be kind and courteous and strive to acquire knowledge which will bring them closer to Allah. Such people will be well received and will have a most pleasing abode in the end.’⁵⁵

Commenting on the meaning of *taqwa*, Imam `Ali has said, ‘Truly *taqwa* of Allah is a medicine for your hearts’ illness, and sight for the blindness of your hearts, a cure for your bodies’ sickness and a correction of whatever is wrong in your breasts. It is a purification of your character, a making clear of the dimness of your sight; it is a safety from your agitation and fear, and light for the blackness of your gloom.’⁵⁶

Describing the people of *taqwa*, he has said, ‘Those of *taqwa* possess qualities of excellence: their speech is correctness, their garment is economy, their gait is humility; they lower their eyes before what Allah has forbidden and they listen to knowledge which is useful to them.’⁵⁷

‘I counsel the slaves of Allah to have *taqwa* of Allah, for it is a lasting provision and a sure means of reaching their destination in the hereafter. The most aware and the most respected of men have called others [to Him] by it; He has caused His call to be heard and those who were attentive have gained paradise.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Nahj*, I, 275; II, 440-452; I, 273.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

‘O slaves of Allah! Truly *taqwa* of Allah protects the friend of Allah from His fire, and has placed such a fear of Him in their hearts that they remain awake at night in worship, and are thirsty for the next world because they have abandoned this world.’⁵⁸

Imam `Ali mentions the verse from the Qur’an, ‘Be careful of [your duty to] Allah with the care which is due to Him’ [3:102].⁵⁹

‘The closest description of the man of *taqwa* is scrupulousness: he combines kindness with knowledge, words with deeds and rarely commits a wrong action, his heart is humble, he is content in himself, he eats little food; he takes the easiest path in his affairs and is zealous in matters of his religion, his desires have been extinguished and his anger stilled. Good is expected of him and he himself is protected from evil. If he is negligent, he is recorded as not being among those who remember Allah; if he is amongst those who remember Allah, he is not counted amongst those who are negligent. He forgives those who cause him harm and gives to him who withholds; he re-establishes relations with those who have broken with him. He is far from their corruption but gentle in his speech to them. He is absent from their bad actions and present for their kind actions. He accepts goodness from them and turns away from evil; he is dignified in the face of calamity and patient when faced with their plotting. He is thankful when things go easily.’⁶⁰

Imam al-Sadiq said, ‘The most scrupulous of men are those who stop short of doubtful things.’⁶¹

Trust in Allah

Allah, may He be praised, says in His Book:

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ *al-Khisal*, I, 16.

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Our System of Belief – Belief in Allah

And on Allah should the reliant rely. (14:21)

And whoever trusts in Allah, then surely Allah is Mighty, Wise. (8:49)

And whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him. (65:3)

Surely Allah loves those who trust. (3:159)

And on Allah should you rely if you are believers. (5:23)

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The Messenger of Allah has said, ‘If you were to trust in Allah with the trust which is due to Him, He would surely provide for you as He provides for the birds.’⁶²

‘If a man relies solely on Allah, Allah will guarantee him all his provision and in such a way as he had not expected; but if a man devotes himself to the world, then Allah will make him rely solely on it.’⁶³

It has been related that when the Messenger’s family was afflicted by poverty he would say, ‘Stand up for the prayer,’ adding, ‘Our Lord has commanded us to do this, with the words: “And so enjoin upon thy family worship and be constant therein. We do not ask thee for provision: We provide for thee. And the (success of) hereafter is for *taqwa*” [20:132].’⁶⁴

It is related from al-Sadiq that he [the Prophet] would not say of anything that had happened, ‘If only something else had happened!’ He would not feel regret for anything that had happened, for he had complete trust in the decree of Allah.⁶⁵

‘Whoever wishes to be among those of the greatest *taqwa*, then let him place his trust in Allah.’⁶⁶

⁶² al-Ashtari, I, 222.

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Mishkat*, 17-18.

‘Whoever finds happiness in being amongst the strongest, then let him rely on Allah and whoever finds happiness being amongst the noblest of men, then let him fear Allah in his actions; whoever is happy to be the richest of men, then let him be surer of what is in the hand of Allah than that which is in his own hand.’⁶⁷

It is related from Imam al-Baqir that some riders met the Messenger of Allah on one of his journeys. He asked them who they were. They replied, ‘We are believers, O Messenger of Allah.’ He said, ‘What is the reality of your belief?’ They replied, ‘Contentment with the decree of Allah, delegating our affairs to Allah and submitting to what He has ordained.’ He said, ‘Those of knowledge and wisdom are close to the sagacity of the prophets: if you are truthful, then you do not build anything that you are not going to live in, and do not amass what you do not need for immediate consumption, and fear in your actions Him to Whom you are returning.’⁶⁸

Imam `Ali has said, ‘Faith is based on four pillars: trust in Allah, the handing over of one’s affairs to Allah, contentment with the decree of Allah and submitting to what Allah has ordained.’⁶⁹

‘A slave will not taste true faith until he realizes that whatever happens to him could not have passed him by, that whatever passes him by could not have happened to him, and that it is Allah Who causes harm or benefit to man.’⁷⁰

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *al-Haqa’iq*, 188-189.

Imam al-Sadiq was asked, ‘There exists nothing but that it has a terminus, so what is the terminal point of trust?’ He replied, ‘Certainty.’ He was then asked what the terminal point of certainty was, and he replied, ‘That one does not fear anything besides Allah.’⁷¹

Al-Sadiq said, ‘Whoever has been given three things will not be denied three things: whoever has been given prayer, will be given the answer to his prayer; whoever has been given thanks, will be given increase; and whoever has been given trust in Allah will be given sufficiency. Have you not read in the Book of Allah, “Whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him” [65:3]; Allah then says, “If you are grateful I would certainly give you more” [14:7]; and “Call upon Me, I will answer you” [40:60].’⁷²

‘Truly riches and nobility are in movement but when they find the place of trust in Allah they come to rest there.’⁷³

‘Ali ibn Suwayd asked Imam al-Kazim about Allah’s words in the Qur’an: ‘And whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him,’ [65:3] and he replied, ‘Trust in Allah is of different degrees. There is that of trusting in Allah in all your affairs, so that whatever He does with you, you are content with Him: realize that He will not fail you in respect of the good and abundance in life and realize that control over these things is with Him; trust, therefore, in Allah by placing these matters in His hands; have confidence in Him concerning these and other matters.’⁷⁴

Reflection

Allah commands man to reflect and meditate in many places in the Qur’an, and has praised those who reflect:

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² al-Kulayni, II, 65.

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

Those who reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth; Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! (3:191)

Do they not then meditate on the Qur'an? And if it were from any other than Allah, they would have found in it many a discrepancy. (4:52)

And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all from Himself, most surely there are signs in this for people who reflect. (45:13)

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The Messenger of Allah has said, 'Reflect upon the bounties of Allah, not upon the essence of Allah, for you will never be able to measure the extent of His power.'⁷⁵

'Give to your eyes their just portion of worship.' When asked what he meant, he replied, 'Looking at the Qur'an, reflecting upon it and believing in its wonders.'⁷⁶

Imam `Ali said, 'Awaken your heart by reflection, and rise from your bed in worship at night, and trust in Allah as your Lord.'⁷⁷

'Reflection leads one to goodness and action in accordance with it.'⁷⁸

'All goodness is gathered together in three qualities: observance, silence and speech. Observance without contemplation is negligence, silence without reflection is carelessness, and speech without remembrance of Allah is foolish talk.'⁷⁹

⁷⁵ al-Haqa'iq, 306.

⁷⁶ al-Ashtari, 306.

⁷⁷ al-Kulayni, II, 54-55.

⁷⁸ ibid.

⁷⁹ *Mishkat*, 37.

‘Wonder at man, who observes with a ball of fat [the eye], who talks with a lump of flesh [the tongue], who listens by means of a bone [the inner ear] and breathes through a hole in the flesh [the nose].’⁸⁰

Al-Sadiq said, ‘The best worship is to devote oneself to reflection upon Allah and His power.’⁸¹

Al-Rida said, ‘True worship is not [to be found merely] in much prayer and fasting but rather in reflection on Allah’s design.’⁸²

Sincerity and Devotion

Allah says in His Book:

Except those who repent and hold fast to Allah and are sincere in their religion to Allah; these are with the believers. (4:146)

Now, surely, sincere obedience is due to Allah [alone]. (39:3)

And they were not enjoined anything except that they should serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience upright. (98:5)

He is the Living, there is no god but He, therefore call on Him, being sincere to Him in obedience. (40:65)

Then see how was the end of those warned, except the servants of Allah, the purified ones. (37:73-4)

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⁸⁰ *Nahj* IV, 660.

⁸¹ al-Kulayni, II, 16 & 55.

⁸² *ibid.*

The Messenger of Allah said, ‘O Mankind! There is Allah and there is Satan, truth and falsehood, guidance and going astray, the right path and the wrong path, life in this world and that of the hereafter, the reward of good actions and bad: the good actions belong to Allah and the bad to Satan, may the curse of Allah be upon him.’⁸³

‘Whoever wishes to know what is in store for him with Allah surely must understand what is Allah’s.’⁸⁴

‘Surely for every truth there is a reality. A servant [of Allah] cannot attain the reality of sincerity until he dislikes people praising him for something which Allah has done.’⁸⁵

Imam `Ali said, ‘Contentment is his who devotes his worship and prayer sincerely to Allah and whose heart is not occupied by what the eye sees, and who does not forget Allah because of what his ears hear, and whose breast [i.e. heart] is not troubled by what is given to others.’⁸⁶

Al-Sadiq was asked the meaning of Allah’s words, ‘[In order] that He may try you – which of you is best in deeds,’ [67:2] and he answered, ‘This does not mean the greatest number of deeds, but rather the most correct deeds: truly, correctness comes from fear of Allah and a good and sincere intention. Perseverance in a deed until one finishes it is the hardest of deeds. A sincere deed is one for which you want no one’s praise but Allah’s; indeed, the intention is better than the deed itself, rather, the intention is a deed.’ Then he read Allah’s words, ‘Say: everyone acts according to his manner,’ [17:84] and explained it as meaning, ‘according to his intention.’⁸⁷

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Mishkat*, I I.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁶ al-Kulayni, II, 16.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

Justice

Allah has said in His words of revelation:

Allah commands you that when you judge between people you judge with justice. (4:58)

Say: my Lord has enjoined justice. (7:29)

Certainly We sent Our apostles with clear arguments, and sent down with them the Book and the Balance that men may conduct themselves with equity. (57:25)

And the heaven, He raised it high, and He made the Balance. (55:7)

Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good and the giving to kinsfolk. (16:90)

Allah bears witness that there is no god but He, and [so do] the angels and those possessed of knowledge, maintaining His creation with justice.(3:18)

And call to witness two men of justice from among you, and give them right testimony for Allah. (65:2)

Two just persons among you shall judge. (5:95)

^^^

The Messenger of Allah said, ‘An hour’s justice is better than seventy years’ worship, rising at night, and fasting by day; and a moment of tyranny in governance is worse than sixty years of crime.’⁸⁸

‘Whoever accompanies a tyrant in order that he may help him – while he is aware that he is a tyrant – has left the fold of Islam.’⁸⁹

⁸⁸ al-Ashtari, II, 60.

⁸⁹ al-`Amili, `Izz al-Din, *Nur al-Haqiqah*, 132.

‘Whoever gives of his wealth to support the poor and is just with people of his own accord, is a true believer.’⁹⁰

It has been related by al-Sajjad that the Messenger of Allah said in his last speech, ‘Contentment is the lot of those who have refined their behavior, purified their character, cleansed their hearts, who possess beauty in their speech and appearance, are of good reputation, who give away the excess of their wealth, who refrain from superfluous speech and who are just with people of their own accord.’⁹¹

Imam `Ali has related that Allah said in a *hadith qudsi* (a *hadith* directly from Allah via the tongue of His Prophet), ‘My anger is greatest towards men who oppress those who are without helpers. If anyone takes away the wealth of others, Allah will take away his wealth.’⁹²

Imam `Ali said, ‘Truly upright citizens prosper under a just leader [Imam], and perish under a corrupt one.’⁹³

He also said, at the moment when he returned to the Muslims what `Uthman had taken for himself while he was caliph, ‘By Allah, if I had found that he had married women [meaning by virtue of his authority over the wealth of the Muslims] and taken possession of female slaves, I would have returned them, for surely injustice there is amplitude. If a man finds justice constricting, then oppression will be even more constricting for him.’⁹⁴

When Imam `Ali handed over the governorship of Egypt to Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, he commanded him to deal justly with the citizens, saying, Treat them kindly, be gracious to them, extend to them the benefits of your position and be fair in the way you regard different ranks of

⁹⁰ al-Kulayni, II, 144-147.

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² al-`Amili, *Nur al-Haqiqah*, 132.

⁹³ al-Hakim, *al-Hayat*, II, 296.

⁹⁴ *ibid.* II, 198 (from *Nahj*, III, 543).

men, so that the powerful do not desire you to commit injustice in their favor and the weak do not despair of your justice towards them; truly Allah will ask your servants about the smallest and greatest of your deeds, about the deeds made in public and those hidden from view. Indeed, if He punishes, then you were surely worthy of the punishment, and if He forgives, then He is the most generous.’⁹⁵

Mu`awiyah ibn Sufyan asked Khalid ibn Mu`ammar why he loved `Ali ibn Abi Talib. He replied, ‘I love him for three qualities: for his compassion when he becomes angry, for his truthfulness when he speaks, and for his justice when he is generous.’⁹⁶

Imam `Ali found a coat of mail belonging to him in the hands of a Christian, so he brought him before the judge, Shurayh, in order to bring a legal action against him. The Imam declared that he had neither sold it nor given it away as a gift. The judge then asked the Christian to explain himself. He replied, ‘This coat of mail belongs to none other than myself,’ Then he [the judge] asked Imam `Ali if he had any other evidence. He replied that he had not and, therefore, the judge decided in favor of the Christian. The Christian walked away for a while, then he returned and said, ‘Truly I bear witness that these laws are from the prophets! Imam `Ali takes me before his own judge – and the judge reaches a verdict against him.’⁹⁷

It is related by Imam al-Sadiq that Imam `Ali said, ‘Surely if a man deals fairly with people of his own accord, then Allah will increase his share of honor and power.’⁹⁸

Imam al-Sadiq said, ‘Three kinds of men will stay closest to Allah on the day of Resurrection until the reckoning has been completed: the man who, when angry, does not allow his power to drive him to oppress those under him; the man who walks between two others and does not take

⁹⁵ ibid.

⁹⁶ al-Ashatari, II, 75.

⁹⁷ al-Hakim, II, 216.

⁹⁸ al-Kulayni, II, 72 & 148.

sides with either of them in the slightest degree; and the man who speaks the truth, whether it is for him or against him.’⁹⁹

‘Justice is sweeter than water to a thirsty man; there is nothing more expansive than justice even when it is practiced only to a small degree.’¹⁰⁰

‘Act out of fear and respect Allah and be just, for surely you yourself criticize those who are not.’¹⁰¹

Having a good opinion of Allah

It is related that Imam al-Baqir said, ‘We have found in the book of `Ali ibn Abi Talib that the Messenger of Allah said from the pulpit, “By Him Who is the only God! A believer is not given the best in this world or the next unless he has a good opinion of Allah and places his hope in Him, shows good behavior and refrains from talking behind the backs of the believers. By Allah, Who is the only God, whoever has a good opinion [of Allah], Allah does not punish after he has turned to Him for forgiveness, unless he has a bad opinion of Allah and does not place his hope in Allah, behaves badly and talks ill of the believers. B y Allah, there is no god but Him! If a believing servant has a good opinion of Allah, then Allah is as the opinion of the believing servant. This is because Allah is generous, and all good is in His hand; He would feel embarrassed if a believing servant had thought well of Him and placed his hope in Him and He were to go against this good opinion and hope in Him. Therefore have a good opinion of Allah and maintain your desire for Him”.’¹⁰²

It is related that the Prophet said, ‘Allah has slaves who spend according to the size of their property and He has slaves who spend in accordance with their good opinion of Him.’¹⁰³

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ al-`Inathi, II, 17.

The Messenger of Allah said, ‘You must not die without a good opinion of Allah, for truly a good opinion of Allah is the price of entering the Garden.’¹⁰⁴

The Messenger asked Allah not to take the reckoning of his *ummah*’s deeds in the presence of the angels, prophets, or the rest of the nations, so that their faults may not be revealed to them; rather, he asked that He take them to account in such a way that only Allah and himself may see their mistakes. Allah then replied, ‘O My beloved, I am more compassionate with My slaves than you: if you are loath to have their mistakes revealed to others, then I am loath to expose them even to you, and so I call them to reckoning Myself, so that no one may see their shortcomings other than Me.’¹⁰⁵

From amongst the sayings dealing with having a good opinion of Allah is one related by Ibn Mas`ud about a woman from the *Ansar* who came to the Prophet with ten children and said, ‘O Prophet of Allah, these, my children, are yours – take them to fight for Allah.’ The Prophet took them into his closest company and led them into battle. The woman asked after them until nine of them had died as martyrs. Those that had passed away gave her more happiness than those who were still alive, until there remained the youngest: he deviated from the path of good and tended towards wrong action. When he fell ill his mother cared for him and treated him with tenderness and sympathy. He said to her, ‘O mother, do you not see, if I had behaved badly towards you, or if I had overstepped my rights with regard to you and there was a fire burning in front of you, would you throw me into it?’ ‘No,’ she replied. Then he said, ‘Then do you not realize that the One Who has created me is even more compassionate than the one who has given birth to me?’ Thereupon he died, and the Prophet said, ‘Be filled with joy that your son has been forgiven because of his good opinion of his Lord.’¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ *Mishkat*, 36.

¹⁰⁵ al-Shirazi, 57.

¹⁰⁶ al-`Inathi, II, 12.

Al-Sadiq said, ‘A good opinion of Allah is desiring nothing but Allah and fearing nothing but your wrong actions.’¹⁰⁷ And elsewhere he said, ‘A slave will be brought before Allah on the Day of Resurrection having done wrong to himself by his own actions, and Allah will say to him, “Did I not order you to obey Me? Did I not forbid you to disobey Me?” Then he will say, “Yes, O Lord, but my desires overcame me; if You punish me, then You will not have done me wrong, considering my crime.” Then Allah will order him into the fire. Then he will say, “This was not the opinion I had of You.” Allah will reply, “What was your opinion of Me?” He will reply, “I had the best of opinions concerning You.” Thereupon, Allah will order him into the Garden, and He will say, “Your good opinion of Me has saved you on this last day”.’¹⁰⁸

Imam al-Rida said, ‘Have a good opinion of Allah, for truly Allah says, “I am in My believing slave’s opinion of Me: if he thinks well of Me then for him there is goodness, if ill, then for him is evil”.’¹⁰⁹

The Trial and the Test

It is reported from al-Sadiq that the Messenger of Allah said, ‘Allah has said, “Any slave I wish to bring into the Garden I try in his bodily health, for truly this is an expiation for his wrong actions; or I constrict his provision for him so that because of his suffering he comes to Me without committing any wrong actions, and then I bring him into the Garden. Any slave I wish to bring to the fire I make him healthy in body, thus fulfilling the claims he makes on Me; or I make him secure in his authority, thus fulfilling his demands on Me, or I make death easy for him so that he comes to Me without any merit – and so I make him enter the fire”.’¹¹⁰

It is related from al-Kazim that Allah said, ‘I have not made the rich man rich because of his generosity towards Me, nor have I impoverished the poor man because of his lack of concern for

¹⁰⁷ al-Kulayni, II, 72.

¹⁰⁸ al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin*, 26.

¹⁰⁹ al-Kulayni, II, 72.

¹¹⁰ *Mishkat*, 291.

Me. Rather I have tested the rich by the poor, and if it were not for the poor, the rich would not deserve the Garden.’¹¹¹

When trial, and in particular the trial by which Allah tests believers, was mentioned in the company of al-Sadiq, Abu `Abdallah said that the Messenger of Allah was asked, ‘Which people undergo the hardest trial in this world?’ ‘The prophets,’ he replied, ‘then their like, and then the like of them. The believer is tested in accordance with the strength of his belief and his good deeds; if anyone perfects his belief and does good actions, then his testing will be more severe, and whoever is weak in his faith and deficient in his actions will have a lesser trial.’¹¹²

The Messenger of Allah said, ‘Truly, the greatest of trials will be compensated by the greatest rewards. If Allah loves a slave, He tests him with the greatest trials: whoever accepts with contentment will find contentment from Allah, and whoever becomes angry with the trials will find anger.’¹¹³

It is related from al-Baqir that the Messenger of Allah has said, ‘Allah has no need of him who gives no portion of his self or his wealth.’¹¹⁴

It is related that al-Baqir told of how some people came to `Ali ibn al-Husayn while he was with `Abdallah ibn al-`Abbas and mentioned to him the trials of their followers and how it was afflicting them. Two of them came to Husayn and spoke to him about it. Husayn said, ‘By Allah, trials and poverty come to those who love us quicker than a galloping horse, quicker than the flood running to the end of its course, and quicker than a drop of rain falling from the sky to the earth. If it were not like this for you, we would realize that you were not one of us. By us are the

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, 288-9.

¹¹² *ibid.*, 293.

¹¹³ *al-Khisal*, I, 18.

¹¹⁴ *Mishkat*, 292.

orphans helped, by us is the religion of Islam carried out, and by us are your wrong actions forgiven.’¹¹⁵

Al-Sadiq said, ‘If the believer knew the reward contained in affliction he would desire to be rewarded by afflictions containing his doom.’¹¹⁶

It is related from the same source that ‘Verily, Allah assigns affliction to the believer in [the form of] the gifts He bestows upon him so that he stands his nights in prayer; but should he not do so, Allah assigns to him bodily illness, affliction in his family and property, or one of the catastrophes of this world in order that He may reward him on account of it.’¹¹⁷

It is also related that he [al-Sadiq] said, ‘Truly the believer calls to Allah in his need and Allah says, “I have delayed fulfillment of his need because of My desire for his prayers.” When the Day of Resurrection comes, Allah will say, “My slave, you called on Me for such and such a need and I delayed in replying to you, so your reward is that which you asked for.” Thus the believer desires that his prayers not be answered in this world, because of the reward he perceives in their place in the next [world].’¹¹⁸

‘Truly Allah gives of this world to those whom He loves and hates, but He does not give faith except to the people of the Chosen One [*al-Mustafa*’, i.e. Muhammad] before His creatures.’¹¹⁹

‘Poverty is stored up with Allah as is the testimony [there is no god except Allah] and He only gives these two things to those He loves of His believing slaves.’¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ *ibid.* 292-293.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.* 288-293.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* 288-293.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

Truly, if Allah loves a slave He appoints for him two angels, saying, “Delay his obtaining what he desires and constrict his means of living for him so that he calls to Me in prayer, Surely I love to hear his voice”.¹²¹

Imam Zayn al-`Abideen used to say, ‘In truth, I dislike that a man is spared in this world and is not touched by any afflictions.’¹²²

Contentment with Allah’s Decree and One’s Own Destiny

Allah says in His Book:

And it behooves not a believing man and a believing woman that they should have any choice in their matter when Allah and His Apostle have decided a matter. (33:36)

And when He decrees an affair. He only says to it. Be, and it is. (2:117)

...but - in order that Allah might bring about a matter which was to be done. (8:42)

And the matter has [already] been decided; and [all] matters are returned to Allah. (2:210)

Surely your Lord makes plentiful the means of subsistence for whom He pleases and straitens [them]. (17:30)

The command of Allah is a decree that is made absolute. (33:38)

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¹²¹ *ibid.*

¹²² *ibid.*

The Prophet said, ‘There are four kinds of men whom Allah will not consider on the Day of Resurrection: the rebellious, those who begrudge benefits received, those who deny the decree, and those who are addicted to wine.’¹²³

The Prophet was asked about the signs of the last day, and he replied, ‘When people have faith in the stars and deny predestination.’¹²⁴

Imam `Ali relates that the Prophet said, ‘A slave does not truly believe until he believes in four things: until he bears witness that there is no god except Allah, the One Who has no associate; that I am the Messenger of Allah sent with truth; until he believes in the resurrection after death; and until he believes in the decree.’¹²⁵

It is related by Imam al-Sadiq that the Prophet of Allah said, ‘Truly I have cursed seven kinds of men whom Allah has cursed and whom every accepted prophet has cursed before me [among them are the following three]: the one who adds to the book of Allah; the one who denies the decree; and the one who opposes my *sunnah*.’¹²⁶

Imam al-Kazim said, ‘The man who is negligent with regard to Allah should not accuse Him of delaying his provision nor condemn Him for His decree.’¹²⁷

Imam `Ali used to say in his prayers, ‘O Allah, grant me reliance on You, that I may entrust my affairs to You, be content with Your decree and submit to Your command so that I do not wish

¹²³ al-Khisal, I, 18.

¹²⁴ ibid., I, 62; I, 199; II, 349.

¹²⁵ ibid.

¹²⁶ ibid.

¹²⁷ *Mishkat*, 301-303.

that something You have delayed should be brought forward and that something You have caused to happen should be delayed, O Lord of the Worlds.’¹²⁸

It is related that Imam al-Baqir said, ‘Truly Allah has made and carried out His decree; He has judged, and acted justly in His judgment. Thus, there is no one who can avert His decree and no one who can defer His judgment; therefore it is incumbent on Allah’s creation to submit to what Allah has decreed. If anyone knows Allah and is content with the decree, then the decree will come to pass for him and Allah will increase his reward; but if anyone is angry with the decree, then the decree will come to pass for him just the same and Allah will take away his reward.’¹²⁹

‘Truly, we desire to enjoy our family and close relations; we should pray to Allah for that which the decree of Allah has not yet caused to happen, for when the decree comes into being we should not desire what Allah has not desired [in His decree].’¹³⁰

It is related from Imam al-Sadiq that he said, ‘The most beloved man is he, who when something occurs which he dislikes, does not show it in his face, and if something occurs which makes him happy, does not show it in his face.’¹³¹

‘How can anyone be called a believer when he gets angry at his destiny, and despises his situation when Allah is governing his affairs? Surely, I guarantee that whoever allows nothing but contentment to enter his heart will have his prayer answered if he calls on Him.’¹³²

¹²⁸ *ibid.*

¹²⁹ *ibid.*

¹³⁰ *ibid.*

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² *ibid.*

‘Inspect your hearts, for if Allah purifies them of violent movement as a result of anger at something of His making, then you may ask of Him what you wish.’¹³³

‘As for the Muslim, Allah does not decree anything for him without there being good in it: if he is deprived of completely everything, then there is good in it for him; and if he owns the lands both to the east and to the west there is also good in this.’¹³⁴

‘The conditions for belief are that one is content with the decree and is at peace with himself. Contentment with the decree is the most noble of the conditions, necessary for belief, and the best characteristic of a believer. Allah has said, “Certainly Allah was well pleased with the believers” [48:18]. He also says, “Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Allah” [5:119].’¹³⁵

*Truly, contentment with the decree is a high spiritual rank obtained only by the truthful and the elite of the believers; surely, the death of Imam Husayn as a martyr on the day ‘Ashura’ [10th Muharram] is the highest example of perfect contentment with the decree and destiny of Allah. When his thirst became unbearable and he asked for water, they said to him, ‘Yield to the governance of ‘Abdallah ibn Ziyad, so that we can leave you alone.’ He replied that he was bound by the governance of Allah and refused to submit to this hateful and oppressive condition, knowing that soon he would be put to death. He then fought until he was killed, content with Allah’s decree and what fate had brought with it, thereby adorning his character.*¹³⁶

Among the tremendous events of Islam were those which occurred after the battle of Uhud, during which the Muslims were defeated in the first instance. During the battle a number of the elite of the Muhajirun and the Ansar were killed as martyrs, and the Messenger of Allah was wounded. When the news reached Madinah al-Munawwarah, the wife of one of the Ansar came out to ask about her husband and was told he had died as a martyr. She then asked about her

¹³³ ibid.

¹³⁴ ibid.

¹³⁵ al-‘Inathi,II,157-159.

¹³⁶ ibid.

*father and her brother and was told the same things. Then she asked, 'Is the Messenger of Allah safe and sound?' When they replied that he was, she said, 'His being still alive makes up for all the others.'*¹³⁷

These purified and righteous people became content with the decree of Allah and were patient in the face of events in order to win this contentment and high spiritual stations with Him. As Allah says, 'Truly He will give the patient their reward and will give without reckoning' [39:10]. He also said, 'No soul knows what has been kept hidden for him as a cooling for his eyes, a reward for what they did.' [32:17]

Belief in the Last Day and the Place of Return

Allah says in the Qur'an:

From it [the earth] We created you, and into it We shall send you back, and from it We will raise you a second time. (20:55)

Surely the might of your Lord is great. Surely He it is Who originates and reproduces. (85:12-13)

Allah originates the creation, then reproduces it, then to Him you shall be brought back. (30:11)

Most surely He Who made the Qur'an binding on you will bring you back to the destination. (28:85)

Do they not consider how Allah originates the creation, then reproduces it? (29:19)

To Him is your return, of all [of you]; the promise of Allah made in truth. (10:4)

And those who disbelieve say: the Hour shall not come upon us. Say: Yea! By my Lord, the Knower of the unseen, it shall certainly come upon you. (34:3)

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

And when it was said. Surely the promise of Allah is true and as for the Hour, there is no doubt about it, you said: We do not know what the Hour is; we do not think [that it will come to pass] save a passing thought, and we are not at all sure. (45:32)

And the measuring out on that day will be just; then as for him whose measure [of good deeds] is heavy, those are they who shall be successful. (7:8)

And the companions of the right hand; how happy are the companions of the right hand! Amid thornless lote-trees, and banana trees [with fruits], one above another. And extended shade, and water flowing constantly, and abundant fruits, neither intercepted nor forbidden, and exalted thrones. (56:27-34)

O soul that art at rest! Return to your Lord, well pleased [with Him], well-pleasing [Him], so enter among my servants, and enter into My garden. (89:27-30)

And whoever desires the hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive and he is a believer, [as for] these, their striving shall surely be accepted. (17:19)

And We will set up a just balance on the day of Resurrection, so no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least; and though it be the weight of a grain of mustard seed, [yet] will We bring it, and sufficient are We to take account. (21:47)

What! Did you then think that We had created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to Us? (23:115)

O people! If you are in doubt about the raising, then surely We created you from dust...This is because Allah is the Truth and because He gives life to the dead and because He has power over all things. And because the Hour is coming, there is no doubt about it; and because Allah shall raise up those who are in the graves. (22:5-7)

And certainly We created man from an extract of clay... Then after that you will most surely die. Then surely on the day of Resurrection you shall be raised. (23:12-16)

As We originated the first creation, [so] We shall reproduce it; a promise [binding on Us]; surely We will bring it about. (21:104)

^^^

The Messenger said, ‘O men of `Abd al-Muttalib, surely a leader does not lie to his people. By the One Who has sent me with the truth, indeed you shall die just as you sleep, and you shall be raised up just as you wake up, and after death there is no abode save the Garden or the Fire.’¹³⁸

Counseling the noble companion Abu Dharr, the Messenger of Allah said, ‘O Abu Dharr, take account of your own soul before you are taken to account, for surely this is easier than your reckoning to come; measure your soul before it is measured for you, and make yourself ready for the tremendous day when all souls will be received. Even the hidden is not hidden from Allah. O Abu Dharr, a man is not counted among the pious until he takes his soul to account more severely than the man who takes his partner to account and knows where his food, drink and clothing are from – that is, he knows whether they be of *halal* (permitted) or *haram* (forbidden) origin. O Abu Dharr, if someone does not care where he earns his wealth, Allah will not care by what means he will have him enter the Fire.’¹³⁹

The Prophet said, ‘The most intelligent of you is he who takes his own soul to account and acts in accordance with what is to come after death.’

Imam al-`Askari conveyed the response of Imam `Ali to a man who posed the question: ‘O Commander of the Faithful, how does a man take account of his own soul?’ The Imam replied, ‘When the morning has been followed by the evening, a man turns to his soul and says, “O my self, surely this day has passed by you and will never return to you. Allah will ask you about it and the way you have spent it; so what have you done during it? Have you remembered Allah? Have you praised Him? Have you taken care of the needs of the believers? Have you relieved the Muslims of their hardships? Have you taken care of those absent from you, and of your family and your children? Have you restrained yourself from talking badly of your fellow believer in his absence? Have you helped the Muslims? What have you achieved during this day? Do you remember what has happened during this day?” If he remembers that good has come out of it,

¹³⁸ *al-Muhajjah al-Bayda*, I, 249.

¹³⁹ *al-Hikam* I, 419 (from al-Hurr, *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, XI, 379).

then he praises Allah and His greatness for his success; if he remembers a wrong action or a shortcoming, he asks Allah for forgiveness and makes a firm intention to change his ways.’¹⁴⁰

Imam `Ali said, ‘If you were to suffer like the one amongst you who has died, you would be fearful and horrified; you would listen and obey. What they have suffered is veiled from you; however, the veil will be drawn aside. Surely, you would realize if you but opened your eyes, and you would listen if you but paid attention; you would be guided if you let yourselves be guided. In truth I say to you, I have made plain to you the explanation and forbidden you from what is forbidden; only men will give the message of Allah after the messengers from the heavens.’¹⁴¹

Imam Muhammad al-Jawad and his forefathers reported Imam `Ali ibn al-Husayn as saying, ‘When the condition of Husayn ibn `Ali became serious, those with him looked at him and saw he was different from them: as his condition became more and more serious, the color of their faces changed, their horses shook with terror and their hearts trembled, while the face of Husayn and some of his most intimate companions were bright in color, their limbs were at ease, their souls at rest. They said to each other, “Look, he is not worried by death!” Husayn said to them, “Have patience, sons of the noble: death is nothing but a causeway which will lead you over hardship and affliction to wide gardens and eternal ease. Which one of you then would not wish to leave a prison for a palace? As for your enemies, it is as if they are leaving a palace for a prison”.’¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, I, 420-421 (from *Nahj*, 79 & 1031)

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*

¹⁴² *ibid.*, I, 422 (from *al-Bihar*, vol. 44, 297).

Imam al-Sajjad used to say when praying, ‘O Allah, grant us fear of your promised punishment and desire for your promised rewards, so that for what we call on You becomes pleasurable for us, and for what we seek protection from You becomes grievous for us.’¹⁴³

Remembrance of death

Allah said in His Book:

Say: O you who are Jews, if you think you are the favorites of Allah to the exclusion of other people, then invoke death if you are truthful. (62:6)

Say: [as for] the death from which you flee, that will surely overtake you, then you shall be sent back to the Knower of the unseen and the seen.(62:8)

Every soul must taste death and We will try you by evil and good by way of probation; and to Us you shall be brought back. (21:35)

Say: if the future abode with Allah is especially for you to the exclusion of the people, then invoke death if you are truthful. (2:94)

^^^

The Prophet of Allah said, ‘Increase your remembrance of that which annihilates the pleasures [of this world]’¹⁴⁴ – *that is, smother these pleasures by remembering death until your dependence on them ceases.*

‘If animals knew death as man knows death, you would not find any fat ones amongst them to eat.’¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ *ibid.*,I,422 (from *al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyah*,311).

¹⁴⁴ *al-Ashtari*,I,268-269.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*

Some people asked the Messenger of Allah if certain people would be gathered on the day of Resurrection with those who died as martyrs in the battle of Uhud. ‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘those who remember death twenty times during the day.’¹⁴⁶

Its excellence [remembrance of death] is that it causes distance from the world of illusion, and brings about preparations for the next world; forgetfulness of death incites devotion to the sensual pleasures of this world.

The Messenger of Allah said, ‘Death is the precious gem of the believer,’¹⁴⁷ *meaning that this world is like a prison for the believer: his time in it is spent in distress caused by his constant disciplining of the self, enduring the demands of his passions and defending himself from Satan. Thus death for him is a release from this torment – like the release of the gem from its casket – as he reaches the place of lasting bliss.*¹⁴⁸

‘Death is an expiation for every Muslim,’¹⁴⁹ – *by this he meant the true Muslim, the genuine believer, from whose hand and tongue people are safe, and those people in whom may be found good behavior.*

The Messenger also said, ‘Increase your remembrance of death, for it effaces wrong actions and makes one do without this world. Remembrance of death is counsel enough for you.’¹⁵⁰

The Messenger of Allah went out of the mosque once and heard people talking and laughing. He said, ‘Remember death! By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if you knew what I knew, you would laugh little and weep much.’¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

A man was mentioned to the Messenger and was much praised. He said, ‘How did your companion remember death?’ They replied, ‘We hardly heard him remembering death.’ He said, ‘Your companion is not over there [in Paradise with those who had remembered].’¹⁵²

One of the *Ansar* asked the Messenger who were the most intelligent and the most noble of men. He replied, ‘Those who remember death the most and are the most prepared for it are the most intelligent: they have obtained the honor of this world and are the nobility of the hereafter.’¹⁵³

The Messenger said, ‘People are of two kinds. One kind gives rest, and the other kind rests. As for the one who rests, this is the believer when he dies: he finds rest from this world and its trials. As for the one who gives rest, it is the unbeliever: when he dies he gives rest to trees, the animals and a great many people.’¹⁵⁴

The Prophet said to `Abd Allah ibn `Umar, ‘Be in this world as if you are a wayfarer or a stranger, and prepare yourself [by remembering] the dead.’¹⁵⁵

‘The believer finds ease in death by leaving behind that which he was wary of [i.e. *dunya*], and by the speed of his movement towards the One Whom he desires and has hope of.’¹⁵⁶

One of the *Ansar* said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, why is it that I do not like death?’ The Prophet asked, ‘Do you have wealth?’ ‘Yes, O Messenger.’ ‘Give out your wealth [in this world for the next]; for surely, man’s heart is with his wealth: if he gives it out [for the sake of the next world] he wants to regain it, and if he leaves it [in this world], he desires to remain here with it.’¹⁵⁷

Al-Sadiq told how Gabriel came to the Messenger of Allah and said, ‘O Muhammad, Allah conveys His greetings of peace and says, “Act as you wish, for surely you will encounter Him;

¹⁵² *ibid.*

¹⁵³ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *al-Khisal*, I, 39.

¹⁵⁵ *Mishkat*, 303-305.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*

love whom you wish, for surely you will be separated from him; and live as you wish, for surely you will die. O Muhammad, night prayer is the nobility of the believer, and it gives authority to his speech”.¹⁵⁸

Imam `Ali said, ‘O people, fear Allah Who hears you when you speak and knows what you think. Anticipate death, which will reach you even if you flee, and will catch hold of you even as you stand up. Even if you forget Him, He remembers you.’¹⁵⁹

‘Whoever reckons he will be living tomorrow has not given death its true measure of importance.’¹⁶⁰

He also said, while following a funeral procession and hearing a man laughing, ‘It is as if death has been ordained for people other than ourselves, as if the reality in the coffin is only for others and as if those who die are merely travelling to a place from which few return.’¹⁶¹

‘I am astonished at the man who forgets death although he sees dead people.’¹⁶²

^^^

The Messenger said to `Ali, ‘Sudden death is ease for the believer and a grief for the unbeliever.’¹⁶³

Al-Sadiq said, ‘The Day of Resurrection is like the bride of those who fear Allah.’¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Nahj*, IV, 684-685.

¹⁶² *ibid.*

¹⁶³ Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim al-Akhlaq*, 439.

¹⁶⁴ *al-Khisal*, I, 13-14.

‘Allah has not created anything more certain and without doubt than death, and yet at the same time something which [in the imagination of the people] is less certain and full of doubt.’¹⁶⁵

The *Barzakh*, or matters pertaining to the time spent in the grave before the Day of Resurrection

Allah says:

We will chastise them twice, then shall they be turned back to a grievous chastisement. (9:101)

And when the graves are laid open, every soul shall know what it has sent before and held back. (82:4-5)

Does he not know when what is in the grave is raised, and what is in the breast is made apparent? (100:9-10)

^^^

The Messenger of Allah said, ‘The burial place will say to the dead person as he is put into his grave, “Woe to you, O son of Adam. What deluded you in respect of me? Do you not realize that I am the house of trial and the house of darkness, the house of solitude and the house of worms? What deceived you concerning me when you used to pass me by so many times?” Then, if he were one of the righteous, someone will answer the grave for him, saying, “Have you seen how he was one of those who enjoined righteousness and forbade evil?” The grave will say, “Then I will transform [this place] into a green meadow, his body will become light again and his spirit will rise up towards Allah”’.¹⁶⁶

Al-Bara’ ibn `Azib relates how he went out with the Messenger to the funeral procession of one of the *Ansar*. The Messenger then sat down on his grave, his head lowered, and said three times, ‘O Allah, I seek refuge from the torment of the grave...,’ and went on saying, ‘If the believer is in

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ al-Ashtari, I, 288-290; II, 168.

anticipation of the hereafter, Allah sends angels to him whose faces are like the sun and who carry with them his embalming oil and his shroud; they then sit down ranged as far as the eye can see. When his spirit leaves his body, each angel between the heavens and earth prays over him; the gates are opened for him and there is not a gate but that it desires his spirit to enter through it. Thus when his spirit is raised up and it is said, “And what about this slave of yours, Lord?” He will reply, “Take him back and show him what bliss I have prepared for him, for surely I have promised this to him: ‘From it We created you and into it We shall send you back and from it We will raise you a second time’ [20:55].” Then surely he will hear the tread of the shoes of those who turn back, until he says to that man, “Who is your Lord? Who is your Prophet? Who is your Imam?” Then he will say, “My Lord is Allah, my Prophet is Muhammad and my Imam is `Ali,” and then will enumerate the Imams one by one.

“They will reproach him severely and this will be the last trial he is exposed to. Thus when he replies in the way he does, a herald will proclaim, “You have told the truth” – and this is the meaning of the words of Allah: “Allah makes firm those who believe by firm words” [14:27]. Then an angel will come to him, an angel whose face is beautiful and who is sweet-smelling and pleasantly attired, saying, “Be joyful at the good news of mercy from your Lord, and eternal gardens of bounty .” He will also say, “Allah gives you good news of wealth and the Garden.” “Who are you?” the slave will ask, and the angel will reply, “I am your righteous deeds. By Allah, I have heard only of the speed of your obedience to Allah and your unwillingness to disobey Him; thus Allah has rewarded you with good.” Thereupon a herald will call for a couch to be prepared for him in the Garden, and that a door to the Garden will be opened. Then he will say, “O Allah, hasten the rising of the Last Day, so that I may return to my family and my wealth.” For the unbelievers it will be the opposite: just as the believer will find wealth and blessings, they will find torment.’¹⁶⁷

It is related that the Commander of the Faithful said, ‘If a believer dies, 70,000 angels accompany him in mourning to his grave; when he enters his grave, Munkar and Nakir come and

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*

sit with him, saying, “Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your Prophet?” He will reply, “Allah is my Lord, Islam is my religion and Muhammad is my Prophet.” Then they will clear a space for him in the grave as far as his eyes can see and will bring food from the Garden; they will cause the breath of life to enter and bring perfume, as mentioned by Allah in His words: “And as for those who have been brought close to Me, theirs is happiness and bounty” – that is, in his grave – “and the Garden of bliss” [56:89] – meaning the Hereafter.’

Then Imam `Ali said, ‘When the unbeliever dies, 70,000 of the guardian angels of the Fire will accompany him to his grave. Then he will implore those bearing him, in a voice heard by all those bearing him except man and jinn, saying, “If only I had a chance to return and be like the believers! Take me back, that I may do righteous deeds in the place I have left.” The guards will reply, “Certainly not – these are merely empty words.” An angel will then call to them, “Such men, if they were sent back, would repeat what they had been forbidden to do.” Then when he enters his grave and the people have left him alone, Munkar and Nakir come to him in their most hideous form and stand by him, saying, “Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your Prophet?” Then his tongue will stammer and he will be unable to reply, and they will strike him with a stroke of Allah’s torment and will terrify all things. Then the two angels will again ask, “Who is your Lord, what is your religion and who is your Prophet?” He will then reply, “I do not know .” They will then say to him, “You have found out nothing, you have not been guided and you have not been successful.” Thereupon they will open for him a gate into the Fire, causing boiling water to pour over him. This is in accordance with Allah’s words: “But if he were one of the liars, astray, his abode will be boiling water and burning in the fires of hell” [56:92].’¹⁶⁸

The body will disintegrate after its separation from the soul. Allah says, ‘Do not reckon that those killed in the way of Allah are dead, rather they are alive with their Lord, provided for and glad with what Allah has given them of His bounty; they are rejoicing at those coming after who have not yet joined them; they have no fear and they will not grieve’ [3:169].¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *al-Haqa’iq*, II, 460.

The Prophet called out to the rebellious unbelievers killed at the battle of Badr, ‘I have found what my lord promised me was true; so have you found what your lord promised you was true? By the One in Whose hand is my soul, certainly they hear your words, but are unable to reply.’ A similar *hadith* is also reported from Imam `Ali concerning those killed during the battle of the Camel.¹⁷⁰

Al-Sadiq is reported as saying, ‘The soul will surely remain in its place: the soul of the believer in space and light, and the soul of the sinner in constriction and darkness – but the body will turn to dust.’¹⁷¹ From the same source: ‘The soul of the believer in his body is like a gem in a casket: if the gem is taken out, the casket is discarded, and is not used to contain the gem again.’¹⁷²

He also said, ‘Whoever denies these three matters is not among our followers: the *Mi`raj* (the night ascension of Muhammad to Allah), the reality of what takes place in the grave, and intercession (on the Day of Resurrection).’¹⁷³

The Place of Assembly of the Day of Resurrection

Allah says in His Noble Book:

And We shall gather them together on the day of Resurrection on their faces, blind and dumb and deaf. (17:97)

And We will set up a just balance on the day of Resurrection. (21:47)

And you shall only be paid fully your reward on the Resurrection day. (3:185)

Surely your Lord will judge between them on the Resurrection day concerning that in which they disagreed. (10:93)

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*,II,461.

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*

¹⁷² *ibid.*

¹⁷³ al-Kashani,*al-Muhajjah al-Bayda*’,I,248 (from al-Saduq,*al-Amali*,177).

And on the day of Resurrection you shall see those who lied against Allah; their faces shall be blackened. (39:60)

There would be naught but a single cry, when lo! they shall be brought before Us. (36:53)

The day when they shall hear the cry in truth; that is the day of coming forth. (50:42)

^^^

When asked about the length of the Day of Resurrection, the Messenger of Allah replied, ‘By the One in Whose hand is my soul, in truth it will be so short for the believer that it will be easier for him than the prescribed prayers he used to pray in the world.’¹⁷⁴

On another occasion the Messenger said, ‘Some people will be raised in such ugly forms that apes and pigs will appear beautiful in comparison with them.’¹⁷⁵

‘People will be gathered together on the Day of Resurrection in three groups: riding, walking, or on their faces.’¹⁷⁶

The Prophet was asked why he did not lead a life of ease and comfort. He replied, ‘How should I lead a life of ease, knowing the trumpet-blower has the horn in his mouth and is crouching, listening with his ear for the order to blow?’¹⁷⁷

‘And the trumpet shall be blown, so that all who are in the heavens and all those that are in the earth shall swoon, except such as Allah please; then it shall be blown again, then lo, they shall stand up awaiting’ [39:68].

¹⁷⁴ al-Kashani, *Qurrat al-`Uyun*, 480.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.* 479.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*

‘On the Day of Resurrection people will be raised up barefoot and naked, isolated and exhausted by profuse sweating – even from their earlobes.’¹⁷⁸

It is related that Sawdah, the wife of the Prophet, said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, will we be able to see each other’s private parts?’ He replied, ‘People will be too preoccupied to notice; each one will be concerned by a matter which will allow him no time for other things.’¹⁷⁹

Imam `Ali has said, ‘On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will raise the people from their graves solitary, having nothing about them, and beardless, together on one plane; then they will be driven by light and gathered together by darkness, until they stand on the threshold of the place of assembly; they will climb on top of each other, jostling others out of the way. preventing others from moving forward, their breath becoming heavier and heavier, sweat pouring from them, the noise and clamor increasing while their cries rise higher and higher.’¹⁸⁰

Al-Sadiq has said, ‘Take account of yourselves, before you are taken to account. Truly, on the Day of Resurrection, there are fifty places of standing, each place a standing of a thousand years.’ Then he recited, ‘On the day whose length extends fifty thousand years’ [70:4].¹⁸¹

The Garden and the Fire

Allah says in His Book of Wisdom:

And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord; and a Garden, the extent of which is as the heavens and the earth; it is prepared for those who guard [against evil]. (3:133)

Surely whoever associates [others] with Allah, then Allah has forbidden him the Garden, and his abode is in the Fire. (5:72)

¹⁷⁸ al-Ashtari, I, 294.

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Qurrat al-Uyun*, 480.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*

And the dwellers of the Garden will call out to the inmates of the Fire: Surely we have found what our Lord promised us to be true. (7:44)

Surely Allah has bought of the believers their persons and their property for this, that they shall have the garden. (9:111)

Whoever obeys Allah and His Apostle, He will cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow. (4:13)

Not alike are the inmates of the Fire and the dwellers of the Garden. (59:20)

Surely those who guard [against evil] are in a secure place, in gardens and springs. (44:51-2)

Then be on your guard against the Fire of which men and stones are the fuel. (2:24)

Those who say: O Lord! Surely we believe, therefore forgive us our faults and save us from the chastisement of the Fire. (3:16)

Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee, save us then from the chastisement of the Fire. (3:191)

^^^

The Messenger of Allah said, ‘Surely every one of you will stand in front of Allah and He will say, “Did I not give you wealth?” The person will reply, “Yes,” then he will look to his right and will not see anything except the Fire, then he will look to his left and will not see anything but the Fire. Thus everyone should guard himself from the Fire, even if it is (in giving) half a date and if he does not find this then a kind word. Then He will say, “O son of Adam, what enticed you away from Me? What were you doing when you did what you did?”’¹⁸²

¹⁸² al-Ashtari, I, 297.

‘Surely the first parts of my community to enter the Fire will be the two cavities.’ They said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, what are the two cavities?’ He replied, ‘The private parts and the mouth; and that by which most people will enter the Garden is awe of Allah and good character.’¹⁸³

‘Truly there are stations in the garden only reached by the just Imams of those who maintain strong ties with their relations and those who are patient with their families.’¹⁸⁴

‘By the One Who sent me in truth as a proclaimer of good news: Allah will never torment with fire a man who believes in His unity; those with belief in His unity will act as intercessors and be interceded for.’¹⁸⁵

‘The *Ruh al-Amm*, Jibril [Gabriel], informed me that there is no god except Him. When mankind is standing, the earliest and the latest generations gathered together, *Jahannam* will be brought forward crashing, destructive, roaring and hissing, driven by a thousand reins, each rein held by a hundred thousand angels, rough and harsh in appearance.’¹⁸⁶

Al-Sadiq has said, ‘Fever is a precursor of death; it is Allah’s prison on this earth and it is like an exhortation to the believer to avoid the Fire.’¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ *al-Khisal*, I, 78&93.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Qurrat al-Uyun*, 491-492.

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*

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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 & 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 and 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.