

# 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-Dhakhir 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 the Author**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 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*<sup>1</sup>) 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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 jurisprudence<sup>3</sup>, 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'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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-Ifham 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’<sup>5</sup>.

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,

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<sup>5</sup> *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-Haeri<sup>6</sup>, 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

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<sup>6</sup> 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)

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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.’<sup>7</sup>

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”.’<sup>8</sup>

‘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.’<sup>9</sup>

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.’<sup>10</sup> *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”.’<sup>11</sup>

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.’<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *al-Kashani, al-Muhajjah al-Bayda*, I,219.

<sup>8</sup> al-Saduq, *al-Tawhid*, 18-30.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *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”.’<sup>13</sup>

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.’<sup>14</sup>

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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.’<sup>15</sup>

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

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> al-Tabarsi, *Mishkat al-Anwar*, 10.

<sup>15</sup> *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.’<sup>16</sup>

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.’<sup>17</sup>

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 *kufir* (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.’<sup>18</sup>

`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

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<sup>16</sup> *al-Muhajjah al-Bayda*, II, 208.

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

<sup>18</sup> 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.’<sup>19</sup>

## 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)

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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.’<sup>20</sup>

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

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<sup>19</sup> *al-Tawhid*, 31-32.

<sup>20</sup> *Mishkat al-Anwar*, 49.

<sup>21</sup> al-Kashani, *al-Haqa’iq fi Mahasin al-Akhlaq*, 51.

<sup>22</sup> *al-Khisal*, I, 75.

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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.’<sup>23</sup>

‘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.’<sup>24</sup>

‘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.’<sup>25</sup>

‘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.’<sup>26</sup>

‘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

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<sup>23</sup> *Nahj al-Balaghah*, IV, 685 & 744.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, II, 453; I, 253; II, 318.

<sup>26</sup> *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.'<sup>27</sup>

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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.'<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> 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).’<sup>29</sup>

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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.’<sup>30</sup>

## **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).

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *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].’<sup>31</sup>

‘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.’<sup>32</sup>

‘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.’<sup>33</sup>

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.’<sup>34</sup>

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

‘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.’<sup>36</sup> The Messenger of Allah was asked, ‘Which people possess the best faith?’ He replied, ‘Those whose hands are the most generous.’<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> al-`Inathi, *Adab al-Nafs*, II, 151-152.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *al-Khisal*, I, 47.

<sup>36</sup> *Mishkat al-Anwar*, 40.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*



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

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.’<sup>39</sup>

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

‘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.’<sup>41</sup>

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

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.’<sup>43</sup>

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

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<sup>38</sup> *al-Khisal*, I, 47.

<sup>39</sup> *al-Tabarsi*, 39.

<sup>40</sup> *Nahj*, IV, 663; I, 265; II, 334.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *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.’<sup>44</sup>

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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.’<sup>45</sup>

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*.’<sup>46</sup>

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

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<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> al-Kulayni, II, 25 & 47.

<sup>46</sup> *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.’<sup>47</sup>

### **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,

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<sup>47</sup> *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.’<sup>48</sup>

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

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*)”.’<sup>50</sup>

‘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.’<sup>51</sup>

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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.’<sup>52</sup>

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.’<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Mishkat*, 45-46.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> *al-Ashtari*, II, 62.

<sup>51</sup> *al-Khisal*, I, 4.

<sup>52</sup> *al-Ashtari*, II, 39.

<sup>53</sup> *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.’<sup>54</sup>

‘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.’<sup>55</sup>

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.’<sup>56</sup>

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.’<sup>57</sup>

‘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.

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<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Nahj*, I, 275; II, 440-452; I, 273.

<sup>57</sup> *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.’<sup>58</sup>

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].<sup>59</sup>

‘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.’<sup>60</sup>

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

### **Trust in Allah**

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

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<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *al-Khisal*, I, 16.

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Our System of Belief – Belief in Allah

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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.’<sup>62</sup>

‘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.’<sup>63</sup>

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 enjoy 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].’<sup>64</sup>

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.<sup>65</sup>

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

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<sup>62</sup> al-Ashtari, I, 222.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *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.’<sup>67</sup>

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.’<sup>68</sup>

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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.’<sup>69</sup>

‘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.’<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *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.’<sup>71</sup>

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].’<sup>72</sup>

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

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‘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.’<sup>74</sup>

## Reflection

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

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<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> al-Kulayni, II, 65.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*

Our System of Belief – Belief in Allah

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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)

^^^

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.'<sup>75</sup>

'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.'<sup>76</sup>

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

'Reflection leads one to goodness and action in accordance with it.'<sup>78</sup>

'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.'<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> al-Haqa'iq, 306.

<sup>76</sup> al-Ashtari, 306.

<sup>77</sup> al-Kulayni, II, 54-55.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Mishkat*, 37.

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