

# ***Safinah***

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All researchers, scholars and those who are interested in Islamic issues are invited to provide us with their academic researches, findings and articles to be published in Safinah. To this end, considering the following points is recommended:

1. The contributions must be original, resulted from academic studies and researches.
2. The articles have not been published earlier and have not been currently under consideration for publication elsewhere.
3. Articles should contain author's name, academic statue, country and living city.
4. The editors of Safinah retain their full authority to bring the accepted papers in conformity with the Safinah house style, and edit them for length and clarity.
5. The length of articles should be 3000 words (10 pages) at maximum.
6. Regarding the academic nature of this journal, using abusive or consulting language in essays or articles towards opposite thoughts or views should be highly avoided.
7. The articles will not be returned.
8. The responsibility of the accuracy of the content of articles is on authors'.
9. Using parts or complete articles of Safinah by citing the source is allowed.

## Editorial

Almighty God chose some people as His prophets to lead people into the right and true path resulted in their perfection. The numbers of the prophets are 124000 Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus are of most outstanding ones and the very last prophet is Muhammad (p.b.u.h) who brought perfection and God's blessings to all human beings. God descended all the necessary commands, orders and advices needed for human's perfection during the life of Muhammad (p.b.u.h); the orders, which will suffice until the end of the world to help people reach perfection. By the prophet of God, Qur'an- the words from God- has been sent for all mankind and Muhammad (p.b.u.h) during his 23 years of invitation made his best effort to declare and explain the divine knowledge which is needed by human beings to find the true and right way, and the thought of leading people to the true way obsessed him until the last minutes of his life and even in his death bed.

The prophet of God is for people's guidance, and his eternal will is famous as "**Hadith Saqalain**"\*: He explained the only way of finding salvation in following his 2 permanent memorials- Qur'an and Ahlal-Bayt - and ordered his "Ummat"

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\* Hadith Saqalain

(community) to resort to these two precious things. One of the aspects of this Hadith is its use in religious research. The message of "**Hadith Saqalain**" in this domain is that Qur'an and Ahlal-Bayt are the only criteria to evaluate religious thoughts based on. And whoever seeks the path of guidance should pass through this way.

It is incumbent upon us all to make our best effort to introduce and transfer the message of guidance to others; especially today, when the world is suffering from increasing craving of recognizing Islam profoundly.

It is obvious that this acceptance of attitude puts more duty on our shoulders. It is definitely upon us to establish our faith in religion on the ground of knowledge and deep understanding and of course deep understanding puts more weight on our shoulders; it grows the sapling of faith inside us, but knowledge does not demand faith. Deep understanding leads to action but knowledge does not necessarily leads to action. The point is that "pure knowledge" is a good passageway but it's not a "good destination".

Amirul Muminin, Ali (p.b.u.h), in a brief and profound speech, called the last prophet of God, Muhammad (p.b.u.h) the doctor whose only (far and foremost) thought is curing patient's disease.

From this short sentence it is inferred that how he was occupied with the thought of introducing and transferring the truth of religion.

He definitely knew the pain, the patient, the cure, and used those ways of curing which were suitable for the patient. He compassionately went wherever his presence was needed, And put his kind hand on the heads of the patients, And offered his tender and kindness to the patients and gave reviving drugs to them.

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If we recognize him as an "Osva" (noble example) and want to follow him, we should act like him, we should start from "opinion polling" of religious efforts in order to reach an "effect-measuring". We should always bear in mind that our religion is "reviving"(Anfal: 24)

Whatever comes earlier was a part of our concern in motivating us to publish a quarterly in Islamic studies. We come to provide you with the truth of our holy religion patiently and without any prejudice or dispute. We decided while moving in the light of two precious memorials of our prophet, exert our effort to introduce unknowns and reveal the dormant, neglected and hidden truth of Islam and put a step forward to cure diseases.

Our addressees of this quarterly are all Muslim nations, and we hope it can be useful for all followers of other religions and schools, which are interested in familiarizing with Islam.

We call this quarterly "Safinah"(Ark) to the memory of the "Ark of Noah" in which he embarked his faithful followers and rescued them from The Great Flood.

And God in Qur'an calls it "a sign for all mankind" (Ankabot: 15)

Besides, we are aimed at reminding of the "Saving Ark" which the last prophet of God, Muhammad (p.b.u.h) introduced it to his Ummat to rescue them – in all time and in all lands, until the end of the world – from hard flood of accidents and trials!

We are here to hold "guidance flag" and introduce other aspects of that "guidance sign" to our addressees.

We know that we put our foot in a difficult and rough road, and in this way, by attention to the order of God, we are seeking your help and we welcome all ideas, comments, suggestions and criticisms from you as "the best gifts".

In the way of this holy attempt, always and each moment, we are looking forward to receiving blessings from the Beneficent God, and hope to have the paternal kindness of the last legatee of our prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), " Leader of the Age" – Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (p.b.u.h)- with us.

Peace be upon us all.

Muhammad Husain Shahri

## **At the Presence of Jesus Christ**

By: M. H. Shahri\*

***Abstract:** Jesus Christ is one of the divine messengers who led people to believe in God and resurrection. Like other divine messengers and Imams, he had some guidelines for people as a light to their path towards deliverance and salvation in their life. The writer has selected some of his precious speeches which are represented through this article. These are mainly selected from the books such as Tohaf-ol-Oqool, Behar-ol-Anwar, Tanbih-ol-Kavater, and Al-Kafi.*

***Keywords:** Jesus Christ, Speeches of Jesus Christ*

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## **Preface**

All Muslims believe, based on Qur'an verses and traditions of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), that Jesus Christ is a resolute man, and an arch (prominent) Prophet.

This divine messenger, by great suffering awakened the dormant consciences of his people, and led them to believe in God and resurrection (Last Day Judgment).

His holiness Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and our Innocent Imams have brought forward the precious heritage of our ancestors, from the history, and presented them not only to the Islamic society, but also to all people worldwide, to use these guidelines, as a light to their path, towards deliverance and salvation in their lives.

We are fortunate since we lean on wise and precious speeches of Jesus Christ through what have been quoted in Shia anthologies without any deviation or digression.

Here, we represent some selected brief narrations (Hadith) of these great prophet speeches. We hope that they would bring insight and light to our lives.

### **1) Jesus Christ said:**

"Truly I tell you: just as sun gives light and illumination to all objects, in the same way, spiritual knowledge lights up the hearts. Piety is the fountain head of all knowledge. Truth is the gate to the good deeds, while God's Mercy is the gate to leading the truth. The keys to this gate are: invocation, repentance (to God) and good action. How could a door be opened without its key!?" (Tohaf - ol - Oqool, P. 512)

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### 2) Jesus Christ said to his disciples:

"O, sons of Adam shun this world and turn towards God. Detach yourselves from this world as you are not competent for it, nor it is fair for you. You shall not live long in this world and the world too shall not last for you. " (Behar \_ol\_ Anwar, vol: 14, P. 288)

### 3) Jesus Christ said:

"Truly I tell you: There is nothing like the regular prayers that can make you earn swiftly the dignity of the Hereafter; and there is no support better those prayers at times of difficulties. Besides, nothing is nearer to God than prayers.

So be perpetual in your prayers and perform it abundantly because among the worthy deeds that bring man close to God, it is prayer that has special significance before God. (Tohaf \_o1- Oqool, P.508)

### 4) Jesus Christ said:

"Blessed is he whose silence is thinking; his looking is for getting lessons; his provisions are limited; he weeps over his sins, and the people are safe from his tongue and actions. (Behar \_01 \_Anwar, vol: 14, P. 319-320)

### 5) Hazrat Ali Ibn Husain, Imam Sajjad(p.b.u.h) said to his companions:

"My brothers! I recommend you to strive for the eternal world and not this material world upon which you have fixed your greedy eyes. Do you know that Jesus Christ (a.s.) told his disciples: This world is a bridge that you have to pass from it, and do not get engaged in its attractions? Is there anyone who builds a house on the sea waves? So do not consider the world as your lasting place." (Behar - ol- Anwar, vol: 73, P .107)

**6) Jesus Christ said:**

"Truly, just as a tree can't turn fruitful unless it gives good fruits, in the same way, your religion can not be perfect unless you avoid the sins." (Tohaf – 01- Oqool, P. 511)

**7) Jesus was asked:** "Who trained you in good manners? His holiness answered: I didn't have any teacher! I noticed the ugliness of the ignorance, and kept away from it" (Tanbih - 01 - Kavater, vol: I, P. 96)

**8) Jesus Christ said:**

Truly I tell you: "All the people may look at the stars, but only he is guided who knows their path and positions. Similarly, you all gain knowledge but only the one is guided who acts upon his knowledge." (Tohaf - 01- Oqool, P. 509)

**9) Jesus Christ said:**

"Truly I tell you: With respect to knowledge, people are divided into two groups: those who firm knowledge through words; then destroy it by their evil acts. And the other group that makes solid the knowledge through words, at the same time confirm it by their (good) deeds. And there exist numerous people among these two groups. Blessed is the scholar who acts upon his knowledge; and woe to the scholar who only relies on words and does not act." (Tohaf - 01- Oqool, P. 509)

**10) Jesus Christ said to a group of people:**

"O, sons of Israel, do not grieve over the loss of world affairs, just as the worldly people who attain the worldly affairs do not grieve over the loss of religious affairs. (Al-Kafi, vol: 2, P.137)

# Ghadir Khum

By: Muhammad Reza Hakimi\*

**Abstract:** *This article is mainly about the historical and religious event of Ghadir Khum known as the backbone in the history of Islam; in which the prophet of Islam introduced Imam Ali as his successor on every occasion of his proclamations, according to the will of God. The writer describes briefly the location of Ghadir Khum as well as its sermon. This is the time when the prophet bestowed the title of 'Amirul Muminin' to Ali.*

*Event of Ghadir is not the only proof or authority to establish the caliphate of Ali. There are several other traditions of the prophet as well which in the continuing, the writer has mentioned some of them. Among them, is the famous Hadith of Saqalain.*

*The article continues by a very short biography of Imam Ali, referring to some moral characteristics of him from viewpoint of some scholars such as Khaja Naseeruddin Tusi, Thomas Carlyle, Poles Salama, etc. Finally, the main issues that we should conclude from the event of Ghadir Khum are put in discuss.*

**Keywords:** *event of Ghadir Khum, Johfa, Hadith of Ghadir Khum, Hadith of Saqalain, Prophet's Successor, Hajjatu l- Wida( the holy Prophet's last pilgrim to Mecca)*

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\* Islamic Researcher

Ghadir Khum is located in a place called Johfa, between Mecca and Medina. A place in a desert where water gathers is named Ghadir Khum. Since it was like a barrel of die and some of the tribes used to wash their dyed clothes there, it became known as Khum.

The Prophet traveled from Medina to Mecca to perform the Hajj pilgrimage there.

It was in the tenth year of Hijra. News of his journey had reached the Muslims in various locations. In order to perform the pilgrimage along with the Prophet, many groups and classes of people had gathered in Mecca.

The Prophet completing the pilgrimage delivered several speeches among the crowds. He then decided to return to Medina. The crowds continued to accompany the Prophet. On his journey back the Prophet reached the hilly spot of JOHFA in the desert, also known a GHADIR KHUM. It was here that the Angel of Revelation, Gabreil, descended upon the Prophet with this verse of the holy Qur'an:

*"Oh, Messenger. Proclaim what descended to you from your Lord; and if you do not so, you have not proclaimed His message. God protects you from the people."*

The event of Ghadir Khum reveals that the Prophet's life was soon to end, because he lived only seventy days thereafter. On the other hand there was no Divine decree or commandment that the Prophet did not proclaim to the people. Hence, it is quite evident from this verse that the issue of succession to him is the point. The Prophet acted accordingly, then and there. After the noon prayer, he gave order to have a pulpit made which was done so by heaping the camel's saddles on top of each other. The people gathered around this pulpit.

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According to historians the gathering of that day was 120,000 people.

The Prophet went on the pulpit. The people were anxious to know the importance and the magnitude of the reason why the Prophet had stopped them in that heat desert to speak. Not allowing him to postpone it to be made in the ease and the comfort of a town. Every indication was to show that the matter was of great importance. The Prophet had predicted the nearness of his death, which he had also said in Mecca. Then he spoke of his being the Prophet and that he had acted upon the will of God in announcing the revelations to them; and that he had to announce the last issue in completion of the religion. After these words he called Ali Bin Abi Taleb. Ali went next to him on the pulpit. The Prophet then took his hand and lifted it above his head so that as historians say, the whiteness of their armpits were visible.

There in the hot searing desert, holding Ali's hand high above his head, automatically stopping all passing caravans, the holy Prophet's voice rang out:

"To whomsoever I was the master, Ali to be his master." Then the Prophet blessed those who would help Ali, and cursed those who would refrain from helping him.

Under such a ceremony Ali was installed by the Prophet as his "successor". The religion of Islam, according to this verse, was made consummate and perfect.

"Today I have completed for you your religion and completed my bounties upon you, and am pleased for Islam to be your religion."

People from that gathering approached Ali, one by one, congratulated him and shake his hand as a token of their resignation to him. After all this the Prophet bestowed the title of "Amirul Muminin", Master of the Believers, to Ali and asked the community to call him by his new title. According to some historians, the Prophet remained three days and nights at Ghadir Khum, so that all the people could shake his hand - the act of surrendering to his authority.

The event of Ghadir, that we briefly passed over, is the backbone in the history of Islam. All the scholars such as Abu Rihan Bironi, and Khaja Naseeruddin Tosi, and the famous philosopher Farabi have mentioned it. Farabi has analyzed the IMAMAT on that basis. Avcina, in his book, SHIFA, has mentioned the event of Ghadir with great importance and suggested it as the best method of appointing a successor. Apart from the Shia scholars, who are all authorities in this field, tens and tens of Sunni scholars, historians, and interpreters have also mentioned this event. Among them are Tabari, Ibn Atheer, and Ahmad Hanbal....

In our own time, Allama Amini, in his great book AL-GHADIR, has expounded the event by quoting 360 sources from the Sunni scholars.

The event of Ghadir is not the only proof or authority to establish the caliphate of Imam Ali. There are several traditions of the Prophet to show that Ali is his only successor. Of those several, we will only briefly mention here an event that occurred in the third year of the Prophet's prophethood.

The holy Prophet had not made his mission public for three years after his message. Then he was assigned to invite his tribe to Islam. The holy Prophet ordered Ali to invite forty men from their tribe, Quraish. In the meeting, the holy Prophet disclosed to them the mission and his prophethood.

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Then he asked, "Now who is there among you to help me in this mission so that he can be my successor and my Caliph after me?"

Nobody replied him except Ali, who said, "I will help you." The Prophet repeated his question three times. No one responded to him except Ali. On the third time the holy Prophet turned to Ali and said: "You will be my caliph and my successor after me."

There is a famous tradition from the holy Prophet. Most of the scholars, both Shia and Sunni, have narrated it. And the tradition is this:

"I leave, behind me, two great things amidst you - The Book of God (the Qur'an), and my own family (that is Ali and the other Imams, from his sons). You Muslims will not go astray as long as you follow the both."

It becomes evident that the successor of the Prophet should be fixed or appointed by God Himself. In support of this we refer to the incident of Bani Aqmer Bin Sasa'a. The incident runs thus: The Prophet invited a tribe to Islam. The head of the tribe asked: "If we follow you, and if you succeeded in establishing your religion; then would you give us the charge of the affairs after your death?"

The Prophet replied: "The matter belongs to God. He does however He wishes."

Reason too dictates the same. There comes a Messenger from God; he then leaves his people and the religion without a guardian, giving the people a room to do whatever they desire. Reason spurns such a thing. In such a case what would remain



of the religion? When things go such, Yazid Bin Mawiya and Motawakkil Abbasi could have easily become the caliph of the Prophet. It is common sense that a religion has a system regulated by God.

Therefore, everything of it should be regulated by God. The Prophet was quick aware of that fact. He introduced Ali as his successor on every occasion of his proclamations of the Divine decrees. Ghadir was one among others.

Now let us see who Ali was, and what distinction(s) he had, that he became the choice of God for the office of the leadership of the Muslims in succession to the Prophet.

Since his childhood, Ali was brought up by the holy Prophet. (The year of drought had hit Mecca. The Prophet by way of sympathy with his uncle, Abu Taleb, took Ali, one among his cousins, and kept him with himself in his home. Ali (then was a boy of six years.) Amidst all the people Ali was the first one to accept the call of the Prophet. Ali was then between ten or twelve years of age. This shows that since his infancy Ali was acquainted with Islam and Islam became rooted in him, as blood in his veins. Next to the Prophet there was no one else except Ali who had deeply rooted faith in Islam.

Khaja Naseeruddin Tosi describes, "Ali was cleverer than others. He was a man of strong sense. He was always in the company of the Prophet. In generosity, he was the foremost of all. Besides the Prophet he was one of the most pious ones and great worshippers. Among all, the preference of faith goes only to him. He was the man of eloquence in which his word was strength and faith to which others were short. His opinion was to the point and most correct, while others erred. Towards protection of the Qur'an and towards the execution of its commands his attention surpassed all."

According to the English thinker and historian, Thomas Carlyle, Ali was a man of brave nature, and a great soul. Love and virtue flowed from the fountain of his conscience, while flames of bravery leaped from his heart. His courage surpassed that of a lion but blended with kindness.

Poles Salama, a Lebanese Christian law scholar says, "In judgment he never allowed a distinction. Whatever to be distributed among the people he used to do equally and on parity. He never drew a line of distinction between a servant and a master. The condition of the miserable ones used to upset him. It was always before his sight that the pains and misery of life, like the rhyme of a verse, is felt by all people."

This shows the merit that qualified Ali to be the choice of God. And on the pedestal of these realities the Shia people adhered to the path pointed out by the Prophet. In other words, they obeyed Ali in his capacity as the leader of Islam, the Imam of the nation, leader of the people, executor of the commandments of the holy Qur'an, the protector of justice and law, and the guardian of the rights of the masses; in short, the immediate successor and the rightful caliph of the Prophet. They recognized him as the leader who translated the Qur'anic banners into practice. Ali always adhered to the contents of the Ghadir that had taken place by God's decree. He thus remained faithful to Islam, to the Prophet of Islam, and to the commandments of Islam to such extent that he neither added anything thereto nor did he reduced there from. He did not walk where the Prophet had not set his foot. He only followed the footprints of the Prophet.

Had they acted, after the demise of the Prophet, in line with the command of the holy Prophet? Ghadir, or in line with the Prophet's declarations in various occasions to the effect that Ali was his successor, Islam would have had been much

stronger worldwide. Wolter, the French philosopher, says, "The last wish of Muhammad was not acted upon. He had appointed Ali in his own place."

It is a remarkable fact to mention here that the event of Ghadir is not only a historical one, but a religious event based on truth. Hence, its importance binds every Muslim to investigate the truth and stick to it once found. The main thing that comes to light in Ghadir is the right and correct choice of the leadership, guardianship, and the guidance for the people of truth. One should believe in the just government of the just leader. An example of such a government can not be found beyond that of Ali himself, which lasted nearly five years when he was the caliph, the torch of Ghadir is burning from age to age in our minds. Its spirit is in the bodies of societies. To discuss this issue of Ghadir so often and repeatedly is only to point to the truth and preserve its challenge, so as to keep the banner of justice high against tyranny and ignorance. As such, Ghadir is the issue of mankind. The voice of the Prophet is still ringing in the ears of those who seek truth and defend the truth. It is the obligation of man to accept the fact and remind others of it. And it shall be as long as man is alive.

## **Hazrat Abbas (p.b.u.h.) Sermon in Mecca\***

***Abstract:** This article represent Hazrat Abbas's sermon which was done while he witnessed the sad situation happening to the grandson of the prophet Muhammad, along with his companions. They were forced by Yazid's agents to leave Mecca and weren't allowed to do their pilgrimage completely.*

***Keywords:** Hazrat Abbas's sermon, Last Hajj*

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\* Translated by: Jalil Dorrani

It was the holy month of Zil-Hajj, in the year 60 A.H. when scores of people enter the blessed city of Mecca to perform the pilgrimage. The grandson of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) along with his faithful companions were forced by Yazid's agents to leave Mecca thereby leaving pilgrimage rituals incomplete. Hazrat Abbas (p.b.u.h.) witnessing the sad situation goes on the roof of the holy Ka'ba and addressed the following sermon :

*"All praise be to the Almighty Allah, Who honoured this house (The holy Ka'ba) because of his (Imam Husain's) father, and set it as the Qibla of the Muslims, which till then was only a house .*

*O' evil creatures and infidels, do you close the way of this house for the pious and holy Imam? You close the way upon one who is more worthy and nearer to this house than anyone else !*

*If it was not for the Will of the Almighty Allah, the Divine mystery and the Divine test, then surely, the house (of Allah) would have moved towards the Imam. For touching her blessed hands, while the people touching the Hajr al-Aswad (the black stone) .*

*If my master (Imam Husain) will was not in conformity with the Will of Allah, I would have attacked you, like an angry eagle attacking a sparrow in the air, and would have sacrificed my life for my pious leader .*

*Do you threaten a brave man who has not been fearful of death even at childhood, and considered it a sport? Never!*

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*Think and see who is the one who drinks wines (Yazid)? And who is the owner of Kauser (drinking pond in the Heaven) (i.e. Imam Husain?)*

*Ponder and see in whose house drinking of alcohol and dancing by women is common (Yazid); and in whose house is witnessed revelation of the holy Qur'an (Imam Husain's)!*

*Ponder and see in whose house is corruption and evil (Yazid)? And in whose house is found purity and verses of the holy Qur'an (Imam Husain)!*

*You are heading toward the same wrong way that the Quraish went. They planned to kill the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and you, too, plan to kill his grandson. As they couldn't do anything to him during Amirul Muminin's era; you, too, cannot implement your scheme against Imam Husain as long as I am alive!*

*Know that you cannot succeed in your evil intention unless you kill me first! I hope you will not achieve your evil aim, and may the wrath of Almighty Allah be on you, your forefathers, and sons forever!"*

# Understanding the Holy Qur'an

By: Majid Ma'aref\*

**Abstract:** *due to the Qur'an's concise nature, there is a need for interpretation. The prophet Muhammad is the first interpreter, who was followed by the Ahl al-Bayt. This essay gives a brief account of teaching and also understanding the Qur'an in the time of the prophet. There are 3 ways to this purpose as the historical evidences show which are: 1. **Ismā** (hearing) 2. **Iqrā** (recitation) and 3. **The System of Privileging by the Qur'an.***

*The writer discusses about the ways of interpretation which are: 1. **Expressing the Example in Deed** 2. **Oral Explanations about the Qur'an** and 3. **Answering the Qur'anic Queries of the Companions.***

*At the end of the article, the writer puts the position of Ahl al-Bayt in dispute by mentioning the Hadith of Saqalain, which is a proof for all the Muslims till the Day of Judgement! He also counts some valuable results gained by believing this Hadith which at last, leads to follow the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt.*

**Key words:** *holy Qur'an, Tafsir(interpretation), teaching the Qur'an, understanding the Qur'an, Ismā, Iqrā, prophet Muhammad(p.b.u.h), ways of interpretation, Hadith Saqalain, Ahl al-Bayt.*

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From the beginning of Islam, the exegesis of Qur'an has been one of the earliest Islamic disciplines to be under the Muslims' focus. The reason for this focus is the Qur'an's concise nature and the readers' consequent need for the explanation of the *mujmalāt* (the brief expressions in the Qur'an). According to definite evidences, the prophet Muhammad is the first interpreter, who explained the Qur'an for the Muslims. After him, the *Ah al-Bayt* took the charge.

This essay tries to give a short account of the historical evidences related to the understanding of the Qur'an and the ways of achieving that understanding.

### **Teaching the Qur'an in the Time of the holy Prophet**

The holy Qur'an has been concise in such cases as the historical accounts, the events in the age of the Prophet, and, more importantly, in *Āyāt al-Ahkām* (the verses related to the religious rules). So, during the Prophet's life, the Muslims came up with questions for which they referred to the Prophet and got an answer.

On the other hand, the most important means for the Prophet to prove his truth and guide the people was the Qur'an, which he used both in Mecca and Medina.

As the historical evidences show, he had two ways of explaining the Qur'an.

#### **1) *Ismā'***

Literally, *Ismā'* means make (somebody) hear (something). Technically, it means "To make the people (especially the unbelievers in Mecca) hear the Qur'an". In those years, the Prophet sat in *Masjid-al-Harām* (the Grand Mosque of Mecca)



and recited the Qur'an to the people<sup>1</sup>. Sometimes, he recited those verses in his salat and made the people hear those warnings, as the Qur'an says, "This Qur'an hath been revealed to me by inspiration, that I may warn you and all whom it reaches" (6:19). Obviously, in these cases, people heard the Qur'an without any mediation; therefore, the Prophet's mission, which was giving the revealed words to the people, met no obstruction.

For, the Meccan verses were about the major beliefs (like the existence of God or Restoration) and, because of their repetition, they had become comprehensible.

Moreover, the audiences were the Arabs and familiar with the language of Qur'an. So, they had no difficulty in understanding those verses, especially the warnings.

For example, in some historical and tafsir books<sup>2</sup>, we read:

Once Walīd b. Mughaira, then a leader of the unbelievers, had gone to Mecca. He went close to the Prophet to hear the Qur'an. The Prophet was reciting Sura number 40. Influenced by these verses, Walīd went back home, without returning to his people. His friends thought he had converted to Islam!

Hearing the Qur'an, many of the unbelievers were influenced. Among them were Jubair b. Muṭ'am and Ṭufail b. 'Amr-al-Dusī (Rāmyār 214-219).

Therefore, the Quraish leaders, who were afraid of this, forbid listening to the Qur'an, and even did not allow the Prophet to do his salat in Masjid-al -Harām or recite the Qur'an

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<sup>1</sup> As the Qur'an says, "It is He Who has sent among the Unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to purify them..." (62:2). So, the first step the Prophet took was to recite the Quran to the people.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ibn Hishām 289; al-Suyūṭī, vol. 4: 5; al-Ṭabrisī, vol. 10: 584; al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, vol. 20: 92.

## 26. Safinah

to the people.<sup>1</sup>

The verse "Seest thou one who forbids a votary when he (turns) to pray?" (96:9,10), which reprimands Abū-Jahl<sup>2</sup>, refers to these obstructions against the Prophet. But, since the Prophet was successful and influential in *Isma'*, God encouraged him to stand against the unbelievers and continue his job, as in the last verses of Sura al-alaq (96)<sup>3</sup>.

## 2) Iqrā'

In Qur'anic terms, *iqrā'* means "to teach the qirā'a (reading) of the Qur'an and ask the learner about it and correct him/her" (al-Ṭabrisī vol. 10:719). Hence, Muqrī for the teacher is different from qārī (the person who recites the Qur'an). The Prophet used *iqrā'* for the believers, whereas *ismā'* was used for the unbelievers. However, since the audiences were usually the Arabs and had no difficulty in understanding it, the Prophet conveyed some Qur'anic concepts and did the *iqrā'*.

This was necessary because, after conversion, the believers needed to know the religious rules, when their details were not explained in the Qur'an. Therefore, the Prophet gradually explained them, by word or deed, and taught them the interpretation of many verses. Of course, in Mecca, the Prophet encountered many restrictions in teaching the Qur'an to the believers. He did this job in secret places, far from the unbelievers, one of which was the house of Arqam b. Arqam in the Mount of Ṣafā ('Askarī, 333). But after migration to Medina, mosque was the main center for teaching the Qur'an.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Unbelievers say, 'Listen not to this [K]oran, but talk at random in the midst of its (reading), that ye may gain the upper hand.'" (41:26).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. al-Ṭabrisī Vol 10: 782; al-Ṭabātabā'ī, vol. 20: 327, 329.

<sup>3</sup> "Nay, heed him [=Abu Jahl] not..." (96:19).

Moreover, as the major teacher, he appointed some of his friends, like 'Ubāda b. Ṣāmit, Abdullah b. Mas'ud, Mu'adh b. Jabal, and Ubayy b. Ka'b al-Anṣārī to teach Qur'an.

'Ubāda b. Ṣāmit says, "When a *muhajir* (immigrant) came to Medina, the Prophet appointed one of us (the teachers of the Qur'an) to teach it to him. So, all the time the Qur'an was heard in the mosque. Once the Prophet ordered that the *qārīs* should recite it more quietly so that the voices would not mix" (al-Zaraqānī 234).

At that time, the important issue in teaching the Qur'an was transferring the Qur'anic notions to the learners. It seems that the Prophet had a special program in this regard. One of the teachers of Qur'an in the period of *tābi'in*<sup>1</sup> Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī says, "The Prophet taught the Qur'an in 10 verses packs to his Companions. They did not pass any 10-verse section until they had learnt the issues, or the religious rules related to it" (al-Dimashqī, 4).<sup>2</sup> So, we see that the *iqrā'* involved the teaching of both the words and their meanings. Under the Prophet's supervision, some of the Companions reached a high level of knowledge (in *fiqh* or *tafsir*) so that they could be sent as teachers or missionaries to different areas.

### 3) The System of Privileging by the Qur'an

To expand the Qur'anic culture in the society, the Prophet developed a system, known as "privileging by Qur'an". He said, "The best *'ibāda* (kind of worship) is reading (*qirā'a*) the Qur'an" (al-Ṭabrisī vol. 1: 84). So, he encouraged the Muslims to read the Qur'an more. Considering that, at that time, learning

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<sup>1</sup> Those who saw the Companions, but not the holy Prophet.

<sup>2</sup> There are also some hadiths which say, "He did the *iqrā'...*" So, *iqrā'* refers to teaching. Cf. al-'Askari 157.

## 28. *Safinah*

the Qur'an was not separate from understanding it and contemplating on the verses, we can better understand the significance of the above hadith. The Prophet said, "The best of you is the one who learns the Qur'an and teaches it to others"(al-Bukhārī 594; al-Tirmidhī 159; al-Majlisī 186). In this way, he

put all the Muslims in the course of teaching or learning the Qur'an. He kept the hafiz (memorizer) or *qārī* of Qur'an in a higher level, especially in leading the congregational salat and advised the Muslims that "Your imam in the congregational salat should be the one who knows more Qur'an" (Abī Dāwūd 159,160).

In this manner, the Prophet emphasized on the value of a hafiz or *qārī* of the Qur'an in this world. Moreover, he talked about their spiritual position in the Day of Judgment. This hadith is famous: "In the Day of Judgment, the hafiz or *qārī* of the Qur'an is told, 'Read the Qur'an and get degrees because your position in the Paradise equals the last verse you remember and recite.'" (al-Ṭabrisī, 1 .85; al-Tirmidhī,163).

## **Ways of Interpretation at the Time of the Prophet**

In the time of the Prophet, interpretation was easy. There was no trace of terminological, literary, or other arguments, which later came to tafsir books. The Prophet Muhammad(p.b.u.h) explained everything in brief statements and even, occasionally, elucidated them, in one word.

However, as the remaining records show, he used a specific diversity in interpreting the Qur'an. Some of those ways will be mentioned here:

## 1) Expressing the Examples in Deed

In some cases the Prophet expressed the importance of the verses in his doings and showed their truth to the Companions. There are many instances of this kind of behavior, especially in case of the rules and the social issues. Let us look at some instances:

- A) The Prophet told his Companions, "Do the salat as you have seen I do it" (al-Bukhārī 117). Clearly, the manner of the Prophet's salat is, in one sense, the interpretation of "And be steadfast in prayer" (2: 43, 110, etc) and the Muslims adhered to it, as a *wājib* (obligatory) tradition. This holds true of other rules like *zakā*, *ṣawm*, and hajj.
- B) In the case of the argument between the Prophet and the Christians of Najrān, the verse of Mubāhala was sent down, which reads, "If anyone disputes in this matter with thee, now after full knowledge hath come to thee, say: 'Come! Let us gather together,--Our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our selves and your selves; then let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of Allah on those who lie" (3:62).

For acting according to this verse, the Prophet went to the place of Mubāhala [=invocation of the curse] with Imam Ali, Hazrat Fatima, Imam Hasan and Imam Husain (al-Dimashqī 379). In this manner, he showed them that Hasan and Husain (p.b.u.t) are "our sons", Fatima is "our women" and Ali is "our selves". He did similarly in the case of the verse of taḥīr.

## 2) Oral Explanations about the Qur'an

In many cases, the Prophet explained the Qur'an orally to the Companions. In this regard, there are reliable traditions in the Sunni and Shia books. Let us look at some of them:

- A) Interpreting "those whose portion is not wrath and who go not astray" (1:7), the Prophet said " 'those whose portion is wrath' are the Jews and 'those who go astray' are the Christians" ( Suyūfī, vol. 4: 245).
  
- B) Explaining the verse "thus, have we made of you an Ummah justly balanced [= *wasaf*]" (2:143), he said, "'*wasaf*' means 'adl', which means that God has made you an average and middle-of-the-road people" (al-Suyūfī 246).
  
- C) Imam al-Sadiq says, "When the verse 'obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you" (4:59) was sent down, the Prophet said, "Every believer who has me as his *mawla*, should have Ali as his *mawla*." He has also said, "I tell you, the believers, not to separate from the Book of God and *Ahl al-Bayt*. I have asked God not to separate *Ahl al-Bayt* from the Qur'an, until they come to me in the Day of Judgment" (al-Kulaynī 287).
  
- D) Suyūfī has related a hadith: Interpreting "Then do you remember Me; I will remember you" (2:152), the Prophet said, "In this verse, God exclaims, 'O my servants, remember me with your worship, and I will remember you with my forgiveness.'" (al-Suyūfī vol.1:287).

### **3) Answering the Qur'anic Queries of the Companions**

In some cases, the Prophet answered the queries of the Companions and solved their problems. For example, we read in the tafsir books of the Sunnis and the Shia: When "It is those who believe and mix not their beliefs with wrong—that are (truly) in security, for they are on right guidance" (5:82) was sent down, some of the Companions asked, "Who is among us that has not wronged himself?" The Prophet said, "Here wrong means Shirk (polytheism). Have you not heard what Luqmān, the true servant of God, said, 'False worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing' (3:97)" (al-Ṭabrisī vol. 3:506)

Also, about "Pilgrimage there to is a duty men owe to Allah,—those who can [find a way to that=] afford the journey" (3:97), the Prophet was asked, "What does 'way' mean in this verse?",

To which the Prophet answered, "Provisions and vehicle" (al-Suyūfī vol. 4:250).

Likewise, there are other questions and answers in the hadith-based tafsir books.

This continued in all the years of the Prophet. Some scholars believe that the Prophet clarified all the Qur'an for the Companions (al-Dhahabi 49). Furthermore, many of the Companions added the explanations to the margins of their *muṣhafs* (=codices). These explanations existed up to the time of the first caliphs, since which time they were gradually forgotten.

### **The Heirs of the Prophetic Knowledge**

After the Prophet, the most knowledgeable about the Qur'an are the *Ahl al-Bayt*. During his life, the Prophet acknowledged not only their political qualifications, but also their knowledge.

### 32. *Safinah*

For instance, the hadiths "I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate" and "I am the house of knowledge and Ali is its gate." (al-Tirmidhi 596) are definite proofs for Imam Ali's knowledge.

The Shia believe that the knowledge of the holy Imams has a heavenly and divine root, and is not confined to learned information. But even if one does not accept this, undeniably, among the Companions, Ali was the closest to the Prophet and partook of the latter's knowledge. Ibn Is'hāq, one of the earliest Sunni historians, writes, "One of God's favors on Ali was that

he was reared by the Prophet, since his childhood before Islam" (Ibn Hishām, 262). During this time, he was under the Prophetic knowledge and he inherited it. Imam Ali says, "My relation to the Prophet was in a way that when I asked, he answered and when I was silent, he began to speak" (al-Tirmidhī 595).

Under the interpretation for "and that ears (that should bear the tale and) retain its memory should bear its (lessons) in remembrance", the great interpreter al-Ṭabrisī writes that those ears are Ali's. Then he quotes Imam Ali "When this verse was sent down, the Prophet told me, 'I have asked God to give you ears that bear the tale' and because the Prophet's prayer, I never forgot what the Prophet told me" (al-Ṭabrisī vol. 10:519).

In his life, Imam Ali talked repeatedly about the Prophet's teachings and his learning from him. Take for instance this hadith: Once Ali predicted some future events in a way that his companions were surprised. "Someone said to him 'O Amirul Muminin! You have been given the knowledge of the unknown?' Amirul Muminin laughed and said to the man, who belonged to the tribe of Bani Kilab, '[...] these matters



have been acquired from him (namely the Prophet) who knew them. ' "(al-Seyed al-Radi, sermon 126).

Many times, Imam Ali said, "Ask me before losing me" (Suyūfī vol.4:233). About his Qur'anic knowledge, he said, "Ask me about the Book of God. By God, there is no verse except that I know it is revealed in day or night, in the plain or the mountain" (ibid). The great Companion Abdullah b. Mas'ud said, "The Qur'an has seven aspects. Each aspect has a surface and a depth. The surface and depth of Qur'an are all in Ali"(ibid).

Anyway, Imam Ali's knowledge, to which all the Companions testified, is a good reason for referring to him as the best person, after the death of the Prophet. But, more significantly, there is the position it assigns the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

### **The Position of *Ahl al-Bayt***

In both the Sunni and Shia books we read that the Prophet has said, "I leave among you two precious things—the Book of God and *Ahl al-Bayt*. As long as you grasp them, you will never go astray. And they will not be separated until they will come to me at *hawd al-kawthar*." This hadith, according to hadith scholars, is a definite and frequently-related (*al-mutawātir*)<sup>1</sup> hadith. In his book *'Abaqāt al-Anwār*, the great Shia scholar Mīr-Hāmid Husain al-Hindī has related it from about 200 Sunni scholars.

We believe that this hadith is a proof for all the Muslims till the Day of Judgment and can lead to valuable results regarding the position of the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Here are some of those results:

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<sup>1</sup> A hadith which has been related by so many reliable people that it has become reliable./Translator

### 34. *Safinah*

- 1) The Qur'an and *Ahl al-Bayt* are strongly bound together and this bond will last till the Day of Judgment.

Considering this bond, the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) guaranteed the guidance and salvation of the Muslims in grasping to both the Qur'an and *Ahl al-Bayt*. Grasping only the Qur'an and turning away from the *Ahl al-Bayt* is considered a kind of transgression and causes straying.

- 2) The requirement for grasping to the *Ahl al-Bayt* is the Muslims' referring to them, and their accepting the guides and commands of these two items.

- 3) The word and deed of the *Ahl al-Bayt* is just like the Qur'an; because the guidance of the Muslims is guaranteed in grasping them.

- 4) The *Ahl al-Bayt* are *ma'şūm* (infallible) because the authenticity of their word and deed depends on this.

Obviously, these results depend on two basic qualities in the *Ahl al-Bayt* -- *ilm* and *işmat*. These attributes have been indicated by Allah in the Qur'an (33:33, 56:78). Therefore, every Muslim has to follow the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

Praising the knowledge of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, the Prophet Muhammad said, "Do not teach them anything because they know more than you" (al-Kulayni 287). Regarding their infallibility, he said, "Beware that my family [that is, *Ahl al-Bayt*] do not take you away from the way of truth and they do not lead you astray." (ibid).

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## **The global civilization created by Islam**

By: Hyder Reza Zabeth\*

**Abstract:** *Islam, as a religious ideology, is one of the most durable civilizations with the greatest impact on the world, which is based on a unity that stands completely against any racial or ethnic discrimination. Major racial or ethnic groups as Arabs, Iranians, Africans, Indians, Chinese, etc embraced Islam and contributed to the building of Islamic civilization. This essay, discusses generally the global civilization created by Islam, the characteristics of Islamic civilization and its basis, importance of education and learning in the development of Islamic civilization, the significant impact of the Islamic civilization upon Europe in a number of different ways during the middle ages. At the end of the essay, the writer has proved that the scientific revolution could not have occurred without the help of the Muslims considering the fact that Muslims had numerous advances in various fields like medicine, physics, optics, etc. He then lists some of the medieval European scholars who were influenced by the writings of the Islamic scholars.*

**Keywords:** *global civilization, Islam, Islamic civilization, characteristics (features) of Islamic civilization, Islamic scholars, the Middle Ages, Scientific Revolution, Renaissance*

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*"Thus, We have appointed you a middle nation, that you may be witnesses upon mankind." (The holy Qur'an, 2:143)*

What gives birth to a civilization is a belief system according to which specific ways of life appear in a given polity. These specific ways of life of a large social group, then, produce specific way of organizing social, political and economic activities of that polity; this, in turn, necessitates the establishment of institutions to carry out the various tasks, which fulfill the commandments, customs and rites originating from the set of beliefs held sacred by that polity.

By the appearance of Islam, the landmarks of earthly and heavenly lives became clearly distinguished. By divinity, humanity achieved justice, equality, dignity and freedom. Allah alone is worshipped; the Muslim is led and submits to the orders of Allah alone. Allah is also the owner of everything. Islam was neither limited in place, national in scope, restricted to its own followers, nor for a special class. It was rather for all humans, with a broad horizon, establishing human brotherhood.

*"O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct". The holy Qur'an (49:13).*

With the advent of Islam and the spreading of its light over the eastern states, this spirit was bolstered and augmented. It worked to unite individuals of the Islamic State, despite their races and origins. Consequently, Islam, as a religious ideology, an approach to life and a unifying force, managed to establish

a human unity based on freedom, equality and tolerance; acting to abolish political barriers between various countries extending over three continents to give them a certain unified form.

Islam was destined to become a world religion and to create a glorious civilization that stretched from one end of the globe to the other. Already during the early Muslim caliphates, first the Arabs, then the Iranians, and later the Turks set about to develop classical Islamic civilization. Later, in the 13th century, both Africa and India became great centers of Islamic civilization. Soon after Muslim kingdoms were established in the Malay-Indonesian region, while Chinese Muslims flourished throughout China.

It was not the warlike prowess of the early Muslims which enabled them to conquer half the then known world, and convert half that world so firmly that the conversion stood unshaken to this day. It was their righteousness, humanity, and their superiority in those respects over other men.

The Muslims intermarried freely with the conquered people of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and all North Africa - none of their conquerors had ever done before. The advent of Islam brought them not only political freedom but also intellectual freedom. The result was what might be expected from so great a liberation of peoples who had never really had a chance before - a wonderful flowering of Islamic civilization, which in the next generations showed its fruits in science, art, and literature.

The simple, rational, and Arab character of Muslim government passed with the last of the Omayyids to Spain; the caliphate of the East was transferred to Abbasids, who were already under the Iranian's influence, and the capital was removed from Syria to Iraq. The city of Baghdad - a much more glorious Baghdad than the present city of the name, a

triumph of town planning, sanitation, police arrangement, and street lighting - sprang into existence.

Nominally, the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad lasted for full five hundred years, but for the last three hundred and fifty years the real sovereign power had passed to the Turks. There was change of rulers, but the civilization remained that of the Islam. Indeed the condition of the common people throughout the Muslim empire remained other people in the world in education, sanitation, public security, and general liberty.

Its material prosperity was the envy of the Western world, whose merchant corporations vied with one another for the privilege of trading with it. In other countries, even in Europe, in the same period, the peasantries were serfs, bound to the land they cultivated; the artisans had still a servile status, and the mercantile communities were only just beginning, by dint of cringing and of bribery, to gain certain privileges. In the Muslim realm, the merchant, the peasant, and the artisan were all free men.

No color or race prejudice existed in Islam. Black, brown, white, and yellow people mingled in its markets, mosques, and places upon a footing of complete equality and friendliness. It was a civilization in which there were differences of rank and wealth, but these did not correspond to class distinctions as understood in the West, much less to Indian Hindu caste distinctions. No man in the cities of the Muslim Empire ever died of hunger or exposure at his neighbor's gate. A noble feature of Islamic civilization was its cleanliness. In every Muslim town, there was a public hot bath, and public fountains for drinking and washing purposes.

Islam is a religion for all people from whatever race or background they might be. That is why the Islamic civilization is based on a unity which stands against any racial or ethnic

discrimination. Such major racial and ethnic groups as the Arabs, Iranians, Turks, Africans, Indians, Chinese, and Malays, in addition to numerous smaller units embraced Islam and contributed to the building of Islamic civilization.

Moreover, Islam did not oppose learning from the earlier civilizations and incorporating their science and culture into its own world view, as long as they did not oppose the principles of Islam. Each ethnic and racial group, which embraced Islam, made its contribution to the Islamic civilization. The sense of goodwill was so much emphasized that it overcame all local attachments to a particular tribe, race, or language--all of which became subservient to the universal brotherhood of Islam.

The global civilization thus created by Islam permitted people of diverse ethnic backgrounds to work together in cultivating various arts and sciences. Although the civilization was Islamic, even non-Muslim "people of the book" participated in the intellectual activity whose fruits belonged to everyone.

The global civilization created by Islam also succeeded in activating the mind and thought of the people who entered its fold. Because of Islam, the nomadic Arabs became torchbearers

of knowledge and learning. The Iranians, who had created a great civilization before the rise of Islam, produced much more science and learning in the Islamic period than before.

The same can be said about the Turks and other peoples who embraced Islam. The religion of Islam was itself responsible for not only the creation of a world civilization in which people of many different ethnic backgrounds participated, but also it played a central role in developing intellectual and cultural life, on a scale not seen before. For some eight



hundred years Arabic remained the major intellectual and scientific language of the world. During the centuries following the rise of Islam, Muslim dynasties ruling in various parts of the Islamic world bore witness to the flowering of Islamic culture and thought.

### **The Characteristic of Islamic Civilization**

The symbol of Islamic civilization is the holy Ka'aba, the stability of which symbolizes the permanent and immutable character of Islam.

Once the spirit of the Islamic revelation had brought into being, out of the heritage of previous civilizations and through its own genius, the civilization whose manifestations may be called Islamic, the main interest turned away from change and adaptation.

The arts and sciences in Islam are based on the idea of unity, which is the heart of the Muslim revelation. Just as all genuine Islamic art, whether it be the Alhambra or mosque in Paris or London, provides the plastic forms through which one can contemplate the Divine Unity manifesting itself in multiplicity, so do all the sciences that can properly be called Islamic reveal the unity of Nature. One might say that the aim of all the Islamic sciences and, more generally speaking, of all the medieval and ancient cosmological sciences is to show the unity and interrelation of all that exists, so that, in contemplating the unity of the cosmos, man may be led to the unity of the Divine Principle, of which the unity of Nature is the image.

Islamic civilization, as a whole, is like other traditional civilizations, based upon a point of view: the revelation brought by the holy Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is the

"pure" and simple religion of Adam and Abraham, the restoration of a primordial and fundamental unity. The very word Islam means both "submission" and "peace" or "being at one with the Divine Will."

This was especially true about the sciences of Nature, because most of the ancient cosmological sciences -- Greek, as well as Chaldean, Iranian, Indian, and Chinese -- had sought to express the unity of Nature and was therefore in conformity with the spirit of Islam. Encountering them, the Muslims adopted some elements from each most extensively, perhaps, from the Greeks, but also from the Chaldeans, Indians, Iranians, and perhaps, in the case of alchemy, even from the Chinese.

They united these sciences into a new corpus, which was to grow over the centuries and become part of the Islamic civilization, integrated into the basic structure derived from the Revelation itself.

The lands destined to become parts of the medieval Islamic world -- from Transoxiana to Andalusia -- were consolidated into a new spiritual universe within a single century after the demise of the holy Prophet of Islam.

### **Importance of Education in the Development of Islamic Civilization**

The Muslim universities of those days led the world in learning and research. All knowledge was their field; and they took in and gave out the utmost knowledge attainable in those days. They were probably the most enlightened institutions that have ever been a part of a religion. Following the commands and traditions, Muslim rulers insisted that every

Muslim child should be educated, and they gave considerable support to institutions, and learning in general.

This contributed largely with to make elementary education almost public among the Muslims. It was this great liberality, which the Muslims displayed in educating their people in the schools, which was one of the most potent factors in the brilliant and rapid growth of Islamic civilization.

Every place, from the mosque to hospital, was a place of learning. Scholars also addressed gatherings of people in their own homes. The mosque played a very great part in the spread of education in Islam. Once established, such mosques could develop into well-known places of learning, often with hundreds, sometimes with thousands of students, and frequently contained important libraries.

Teaching and learning in most large mosques became a fully-fledged profession, and the mosque school took on the semblance of a university later on. So important centers of higher education, indeed, that many of them still exist today as the oldest universities in the world. Among them are Al-Zaytuna in Tunisia, Al-Azhar in Egypt, and Al-Qarawiyyin in Fez, Morocco.

The scholars of Asia, Africa, and Europe held the universities of Granada, Seville and Cordoba in the highest level. In the ninth century, in department of theology at Cordoba, alone, four thousand students were enrolled, and the total number of students of the University reached almost eleven thousand. In addition, on the eve of the British occupation, in Al-Azhar, were already 7600 students and 230 professors.

In the early Islamic era, the mosque was used for teaching of the Islamic sciences and literary arts. After the mid ninth century, the legal courses became more important. Scientific

subjects were also delivered, and included astronomy and engineering at Al-Azhar, medicine at Al-Azhar and the mosque of Ibn Tulun in Egypt and at the Qarawiyyin.

Islam contributed Europe and subsequently the rest of the world, with its system of education, including universality and its methods of teaching and granting diplomas.

The influence also came in the form of the many translated books of the Islamic scholars, which formed the core of European education in their first universities (Montpellier, Bologna, Paris, Oxford...), which all were founded in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries. [1]

"Jamia" means co-existence of a mosque and a school, even when they are in separate buildings.

The "Ulama" were the most enlightened thinkers of their time and saved the Islamic culture from deterioration in different ways. The 'Ulama sought for knowledge "even though it were in China!"

## **Islamic Civilizations' Impact upon Europe**

The Western writers have often used the word Arabs or Muhammadans for Muslims, and "the Arabic civilization" for Islamic Civilization. In other instances, the words Saracen and Moor are also used for the Muslims (Arabs and non-Arabs) from various parts of Europe, Africa, Arabia and Asia. During 800-1500 C.E., all scientific works were written in Arabic. It is only after colonization of Muslim lands that this practice became less prevalent and in many instances was eliminated.

During the Middle Ages, the Islamic World had a very significant impact upon Europe, which in turn cleared the way for the "Renaissance and the "Scientific Revolution". In the

Medieval age, Islam and Muslims influenced Europe different ways.

Cities like Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, and Cordoba were the centers of civilization.

These cities were flourishing, and Muslim scientists made tremendous progress in applied, as well as, theoretical Science and Technology. In Europe, however, the situation was much different. Europe was in the Dark Age.

Islamic contributions to science were rapidly translated and transferred from Spain to the rest of Europe. Ibn Haitham's works on Optics (in which he deals with 50 Optical questions put to Muslim scholars by the Franks), was translated widely. The Muslims discovered the principle of Pendulum, which was used to measure time. Many of the principles of Isaac Newton were derived from former Islamic scientific contributions. In the field of chemistry, numerous Islamic works were translated into Latin. One of the fields of study in this area was alchemy. The Muslims by exploring various elements developed a good understanding of the matter. Jabir Ibn-Hayyan (Geber) was the leading chemist in the Muslim world; some scholars link the introduction of the 'scientific method' back to him. A great number of terms used in chemistry such as alcohol, alembic, alkali and elixir are of Islamic origin.

Medicine was a key science developed by the Muslims. Rhazes is one of the famous physists and writers of the Islamic history. Every major city had a hospital; the hospital at Cairo had over 8000 beds, with separate wards for fevers, ophthalmic, dysentery and surgical cases. He discovered the origin of smallpox, and showed that one get it just once in one's life, thus showing the existence of the immune system and how it worked. Muslim doctors were also aware of the

contagious qualities of diseases. Hundreds of medical works were translated into the Latin language.

All of this knowledge, transferred from the Muslims to the Europeans, was the vital raw material for the scientific revolution. Muslims not only passed on Greek classical works but also introduced new scientific theories, without which the European Renaissance could not have occurred. Though many of the Islamic contributions were unacknowledged, they played an integral role in the European transformation.

While historians have written many books on the high level training and education of the Muslims, compared to the Europeans during the dark ages, only few have thought to make connection between their sciences and the scientific development that was to occur later in Europe. The dependence of the latter on the former, however, has been immense. The scientific revolution that took place in Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> century could not have occurred without the help of the Muslims.

The maelstrom brought upon Europe by the intellectual tradition taken from the Muslim world had far-reaching consequences on European life. Education spread throughout Europe, with universities arising in the major cities, the authority of science grew exponentially. Even the powerful church of Rome lost its power as it tried to challenge rationality and scientific realities with superstitions and the fading doctrine of papal authority. [2]

The crusades, in terms of human losses, were one of the most lopsided military campaigns in history, with the exception of the savage massacres of Muslim civilians by the christian armies. However, the crusades, initially being a crushing defeat for the Christian world, would introduce them to the enormity of the gap between them and the Muslims.

At the same time, European scholars were taught by the Muslims in Spain. The translated Greek works introduced the Europeans to an indigenous intellectual tradition that they did not know. It helped a new self-confidence among the scholars of Europe. The European scholars were doubtful between their intellectual loyalty and the strong hatred of their teachers present in their culture. Karen Armstrong explains:

"The Arabs, in particular, were a light to the Christian West, and yet this debt has rarely been fully acknowledged. As soon as the great translation works were completed, scholars in Europe began to shrug off this complicating and schizophrenic relationship with Islam and became very vague indeed, about whom the Arabs really were... There is an unhealthy repression and doublethink about people who are at the same time guides, heroes, and deadly enemies. This is very clear in the scholarship about Islam". [3]

Another factor that plays alongside the long-standing hatred against Islam in Europe is the phenomenon known as Orientalism. Edward Saeid first articulated this concept in his landmark book *Orientalism*, which now should be read by anyone studying Middle Eastern culture or history. Orientalism is the result of the elaboration of the imaginary distinction between East and West: geographically, culturally, morally, and intellectually. The result of Orientalism are claims that go along the lines of " 'We' are like this, but 'they', for unexplainable reasons, are fundamentally different, and in due course, inferior." This in turn serves as justification for "us" to rule "them", to exploit "them", to guide "them" to our enlightened ways. Academic Orientalism gave rise to arrogant, seemingly humanistic ideals, who drove imperialism, whose effects are felt very painfully in the Muslim world. [4]

While the "occidental-oriental" dichotomy of recent centuries identifies the World of Islam as "separate" and "Eastern", that world, is inextricably linked with the West. In general, however, the "Westerners - Europeans - have great difficulty in considering the possibility that they are seriously indebted to the Arab [Islamic] world, or that the Arabs [Muslims] were central to the making of medieval Europe" [5]

"No historical student of the culture of the Western Europe can imagine the intellectual values of the later Middle Ages unless he possesses a vivid awareness of Islam looming in the background." [6]

"The Arabs have left intellectual impression on Europe, and the Christendom will have to confess; He has indelibly written it on the heavens, as anyone may see who reads the names of the stars on a common celestial globe." [7]

"Because Europe was reacting against Islam it belittled the influence of Saracens [Muslims] and exaggerated its dependence on the Greek and Roman heritage. So today an important task for us is to correct this false emphasis and to acknowledge fully our debt to the Arab and Islamic world" [8]

"One of the hallmarks of civilized man is knowledge of the past - [including] the past of others with whom one's own culture has had repeated and fruitful contact; or the past of any group that has contributed to the ascent of man. The Arabs fit profoundly into both of the latter two categories. Nevertheless, in the West the Arabs are not well known. Victims of ignorance as well as misinformation, they and their culture have often been stigmatized." [9]

"Too often science in Arabia has been seen as nothing more than a holding operation. The area has been viewed as a giant storehouse for previously discovered scientific results, keeping them until they could be passed on for use in the West.



However, this is, of course, a travesty of the truth. Certainly, the Arabs did inherit Greek science - and some Indian and Chinese science too, for that matter - and later passed it on to the West. But this is far from being all they did" [10]

An eminent mid-20th century scholar, George Sarton (Harvard University), traces the "roots" of Western intellectual development to the Arab tradition, which was "the outstanding stream, and remained until 14th century, one of the largest streams of medieval thought." Further, "The Arabs were standing on the shoulders of their Greek forerunners, just as the Americans are standing on the shoulders of their European ones. There is nothing wrong in that." Then Sarton criticizes those who say, "The Arabs simply translated Greek writings, they were industrious imitators..." This is not absolutely untrue, but is such a small part of the truth, that when it is allowed to stand alone, it is worse than a lie" [11]

We can list some of the medieval European scholars who were influenced directly or indirectly by the writings of Islamic scholars like Adelard of Bath, Peter Abelard, Robert Grosseteste, Alexander of Hales, Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventura, Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon, Marsilius of Padua, Richard of Middleton, Nicholas Oresme, Joannes Buridanus, Siger of Brabant, John Peckham, Henry of Gant, Williams of Occham, Walter Burley, William of Auvergne, Dante Algheri, Blaise Pascal, and numerous others.

The well-known early 12th century Englishman, Adelard of Bath, often proudly acknowledged his debt to the Muslims - "trained (as he says) by Muslim scientists....I was taught by my Arab masters to be led only by reason, whereas you were taught to follow the halter of the captured image of ancient authority (i.e., authority of the Church)." [12]

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George Sarton pays tribute to Muslim scientists in the 'Introduction to the History of Science,' "It will suffice here to evoke a few glorious names without contemporary equivalents in the West: Jabir ibn Hayyan, al-Kindi, al-Khwarizmi, al-Fargani, al-Razi, Thabit ibn Qurra, al-Battani, Hunain ibn Ishaq, al-Farabi, Ibrahim ibn Sinan, al-Masudi, al-Tabari, Abul Wafa, 'Ali ibn Abbas, Abul Qasim, Ibn al-Jazzar, al-Biruni, Ibn Sina, Ibn Yunus, al-Kashi, Ibn al-Haitham, 'Ali Ibn 'Isa al-Ghazali, al-zarqab, Omar Khayyam. A magnificent array of names which it would not be difficult to extend. If anyone tells you that the Middle Ages were scientifically sterile, just quote these men to him, all of whom flourished within a short period, 750 to 1100 A.D."

Robert Briffault states in the 'Making of Humanity', "It was under the influence of the Arabs and Moorish revival of culture and not in the 15th century, that a real renaissance took place. Spain, not Italy, was the cradle of the rebirth of Europe. After steadily sinking lower and lower into barbarism, it had reached the darkest depths of ignorance and degradation when cities of the Saracen world, Baghdad, Cairo, Cordova, and Toledo, were growing centers of civilization and intellectual activity. It was there that the new life arose which was to grow into new phase of human evolution. From the time when the influence of their culture made itself felt, began the stirring of new life.

"It was under their successors at Oxford School (that is, successors to the Muslims of Spain) that Roger Bacon learned Arabic and the Arabic Sciences. Neither Roger Bacon nor later namesake has any title to be credited with having introduced the experimental method. Roger Bacon was no more than one of apostles of Muslim Science and Method to the Europe; and he never wearied of declaring that knowledge of the Arabic

and Arabic Sciences was for his contemporaries the only way to true knowledge. Discussion as to who was the originator of the experimental method....are part of the colossal misinterpretation of the origins of the European civilization. The experimental method of the Arabs was by Bacon's time widespread and eagerly cultivated throughout Europe.

"Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world; but its fruits were slow in ripening. Not until long after Moorish culture had sunk back into darkness did the giant, which it had given birth to, rise in his might. It was not science only, which brought Europe back to life. Manifold influence from the civilization of Islam communicated its first glow to the European life.

"Although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic Culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the permanent distinctive force of the modern world, and the supreme source of its victory, natural science and the scientific spirit.

"The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories, science owes a great deal more to Arab culture, it owes its existence. The Astronomy and Mathematics of the Greeks were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatized in Greek culture. The Greeks systematized, generalized and theorized, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute method of science, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to the Greek temperament. Only in Hellenistic Alexandria were approaches to scientific work conducted in the ancient classical world. What we call science arose in Europe because of new spirit of enquiry, of new

methods of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics, in a form unknown to the Greeks. The Arabs introduced that spirit and those methods into the European world.

"It is highly probable without the Arabs, modern European civilization would never have arisen at all; it is absolutely certain that but for them, it would not have assumed that character which has enabled it to transcend all previous phases of evolution." [13]

Arnold and Guillaume in "Legacy of Islam" mention the success of Muslims in science and medicine, "Looking back we may say that Islamic medicine and science reflected the light of the Hellenic sun, when its day had fled, and that they shone like a moon, illuminating the darkest night of the European middle Ages; that some bright stars lent their own light, and that moon and stars faded at the dawn of a new day - the Renaissance. Since they had their share in the direction and introduction of that great movement, it may reasonably be claimed that they are still with us." [14]

The Muslims made numerous advances in many fields, especially in physics. They received the physics texts of the Greeks, then translated, corrected, and expanded them greatly. The basis of the study of optics can be attributed directly to the Muslims. Al-Hasan bin Al-Haythem is considered the founder of this field. He and Al-Beirouni also logically came to the conclusion, despite Aristotle, that the speed of light is constant and that light is composed of extremely small particles moving at extremely high speeds, which is the basis of the quantum nature of light, an endlessly celebrated tribute to the 20th century science [15]

The Muslims made monumental strides in the practice and study of medicine. Ibn Sina's text, the "Canon of Medicine" was used as a text in Europe for centuries, and its popularity dwarfed the books of Galen and Hippocrates. Physicians like Abul Qasim al-Zahrawi, Ibn Sina, and Ali Abbas, wrote texts on surgery that would form the foundations of the Western Surgery [16]

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## **The Prophet's Manner in the Husain's Words**

By:Fatemeh Mojtahedi\*

***Abstract:** This essay explains about the behavior and qualities of the prophet of God, Muhammad (p.b.u.h) as described in the book "Makarem-ul-Akhlagh" narrated by the great scholar, Raziuddin Tabarsi. In that book, the qualities of the prophet have been explained in 12 chapters. In the first chapter (prophet's manner), Imam Husain ( p.b.u.h) has talked about the prophet qualities in five contexts. The focus of this essay is on the mentioned chapter. This article consists of the complete translation of the questions and answers in which Imam Husain ( p.b.u.h) asks and Imam Ali replies. The presence of the prophet in the house, his good morals and social personalities, treating his companions, his behavior and manner in general, etc.*

***Keywords:** prophet's manner, Makarem-ul-Akhlagh, qualities of the prophet, Imam Husain ( p.b.u.h)*

Imam Husain ( p.b.u.h) asked about the qualities of the Prophet of God, from his great father in five contexts. The Chief of martyrs questions, and the commander of the believers, Imam Ali, replies; and the topic is the description of the life-history and conduct (morals) of the Majestic and All-glorious Prophet of Islam, Muhammad Ibn Abdullah (Blessing and benedictions of God be upon him and his descendents).

The tradition has been narrated by the great scholar, Raziuddin Tabarsi, who is an eminent personality of the sixth century A.H. [after Hejira] in his book "Makarem-ul-Akhlagh". The complete translation of the questions and answers are as follow:

Husain Ibn Ali ( p.b.u.h) states: I enquired about the presence of the holy Prophet in the house.

He stated: The Prophet did not require permission for his entry. He would divide his presence at home in to 3 purposeful parts; a part for praying the Glorious and Almighty God; another for his family and the third part for himself. He would divide his own part between himself and the people.

His policy in the community was to give more time to the scholars and nobles depending on their religious values. Some had only one assignment, some two, and some others had more questions.

He was busy with them. By setting questions and questioning he would keep them busy with what was advisable and expedient for the community and themselves too. He would say to them:"The ones who are present should inform the absentees, and inform me the words and questions of those who are needy, but are unable to inform me their needs."

Whomsoever informs the ruler of the needs of those who themselves are unable to do so; then the Almighty God will give tranquility and support him (her) on the day of Judgment (Resurrection).

For the pious visitation of the holy Prophet they would enter the house, and would not leave his company unless they acquired some divine knowledge and would leave him as wise guides fore the people. Husain ( p.b.u.h) added: I asked him about the external presence of the Prophet and his social behavior.

Imam Ali replied: the Prophet of God (p.b.u.h.) would hold his tongue except were he was concerned. He encouraged familiarity and friendship amongst people, and never invited them to separation from each other. He respected and honored the great and noble personalities of every community, and gave full authority and allegiance over them. He warned people in time of commotion (disturbances), and without any change in his good character and commendable moral virtues; he would avoid them. He always enquired about the well being of the companions and about the public affairs.

He was a Prophet of moderation, and followed stable policy all the way. He was absolutely vigilant, so that the people would not become tired, and negligent to their path. He was ready at the beck and call of every situation.

He did not go beyond right and just, neither short of, nor exceed.

The most valuable person in his eyes was the one whose benevolence and goodness, by far exceeded others, and the greatest before him was the one who assisted people the most.

Husain( p.b.u.h) asked him about the sitting of the holy Prophet.



He replied: "the Prophet of God (p.b.u.h.) neither sat nor stood but in the remembrance of the Almighty God. In the gatherings he did not reserve special seat for himself; and stopped others from doing so.

Whenever he reached a group or gathering he would sit at any empty place and asked others to do so.

He gave each of his companions his due respect, in such a manner that no one was more respectful than him in the eyes of the Prophet.

Whoever approached the Prophet for work he would wait till the person parted.

Whoever had a request from him, he fulfilled it, or else utter admonitory advice.

His cheerful face and benevolence was for all. He was like a father to all. In the path of righteousness and justice all were equal to him. His meeting was one of patience, forbearance, modesty, and holding in trust. The voice did not raise; regards and respect were not broken, and the blunders and offences remained unrevealed.

He was moderate in his ways. In his gatherings the pious ones were superior and preferred over others. They would do homage and bow down before one another. The elders were respected and the youth received kindness. His people preferred the needy to themselves, and were kind to the strangers (their need were fulfilled).

I enquired "how did he treat his companions?"

He replied: "the Prophet of God was always seen cheerful, having good morals, and soft spoken; he was neither harsh tempered nor rough, neither shout nor rude to anyone; he was not in the habit of blaming or feuding faults with other nor a panegyric.

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He did not take notice of what was of no interest to him. He did not disappoint, and did not despair the ones who had hope in him. He was far from disputes, debates, conflicts, extravagance, going beyond bounds; and of what did not concern him.

He had saved people of things: he did not blame any one, he did not revealing others' dark hidden secrets, and would not talk about anything but what he hoped would be rewarding.

When he spoke the present people were silent, as though a bird had sat on their head. And when he had stopped talking, other people would talk. They never made discussions in his front. He was silent and hearing when other people talked to him.

Whenever someone spoke to him, it seemed as though that person was the first to be speaking. The holy Prophet laughed at whatever made them laugh, and surprised and astonished at the same!

He used to hear the new comers who had undue, inadmissible requests or made unkind remarks; until his companions would summon the strangers to their sides.

He said, "whoever you see a needy, poor person, who is out to supplication to it help him fulfill his need."

He did not accept praise but only from the one who was out to confront.

Husain(p.b.u.h) asked, "how was his silence?"

Imam Ali replied: His silence was four kinds: out of tolerance, out of alertness, intelligence and abstinence, out of moderation or keeping within bounds and out of thought.

Moderation was in looking upon people as one and similar and listening to what they had to say.

Thought and thinking, regarding what remained and what was mortal, transient and non-permanent.

Tolerance and patience were so much a part of his soul that nothing would arouse his anger nor scare him.

And his providence, foresightedness and intelligence were assembled around four things:

Charitable acts, beneficence, and good thoughts, so that it could be a pattern for others.

Keeping away from evil deeds and inadmissible acts, so that others would also abstain from the same.

His struggle was towards the welfare of his community;

And resistance in those acts that included the interest and welfare of the community both in this world and thereafter.

## **Book Review:**

### **Islam: Faith, Practice and History**

**By Seyed Muhammad Rizvi**

**(Ansarian Publications, 2004)**

Review by: Sedighe Shakeri\*

***Abstract:** The book "Islam: Faith, Practice & History" is written by Seyed Muhammad Rizvi in 2004. This book consisting of three main parts "Islamic beliefs, laws and ethics, and history" has been divided into 50 lessons. The writer's aim of compiling the mentioned book is to reply to seekers of truth. He has considered it as a resource, especially for those who have recently submitted to Islam. The Islamic center in Houston, Texas was included it in its tabligh program for new Muslims. Ways of knowing God, the justice of God, prophets and scriptures, Qur'an as the miracle of Islam, The Imamate: succession to the prophet, khilaphat & consultation, the return & resurrection, the Shari'a, Islam's spiritual program, a short biography of the prophet and Imams, and other subjects are the issues discussed in details through the book. The book has been translated into Swahili as well.*

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## **Book Review**

In this article a short explanation about the writer is given followed by introducing propounded issues in the book (with the same order as table of contents of the book). Afterwards some of the structural and content-related qualities of the book will be noticed.

### **1. About the Writer**

The book called "Islam: Faith, Practice & History" is written by Seyed Muhammad Rizvi. He is the son of Seyed Sa'id Akhtar Rizvi who was an Indian-born, Islamic scholar of the Shia and active in promoting Islam in East Africa. He was born in a place called Ushri, Distric Saran Bihar, India, in 1927.

In 1959 Mr. Akhtar Rizvi went to Lindi, Tanzania, where he was appointed the local Islamic scholar. He there learned Kiswahili and improved his English in order to better perform his work as a scholar. His name became synonymous with the word Tabligh (Islamic mission) among the indigenous people of East Africa, and he introduced correspondence courses in Islamic studies in English and Kiswahili besides several other courses for Shia students, some of the courses being taught even outside Africa. Finally, after 43 years living in Tanzania, he died at the age of 76.

He spent all his life on researching, writing and advertising. He has more than 140 books in English and Swahili. Among them, he has so many works about knowing Islam as there are many citations to them all over the book. Some of them are: *the Need for religion, The roots of religion, God of Islam, The Qur'an & hadith, Imamate (The vicegerency of the prophet),*

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*the family life in Islam, the importance of Hijab, Slavery (Islamic and western perspectives), Prophecies of the holy prophet of Islam, Reciprocal rights, Life of Muhammad the prophet, The justice of God, Pork, Wahhabis fitnah exposed, and etc.*

Mr. Seyed Muhammad Rizvi is a Shia scholar and possesses valuable works about different fields and aspects of Islam. Some of them are:

*The ritual and spiritual purity, Shiism: Imamate and Wilayat, Writing an Islamic will, Khums: an Islamic tax, an introduction to the Islamic Shari'ah.*

Most of them are written in English and Swahili. Among them, there are some which have been translated into other languages as Farsi and Arabic.

## **2. A Brief Description of the Book**

### **2.1 General Structure of the Book**

The book which is an introductory treatise on Islamic beliefs, laws and ethics has been organized by the writer into three main parts consisting of fifty lessons. It seems that it has been compiled for the Islamic Education and Information Centre, Toronto in Canada.

This book has 389 pages and for the first time, it has been published in 2004. The course consists of three main parts. Each part includes several lessons, which are short between 3 to 10 pages. The sources used in preparing this course have been duly mentioned at the end of each lesson followed by some questions related to the issues. The number of questions between 2 to 7; but generally, most of the lessons consist of 3 questions. Usually, one of the questions makes the reader think deeply about what he/she has learned from that lesson. As an

example, I can refer to the third question in the lesson 19 which is about the return and resurrection. The question is: "explain how the belief in the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment affects the life of a good Muslim. (You may use some real

example from your own life)". Another Example has been chosen from the 35<sup>th</sup> lesson in which Family Life in Islam has been explained. The question is: "Explain the ways and methods by which you would do silatu r-rahm in today's modern and busy lifestyle of the West".

## **2.2 A Review of the Contents of the Book**

### **2 .2.1 Part: beliefs**

The title of the first part is "beliefs" which consists of 20 lessons. On the whole, quite a few numbers of issues were debated by the writer as follows:

The first lesson begins with this question: why study religion? The writer counts 3 main reasons about God and religion: 1. love of knowing: he reminds us of various questions but emphasizes that the first question which comes to the mind is about our creation i.e. where we have come from and where we will go to. Therefore studying about God and also religion is necessary so as to reply to these questions. 2. The sense of thankfulness: the writer notes some examples of the God power and the intellectual ability of man himself and at last he concludes that we should find the source of this power and offer him our thanks. 3. Preventing possible danger: discussion about existence of the court of great judge and the belief in world after death are referred. Then he states some necessary qualities of religion i.e. "belief follows understanding", and finally in this lesson the religion is

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introduced as a complete guidance to develop body, mind, and spirits of human beings as a whole.

In the second lesson, ways of knowing God consisting of the inner way and experiment beyond sensation based on the principle of cause and effect have been clearly and briefly stated by the writer using some examples.

The title of the third lesson is "Design in the universe". The writer explains that the world of existence firmly rests on the foundation of perfect orderliness and that it could never have come to exist on the basis of chance or accident. Then some attributes of God such as his needlessness and omniscience and invisibility of God and finally the basis of God knowledge are discussed in the next lesson.

In Lesson 5 applying the uniform pattern of the universe by one and only God, using some scientific evidences, is proved by the writer.

The title of the sixth lesson is "Tawhid & Sifat". In this lesson, the word "Allah" is meant "one who deserves to be loved" and "in whom everyone seeks refuge" as well. Then the lesson continues by interpreting the message of Tawhid followed by the attributes of God which has been grouped into positive (Sifat Thubutiyah) and negative (Sifat Salbiyah). The former reflects the attributes that exist in Him, whereas the latter reflect the attributes that cannot be found in Him. The eight Sifat Thubutiyah are as follow: al-Qadim, al-Qadir, al-Alim, al-Hayy, al-Morid, al-Modrik, al-Mutakallim, and as-Sadiq. The salbiyah attributes are: as-Sharik, al-Murakkab, al-Makan, al-Hulul, al-Mar'I, and so on; all of them are enumeratively mentioned .

The justice of God is completely and clearly discussed by means of some verses of the Qur'an in the next lesson. The writer believes that injustice stems from ignorance, need,



weakness and compulsion. He proves that none of them can exist in God. Then he defines justice as follows: "justice is that every person's rights should be respected that no distinction should be made between people for no reason". Finally he states that whatever situation happens to man, it is for his spiritual development, and this is the justice of God.

The next lesson refers to the fact that human conscience and intelligence alone are not enough to guide us completely, and to make us achieve the purpose of life which is perfection in all dimensions of life. Thus, there is a need for training. The Divine guidance, God messengers and prophets, as human leaders can help us. Miracle and its role in prophethood are discussed as well.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> lesson, the writer refers to the fact that prophets are immune from every kind of sin and error, so as to be able to lead mankind towards God without any error or mistake, and this is the meaning of infallibility. Also the writer, in reply to the question "Why must the Prophets be without any faults?", mentions two main reasons which are 1. The principle of instruction and 2. Confidence and acceptance. Then he outlines them in more details. Thus the purpose of sending the prophets was to educate humanity; and we know that in education, the teacher's behavior is really effective. The writer believes that the secret of the prophets' success in their mission was the coordination in their words and deeds. He then says that the greater the degree of faith and confidence that people have in a speaker, the more their agreement with him increases, and vice versa.

In the next stage the writer considers two factors of prophets Infallibility as "Real Love of God" and "The Deep & Perfect Insight of the Prophets".

The great (Ulu 'l-`azm) Prophets and their Scriptures have been discussed in the following lesson.

Lesson 11 starts with talking about Islam, holy Qur'an, and the biography of the holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad(p.b.u.h). This lesson is about the Arabs in the time of prophet and also prior to Islam, their idol-worshipping and ignorance, and their invitation to Islam. The Prophet's migration to Medina is argued in the lesson too.

Next lesson is devoted to Qur'an as the miracle of Islam. Miracles are to prove the truth of the prophets' claims. In this lesson the differences among all other miracles and the miracle of the prophet- Qur'an- is argued. Also the writer reminds us of The Qur'an as a multi-dimensional miracle. Then its miraculous aspect accompanying with its scientific relations are clearly explained by means of some examples.

The title of lesson 13 is "Muhammad(p.b.u.h), the last prophet" which starts with the explanation of Islam which is the last divine message to mankind, the most complete religion and the culmination of the previous revealed religions. Then "Universality of Islam, The God of Islam, Equality in Islam, Islam and Freedom of Thought, Islam and Knowledge, Islam's Concept of Life, Islamic Laws and Change in Lifestyle" are the categories which are analyzed in more details by the writer. At the end, the Continuation of Divine Assistance has been argued as well.

"The Imāmat : Succession to the Prophet" is the title of the 14<sup>th</sup> lesson. Introduction of this lesson refers to the death of the prophet and the question of whether there should be anybody who continues the way of the prophet after his death and leads them to the right path in the right way or not. And "Is the Qur'an not Sufficient to lead and guide people?"

The title of the 15<sup>th</sup> lesson is Amirul Muminin Ali (p.b.u.h): The Chosen Successor of the Prophet". In this lesson the necessity for a leader in the society is proved and then the Historical Hadīth of Ghadīr, and the Farewell Pilgrimage"(hajjatu 'l-wida') through referring to different verses and hadiths are explained in more details.

Next lesson is about Khilāphat and Consultation (a review of the Saqifah meeting). In the lesson wilayat of the prophet and the question whether the Prophet is subject to "the opinion of the majority" and the story of choosing Abu Bakr as a caliph are debated.

In lesson 17, the Hadith of the holy prophet on "Twelve Imams" is discussed, followed by a short description of the twelve Imams.

The next lesson belongs to Muhammad al-Mahdi(may God accelate his reappearance). A brief biography of Imam Mahdi and also belief in Mahdi in Qu'ran and Sunni Authorities are mentioned In this lesson (you can see more complete information about the biography of Imam Mahdi in the third part of the book)

Lesson 19 is about The Return & Resurrection (Al-Ma'ād and Al-Qiyāmah). The writer has noticed that there are more than a thousand verses of the Qur'an referring especially to the Return and life after death. In the writer's viewpoint, the belief in the Return is a foundation and basis of Islam. Then a few verses from the Qur'an on the Return and Resurrection are mentioned on the necessity of the Return and also on the possibility of the Resurrection. Purgatory (Barzakh), describing the Paradise and Hell in the Qur'an are issues mentioned in the next lesson.

### **2.2.2 Part 2: Laws and Ethics**

The second part of this book, in 15 lessons, talks about laws and ethics.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> lesson (The Shari‘a) the place of Shari‘a in Islam, and the need for it are noticed by the writer. When giving explanation of the Shari‘a, he introduces it as a complete guidance in all aspects of human life.

Sources of Sharī‘a, such as the holy Qur'an and the Sunnah ( practice) of the holy Prophet, are pointed in the next lesson. At the end of this lesson ijtihād, taqlīd, and mujtahid are defined; and in the following lesson the writer extends their meanings and replies to this question: "Is Taqlīd reasonable or not?"

The writer lists the principal meanings (Usūl ad-Dīn)" and doctrines (Furū‘ad-Dīn) of religion and classifies the Sharī‘a laws as well.

The next two lessons are devoted to the Islamic Spiritual program. The writer emphasizes the importance of physical aspect of human being, as well as, their spiritual dimension in Islam. Then he refers to Fasting and Salāt as spiritual programs in Islam. Afterwards, aspects of salāt are explained. To rid our bodies of the physical dirt, we use water; similarly, to rid our souls of the spiritual impurities, we use repentance. In short, the human soul is corruptible. It is corrupted by sins. The corrupted soul can be purified by repentance. These are the issues that are briefly explained in the lesson.

The next three lessons are about the Islamic community. The brotherhood, the equality of believers, promotion of equality and brotherhood among Muslims, recommend good deeds, and prevention from bad behavior, their importance, conditions and levels in Islam have been explained in detail.

The following three lessons are related to the Islamic economic system. Not only Islam guides human being in political, social and moral affairs, but also it considers the financial and economic matters. Then the usage, importance, and qualities of Zakat, Khums, charity, endowment, and... in the Qur'an and history are reviewed by the writer.

The final lessons the second part of the book are concerned about the family life in Islam. In these lessons, the rights of parents and children, and their duties toward each other are given in more details. At last, the importance of attending the relatives in Islam, and the ways of doing it with referring to a tradition of the prophet are emphasized.

Finally, the last lesson of the book is the 50th one, in which guidance in occultation of Mahdi (p.b.u.h) is debated. Then the importance of belief in Imam Mahdi, in the words of Imam Hasan Askari(p.b.u.h)- is discussed. At the end, the views of some opponents of the Shia about Mahdi are responded by the writer. He also talks about the perfect men and considers them as the real followers of Imam Mahdi.

### **2.2.3 Part 3: history**

The third part of the book is about the history of Islam. This part is packed with 15 lessons. The first fourteen lessons describe briefly the biography of Muhammad-the holy prophet of Islam; Fatima Zahra, and 12 Imams from Imam Ali bin Abi Talib to the twelfth one Imam Mahdi. In the beginning of every lesson, in a table, some information such as the name, agnomen, title, father, mother, birth, and death of holy Imam is given.

Then, the lesson follows by a short history of the life of the holy Imam the birth to the death. As an example, we can refer to the 36<sup>th</sup> lesson "Muhammad- the prophet of Islam" in which

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some categories such as birth to Appointment, the beginning of the mission, migration to Medina, the battles, the treaty of Hdaybia, Ghadīr event farewell pilgrimage"(hajjatu 'l-wida'), and his death are observed.

### **3. Some Characteristics of the Book**

**3.1.** One of the characteristics of this book is the references made to the verses of Qur'an and the words of the holy prophet and ahl-ul-bayt, which are applied mostly in explaining the issues, it not only increases the attractiveness of the book and better understanding of the issues, but also enhances the validity of the book.

**3.2.** You can see the dialogue method used all over the book. This book is a good reference for replying questions related different aspects of Islam, the history of Islam, and so on. Since the book does not have an index, using it as a reference book is a bit difficult.

**3.3.** There are some content-related questions at the end of each lesson. This is an appropriate way for the reader's self-examination which is rarely seen in Islamic books.

**3.4.** The writer's ability in both clarification of the reading matters (wherever he feels that the reader is unable to understand the matter, he clarifies it by using some examples, as in the 7<sup>th</sup> lesson for explaining the justice of God) and the style of writing the book in plain English is the other characteristic of the book.

**3.5.** The writer uses a chart and several tables along the book so as to better understanding the mentioned issues. The mentioned chart is in the 27<sup>th</sup> lesson in page 195. This chart which is a pie one explains the relationship of a Muslim which

is known as Islamic brotherhood. The first two circles show the Muslim's family ties and the third one is based on religious ties (nation). About the tables it is better to say that they are located at the beginning of each lessons of the third part (the history of Islam) of the book, which point to some information such as the name, agnomen, title, father, mother, birth and death of the prophet and 12 Imams.

**3.6.** When observing the resources cited by the writer in the end of each lesson, it is understood that he has used other books of the same subject in order to compile the book.

**3.7.** The writer, in his sayings, ratiocinates on the basis of intellectual and although he is observant of Shiism, he has not spitefully spoken. He has respected the beliefs of other religions and faiths, and has never encountered them with a view of aggression and pessimism.

## The Innate Knowledge of God

By: Reza Berenjkari\*

**Abstract:** *Throughout the history of mankind, the belief in God has been the most popular tendency. The major reason for this belief is the innate knowledge of God. While calling the people to God, the prophets reminded them of this knowledge. After this intuition, they submitted and believed. Therefore, passing through the three levels of "ta'rīf" (acknowledging), "tadhakkur" (reminding), and "taslīm" (submitting), they reach the level of "belief". The innate knowledge is granted by God. It has been given to the people in the previous worlds like "the world of the spirits", or "the world of particles"; and they have been made to testify of God's Lordship. After entering this world, the humans have forgotten this knowledge; but the essence of that knowledge has remained in the heart of the humans, and they recall it in different conditions. The environmental factors can not destroy it. The holy Qur'an and the Islamic hadiths testify it.*

**Keyword:** *Heart, fiṭrat, the world of the spirits, the world of particles (dharr), ta'rīf, tadhakkur, taslīm, īmān (belief)*

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## Introduction

A brief look at the theoretical history reveals that the belief in God is the most popular among the beliefs. So, the question has always been why the people have such a belief. There are different answers to this question. Some of these answers are based on unsubstantiated preconceptions of some such sciences as psychology and sociology. Some also have tried to look at these facts from a phenomenological perspective, thus focusing on the preconceptions.

The most important motives for the belief in God are intellectual and innate, the latter of which has more significance.

A second look at the history shows that the people in different cultures and societies claim different understandings of the common human experiences. These understandings are sometimes called religious experiences. Among these understandings, the innate knowledge is the most popular.

Referring to the religious texts and the history of the divine religions, we see that the prophets called people to God by evoking that innate knowledge of Him. So, the prophets use the *tadhakkur* (reminding) to remind the people of God. After receiving the genial intuition of God, the people often submit and step the level of *īmān* (belief). Therefore, passing the three steps of "*ta'rīf*" (acknowledging), "*tadhakkur*" (reminding), and "*taslīm*" (submitting), the people receive the divine guidance and religious belief.

In monotheistic religions, recognition of God is presented not as something unknown and dubious which would require clarification and proof. From the viewpoint of divine sources, the secret of this matter lies hidden, more than anything else, in the knowledge of God which has ever since been deposited in

man's heart and life; a knowledge which is God's creation and referred to as 'instinct', that is "*al-fitra*" (in Arabic) in the body of Qur'anic verses and hadiths.

This gifted knowledge as well as lustrous guidance is reckoned to be the foundation of the divine religions. Analogized to the dereck of the tent (of religion), this divine gift bears the entire branches of knowledge, the practical commandments and moral teachings to a high degree so that in its absence, man would have failed to perceive the true divine knowledge.

*"I recognized You by Yourself and You guided and led me and called me towards Yourself. And if it were not for You, I would not have known You."*

<sup>1</sup> *Rather, without this introduction, one would have failed to attain knowledge of prophethood (Resalah) and mastership (Vilayah), too.*

*"O God! Do introduce Yourself to me, because if You do not make Yourself known to me, I will not be able to recognize Your messenger".<sup>2</sup>*

This innate knowledge is so basic and fundamental that even if some other acts of worship (like ritual prayers) are named as pillars of religion, it is because such worship causes man to return to her or his 'self' and reminds her or him of his innate knowledge. In fact, ritual prayer is nothing but remembrance of God and a means of ascension of a believer.

The discussion on (introduction) which has come down in the Qur'an and hadiths can be explained in two parts. The first part discusses the place where innate knowledge was gifted to

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<sup>1</sup> - *Mafatih al-Jinan*; Supplication of Abu Hamza al-Thumali.

<sup>2</sup> - *Bihar al-Anwar*; vol. 95, p. 326, hadith no. 2.

man as well as the time when man became the trustee of this divine gift. The second part concerns the outcome and consequence of the divine introduction (of God) and the reality and specifications of this knowledge.

### **Place of Introduction**

What is obvious on the basis of Islamic proofs is that before man's soul could find its entry into this world and get attached to the physical body, it had traversed another world, or rather worlds, and witnessed certain events and scenes and sustained in every stage the knowledge and the realities. All these play a fundamental role in man's worldly life as well as the life in the Hereafter.

In some of these steps, the human beings possessed the soul only like the world of the spirits, while in other places, man's soul possessed a special form and body as in the world of pre-existence. In these very worlds, at a very lustrous and holy place, all the human beings were bestowed with the divine grace and after receiving knowledge of God and free-will, they were thus questioned:

*"Am I not your Lord?" To which all replied: "Yes".*

Although with man's entry into this physical world, the specifications of this innate knowledge sink into oblivion; nevertheless, the origin and effect of this innate knowledge always accompanies man:

*"So, the knowledge (of God) was set in the human-beings and the place of derivation of this knowledge was forgotten by them; and soon they shall remember it".<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> - *Bihar al-Anwar*; vol. 5, p. 237.

This firm and enduring gnosis, like a firm pillar, is so fixed in man's existence that the very structure of "*Din - e - hanif*" (the orthodox religion) is based on it; a perpetual and fortified religion which owes its firmness more than anything else to the irresistible "*fitra*" (innate disposition).

In this regard, we shall now set forth a few verses and hadiths:

*"And when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants, and made them bear witness against their own souls:*

*Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes! We bear witness. Lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: Surely we were unaware of this.*

*Or, you should say: Only our fathers associated others (with Allah) before, and we were an offspring after them: Will You then destroy us for what the vain doers did?"<sup>1</sup>*

The verse speaks about one of the stages of man's existence wherein God made the children of Adam bear witness to His Divinity; and this confession was taken lest the unbelievers and polytheists should say on the Day of Resurrection: Surely, we were heedless of God or would say that: "*Our ancestors were polytheists and so, we, too, followed their footsteps.*"

This verse proves that God the Exalted has made Himself known to all the human beings in such a manner that all have testified to His Divinity. This recognition and/or confession is the actual argument for all the human beings and is so clear

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<sup>1</sup> - The Holy Quran (7: 172-3)

that irreligious family and social environment cannot erase it fully.

For this reason, God argues with the polytheists and unbelievers on the Day of Resurrection and reject their aforesaid two excuses.

There are numerous hadiths in explication of this verse. These hadiths stress that all the human beings have witnessed the Exalted God through examination in the preceding worlds in such a manner that no doubt and skepticism existed in them about His Existence, and if it were not for this knowledge, nobody would have been able to recognize Him in this world.

The noteworthy point in these hadiths is that with regard to the numerous worlds, inference is drawn from this very verse. This shows that the divine covenant was taken in numerous worlds. Some of the hadiths specify that the covenant was taken in the world of spirits, while some other hadiths specify that this took place in the world of pre-existence, i.e. the stage where man's soul and body were together.

Another noteworthy point in these hadiths express that following the event of the divine covenant, the human beings have forgotten the stations. However, the original knowledge of God has remained firm in their hearts. Yet, in some other hadiths it is mentioned that God caused the (event of) examination to be forgotten, but He set firm the original confession in man's heart.

From these hadiths, it becomes obvious that the specifications of the stations and the place of divine introduction have been consigned to oblivion. Similarly, the exact form of this gifted knowledge, which is well known as (examination), is not present with man in this world. Rather, only the original recognition of God is present with him. In

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subsequent discussions, this point will be discussed, in addition to the ways of remembering the innate knowledge. Now, we shall set forth a few hadiths wherein the above-mentioned points are discerned:

Zorareh said that he had inquired Imam al-Baqir (p.b.u.h) about the "Verse of Covenant", and the Imam replied:

*"Allah shall bring forth from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants until the Day of Judgment. They existed in the form of small particles. Thereafter, He manifested and introduced Himself to them. If this event had not occurred, nobody would have succeeded in recognizing their God."<sup>1</sup>*

Zorareh further inquired about the "Verse of Covenant", and the Imam replied:

*"The recognition of Allah remained firm in the hearts and they forgot the place of the covenant. A day shall come when they shall remember it. If it were not for this event, none would have succeeded in recognizing her or his Creator and Sustainer."<sup>2</sup>*

About the "Verse of Covenant", Imam al-Sadiq further remarked:

*"This was (examination) of Allah. Then, Allah made them forget the examination and made their confession firm in their hearts. And if it were not for this, none would have been able to recognize his Creator and Sustainer. And the proof of this*

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<sup>1</sup> - *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> - *Al-Mahasin*, vol. 1, p. 376, hadith no. 826.

matter is the verse: "And if you ask them who has created you, they shall reply: Allah"<sup>1</sup>

There are numerous verses and hadiths concerning the preceding world and the events that have occurred in them.

These hadiths can be found mainly in discussions related to beliefs and even ethics and jurisprudence such as monotheism, prophethood, imamate, resurrection, hajj, invocation, soul and spirit, creation, and so on. One hardly comes across a discussion related to belief wherein this matter has not been discussed in some way or the other. [In this connection, I presented fourteen verses and some two hundred hadiths in another book, titled, *Fundamentals of Knowing God in Greek Philosophy and Divine Religions* and therein discussed a few of them.] Here, suffice it to mention the following three remarks:

1. The late Agha Buzurg Tehrani relates that the grand jurist and historian Allama Amini, the author of *Al-Ghadir*, wrote a 150-page treatise on the exegesis of the Verse of Covenant and therein set forth nineteen verses and 130 hadiths, proving the existence of the world of pre-existence. Interestingly, after reviewing the chain of transmitters of these hadiths, he declares forty of such traditions to be terminologically sound, that is, hadiths whose transmitters are all just and belong to the Imamiah denomination.<sup>2</sup>

2. The renowned philosopher Sadr al-Mut'allehin Shirazi, who interpreted the world of spirits on the basis of his special type of philosophical thinking, reckoned the existence of the world of spirits to be among the necessities of the Shia faith.

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<sup>1</sup> - *Ibid*, p. 438, hadith no. 1015.

<sup>2</sup> - *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 4, p. 323.

Moreover, he stated that there are countless hadiths in this regard. His exact words are as follows:

*"Man's soul preceded his physical body and to believe this, one does not need to believe in transmigration. In this regard, hadiths from the Shia sources are countless. Similarly, precedence of soul over body is amongst the essential beliefs of the Shia denomination; may Allah be satisfied with them."<sup>1</sup>*

3. After setting forth the topic about innate disposition, Beheshti interprets the Verse of Covenant and draws the following conclusion: "These verses refer to the conversation between God and the human beings, when the human beings have testified and confessed the divinity of God; and that He is the Regulator of the affairs. This testification prevents man from pleading any excuse before God on the Day of Resurrection (excuse of being heedless or being influenced by their fathers)." After that, he discusses the place of covenant and after reviewing the views of Hasan al-Basri and the Mu'tazilites, who denied the world of pre-existence, he accepts the world of pre-existence and remarks as follows: "Concerning this verse, it can be said that it refers to one stage of man's existence, where man has confessed God's divinity."

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<sup>1</sup> *Al-Arshiyah*; p. 23, ch. 2, section 8.



## Questions and Answers

Questions and Answers is an interactive part which is allocated to prepare all readers with the scientific and at academic answers to their questions.

### **First question:**

Information given in Islamic texts regarding virtues and position of Messenger of the God and Imams (religious leaders) credits these holy men with holding heavenly high positions.

Are the attributed positions and ranks fair?

Does belief in this information prevents us from following these honorable ones' examples?

The Almighty God says, to his messenger, in the holy Qur'an:

*"Say (truly I am a human like you; the only difference is that revelations from God come to me.)"*

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According to this verse, messenger of the God is an ordinary man like us and his only difference is his position and rank which assign him to convey to us the revelations come to him from God. Then how to believe in so many virtues and qualities he is credited with?

### **Answer:**

1) It would be wise to inquire the aspects of the similarity whenever a comparison is made. Otherwise we may get into trouble by big misunderstandings!

For example, when it is said "Hasan is like a lion" one should not conclude that Hasan walks on all fours, and he has mane. He should realize that Hasan's courage is intended in this speech. In such cases referring to the source, basis of logic or other strong reasons would clear up the meaning and if it is still unclear and we are not sure we have understood the point we should refer to the speaker or his representative to make the similarity aspect clear in order to avoid any misunderstanding.

In the said verse, different features of similarity between ordinary people and Messenger of God can be mentioned; however, when we realized that understanding position of the messenger of God and his successors is beyond our intellectual ability, we would refer to those innocent leaders, the true commentators of Qur'an for answers.

Imam Sadeq (p.b.u.h) "says being a creature" is the similarity feature (Nur ol-Saqalain) means that the divinity can not be attributed to the Innocents.

2) Devotion is one of divine duties of the Innocent Leaders and they have carried out this duty at their best. Imam Hadi (p.b.u.h.) describes these honorable and noble people as below:

*"...God's honorable servants; those who do not deviate from His command and obey Him." (Al-Anam)*

While doing their duty during different conditions of their devoted life (like illness, poverty, imprisonment, comfort, peace, wealth etc.), they both add to their spirituality and reverence degree and at the same time they teach us devotion and obedience.

If these honorable men were not disguised as human beings, some might have disapproved and claimed that: we can not obey messengers of the God and the leaders (Imams) because they do not experience poverty, illness etc like us."

In order to avoid any excuse made by enemies, The God on high disguised them as human beings so that they can be set as examples to the mankind.

Some other brought up the dispute over why angels do not come to us to warn us? God had answered:

*"If we had decided, (that the Messenger), to be an angel, we would have been obliged) to create him as a human being, and would have dressed him the way the ordinary people do."*

3) To get close to the issue let us give an example which is closer to reality from some aspects.

Imagine a country governor who sends a group of his special officers to the prison among the prisoners in order to educate the criminals, improve their morals and promote

intellectual ability of illiterate and ignorant prisoners; these officers were to live among the prisoners, eat with them, and sleep in the same place and at the same time carry out the duty of educating and guiding the prisoners.

Since these officers are the closest ones to governor, surly they have the key to the prison's doors and as demanded by their job are allowed to leave the prison and have the most confidential discussion with the Governor.

Does an ignorant criminal have the right to claim the equal rights to his trainer fellow prisoner and complain about their freedom to leave the prison? And if he does so, doesn't his objection prove his lack of knowledge about the trainer's position?!

Although Messengers and Imams (religious leaders), in particular the 14 Pure Innocents, are living in this world among those who are charmed by earthly life, they are actually special messengers of the Almighty God sent to assist us to reach exaltation and esteem. It would be narrow mindedness of us to judge them as ordinary people like us and deny their value and reverence before God.

**Second question:**

There are some narratives about Messenger of the God and Imams in which their divine position and virtues are denied. What should be said about these narratives?

**Answer:**

Such narratives are divided into several groups:

1) Sometimes these holy men had been in touch with people who treated Him indecently. For example Amirul Muminin (p.b.u.h), after the war of Saffein met inhabitants of a city who received Him the way they would have received a king. In order to modify their behavior and beliefs the lord of the virtuous (Title of Ali p.b.u.h Shia's first Imam), gave a lecture which is brought in homily no.207 of Nahj-ul-balagheh. One sentence of this homily had become an excuse for ill natured people to deny Imam's purity. Whereas, his holiness points out later in the same lecture that "we are innocent by the grace of God." In fact he wants to notify every one that their virtues and positions are divine favor and so Imam has denied Imams self liberty in selecting these virtues.

2) Some writers or narrators made alterations in narratives and deliberately distorted those facts.

3) Some times it happened when the Imams were present in an assembly where enemies were also present; the enemies were eagerly waiting for the innocent Imams to make a comment on the virtues so as to start to make unjust and inappropriate statements which might have caused group of innocent Shia' s to die just because of their very right words. In such cases the innocent Imams based on the divine command and advice used to keep silent and sometimes they

went farther to deny some facts and in this way they taught silence to the Shia.

4) Some times Innocent Imams came across the people who were overstating the facts and who were abusing some of these virtues and qualities to develop deviant beliefs and in this way became applicable to them.

In such cases Imams were emphasizing on their obedience and called attention to the point: "if God doesn't want neither we know nor we can."

5) In some cases these wise leaders used to explain a topic according to capacity of the addressee in order to avoid misunderstanding. Therefore there are different explanations of the same subject which express different levels of the same fact in such a way that each level is said for a certain group of people.

Such explanation of the facts also is a great lesson for followers of the divine Ja'fari (pertaining to Ja'fari sect. established by Imam Ja'far, the 6<sup>th</sup> Imam of the Shia) school of thought so as to always pay attention to capacity of the listener when explaining the facts.

6) Some times in the prayers said by the innocent Imams there are interpretations in which it is understood that they have confessed to their sins! Regarding such interpretations the late Alame Majlesi gives explanation as below:

Since his holiness messenger of the God and the Imams have constantly been making progress towards attaining knowledge and perfection, they used to feel guilty of the worship they have done at their former level of knowledge and so they used to repent of the way they were worshiping; and

considering that such progress and advancement is endless, they repent all the time.

General basic in dealing with such narratives (the said 6 group) is that to match these narratives up to the final and proved principles of the Imamat (leadership) and interpret the narratives according to these certain and positive facts, which are brought in other accounts. Having scholarly tools including wisdom and knowledge is essential in doing such assessment however relying on and seeking assistance of holy presence of his highness is also a must which should not be forgotten, otherwise one might be misled by Satan who lays a trap for those interested in interpretation of Qur'an and narratives.

**Third question:**

Such definition of the virtues and qualities would cause us to consider messenger of the God and the Imams as superhuman people and not superior people. Such perception would suspend some of the verses and narrative like the below verse or the narratives which command people to follow the Innocents:

*"Messenger of the god is a good example for you to follow"*  
( (33:22)

Is it not better to present more simple and earthy visage of the innocent leaders instead of such heavenly faces?

**Answer:**

1) As is said before the most important lesson the messengers and Imams are to give us, is sincere obedience and

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performance of divine duty under any condition. His holiness Suleiman describes his endowed power and divine kingdom as the grace of God and says:

*"This is God's bestowment to me to see whether I give thanks to God or I am ungrateful." ((27:41)*

In the same way, His Holiness Ayoub considered all his problems and difficulties as divine examination which means God wanted to try his patience. After numerous tests, description of which has come in narrative of Imam Sadeq (Nor-ul-Seqlin 3: 463-466), God says:

*"We found him patient. What a nice person he was! He always paid attention to us." ((38:45)*

This is the soul and essence of patience messengers and Imams taught us. Nevertheless, they never expected us to have the same level of patience however they wanted us to follow their examples under any condition.

When Imam Amirul Muminin (p.b.u.h) warns his governor, Osman Ibn Honaif not to slide into aristocratic mentality and points to his own devout life and says:

*"Your Imam contented himself to two old dresses and two loaf of bread. Beware that you are not able to do this. Yet, you may assist me with your effort, devoutness and continence."*

Usually, people consider a situation as their ideal so as to move towards it. This aimed point sometimes is really unachievable; but they compare two states in moving towards their goal (for example 40% progresses this year and 30% progresses last year) and come to some conclusion. We accept this kind of advancement in wordily matters; so why to act unwisely in spiritual affairs instead of moving based on



definite divine basics and lower such affairs as low as our worthless existence instead of promoting ourselves towards gaining access to divine ideals.

1) There are lights turned on at the top of high buildings in order to keep airplanes away. There are torches on the hills in order to direct the hikers. The stars in the sky are the guide for the ships' sailing. Is this right to bring down the star, the torch and the light onto the earth and want them to walk at our pace just because they are guides and leaders? What is wise thing to do? Should we deny wisdom and knowledge of the teacher so that the students can look at their teacher and follow his example? Which educational system in the world has been so unjust to its teachers?

We emphasize that they are divine proofs and are superhuman people. How have we come to the conclusion that superhuman people cannot be examples to ordinary people? Is it not true that the nice and innocent people followed divine leaders' during the ups and downs of the Shia history, and achieved high ranks and positions?

2) The divine book in which the Messengers are introduced as examples, attributes special qualities and positions to that great mans. For example it says about his holiness David:

*"(we commanded) O' mountains and birds! Pray to him. We have softened (even) the iron in his hands."* (Saba 34:11)

It is also said about his holiness Jesus:

*"When you made a bird out of mud with my permission...and when you cured a born blind and a leper with my permission and when you brought the dead out of the grave with my permission...)"* (5:111)

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*"And he speaks to people in the cradle" (3:47)*

Such actions are out of ordinary people's capacity unless under the divine blessing. If there were inconsistency between these statements and being examples to ordinary people, surely the God on high wouldn't say in this way and wouldn't command human to do impossible things.

3) Human intellect needs God's proof in order to find the right way as the eye of a hiker needs a light. This is the Shia's deep philosophy and wisdom. Imam Kazem says:

*"There are two proofs of God: evident and unknown. Evident proofs are the messenger of the God and Imams and the unknown is the wisdom."*

Wisdom is always supporter and believer of Gods proof and this is human himself who is to decide whether to believe his intellect or run away and resist intentionally. Wisdom and intellectual power finds out that God's proof is beyond our understanding and illusion.



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