

# *Safinah*

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\*\*\*\*\*

#### ***Address:***

*P. O. Box 15655 – 377,  
Tehran – Iran.*

#### ***Tel & Fax:***

*+ 9821-77504683*

#### ***E- mail:***

*info@nabacultural.org,  
nabamobin@yahoo.com*

#### ***Distribution center:***

*3<sup>rd</sup> floor, No. 26, Adibi  
Alley, Shabestari St.,  
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### *Note:*

The abbreviations (*s*) and (*as*) following certain names in this article stand for "*Salawat Allah alaihe va aleh*" (*May the blessings and peace of God be upon him and his family*) and "*alaihe/alaihuma/alaihem salam* (*upon him/her/them be peace*), respectively. Their omission in certain circumstances may be accidental or for fluency, but in any case may God, the Praised and Glorified, continue to shower his blessings and peace upon these personalities until the end of t

# *Forward*

## *Islam, the religion of Moderation and Tolerance*

Despite the hardships that Muslims are subject to in different parts of the world, they are the members of a strong and active community, steadfastly serving their religion, and their brothers in their homelands, or abroad, in an atmosphere of moderation and tolerance.

Moderation means to walk through the middle way, and avoiding going to the extremes. It is a kind of thinking and speculation that appears in the behavior and practice of human beings. This respected manner can be observed in the political, governmental, social, economical, and devotional aspects of our behavior.

Moderation and tolerance are the behaviors and practice ordered by *aql* (common sense / man's wisdom), while extremity is caused by anger and ignorance. Imam Ali (*as*) has said: "you do not see the ignorant people, unless they move on the extremes." Islam, especially the Shia school of thought, recommends its followers to practice moderation, and tolerate other thoughts, teachings, and communities and interact with them peacefully. The message of Imam Ali (*as*), that can form the basis of the new millennium's great religious movement, in the idea that people of all nations, religions, races and languages are brothers, and in fact, one people. They should not allow their differences to divide them. We are all human beings, created by one God, and this is the important point. It is time for the entire world's people to unite in love, peace, and cooperation. We must work together to create a global civilization, in which ignorant prejudice, patriotism, tribalism and other causes of conflicts and wars are put outside.

Hamid Farnagh  
Editor-in-chief

# *The Importance of Salaat*

Muhammad Biabani-Oskouei

**Abstract:** *In the following article, several traditions and sayings declaring the importance of meeting God have been mentioned. Meeting God has been and is the greatest wish of all holy men and those who have reached the understanding that their spirits deserves nothing but God Himself. Although there are many claims which promise mankind the shortest way to God, but most have proved to be incorrect. Here we will learn that the one and only way to God is through the teachings of the Infallibles and through the daily prayers (Salaat).*

**Keywords:** *Salaat Namaz, Daily Prayers, Meeting God*

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<sup>1</sup> Also known as Namaz or the 'daily prayers'

Translator: Jalil Dorrani

The highest aim and goal of the divine scholars and those who tread the path of worship, is meeting with Allah and seeing<sup>1</sup> Him. This is a meeting which can neither be expressed in words nor penned on paper, because divine vision is the work of Allah Himself. The work of Allah, like His Being, does not have any method (*kaifiyyah*) like the works of mortals, and therefore it cannot be expressed.

Allah introduced Himself to His servants and manifested His Own Self on their hearts. By setting aside the veils of negligence and forgetfulness, ignorance, disobedience, immorality, evil ethics, etc. a person prepares his heart to receive this divine manifestation. Purity of heart and sincerity in intention illuminates the divine light further and becomes the cause for the servant to achieve great heights in the field of divine recognition and reach his ultimate goal i.e. meeting with Allah.

The desire to meet Allah can be seen in many supplications and traditions which have been handed down to us from the Prophet and Imams. For instance:

Imam Zain al-Abedin (*as*) invokes:

“O Allah! Make us tread the path that leads to meeting You, and make us travel on the road that is nearest to You... attach us with those servants of Yours who are in haste to reach You. Those who continuously knock on Your door, and worship only You in the night... You have fulfilled their desire by allowing them to meet you, and You have filled their hearts with Your love, and have quenched their thirst with Your pure drink. Thus, by You, they achieved the enjoyment of speaking with You (*munajaah*) and achieved their farthest aims... No one but You, O Allah, is my aim. My being awake and up in the nights is only because of You and not for anybody

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<sup>1</sup> This kind of seeing is not like how we see with our eyes, it is seeing with the heart.

else. Meeting you is the light of my eyes and reaching you is my desire and seeing you is my wish.”<sup>1</sup>

In another supplication, the same Imam (*as*) pleads:

“Nothing can quench my thirst but reaching You and nothing can extinguish my burning desire but meeting You And nothing can extinguish my craving for you except seeing Your face (*wajh*), and my restlessness cannot be done away with but by gaining proximity to You...and My sorrow cannot be dispelled except by being near You.”<sup>2</sup>

Imam al-Baqir (*as*) says:

“The Messenger of Allah is the gate of Allah which except through him He cannot be approached. He (*s*) is the path of Allah which if walked on, will lead to Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He). After him, the same applies to Amir al-Mo'meneen (*as*) and the Imams following him, one after the other...”<sup>3</sup>

When the Prophet (*s*) was taken to the Heavens (*Mi'raj*), Allah Almighty said to him:

“O Ahmad! Abstaining from sins (*wara'*) opens the doors of worship for a worshipper. Then through it, he is honored in the eyes of the people and reaches Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He).”<sup>4</sup>

The mentioned traditions speak about meeting, reaching and seeing Allah. According to Imam al-Baqir (*as*), treading the path of the Holy Prophet (*as*) and the Ahlul Bayt will lead to this meeting. Therefore, this status cannot be achieved but by following the course charted by the Messenger of Allah (*as*) and

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 91, p. 147

<sup>2</sup> Al-Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 91, p. 147

<sup>3</sup> Al-Kulaini, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 198

<sup>4</sup> Al-Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 74, p. 26

through the master-ship of his infallible progeny (*as*). Hence, whoever intends to take the journey of reaching the levels and stages of recognition and to reach its highest grades must hold fast to the Holy Prophet (*s*) and his Ahlul Bayt (*as*).

He should pay attention that his actions conform to the divine commands brought by the Holy Prophet (*s*) and the Ahlul Bayt (*as*). He should not take a single step without their permission. If he fails to do so, he will not reach his destination. If he is steadfast in this path, Allah the Almighty will fulfill His promise and grant him his desire.

As his recognition (*ma'rifah*) of Allah increases so do things such as, humility, modesty, obedience, gratitude, remembrance, attention, glorification and praising. Serving his Lord and God also increases His compliance and submission to the divine laws and he performs all his actions sincerely and purely for Allah and no one else. Obviously, any action that has the color of Allah and is performed only for Him will never be ruined. Allah the Almighty declares:

*“Everything is perishable (will perish) except for His Face.” (The holy Quran 28:88)*

Imam al-Baqir (*as*) explains this verse like this:

“Allah is greater than being described with a face. The meaning (of the verse) is: ‘Everything will be destroyed except His religion and ‘Face’ is the means by which a thing is approached.”<sup>1</sup>

In the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt (*as*), meeting with Allah has also been used to refer to death. Al-Majlesi (*may Allah be satisfied with him*), in his masterpiece: ‘Bihar al-Anwar’, volume 6, page 124, has mentioned traditions explaining the above concept, under the chapter: “The Love of Meeting Allah and the dispraise

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Saduq, *Al-Towhid*, p. 149

of Fleeing from Death”. In some traditions, ‘meeting with Allah’ has also been interpreted as resurrection and being brought out from the grave on Judgment Day for questioning and examination of one’s deeds in this world. Amir al-Mo’meneen Ali ibn Abi Talib (*as*) explains:

“And His words, ‘But they do not believe in the meeting (*liqa*)’ of their Lord’<sup>1</sup> means ‘resurrection’ (i.e. they do not believe they will be resurrected). Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) has named resurrection as His meeting. Likewise He has also mentioned the believers as ‘those who suppose they will meet their Lord’<sup>2</sup>. Meaning: they are certain that they will be resurrected, brought together, (their actions) accounted for and rewarded and punished accordingly... Thus, in this case, meeting does not mean physical vision. Meeting means resurrection and wherever the word ‘meeting (*liqa*) Him’ has been mentioned in the Book of Allah, interpret it as ‘resurrection’.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quran 33:10

<sup>2</sup> Quran 2:46

<sup>3</sup> Al-Saduq, *Al-Towhid*, p. 267

## **Like Water**

*Water does not draw a line – it accepts clean hands  
as well as dirty hands.*

*A mirror does not draw a boundary – it displays  
ugly faces as well as beautiful faces.*

*The holy prophet (s) was water as well as a mirror  
i.e., he was for one and all*

*i.e., everyone enjoyed and benefitted the prophet's  
good morals.*

*Thus, if the prophet (s) was kind and gentle he  
exhibited his kindness to all; if he respected and  
honored, he did so for all; if he resolved difficulties  
he relieved everyone's difficulties.*

*He was never biased and never showed  
discrimination.*

*The Manners of Ali (as),  
The Commander of the Faithful*

Ibn Hatam al-Ameli

**Abstract:** *The present article is a selection of the manners and characteristics of Amir al-Mo'meneen Ali (as) which have been narrated from one of his companions: Habbat ibn Jovain al-Orani. The narration has been mentioned by ibn Hatam al-Ameli in al-Dor al-Nazim<sup>1</sup>:*

**Keywords:** *Ali, Manners, ethics*

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Hatam al-Ameli, *Al-Dor Al-Nazim fi Manaqib Al-A'eema Al-lahamim*, p.236, some parts of the narration have been omitted.

Translator:Mina Oskouei

## 12. *Safinah*, No.8

- ❖ His happiness was apparent in his face and his sorrow was buried in his heart.
- ❖ He was the most patient and the best at controlling his desires.
- ❖ He had no grudge and no envy.
- ❖ He was neither aggressive (while speaking) nor said rude words.
- ❖ He wasn't on the lookout for other peoples shortcomings and did not back-bite.
- ❖ He disliked gossiping.
- ❖ He had great sorrows and deep sadness's.
- ❖ He was decent and always had God in mind.
- ❖ He was patient and thankful and (was so high) that no one could understand his great character.
- ❖ He was satisfied (with the fact) that he was needy.
- ❖ He was good-tempered and generous to all.
- ❖ He had great tolerance and was not abusive.
- ❖ If he laughed he did not surpass the limits of decency.
- ❖ When he became angry he would not rush.
- ❖ His laughter was only a smile, his questions were for learning and his references were for understanding.
- ❖ His knowledge was much, his patience was great and his kindnesses were numerous.
- ❖ He was not ungenerous; he did not become weary and did not make fun of anyone.
- ❖ He did not deviate from the truth in judgment and did not oppose his knowledge.
- ❖ Accompanying him was sweeter than honey.

- ❖ He was neither greedy nor violent.
- ❖ He donated without turning to extravagancy.
- ❖ He was just while angry.
- ❖ If you accompanied him he was a sincere friend.
- ❖ His love was pure and he was loyal to his vows and fulfilled his promises.
- ❖ He was satisfied with God and disobeyed his desires.
- ❖ He did not harm those who hurt him.
- ❖ He did not interfere with the things which were not related to him.
- ❖ He had great merits and honesty.
- ❖ He ate very little and in benefiting from the world, he was satisfied with the least of it.
- ❖ He had no wickedness and his blessings were extreme.
- ❖ If he was asked to give something away, he donated it.
- ❖ If he was offended, he forgave.
- ❖ If he was abandoned, he rejoined.
- ❖ He shared his knowledge with people.
- ❖ He welcomed God's tests with the same extent that others were afraid of them.
- ❖ He always ordered to (obey) the truth and spoke likewise.
- ❖ He sped on the path of Allah.
- ❖ He knew himself and suppressed his internal desires.
- ❖ He was the helper of God ('s religion), the supporter of the faithful and the shelter of the Muslims.
- ❖ He hurried in whatever related to God.
- ❖ Greed did not influence his heart.

#### 14. *Safinah*, No.8

- ❖ Nothing prevented him from implementing God's orders.
- ❖ He always invited people toward God and did what was right.
- ❖ He was very wise and sensible.
- ❖ He didn't swear and was not foolish.
- ❖ He took distance from the evil-doers.
- ❖ He was the companion of truth, He sped to help the weak and he aided the suppressed.
- ❖ He did not reveal what was hidden and he did not expose the secrets.
- ❖ He protested little.
- ❖ If he saw goodness he would speak of it and if he saw badness he would not reveal it.
- ❖ He accepted the excuses of others.
- ❖ He accepted advice and assisted the incapable.
- ❖ He had good thoughts about other people.
- ❖ Because of Allah, he loved with understanding and knowledge.
- ❖ Because of Allah, he cut (bad) relationships with prudence and (good) excuse.
- ❖ Accompanying him brought happiness.
- ❖ Knowledge and wisdom had made him pure; like fire which purifies iron.
- ❖ He was a reminder for the learned and a teacher for the ignorant.
- ❖ He regarded all efforts more praiseworthy than his own and every soul more pure than his own.
- ❖ He had knowledge of the unknown (*elm al-ghaib*) and was occupied with sorrow.

- ❖ He did not bow except for God.
- ❖ He loved God and made great effort to satisfy Him.
- ❖ Did not take revenge out of his own desire.
- ❖ He accompanied the poor, supported the righteous, helped the foreigners, he was like a father for orphans and like a husband for the widows.
- ❖ His heart was filled with the lights of guidance.
- ❖ Difficult deeds were easy at his hand.
- ❖ He was the light of darkness.
- ❖ Knowledge was the fruit of his heart.

***Yes! I swear to God, these were the manners of Ali (as).***

# *Islam and Human Rights<sup>1</sup>*

Fatemeh Tehranidoost

**Abstract:** *in the present article , the author starts with explaining the point that why God, the Almighty is the only Possessor of everything, including human beings and further she categorized mankind according to their submission to God or their non-submission into 6 categories.*

**Keywords:** *divine religions, acceptance, non-acceptance*

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<sup>1</sup> Translator: Jalil Dorrani

Since the end of rightful divine religions is enabling the human souls to achieve development and perfection in their respective field of “pure innate nature” (fitrat), God the Glorified, has conveyed all the basis of this innate right to all the human-beings via religion.

In this divine system, individuals from one hand seek their own rights while on the other hand feel responsible before God and their fellow-beings. Therefore, considering the inseparability between social responsibilities and rights of others, the subject of responsibility aside from being a divine pivot with fortified rational backing also enjoys lofty value due to its role in safeguarding individual rights in the society.

For more explanation, it could be said that:

First, the claim that one is in the right but without any responsibility is mere contradictory claim because right and responsibility are two sides of one coin and the reality of one right and observance of others’ inquiry may not be separated.

Second, from innate divine aspect, we believe God to be the source of all existences and He is the Creator and Master of all human-beings and the world. He is the Master of the universe.

And the human-beings have been created equally. The criterion over which proves one’s superiority over others is piety as lofty human value.

*“O people! Surely We have created you of a male and a female, and grouped you in tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the most pious among you (careful of his duty).”(The holy Quran 49:13)*

On the other hand, we have two vital and authentic traditions which lay down the basis of man’s universal visage vis-à-vis mutual rights.

*The holy Prophet (as) says: “The people are all like God’s family and the most beloved amongst them before God is the one who is most beneficial to God’s family.”*<sup>1</sup>

In the second tradition, the holy Prophet (as) says, “*Anyone who hears someone crying for help seeking assistance but the latter does not respond, then he is not a Muslim.*”<sup>2</sup>

Taking into account the above-mentioned traditions and all other aforesaid points came down in divine verses and traditions, we perceive that:

Therefore, for the noble Prophets, it has been aiming chiefly to remind people about this lofty fact they should not only relate spiritually together as the organs of one body but also strive on the path of “rational life”, a life which is steadfast on the pillars of divinity and servitude. The invitation of divine prophets, too, has been steadfast on the pivot of “divinity of God” and “servitude of His slaves.”

*“And certainly We raised in every nation an apostle saying: Serve Allah and shun the Satan.” (The holy Quran 16:36)*

Considering creation point, God is the Master and Sustainer of human-beings. From the viewpoint of divine legislation too, He possesses full authority and command i.e., the right of sovereignty belongs solely to God and to whom He has vested authority comprising of the immaculate prophets and Imams. All are responsible before the divine commandments; moral and legal values that are fixed by the Almighty God are steadfast and their bounds and limits are specified by God. In other words, divinity of divine legislation is the result and offshoot of divinity of creation Therefore, none but only to God belongs the right to legislation and lawmaking.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Kulaini, *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, p. 164

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

By the divine religions' viewpoint, acceptance and implementation of these very essential rules come down in the divine laws (Shari'ah). They are the factors leading to man's development and step in perfection process.

In the Islam religion, on the basis of being acceptance or non-acceptance, and considering the individual trait, human-beings are grouped in 6 categories:

*F*irst group: People who have not reached the stage of personal growth and development and lack any acquaintance, culture and deed save that which is merely related to his or her natural life.

*S*econd group: people who have, to some extent, set on the path of growth and gained some degree of acquaintance, culture and action. Besides, they have accepted the social life along with its required regulations and they keep respect for his fellow beings.

*T*hird group: people who have gone beyond the second class and perceived that this life and the world they live in cannot be interpreted without relying on the world beyond this one. While reasons and their innate nature emphasize the necessitate of this life and the world they live in to be interpreted and explained. So, for ensuring man's relationship with the world beyond, it is this very world of existence that, aside from fulfilling certain actions in governing the natural life, it places certain duties and responsibilities as well.

*F*ourth group: people who are inclined to one of the divine religions like Jewish, Christianity, Zoroastrianism etc. They have accepted and act upon the beliefs of that particular religion.

*F*ifth group: Muslims who aside from having belief in all divine earlier prophets and faith in the original text of Ibrahim's religion. They have accepted and act upon the religion

brought by Muhammad ibn Abdullah (*as*) on behalf of God. As per the verses of Quran, this religion is known as “Islam”.

*S*ixth group: People who have flourished in Islam and have reached to the level of piety (Taqwa) in Islam. They gain the merit of values pointed out by the holy verse as follows:

*“Surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most pious (careful of his duty).” (The holy Quran 49:13)*

In all the above mentioned groups, the proof of merit is human development and perfection. Thus, the more features of development and perfection among them the greater would be the values of the people of that group. The essentiality of piety and virtue concerning values would be extends to all the above different groups of people. Anyone who follows the invaluable principle and basis of life is better than a person who does not follow that principle even though he may claim to believe in Islam.

If human-beings used to strengthen their reason (Aql) and inner sense (Vijdaan) and accept the Islamic beliefs by virtue of those two aforesaid divine powers and perform good deeds, they have, then, set themselves on right path.

*“So whoever submits, these aim at the right way.”(The holy Quran 72:14)*

For this reason, God, too, places all the required contingencies and His favours at his disposal.

*“He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens, and He knows all things.”(The holy Quran 2:29)*

God equips him with the power of ‘reasoning’ and special faculty. So on the one hand, he can utilizes correctly His bounties and remains a manifestation of God’s attributes and perfection

and on the other hand acts as a guide and leader on behalf of God.

It is worthy to mention that reliance on mere 'reason' (or intellect) will pave the way for real freedom and isolate religion. Thus, there would not be any places left behind for duties and responsibilities. This is because in such atmosphere case, man is a 'researcher' and not a 'duty-bound' creature. So he is not even responsible before his Creator. Amusingly, such a reflection springs from the West.

Amongst the forerunners of this movement are 'Garasius' from Holland and 'John Lock' from England. In their reflection, vis-à-vis, the law of nature, and particularly in John Lock's reflection, phrases like "God's Will" or "Divine law" can be found thinking by law of nature, they mean the law of reason. Besides, they reckon reason's duty to be revelation and interpretation in Divine Will. They claim that 'reason' enjoins how a civil society should be formed and to what extent are the rights and its limits and boundaries in that society.

In this way, as per their beliefs, 'reason' replaces divine and natural laws where the most vital consequences of such reflection is excess and intellectual self-sufficiency and real freedom. This is while intellect, in spite of all its credibility, and capability fails to perceive all the elements that lead to man's prosperity.

Thus, the most important result of this reflection and thought particularly John Lock's thought is galloping freedom such as "Russu" while perfecting John's reflection says:

"Man steps into this world freely and he should live too freely. Undoubtedly, life in a society limits an individual's freedom; but this limitation is lawful to such extent that it supports his own consent."

However, we should declare frankly that such absolute freedom has not only failed to serve a ground for man's prosperity and assure him of his true rights and inquiries but has rather turned into an instrument for unjust rule and tyranny over the people.

Observing a slight pause over man's self-love which is amongst his innate and true desires comes us to conclude that if man's freedom is not controlled by the auspices of religious teachings and legal and moral values then his reason and intellect would come under the influence of self-love and its effects particularly sentiments, anger and lust that would not only make him commit any type of treason but he would even try to justify his acts in a rational and intellectual manner.

The holy Quran and traditions bring up the point that if men become separated from revelation, their separation will pave the ground for their community ruin and destruction.

## *Biography of Imam al-Sadiq (as)*

### *The Sixth Star\**

Mohammad Reza Hakimi

**Abstract:** *In the present article, the author provides readers with a very brief look at the life of the holy Imam of Shias, Imam al-Sadiq (as). This article is divided into these categories: Divine matters, social responsibilities, fiqh, social interactions, and physical fitness.*

**Keywords:** *Imam al-Sadiq, Lifestyle, Biography*

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\* Translator: Hasan Najafi

*J*afar al-Sadiq (*as*) is the sixth Imam of the Shias. He was born on the 7th of *Rabi al-Awwal* in the year 83 AH / 702 AD. His name is Jafar but he is best known as al-Sadiq. He is also referred to by the title Abu Abdullah and he is also called Patient (*Saber*), Learned (*Fadhil*), Pure (*Taher*) and Truthful (*Sadiq*) are all names derived from his beautiful character and attributes.

His mother was Fatimah known as Umme Farwa who was the daughter of Qasim ibn Abi Bakr.

Qasim, was one of the close companions of Imam Zain al-Abedin (*as*). He was one of the seven jurisprudences of Mecca.

Umme Farwa was a greatly respected lady who was very pious and generous. Because of this, Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) is also called the “Son of the Great Lady”.

Jafar al-Sadiq (*as*) succeeded his father Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (*as*) following his death and became Imam in the year 114 AH / 731 AD when he was 31 years old. In those days constant revolts and uprisings by sympathizers of Imam Ali’s family and his offspring and by the Abbasid family had shaken the foundations of the Umayyad government and its institution. Eventually the government was toppled in 132 AH / 750 AD and paved the way for the rise of the Abbasids.

The falling of one and the rising of another dynasty led to a period of relative freedom and served as an ideal opportunity to spread Islamic sciences among the people.

Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) took the best possible advantage of this situation, and he taught several thousand students of whom many became knowledgeable scholars. By doing this, the Imam (*as*) spread a variety of sciences ranging from theology to ethics, jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) and Islamic legal codes among the followers of Ali (*as*). People, thirsty for his knowledge, came from far and

wide to attend his classes. It was from this time on that true Islam emerged in its real face.

Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) was not only an oracle in religious sciences but he was also a great authority in life sciences. The most famous Muslim chemist of those times, Jabir ibn Hayyan, frequently refers to the Imam in his writings as his teacher and his lord!

Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) can be called the “Teacher” because all great Islamic scholars who emerged after him were directly or indirectly his students. The fact that Islamic scholars had a great role in building the foundations of science in those days is no secret. Thus it is not a big claim if we say that Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) - apart from his high station of Imam-hood - was one of the greatest scholars of science and culture of all times.

In Islamic history, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (*as*) was by far the only Imam who had the most chances to propagate Islamic ideology. Even though he was transferred from Medina to Kufa and imprisoned there in the last years of his life by the order of Mansoor al-Dawaniqi, the Imam also devoted his time there to spread Islamic knowledge.

It was because of all this that Shia jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is also known as Jafari jurisprudence and the religion of Imami Shia is known as “the Jafari religion”: Since it was Imam al-Sadiq who expanded the scope of Islamic law and minutely explained, interpreted and expounded its legal codes and many other issues, the Shia belief came to be named after him as the “Jafari religion”. It was through this Imam that the Shia belief remained safe from corruption and was not influenced by the judgments and viewpoints of outsiders.

Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) lived during a very critical period of time and had to grapple with four serious and important issues with intelligence and effort. We will now concisely speak of these matters:

### *Divine Matters*

The days of Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) were days of intense religious ferment where arguments were put forth and against many ideological issues which were interwoven with the politics of those days. Some of the most notable of these issues were related to “the status of the Quran”, “the will and fate of man regarding his actions”, “is Quran sufficient by itself or must it be explained by an Imam”, “life after death” and “the matters regarding revelation” (*vahy*).

In this situation the Imam (*as*) had to take a stance regarding each of these issues and firmly answer the mentioned questions. And so he explained all of these matters from the viewpoint of the Quran and true Islam.

Husham ibn al-Hakam, Hisham ibn Salem and Mo'men al-Ta'q were some of his disciples who took up the task of defending these true beliefs and propagating them far and wide. Gradually a learned group emerged who became a force in defending Islam from the onslaughts of foreign and domestic schools of thought.

This atmosphere of relative freedom and the ability to argue with different beliefs created an ideal opportunity for the Imam to spread the true Quranic beliefs and viewpoints regarding many different matters. These viewpoints which were in exact accordance with the Quran and the fundamentals of Islam were in clear contradiction with the aggressive and sometimes racist viewpoints of the Arab rulers.

### *Social Responsibilities*

Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) cared much about socio-religious behaviors and the responsibilities he had regarding the

society. Revolts and uprisings against the Abbasids were frequent in those times and even though he did not involve himself in these actions, he expressed his opinion about some of them.

Of these many uprisings, one stands out; this was the uprising of Zaid, the grandson of Imam al-Hussain (*as*) who headed a particularly bloody rebellion.

Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) used to encourage the commemoration of the 10th of Muharram (*Ashura*), which was the day of the martyrdom of his great grandfather Imam al-Hussain (*as*) and his followers. To the Imam, this ceremony signified the re-enactment and revival of the mission of al-Hussain (*as*).

Poets and orators were urged to recall and recount this event and were well rewarded by the Imam for their efforts.

All these actions served to create a general awakening of feelings against tyrants and tyranny, a spirit that propagated in waves across society.

### *Jurisprudence (Figh):*

The Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs had long endeavored to train and gather around them a circle of loyal scholars (*fuqaha*) who would endorse and promote what they proposed and shield their actions and unlawful plans. In short, these scholars were expected to back religiously all the deeds and actions of the Caliphs and support their tyranny.

This trend was a matter of some anxiety to the Imam and in order to counter it the Imam trained pious, staunch and sincere scholars who were well versed in Islamic law who would stand up to the corrupt scholars and oppose any of their deeds which ran counter to Islam.

The Imam (*as*) chose the best of men, trained them and sent them to other cities. As a result, a group of the most talented

scholars emerged from the Imam's school who fanned out throughout the cities and towns of the region, mingled with the people and awakened and educated them on day-to-day issues, as well as in Islamic legal codes.

The presence of these pious scholars among the people led to them being freed from ignorance to a very great extent and converted large numbers of them into true Muslims.

The knowledge on Islamic codes disseminated by the group of students trained by Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) proved to be so useful that many Sunni theologians were inspired by these movements to take a right direction in their verdicts. The decrees (Fatwas) which the Imam issued circulated among scholars who studied their basis and implications and they in turn corrected their methods of declaring decrees.

On matters of Islamic law and jurisprudence Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) had such a high stature that Abu Hanifah -one the four Imams of the Sunni sect- became his disciple.

The Imam's disciples were like a breath of fresh air in a suffocating environment overwhelmed with the presence of unlawful scholars and jurists who did not dare contradict the caliph's beliefs.

### *Interacting With Society*

One of the things that had become popular in those days was mystic beliefs which mainly consisted of Sufism. Those who practiced this belief neglected worldly matters and were indifferent to the affairs of this world. They lived a life of asceticism. The tendency among such groups was to desert society in favor of solitude and enjoyment of the limited company of such mysterious groups which they belonged to. They termed these actions 'piety' and they called themselves pious.

The government supported such groups for political reasons. They mostly did so to try to prove to the people that they themselves were pious and supporters of piety. In reality they supported these groups because they were a bunch of citizens who were indifferent regarding the Caliph's actions and evildoings.

The Sufis claimed they were descendants of the "companions of the *Suffah*" who were a group of pious people at the time of the Prophet (*as*). What the Sufis forgot was the fact that the "companions of the *Suffah*" were the lions of day and the worshippers of night. They worshipped Allah by night but in daytime they performed many duties and social services. The reason they didn't pay attention towards worldly matters was probably because they wanted to be ready for any duty given to them whether it be participating in a war or striding toward the welfare of the community.

The Imam had to deal with the apparently decent but truly corrupt actions of the Sufis. He emphasized on keeping the spirit pure and paying attention to spiritual matters and at the same time prevented the misuse or misinterpretation of these teachings. By doing this the social aspects of Islam would be revealed and not be forgotten behind the curtains of ignorance drawn by the Sufis.

The campaign that Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) undertook on this front was not easy but he accomplished it in such a manner that not only the scholars and clerics regarded themselves as his disciples but the Sufis too tried to connect their beliefs to Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) to gain stature from his spiritual highness.

### *Physical Fitness*

*I*mam al-Sadiq paid very special attention to matters of health and body power. Islam has many recommendations regarding these matters and the Imam (*as*) urged people to

practice activities such as archery and horse riding, which were very important at those times.

He narrated:

“The Prophet (*as*) had a horse race with Osama ibn zaid.”<sup>1</sup>

He quoted the Prophet (*as*) saying:

“Angels come down to earth at the time of horse racing<sup>2</sup>.”<sup>3</sup>

According to Ibn Abi Umair, the Imam (*as*) used to take part in archery and horse-riding contests<sup>4</sup>.

Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) finally passed away at the age of 65. During his years he performed many important divine duties. He introduced the true Islam, educated outstanding scholars, protected the religion and left behind an ocean of knowledge and wisdom.

During his life, he suffered greatly at the hands of the Caliphs who sometimes sent him to exile or tortured him in one way or another.

Finally, he was cruelly poisoned and martyred by Mansoor al-Dawaniqi on the 25th of Shawwal 148 A.H. He was buried in the *Baqee* cemetery situated in the southeastern section of Medina beside the holy graves of Imam al-Hasan, Imam Zain al-Abidin and Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (*as*).

Throughout the ages scholars of all religions have spoken about the high stature of Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) and have praised the foundations he put in place. The famous social philosopher and thinker, Ibn Khaldoon says:

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Ameli, *Vasa'il Al-Shia*, vol. 13, p. 347, 348

<sup>2</sup> This should not be mixed up with some of the disgraceful horse races of today which involve betting by the on-lookers.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

“Miracles narrated of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (*as*) by credible sources are definitely acceptable whether they were performed by the Imam himself or by the members of his family. Because this family is one who has miracles. It has been said in verified narrations that Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) had correctly foretold of future events to those close to him and those events had unfolded just as he had predicted them. When miraculous things are narrated about others, why can't they be narrated about them (i.e. the household of the Prophet (*s*))?

Their knowledge, their faith and what they have inherited from Prophet-hood and the generosity God has towards them all testify that these branches have sprouted from this root (i.e. the Prophet (*as*)). Many miracles have been narrated from the household of the Prophet (*as*) ...”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khaldoun, *Al-Moghaddamah*, p. 277 - 280

## *Once I thought that God ...'*

Gheysar Aminpour

*Each person has an imagination of God in his mind regardless of this picture being true or not. It is worth mentioning that these imagination to some extent – if we do not say always- are influenced by the environment we grew up in. some cultures depict an angry revenge seeking God, others a Lenient, indifferent God. These pictures are never true because God is not imaginable. The following article is a poem written by the late Gheysar Aminpour, the Iranian Poet who pictured his childhood imaginations of God with his words.*

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<sup>1</sup> Translator: Farideh Mahdavi-Damghani

Once, I thought that God  
Has a house near the clouds  
Just like the castle of the king, in fairytales  
One brick in diamond, another one in gold  
The base of its dungeon, in ivory and glass  
And He would be seated proudly on a Throne  
The moon, a small splendor on His crown  
Each star, a glittering sequin on His crown  
The sky, His silken dress

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The cosmos, as the pattern of His gown  
Thunders and flashes of lightening as His laughter  
The storm and the flood as His blaring yell  
The sun as the button of His gown  
The flash as His arrow, the moonlight as His dagger  
No one can get close to Him  
Before that, I was sad  
I had this image of God in my mind  
That God was Cruel and Wrathful...  
His dwelling-place in Heavens was so far from Earth...  
And He was not among us  
He was not Good or Simple or Beautiful  
In His Heart, there was no trace of friendship  
Goodness was without meaning

\*\*\*

Whatever I asked myself, or asked God  
Or the earth or the sky or the clouds  
They all responded hastily: it is God's Work indeed  
And to ask about Him is wrong  
And whatever I might ask, the answer would be 'Fire'  
indeed...  
If I drank water, its answer was Fire  
The moment I closed my eyes, He would blind me  
The moment I got closer, He would turn me away  
The moment you open your hand wrongfully

*H*e would turn you into stone  
The moment you take a wrongful step  
He would make you lame  
The moment you commit a sin  
He will torment you  
He will melt you down in the Fire...

\*\*\*

*I* was so very busy with this fable...  
My dreams were about giants and ghouls  
I dreamt that I was on fire  
Inside the indomitable flames  
Inside the mouth of an angry dragon  
Over my head, a rain of fiery clubs  
My silent yells, disappearing  
In the echo of the laughter of God's Wrath...  
My intention in performing the Prayer  
Was only provoked by fear,  
All I did, was done in fear,  
Just like memorizing a lesson...  
Just like doing some arithmetic and geometry  
Just like the principal's punishment in school  
Bitter like a laughter with no feeling in it  
Difficult as when you solve hundreds of equations  
Hard as home work  
Hard as when you conjugate a verb in the past tense  
Until one night , hand in hand with my dad  
We went on a journey together...  
On our way, in a small village, we saw a house, homely and  
familiar. I asked him hastily: what is this place, dad?  
He said: this is the Good House of God  
He said that one could remain there, for a moment  
In a solitary place, he performed his prayer  
He refreshed his face with an Ablution  
I asked: where is then that Wrathful God

Where is His House, here on earth...?!  
He said: Aye ... His House is simple materials...  
He is kind and Good and Empty of any rancor:  
Like a light inside a mirror  
He is not Wrathful or Adverse by nature  
His Name is Light and His Sign is Splendor  
Wrath is a name from among His Signs:  
A way of His Kindness  
His fury is sweeter than His Friendship  
Just like the sweet, maternal fury of a mother  
Friendship is defined with the friend you have  
And fury too, is defined with the friend you have  
No one turns away from his friend  
And His Fury is also a friendly sign

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*A*t last I knew my God:  
A Friend, closer to me than myself  
Closer to me than the jugular vein  
The wind then, took that previous God, away from me  
My heart forgot even His name  
That God was like a dream  
Like a bubble, a form on the surface of the water  
I can befriend this God from now on  
Be His friend, purely and simply...  
One could fly high with this God  
One could confide in Him  
One could talk with Him about a flower  
One could talk to Him, like a nightingale  
Clearly and simply  
One could say secrets to Him, drop by drop  
And say a thousand secrets, with only two drops...  
One could talk to Him sincerely and honestly  
Talk like an old rain  
One could sing the song of flying high in the sky

36. *Safinah, No.8*

One could sing with the alphabet of silence  
One could talk like grass  
With a language, devoid of any alphabet  
One could talk about everything  
One could write a marvelous poem  
Like this poem here, simple and familiar...

# *Academic Debates of Ahlul Bayt\**

Muhammadriza Izadpour

***Abstract:*** *One of the greatest activities of Ahlul Bayt in revitalizing the teachings of Islam and clarifying them was the attention they paid to formal or informal debates sessions. The importance of such debates was magnified by collected several heavy books. Following, a debate between Imam Ali and a Jewish is narrated.*

***Keywords:*** *Ali, Jewish*

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\* Translator: Hamid Shahedi

*A*bu Tofail Amer ibn Va'eleh said:

After giving the title of “Commander of the Faithfuls” to the second Caliph, one day, we were sitting besides him when a Jewish man from Medina entered. He believed that he was one of the progeny of Haroun, brother of Moses. He stood besides Caliph addressing him: oh, Commander of the faithfuls! Which one of you does know the Prophet Muhammad and his holy Book more? I have some questions.

Caliph pointed to Ali (*as*). He asked: is this true? “Yes, now ask whatever you like”, said Imam Ali.

“I am going to ask you about three things, then about other three things and then about one thing.” said Jewish man. “Why don’t you ask about those seven things?” asked Imam Ali.

Jewish man answered: first I am going to ask you three questions if you answered correctly I will ask you the other three ones, when the answers are all right, the last question will be asked. Moreover, if the first three ones are not accepted, you will not be asked more.

Imam asked: how do you justify the truth of my answers?

Meanwhile, the Jew took an old book out of his pocket and said: I inherited this book from my fathers and them from their fathers. This book is signed by Moses and handwrote by Haroun. It includes the answers.

Imam Ali said: so if I answered correctly you should confess to their trueness immediately.

He said: I swear to God! If you answer me correctly, I will surrender.

Imam said: alright, ask me.

The Jews: tell me what was the first stone placed on the earth? What was the first tree which grew? And the first spring gurgled on the earth?

Imam Ali replied: oh, Jewish man! The first stone was Hajar al-Asvad. God put it for Adam in heavens. Then He descended it to the earth as the pillar of His house. People touch it, kiss it and refresh their promises with God through it. Though, Jews believe the first stone is the rock which is in Jerusalem. Man upon hearing this answer said: I take God as our witness, your answer is correct.

Imam Ali continued: the first tree was the date tree whose fruit called Aj'va and it was in heaven when Adam was there. But Jews think that the first three was olive tree.

Again the man cried: I take God as our witness, your answer is correct.

Imam: the first spring was the Life Spring which Moses's accompany forgot and leave salted fish in it and when the water of that spring touched it, the fish became alive and moved. The man said: you are right.

Imam Ali, then, said: now, ask.

He asked: let me know if there is a leader after passing the Prophet among Islamic nation? Let me know where is the eternal habitat of Muhammad and in which part of heaven he resides? And who are the people residing there and living besides him?

Imam Ali: oh, Jewish man! For this nation, twelve just leaders were chosen whom may not be bothered or mitigated by the enmity of their enemies.

The man again confirmed his answer.

Imam said: but the place of Muhammad in Heaven, it is the same Garden of Eden locating in the heart of heaven, the nearest point to the Throne of God.

Jews confessed: you are right!

Imam said: and those who are going to be lived besides him are that twelve leaders.

Jews said: “exactly”. “Ask me!” said Imam. The Jews asked: tell me about the inheritor of Muhammad who is regarded one of his family. How much will he live in this world after the Prophet Muhammad? Will he die naturally or he will be killed?

Imam said: oh, the Jewish man! He will live for 30 years after the death of Prophet Muhammad (*as*).

Then his holiness, pointing to his head, said: his head will be colored by his blood.

The Jewish man again confirmed these words and said:

I confess that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger and you are his inheritor<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Sheikh Al-Saduq, *Kamal Al-Din*, p.172; Al-Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol.10, p.20-22.

# *The Future of Mankind*

Reza Hemyari

***Abstract:*** *During the history of mankind there has been a great attempt by all schools of thought to portray the future of this world; the future of mankind. Utopia and the arrival of a savior have been given a lot of attention. In this article these two concepts have been analyzed.*

***Keywords:*** *Utopia, Savior, Mahdi, Armageddon*

The idealistic spirit of mankind and his tendency toward perfection has always led him towards improvement and higher living standards.

What makes the human stand patiently and bravely against difficulties and disasters is the hope to overcome his problems and the desire to change the existing adverse situation to his ideal condition.

Philosophers and intellectuals in every period, probed into the roots of injustice, immorality, ignorance, and antagonism in society. They tried to find a way out of these evils towards a happy life, and searched for means of serving justice. They presented their theories in the form of different schemes.

On the other hand there have been holy messengers and divine leaders whose nature of existence is to invite nations to the truth and to promote virtue among nations. These holy leaders convey God's promise for fulfillment of truth and establishment of a united global system, and they jointly believe that the final victory is the victory of Truth and the prevalence of faith.

These two movements, although different in some aspects, are moving along the same direction. Below we study some examples of both movements.

### A) *Madineh Fadhele*<sup>1</sup> (Utopia)

A study of history of philosophy from the old times up to the recent years will clearly show that a supreme social and political system and finding means of improving human's social life have always been looked for, and discussed by intellectuals as a topic in philosophy, under the title of "policy of cities".

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<sup>1</sup> *Madineh Fadhele* is an expression that implies a perfect society and a supreme civilization, where human's reasonable wishes come true.

Plato's scheme to form an ideal society which included fixed social classes, and to have an intellectual as the ruler, was one of the first measures that are registered in the history of philosophy.

“The Republic” of Plato was designed on the idea that salvation will be achieved only when a wise intellectual (philosopher) takes the seat of power, and that people should be classified according to their talents and nature, and thus be assigned with appropriate tasks accordingly.

Pursuing Plato, another philosopher named Abu Nasr Farabi, demonstrated Madineh Fadhele and left the books “Madineh Policy” and “Thoughts of citizens of Madineh Fadhele”.

Utopia is of great importance from the view point of Western philosophers too. Thomas Kampanella has offered “Country of Sun”, and Thomas Moore has written “Utopia”. Marx and Angles talked about Communist Society, and Russell has brought up the “United Global Government”.

This subject is so noticeable that William Durrant quoted from Oscar Wild who had said:

“The world map in which the location of Utopia is not shown is not worthy of looking at, since the country where humanity has landed on, is ignored in this map. When humanity lands in such country it looks around to find better locations to move on. Progress and development is a must for achievement of Utopia”.<sup>1</sup>

With regards to the absolute need of societies for a united leadership, Albert Einstein the famous contemporary physicist says:

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<sup>1</sup> William Durrant, *Pleasure of Philosophy*

“People of every race and color should live together under one particular flag peacefully in fraternity and equality”.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is disappointing that man normally selects deviant ways and applies material means to achieve his old desire.

### 8) *Believing in the arrival of the "Savior"*

One of the common grounds of the main Religions is the belief in a promised Future, in which truth and justice overcome disbelief and deception. This belief itself includes faith in the Day of Judgment and arrival of the Savior.

### *According to Zoroastrianism*

Zoroaster promised that after him there will be individuals who will come to save the world from Satan's evils. These individuals are known as Sooshyant. Zoroastrians believe that in the first, second and third millennium after Zoroaster three Sooshyants will come to the world. The last one of these three Sooshyants is called “the triumphant Sooshyant”, who is believed to be the most important one.

### *According to Judaism*

In the Psalms of David (*as*) in the Old Testament it has been mentioned:

“For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But

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<sup>1</sup> meaning of the theory of relativity

the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”<sup>1</sup>

*According to Christianity*

In the New Testament, book of John it is written:

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.”<sup>2</sup>

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”<sup>3</sup>

The belief of a savior in Islam is well known and one of the most comprehensive. This will be studied in detail in future articles.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalms of David, 37:9-11

<sup>2</sup> Book of John, 14:16

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 14:26

*A to Z*

*Allah's Sayings to the Prophet Jesus<sup>1</sup>*

***Abstract:** The holy books of all holy religions are a good source to understand what men should go through to get to perfection. Alongside these books there are other important guidelines which can only be found in the sayings of the Infallible Imams (as). But the guidelines are not limited to these. There is another source which is called "Ahadith Qudsi", (Divine Narrations). These are direct sayings of God which are not part of the Holy Books. In this article some of the sayings of Allah to Jesus the son of Mary have been mentioned. They have been taken from Tuhaf al-Uqool, p. 496 – 501 and have been rearranged in alphabetical order.*

***Keywords:** Jesus, Words of Wisdom, Divine Narrations*

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<sup>1</sup> Compiled by hasan ibn Shu'ba al-harrani, translated by Sadr Shahin

<sup>2</sup> a to z ordering by RaziyeH Soleimani

Advice to connect to God

O Jesus, I offer to you the advice of the tender for you out of mercy. It has become binding for Me to care for you because you are seeking My satisfaction.

Answering the prayers

When you want to refer to Me, you should do so submissively with pure intention so that I will answer you.

Bani Israel

Say to the unjust Israelites: O comrades of evil, keep on doing so and I will convert you into apes and pigs.

Characteristics of the holy Prophet (s) revealed by God to

Jesus

O son of Mary the Virgin, I command you to adhere to the master of the Messengers; My dear Ahmad, the rider of the red camel, the white-faced whose face shines with light, the pure-hearted, the powerful, the modest, and the bountiful. He is surely a mercy for the worlds and the most noble of the sons of Adam when he will meet Me (on the Day of Resurrection). He is the most honorable of the forerunners to Me and the closest of the submissive to Me. He is the Arab, the Meccan the embracer of My religion, and the steadfast for My sake, who will fight the polytheists to protect My religion.

Fondness of this world

You should know that the fondness of this world is the head of every fault and sin; so, do not be fond of it, for I am not fond of it.

*God's order*

O Jesus, you are the Christ according to My order. You create (things) from mud out of My permission and bring back the dead out of My words. Have desire towards Me and fear Me. You will not find anyone that protects you from Me except Me.

*God's advice to the Bani Israel*

O Jesus, say to the unjust Israelites: You have cleaned your faces but dirtied your hearts. Are you deceiving Me? Or are you challenging Me? You perfume yourselves for the people of this world while your interiors are like stinky corpses, as if you are dead people!

O Jesus, tell them: clip your nails against having ill-gotten property and shut your hearings against listening to obscenity. Come to Me with your hearts; I do not want your appearances.

*God's recommendation about Muhammad (s) to the Bani Israel*

You should foretell the Israelites of his coming and order them to have faith in him, believe him, follow him, and support him.

*God's happiness*

Do only what pleases Me, for I am pleased when I am obeyed not when disobeyed.

*God's order to Jesus about oppressors*

O Jesus, say to the unjust Israelites not to pray to Me while they keep their ill-gotten property under their laps and keep idols in their houses, for I took a pledge on Myself that I will answer him

whoever prays to Me, but, for those ones, I will substitute by making them far from my mercy until they depart.

### *Hell*

O Jesus, run toward Me with those who are fleeing from the blazing fire (of Hell) which contains chains and shackles. No rest comes in there and no grief goes out of it. It is just like a gloomy moonless night. He who avoids it is surely a winner. It is the (eternal) abode of the tyrants, the despots, and the oppressors as well as the coarse and rude.

### *Humbleness*

O Jesus, be desirous (for My rewards) and fearful (of My punishment). Take over your heart's (desires) by fearing (Me). O Jesus, discipline your heart by fear of Allah. O Jesus, shed tears from your eyes for My sake and fear Me with Your heart.

### *Jesus Creation*

O Jesus, I have created you from My words, and Mary gave birth to you according to My order. I sent to her Gabriel; My spirit and the trustee from My angels. Thus, you could walk on this earth lively. All that was recorded in My eternal knowledge.

### *Knowledge*

O Jesus, be awake in hours of inadvertence and provide for My sake the nice words of wisdom.

### *Lust*

O Jesus, wean yourself from the destructive passions as well as every lust that takes you away from Me. You should realize that I

regard you as the honest messenger; therefore, be cautious (of me).

*Look at your faults and weak points*

O Jesus, look at your deeds like a sinful guilty slave, and do not look at others' deeds. Abstain from receiving the worldly pleasures. Do not be acquisitive for it lest, you will perish.

*Lying*

O Jesus, do not swear by Me falsely lest, My (Divine) Throne will be shaken because of my anger. This worldly life is short in period and long in (false) hope. I have an abode that is more favorable than whatever they (worldly people) collect.

*Mercy*

O Jesus, you will be interrogated. Be compassionate to the weak like I am compassionate to you and do not distress the orphans. O Jesus, be kind to the weak.

*Patience*

O Jesus, be steadfast against misfortunes, be pleased with the act (of Allah).

*Several characteristics of the holy Prophet (s)*

He is Muhammad; the messenger of Allah sent to all the people (on earth). He is the owner of the closest standing to Me and he is the foremost intercessor. Blessed be him. What a Prophet he is! Blessed be those from his nation who will keep on pursuing his path until they meet Me. The inhabitants of this earth praise him and the inhabitants of the heavens seek (My) forgiveness to him. He is trustworthy, blessed, and clean. For Me, he is the best of

the coming generations. He will come in the ends of time. When he comes out, the heavens will provide their rain, the land will bring out its blossoms, and people will see the blessings. I will bless anything on which he will put his hand. He will have many wives but will have few children.

### *The Other World*

No abode, like the abode to come (Paradise) where the good people are next to each other and the intimate angels (of Allah) visit them frequently. Furthermore, they will be secured against the horrors of Doomsday. The bliss of the abode to come is unchangeable and does not decline from its inhabitants.

### *Thinking about the world and people*

O Jesus, be reasonable, ponder over things, and see (think about) the fate of the unjust ones in different parts of the earth.

### *Zikr- God's remembrance in every place*

O Jesus, spend your times with mentioning Me with words and situating the fondness of Me in your heart.

# *Contentment Is the Solution*

Abbas Pasandideh

**Abstract:** *This article shows the relation between consumption<sup>1</sup> and contentment<sup>2</sup> (Qina'ah) from a religious perspective.*

**Keywords:** *Consumption, Contentment*

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<sup>1</sup> The act of buying and using products (oxford advanced learners dictionary)

<sup>2</sup> By 'contentment' we mean: "Being satisfied with what you have"

Translator: Somayeh Alehosseini

Man, who is God's creation, is always seeking absolute perfection. Exactly because of this nature, he prefers the most beautiful shapes and sizes. If he prefers something, it would be the most perfect; if he wants virtues and spirituality, he would want it in its extreme way and if he focuses on the materialistic and worldly life, it should be the most perfect.

If the worldly life is chosen by someone, he would want the best facilities. At this time consumption starts. Such a person will not limit himself to any amount of facilities and no joy in life will satisfy him because he is constantly seeking more and more. This means more overwhelming effort to gain more.

In this situation, man is transformed into a consumption machine and believes that for having a comfortable life, it is necessary to possess everything. This belief brings the desire to have more and spend more money.

In this stage, greed is born and man will put all his efforts to increase his income and consume as much as he can. Unreachable aspirations and consequently distress come by. Not financial distress but a distress to make more and more money.

Man starts a campaign of luxury and puts himself in trouble to reach these goals. The question is: "Will greed and indulgence and all these wishes lead to a more comfortable life?" The Answer is: "No".

Let's talk about greed. As human beings become greedier, they become more disturbed. Greedy people, never become calm and relaxed. Greedy people are deprived of spiritual peace and the joy of life.

Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) states:

"A Greedy person is deprived of two things and two things will be with him: he is deprived of contentment, so loses

comfort and would be deprived of satisfaction (with what he has), so loses certainty (*yaqin*).”<sup>1</sup>

Or Imam Ali (s) states: “The greedy man is not seen at rest.”<sup>2</sup>

Unreachable dreams and fancies also destroy man’s peace and tranquility. Imam Ali (*as*) states: “He whose wishes become many, his satisfactions will become little.”<sup>3</sup> Because, according to Imam Ali (*as*), the main characteristic of wishes is their endlessness and unlimited capacity:

“Wishes have no end”<sup>4</sup> and “Wishing has no limits”<sup>5</sup>.

Meanwhile, the human life and the capacity of this world are too limited to meet such demands. Therefore, the endlessness of wishes and limitation of capacities will make wishes unreachable and this will obviously lead to dissatisfaction. Accordingly Imam Ali (*as*) says:

“(Unreachable) fancies lead to regret.”<sup>6</sup>

This can be a regret of losing what he could have achieved if he had not gone after unreachable desires and the regret of wasting his precious time and life. On the other hand, if a man has an unreachable desire, he will experience an endless waiting; a waiting which is very sad and disturbing. Therefore, the Imam (*as*) emphasizes that:

“He, who wishes the impossible, will have a long waiting.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Ameli, *Vasa’il, Al-Shia*, vol. 16, p. 20

<sup>2</sup> Abdul-Wahid ibn Muhammad al-Tamimi, *Ghorar Al-Hikam Va Durar Al-Kilam*, p. 294, No. 6601

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, p. 314, No. 7304

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*, p. 311, No. 7202

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, p. 311, No. 7204

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, p. 314, No. 7300

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, p. 312, No. 7225

With these consequences ahead, we should not expect consumerism to lead to happiness.

The solution to the mentioned problems is 'contentment'. Contentment balances all parts of life. Content people try to fulfill their worldly needs but at the same time are satisfied with what God has destined for them. Therefore, they neither protest nor feel unhappy. They are not tied up in their fancies and don't waste their life trying hard to reach what is unnecessary. This makes them satisfied with their life.

Satisfaction is not connected with how much more we consume or spend. Higher consumption will not bring with it higher satisfaction. Rather, the sense of satisfaction and comfort, have a logical connection with the amount of contentment. Imam Ali (*as*) says:

"You are in more need of contentment (even though) you have little provisions (*rizq*) than you are in need of greed in search (of provisions)."<sup>1</sup>

He also says:

"The beauty of life is in contentment."<sup>2</sup>

Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) Quotes Luqman saying to his son: "Be content with what God has assigned for you, so that you have a serene life."<sup>3</sup>

Real wealth and poverty can be defined by the concept of contentment. Imam Ali says:

"The wealthiest person is he who is satisfied with what God has given to him."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *ibid*, p. 391, No. 8985

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, p. 391, No. 8990

<sup>3</sup> Al-Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 13, p. 419

If you are satisfied with what God has given you, then the least of things will suffice you. But if you feel unsatisfied by what is sufficient for you, then nothing in the world will be enough for you.

Imam Ali (*as*) says:

“He who is satisfied with what God has given him, will not be saddened because of the things that he is deprived of.”<sup>2</sup>

Serenity and comfort are the differentiating factors between content and non-content people. The greed of the greedy does not increase what God has put aside for them and the contentment of the content does not decrease it. If people learn to be satisfied by their destiny, they undoubtedly will experience comfort and ease of mind. The holy Prophet (*s*) says:

“Be aware that for every person there is a determined share of provisions (*rizq*) and it will reach him one way or another. If he is satisfied with it, it will be blessed and will be increased for him. But if he is not satisfied with it, it will not be blessed and will not be increased for him. The provisions (*rizq*) are in pursuit of the person who they are destined for just as his fate is.”<sup>3</sup>

Undoubtedly, contentment doesn't mean being lazy and making no effort for making money or working. Contentment and effort are two separate things and they do not contradict each other. Laziness and effort fall in one category and greed and contentment in another. From a functional viewpoint, man is either active or lazy, and from a psychological viewpoint, he is either content or greedy. Without doubt man must try hard to reach what he desires. It's important that his efforts be combined with content and not greed. Imam Ali (*as*) states:

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul-Wahid ibn Muhammad al-Tamimi, *Ghorar Al-Hikam Va Durar Al-Kilam*, p. 397, No. 9219

<sup>2</sup> Seyyed Al-Radhi, *Nahj Al-Balaghah*, p. 536, Hikmah No. 349

<sup>3</sup> Al-Nuri, *Mustadrak Al-Vasa'el*, vol. 13, p. 31, No. 14652

“Seek for your provisions (rizq) for it has been guaranteed for those who seek it.”<sup>1</sup>

God has guaranteed that he will give us a share of provisions, but there is also a specified duty for us. Sudayr says: “I asked Imam al-Sadiq (*as*): What is the duty of man who is seeking his provisions (*rizq*)?” He answered: “When you opened the door of your store and made everything ready, you have performed your duty.”<sup>2</sup>

We can conclude that, it is necessary to have a pleasant life and be able to use all available facilities, but asking for more than we can get and having unreachable aspirations, will cause a lot of inconvenience which will lead to psychological stress and frustration. We should not seek absolute perfection in this material world because it does not have the needed capacity to provide us with it.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Nuri, *Mustadrak Al-Vasa'el*, vol. 13, p. 31, No. 14652

<sup>2</sup> Al-Kulaini, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 5, p. 179

# *Kufr*

Javad Mohaddesi

***Abstract:*** *One of the most frequent words used in the holy Quran is the word “kufr”. This frequency can be concluded as its significance in the teachings of Islam. In this article its different meanings, aspects, and effects, and also the signs of disbelievers (kuffar) have been discussed.*

***Keywords:*** *Kufr, Disbelieving, Kuffar, Infidelity*

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<sup>1</sup> Infidelity, disbelief, blasphemy

## The Application (usage) of Kufr in Quranic Verses

In this article, we will have a short glimpse on the Quranic word “*kufr*”, its meanings, its different types and usage in Islamic texts. The basis of this study is the holy Quran in which the word *kufr* and its derivatives have been mentioned 505 times.

### The Meaning of Kufr

The word “*kufr*” means to cover any thing and it has been used to refer to any condition in which something has been covered, hidden or put away from sight. In expressions and words derived from the word “*Kufr*” this meaning is clear.

For example: “night” has been called “*kafir*” (the coverer) for it covers people (in darkness)<sup>1</sup>. A “Farmer” is also referred to as “*kafir*” for it hides seeds into the earth. In the Quran, in some cases, “*kuffar*” (the coverers) mean farmers. E.g. “...whereof the growth is pleasing to the farmers...”. (The holy Quran 57:20)

“*Kufr*” is mostly used in places where God, His Prophets, religion and the day of resurrection are rejected.<sup>2</sup>

Some sins are also referred to by this word because in those sins God’s Power, Domination and Authority are denied.

In a tradition Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) has called each and every sin committed out of “denying, belittling, and disparaging God’s commands” as “*Kufr*” and the sinner as a “*kafir*” (infidel)<sup>3</sup>; This is because if someone accepts Allah as

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Ragheb Esfahani, *Mofradat Fi Gharib Al-Quran*, *kufr* substance

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Al-Ameli, *Vasail Al-Shia*, vol. 1, p.24

his God and is loyal to this belief, he will never commit a sin and be disobedient.

### *Types of kufr*

According to the Quran *kufr* can have five types. In a narration by Imam al-Sadiq (*as*) these are:

Denial (which itself is divided to two types of disobedience, renouncement) and denial of Gods blessings.

***Kufr of denial:*** Disbelief out of denying God's Authority, Heaven, Hell, and the Hereafter; another type of this kind of *Kufr*, is disbelief out of rejection. This applies to someone who acknowledges the truth in his heart, but out of enmity rejects it with his tongue. *Allah says: "and they denied them, though their souls acknowledged them, for spite and arrogance. ."* (*The holy Quran 27:14*)

***Kufr of disobedience:*** This occurs when mankind acts against his commitments, as God says: "...*then is it only a part of the book that ye believe in, and do ye reject the rest?...*" (*The holy Quran 2:85*)

***Kufr of renouncement:*** means staying aloof from the disbelievers and from all their deeds. The holy prophet, Abraham, renounced his unfaithful tribe and said: "*we are clear of you and of whatever ye worship besides Allah: we have rejected you, and there has arisen, between us and you, enmity and hatred for ever, unless you believe in Allah and him alone*" *The holy Quran 60:4*)

***Kufr regarding God's blessings:*** Thanklessness of God's favors and blessings endowed to human beings. e.g. Quran 27:40, 14:7; 1:152.

## The different aspects of Kufr

*Kufr* means denying and not accepting. But what exactly are the things that we deny or not accept? According to the holy Quran, the following are some of the deeds which will result in *kufr*:

- Not believing in God
- Not believing the signs and verses of God
- Not believing in God's court
- Not believing in judgment day
- Having no faith
- Kufr* regarding blessings of God
- Not believing in the angels
- Not believing in the Hereafter
- Not believing in the Divine Books

From the aforementioned, the first and second are the most frequently used. In some verses a few of the above have been mentioned at the same time which is a great deviation from the right path:

*"Whosoever disbelieves in Allah, his angels, his books, his messengers, and the last day, has surely gone astray into far error."* (The holy Quran 4:136)

In other places "*Kufr* (disbelief) after faith" has been mentioned. This type of *kufr* is called "*Irtedad*" (apostasy) and he who acts like this is called a "*mortad*" (apostate). This is the most hideous type of *kufr* which results from xenophile or lack of self-esteem, being fooled by misleading propaganda, failing in solving economical problems, love of the material world or financial interests or other causes. This phenomenon of "converting in belief" is mentioned in verses such as:

*"...they believed, and then they rejected faith..."* (The holy Quran 63:3)

“...anyone who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters disbelief...” (The holy Quran 27:14)

### The effects of *Kufr*

In this part, we will discuss the effects *kufr* leaves in the hearts and souls of disbelievers. *Kufr* is a condition which does not remain stable. It can be strengthened or loosened, obviated or generated or hidden, and it can change into faith. Just as faith has different levels and a believer’s faith can increase by paying attention to God’s signs.

*Kufr* after faith or apostasy is the most vicious kind of *kufr* which leads to God’s not accepting our repent, loss of God’s forgiveness, and loss of the chances of guidance and salvation:

“surely (as for) those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allah will not forgive them nor guide them in the (right) path” (The holy Quran 4:137)

Because a *kafir* (infidel) does not accept truth out of his obstinacy and enmity, the verses and signs of God not only have no effect for his guidance, but also due to the impurity of his heart, he will become more aloof from God and he will show more insurgence:

“It is the revelation that cometh to thee from thy lord, that increases in most of them their obstinate rebellion and blasphemy, but sorrow thou not over (these) people without faith” (The holy Quran 5:68)

Some people because of the weakness of their soul, ignorance or evil temptations, will trade their faith with *kufr*; or out of worldly assets, in the crossroad of choosing between God and the materialistic world, prefer *kufr* over faith and choose the disbelievers path. What disaster is worse than finding the truth and then losing it?

## *The appearance of kuffar (infidels) in the Quran*

Each of the characteristics which the Quran counts for the *kuffar* need a lot of clarification; here we will only take a brief look at these characteristics.

### **Disbelievers are:**

- cruel and merciless
- hopeless of God's mercy
- deprived of salvation
- Proud, losers, strayed and depressed. They are brothers of the hypocrites.

According to the Quran this is what awaits the *kuffar* in the hereafter: disbelievers will suffer from extreme and painful torture, entangled in hell, are cursed and hated by God and far from His mercy, and God does not love them.

The life of disbelievers, out of lack of presence of faith, spirituality, love of God and purity, is like one of an animal which is devoted to eating and sleeping and nothing more....

*"...while those who reject Allah will enjoy (this world) and eat as cattle eat; and the fire will be their abode."* (The holy Quran 47:12)

Disbelievers have no patron or guardian. The Quran says:

*"That is because Allah is patron of those who believe, and because the disbelievers have no patron."* (The holy Quran 47:11)

*"Allah is the protecting guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of darkness into light. As for those who disbelieve, their patrons are false deities. They bring them out of light into darkness. Such are rightful owners of the fire. They will abide therein."* (The holy Quran 2:257)

*"We have made the devils protecting friends for those who believe not."* (The holy Quran 7:27)

When people ignore God and the rays of faith fade within them, Satan will enter their life. The shade of Satan will cover them and once this happens, even the prophet's (s) invitations to God and the words of righteous people will have no effect on them.

*“Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they (incur).” (The holy Quran 2:27)*

# *No One Saw*

Sa'eed Alerasool

***Abstract:*** *This article is a story about the life of Imam al-Javad (as), the 9<sup>th</sup> Shia Imam.*

***Keywords:*** *Biography, Imam al-Javad*

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<sup>1</sup> Translator: Maryam Akhoundali

*I*t was early in the morning and I could sense the fresh air of the previous night moving around the house. I looked at the single, tall palm tree, in the middle of the yard. Being heavy hearted, I wanted to sit next to the tree for a while. Moments later, I heard my mother coughing from inside the house. She had been sick for a few days and needed my nursing. I went back to the room and held a bowl of water to her lips. She drank a bit and felt better. I decided to go to the bazaar and buy some milk for her. I went to the backyard. A cool breeze was blowing slowly and moved the palm leaves playfully. Against my will, I moved away from this scene and stepped out of the house.

\* \* \*

*T*he town of Samarra was full of fruit orchards. The earth of the alleys smelled of flowers. Tree branches stooped over the walls and greeted the pedestrians. You could see a beautiful clean stream from anywhere you passed. Anyone who walked in the town was overwhelmed from these beautiful scenes.

One by one, I left behind different shops until I came across the milk shop. When the milkman saw me, he said with a loud voice, “Hello son of Khaled! You haven’t been around for a few days!”

I told him that I had stayed at home for a few days because of my mother’s illness. Surprised, he asked, “So, you don’t know about what’s been going around in town?”

“No,” I answered, “if you have any news tell me about it.”

He brought his face close and said, “They have brought a prisoner to town yesterday. They say he claims to be a prophet. He is an old man from Damascus...”

I stepped away aimlessly and without direction. The milkman cried with surprise, “Where are you going Ali ibn khaled?”

I didn’t answer back. I was thinking with myself, how was it possible for a person to call himself a prophet while two hundred years had passed from the prophet-hood of the Prophet Muhammad (s), and all the Muslims knew him as the final prophet. The only answer was that perhaps the old man was crazy!

When I came to myself, I had the tall strong walls of the prison in front of me. I have forgotten to tell you that the town of Samarra with all its beauty, was a military town and soldiers and government officials could be seen everywhere. One of the biggest suburbs of the town was called *Askar* and the town's prison was placed in that suburb. I looked around. The towers of the prison seemed taller than before, and its walls stronger and taller than ever. I was sad that I couldn’t fly over the walls like a bird.

Suddenly I remembered one of my old friends. He was my childhood playmate and he worked in the town prison. I hadn't seen him for years and had no news from him. I felt a power inside me. I went forward and asked the guards about my friend. One of the guards knew him but said, “It is now a year that he has moved to Baghdad and now he is one of the Caliph's bodyguards.”

It was a good opportunity. I used my friendship and asked that guard to take me to that old man. First, he would not accept but after my insistence, he gave in. I thanked him happily and promised him to return his kindness some day. Then I looked at the sky and thanked God in my heart.

I saw the sun peeping from behind the clouds and smiling.

\* \* \*

The prison was dark and damp. We went through narrow passages that had low ceilings and mud-built walls. If it were not for the light of the torches, we could have hardly seen in front of our steps. The sound of crying, moaning, and chains, could be heard throughout the prison. Fear could be felt from every corner. After putting behind some passages, we came to an old wooden door. A guard -with lots of keys belted on his waist- put a key to the lock, and hit against the door with his leg. The door opened with a shrieking sound. The light of the torch, which was in the hand of one of the guards shone on the old man's face.

It was he; the one whom they said had claimed to be a prophet.

I took the torch from the guard and went down the stairs. I stepped closer to him. His hair and beard were gray and he sat in a corner. Next to him was nothing but a pot of water and a clay bowl. He opened his eyelids and in one look studied me from top to bottom. My heart trembled. I sat next to him quietly. A few minutes passed in silence. Although I could hardly speak, I said to him, "I have heard from people that you know yourself to be a prophet, is this true?"

The old man slowly took his eyes off me and fixed them to the ground. He sighed and said, "Pity that people are simple-minded and easy believers."

I could feel grief and sorrow in his voice. I asked about him and his name. He said that he was from Damascus and that he had spent his life in the way of worshipping God. He talked with serenity and dignity.

I asked about his imprisonment. He did not answer. I asked again. He shook his head in disappointment and said,

"We have different beliefs, so how can you understand the truth of the story I talk about?"

I smartly answered, “Don’t you want to put me on the same side as yourself?”

He thought in silence for a while and then said, “The story started in a shrine in Damascus. It was for some time that I prayed and worshiped God there. One day, when I had raised my hands to God, a voice called me and said, “Rise!” I turned towards the sound. I saw a well-dressed man in front of myself who had a blessed face. I got up involuntarily and followed behind him. Only a few moments had passed that he stopped in front of a mosque with tall minarets. He turned towards me and said, “Do you know this mosque?”

“Yes,” I answered. “This is the Mosque of Kuffa.” ...after praying we left that mosque. We had not taken many steps, when I found myself facing the Mosque of the Prophet (s) in Medina. We prayed there too, and started again. We walked a bit further and I suddenly saw myself in Mecca, next to Ka’ba. After circling Ka’ba, we walked on again. This time I found myself in Damascus; the same place I had been before this mysterious trip. At this moment, that person disappeared from my eyes and left me alone with a sea of wonder. A year passed on until one night, for the second time, the same story and the same trip was repeated, with the difference that this time, I begged him for God’s sake to tell me his name. Do you know who he was? He was Imam al-Javad (as) the ninth Imam of us Shias!”

When I found out that he is a follower of Imam al-Javad (as), I was even more surprised. How could it be possible for a person to be a Muslim, count himself as a follower of the Imams, and yet claim to be a prophet? Without hesitation, I asked the old man, “What does this story has to do with claiming to be a prophet?”

The old man turned his face towards me and stared into my eyes. Then with a trembling voice said, “I swear that I have never called myself a prophet. All these are lies. My only mistake was that I told this incident to my friends and family and they

retold it to others, till the news reached Abdul Malek. He ordered that I be brought to your town and be imprisoned, and accused me of claiming to be a prophet.

I trembled all over when I heard the name, Abdul Malek. Suddenly everything seemed dark to me. I went deep in thought. He was the vizier of the Abbasid caliph Mo'tasem; a stonehearted vicious man who did not know friend from foe and had mercy on no one. By his order, they had made a furnace with small and large nails sticking out of its walls. They would throw his enemies in the burning furnace, burning them alive. Tears filled in my eyes and I felt sorry for the old man. I thought with myself that perhaps they had given false news to the vizier about this old man. What if a little mistake or lie had caused great trouble for him? As I was leaving him alone in the darkness, I said, "I will do all I can, to save your life."

From the split between the wall and the closing rusty door, I saw the old man fare-welling me with a smiling face. I will never forget the look on his face.

\* \* \*

*A*t home, I sadly sat in a corner with my hands circled around my knees. My mother woke up coughing. Her coughs reminded me that I was supposed to buy milk in the morning, but the excitement of seeing the old man had made me forget. I told the story to my mother. She tried to calm me down and said, "The old man's words cannot be trusted. If he is telling the truth, God will show a way for his freedom. If he is lying, then better that he stays where he is."

For me who had spoken with the old man and still felt his voice in my ears, it was hard to think him crazy or a liar. On the other hand, I could not just sit down and see the old man's life ending. I recalled the happenings of the day a few times. Suddenly, I remembered what one of the agents had said about

my friend being a special guard of the caliph. It was better to ask him to inform the vizier about the old man. I took a pen and paper with excitement, and wrote everything to him.

\* \* \*

Days went on from that event. My mother's health was improving and I could spend more time outside the house. Every day, when I came home, I asked mother, "Has there been a letter or a message?"

And mothers answer would always be the same: "no!"

During this time, I was worried about the old man who was awaiting his death on one hand and on the other hand, I was searching for a way to find out whether the old man was telling the truth. Finding the truth was more important for me than the old man's destiny, because if he had told the truth, then I had to believe in the Imamate of Imam al-Javad (*as*), and be on the same belief as the Shias. What he had said is possible only through an Imam and a successor of the Prophet (*s*).

Finally, one morning, I heard a few knocks on the door of the house. I got up and opened the door. In front of me, stood a young man with his horse's bridle in his hands. He looked very tired, and his face and clothes were covered in dust. He greeted me and said, "I come from Baghdad, I have brought a letter for you." I happily received the letter from him, and opened it quickly while saying goodbye. I was shocked when I saw what was written in the letter. The Caliph's vizier, Muhammad ibn Abdul Malek had written in his own handwriting, "Ask the same person who takes the old man from Damascus to Medina and Mecca, then returns him to come and free him from our prisons."

What the Vizier meant by 'the same person' was Imam al-Javad (*as*). I wiped the cold sweat, which had settled on my forehead. I didn't know what to say. I gazed at the date palm tree in the middle of the yard. It was bent towards the ground and it

did not move. He too, seemed sad and gloomy. It was clear from the vizier's answer that they had imprisoned the old man because of their hatred towards the leader of the Shias and claims of prophet-hood were only excuses. The Caliph and his vizier feared that if the people heard the story of the old man they too would become believers of Imam al-Javad (*as*). That was why they had sent the old man to prison. I spent one or two days looking for a solution but I came to no answer. It was as if the old man had to stay in jail until he was punished.

Finally, I decided to give the old man another visit to inform him about the Vizier's answer. As I was going, I remembered those fearful scenes; narrow passages, small dark rooms, chains clattering, prisoners moaning, and the sad old man, sitting in the prison all alone.

From a distance, I saw many soldiers running from one place to another. I went closer. They were all angry and distressed. I was amazed. I saw two guards running towards their commander, saying, "We searched everywhere...there is no trace of him!"

There was a great crowd around the great gate of the prison. I saw some guards talking in a corner. I went forward and asked, "What's happened?"

One of them moved his hands like two wings and said, "It's as if he has flown away."

The other guard said, "Maybe he has gone into the ground; like a drop of water!"

"Who are you talking about?" I asked, surprised.

"That old man from Damascus who was jailed here. No one knows how he has got out of prison."

I was happy all over. I wanted to scream and thank God. Everything was clear for me. Imam al-Javad (*as*) had come to help the old man. And this time too, he had taken him from one place to another, just like the old man had said. But this time, the old man wasn't saved alone; I considered myself saved too. Imam al-Javad (*as*) had helped me too and he had flown me from the land of darkness to the heavens of light and guidance. Now, I knew that he is the Imam and successor of the Prophet of God (*s*). I felt very light. I ran as fast as I could towards home to make mother happy too.

## *Amr Bil Maroof and Nahi Anil Munkar*<sup>1</sup> (*Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil*)

The propagation of good things and drying the swamp of bad things is possible with “*Amr Bil Maroof and Nahi Anil Munkar*”.

*Amr Bil Maroof* and *Nahi Anil Munkar* are signs of sensation and life in a society. Without them the society will die and the stench of sin will spread everywhere.

In a polluted environment, even healthy individuals will become sick. *Nahi Anil Munkar* is a protest to those who make the space of society polluted for healthy breathing. This protest is both the right of every person and their responsibility.

If everyone says, “What is it to me?” goodness will become faded in society and transgression and sin will increase.

A society in which there is no “public oversight” is a dead society. In an Islamic society, if the culture of *Amr Bil Maroof* and *Nahi Anil Munkar* is revived, the corrupt and people of sin and transgression will not feel free and comfortable, but will see the circumstances restricted for themselves.

If you are interested in your own well being, be in thought of the well being of society.

*Amr Bil Maroof* and *Nahi Anil Munkar* are the callings of a pure *fitrat* (innate nature). Let us not disregard this innate calling.

*Nahi Anil Munkar* is not the weapon of arrogant people for the breaking of the pride of others. Rather it is a calling to the divine *fitrat* of man and prevention from the pollution of society’s environment with corruption and sin.

Society is nothing but the union of “you” and “I”. If you and I are not thinking about the reform of it, then who else is responsible? **A manager and boss who is addicted to hearing flattery must be cured with the shot of “criticism”.**

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<sup>1</sup> Translator: Ali Mansoori

# *Al-Abbas*

## *The River of Endless Loyalty<sup>1</sup>*

Mahya Shamaï

**Abstract:** *no one can deny the fact that among the freedom seekers of the world none can be found equal to Imam al-Hussain and his companions. Among his companions, his brother, al-Abbas has a special place. A place no one can ignore regardless of being a Muslim, knowing about Islam or being familiar with the life of holy Imams (as). This article is dedicated to al-Abbas.*

**Keywords:** *al-Abbas, Hazrat Fatimah, Imam Al-Hussain, Imam Ali, Ashura, Karbala*

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<sup>1</sup> The following are the main sources used to compile this article:  
Shahin, Badr, *Al-Abbas*, Qum: Ansariyan Publications, 2001  
Syed, Akramulla, Islamic Occasions, 5 June 2007, 27 Aug. 2007  
<<http://www.ezsoftech.com/islamic/abbas1.asp>>.

A man once lived who possessed the might of Ali (*as*), the faith of al-Hussain (*as*), and all the blessings of Allah. He was known as *Qamare Bani-Hashem* (the moon of the Bani-Hashem progeny) because his bright and beautiful physical appearance dazzled like beams of moonlight. *Saqqa* (the one who brings water) was another one of his titles because he continuously sought to quench the thirst of Imam al-Hussain's family. He inherited all the elements of human perfection from his father, Imam Ali (*as*); his bravery, kindheartedness, faith, and clemency, made him the epitome of heavenly virtue. Even the most eloquent speakers are at a lack of words when trying to describe this towering personality. This man was Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*), the *Alam-dar* (flag-bearer) of Islam. Despite all of his other lofty merits, one of his traits glistens above all the others. Hazrat Abul-Fazl's endless loyalty and devotion have been etched in the hearts of Muslims worldwide.

In today's terror-stricken world, Muslims especially need to stand up proud and follow their faith whole-heartedly. At the same time, if every Muslim was able to devote him/herself to following the Ahlul Bayt (*as*), Islam would be represented at its best. This is a strenuous task and it is necessary to look towards a hero to inspire and uplift the hopes of Muslims. Hazrat Abbas (*as*) is the unblemished model of loyalty to one's faith and should be referred to by all Muslims, who need to follow in his footsteps in order to illuminate the world with Islam.

\* \* \*

When the beloved Hazrat Fatimah (*as*) passed away, sorrow pierced the blessed hearts of Imam Ali (*as*), Imam al-Hasan (*as*), and Imam al-Hussain (*as*). The sordid enemies of Islam had ruthlessly murdered the most preponderating woman of the religion, and taken Imam Ali's best friend and companion. Imam al-Hasan (*as*) and Imam al-Hussain (*as*) were robbed of their precious and adored mother, who instilled the strong love of

Allah in their souls. Though no one could replace Hazrat Fatimah (as), Imam Ali (as) needed a dedicated companion who would help care for his children. He found his perfect partner in a pious woman who we now know as Ummul Banin (Mother of the sons). Imam Ali's family were his precious jewels, thus he was very pleased with Ummul Banin who cared remarkably for his gems. She had such an inundated love for Imam al-Hasan (as) and Imam al-Hussain (as) that she asked Imam Ali (as) not to call her by her real name, Fatimah, so the children would not be reminded of their extraordinary mother.

Hence, they were nurtured by Ummul Banin's extreme kindness and compassion to the extent that some of their deep emotional lacerations were mitigated by her extreme sympathy. Astonishingly, she cared for Imam al-Hasan (as) and Imam al-Hussain (as) far more dedicatedly than for her own children. Never in history has it occurred for a woman to love her stepsons as sincerely as Ummul Banin. Her motivation was Allah; she knew that her Lord had bestowed her with this sacred duty, thus she attended their every need with the utmost affection. Furthermore, she was exceptionally loyal to her family, which Allah commanded most beautifully in the Quran:

*“Say: No reward do I ask of you for this, except the love of those near of kin.” (The holy Quran 42:23)*

This intense dedication and loyalty to family must be noted by Muslims today, whose families may not be very tightly knit. Family is of chief importance in Islam and is the foundation for receiving Allah's blessings. A strong sense of family will lead to a strong sense of community in Islam.

\* \* \*

When the blessed day came, Ummul Banin gave birth to a prodigious son who would be like a mighty lion in his defense of Islam. Imam Ali's face glowed with delight, completely aware that this was the son he was waiting for, the

brother who would stand by Imam al-Hussain (*as*) on the day of *Ashura*. Imam al-Hussain (*as*) embraced his baby brother in his arms, and recited the Azhan and Eqamah in his ears. The infant opened his eyes for the first time, and observed the gentle face of Imam al-Hussain (*as*) with its soft expression. Ever since that moment, he had a constant fire of burning love, blazing for his dearest brother, Imam al-Hussain (*as*).

From the time Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) was young, Imam Ali (*as*) educated him, desiring his son to preach Islam and forever pledge his allegiance to the Ahlul Bayt. Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) inherited his mother's fervent loyalty to Imam al-Hussain (*as*) and was ready to do absolutely anything for the Imam of his time. He not only realized that al-Hussain (*as*) was first and foremost the Imam, but he also happened to be his brother, making him even more obliged.

\* \* \*

*I*mam Ali (*as*) was training Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) to become a powerful and courageous warrior of Islam, both spiritually and physically. Allah had bestowed Imam Ali (*as*) the great gift of strength which won him many battles in the name of Islam and enabled him to defend the helpless. However, as he proclaimed when he broke the *Kheibar* gate, it was the power of his *iman* (faith) which had given him the strength. All of his potency and fighting techniques were inherited by Hazrat Abul-Fazl (*as*). At a mere 11 years old, he faced his first battle, which became known as the battle of Siffin. He never thought of himself as a champion in strength, he knew that in every way, Allah had given him the power to defend Islam. That power he dedicated to the will of Allah and the beloved Ahlul Bayt, specifically Imam al-Hussain (*as*). Consider that one of the most powerful warriors which shook the hearts of the strongest men in the land, knew himself as nothing more than a slave for Imam al-Hussain (*as*) and Islam at the peak of dedication. He always

addressed Imam al-Hussain (*as*) as *Mawla*, or Master, not once calling him by his name. Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) could have had a world of power and possessions, but he was so incredibly loyal to Islam that he was willing to sacrifice absolutely everything, including his own life, for his brother and his religious conviction.

When Imam Ali (*as*) was mortally wounded and lying at his deathbed, he summoned his entire family. He entrusted everyone except Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) to the care of his oldest son, Imam al-Hasan (*as*). Barely 12 years old, the excluded Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) was silently sobbing. Of course, the scrupulous Imam Ali (*as*) had not forgotten about his son and called for Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) to stand beside him. He put Hazrat al-Abbas' hand in Imam al-Hussain's and majestically said: "Hussain, this child I am entrusting to you. He will represent me on the day of your supreme sacrifice and will lay down his life in defending you and your dear ones". Roughly, 20 years later, Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) would be standing beside his brother on the scorching sands of Karbala.

\* \* \*

*I*mam al-Hussain (*as*) did everything in his power to avoid a violent encounter with Yazid, but being the ruthless person that he was, Yazid and his men committed the worst of all regicide. As Imam al-Hussain (*as*), accompanied by his companions, were leaving Medina, Shimr came to Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) and his brothers with a proposition. He urged them to join Yazid's army, where they would be cosseted from the myriad of soldiers which would attack Imam al-Hussain (*as*). Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*), firm in his allegiance to Imam al-Hussain (*as*), did not even consider it. His devotion and affection for Imam al-Hussain (*as*) and Islam were far too deep to be penetrated by the offers. The true reason for their offerings was the fear of facing his valor and might which had burrowed deep in their hearts. Their attempts were in vain as Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) sought

help from no one but Allah. All but 72 people had left Imam al-Hussain's side. Still, Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) was completely committed to his master and was not shaken by the 10,000 enemy troops which faced them. One by one, the men of the camp would leave for the last time, the only thing that returned were the badly beaten bodies of the martyrs. After each man was pronounced dead, Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) eagerly asked Imam al-Hussain (*as*) for permission to enter the battlefield, getting a negative answer each time. Allah had granted him the power to beat all of the enemies, but for his master's sake he was forced to be patient and contain his fervor despite the way they were being treated. Gradually, the sand dunes of the desert of Karbala became red from the blood of all who were being brutally killed. Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) approached Imam al-Hussain (*as*) and asked to go fight, but Imam al-Hussain (*as*) did not allow him to do this and once again, the lion was contained by its master.

The beastly Yazid blocked Imam al-Hussain's access to the river, which was the only source of water and nourishment in the desert of Karbala. Imam al-Hussain's children along with the others had parched and scorching throats. Their lips were splitting in the dry heat, which they had endured for days without water. Just then, little Sakinah, with the innocence of a four year old, approached her uncle holding the empty jug. "*Al Atash*," she said, "I am thirsty, oh my uncle Abbas." Hazrat al-Abbas' heart dropped as he felt the pain of his niece. He sat in front of Imam al-Hussain (*as*) with Sakinah on his lap. This time, Imam al-Hussain (*as*) could not deny him and he allowed Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) into the battlefield with the sole purpose of retrieving water for the dehydrated children. Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) mounted his horse with the water jug and the *alam* (flag), armed solely with a spear. Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*), the lone warrior against thousands of men, majestically entered the battlefield. As Yazid's men witnessed him coming, they scrambled to hide behind one another. The few brave ones who dared challenge al-Abbas were put to death by his spear.

Hazrat Abul-Fazl (*as*) reached the river and proceeded to fill the bag with water. When it was full, he strapped it on and was about to sip some of the precious water but hesitated, thinking about the children that were thirsty back at the camp. Though the arid desert sun had pounded on his head and made him exceedingly thirsty, he threw the water back. While the *Saqqa* (he who gives water) was returning to the tents, one of Yazid's men hid in a tree and as Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) passed by him, he struck his right arm so hard that it was severed and fell to the ground. Hazrat Abul-Fazl (*as*) knew his mission and continued, holding the *alam* and the jug of precious water in his other hand, until someone crept behind him and severed his other arm. The *alam* fell to the ground, but Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) grabbed the jug with his teeth, determined to get the water to his niece. An arrow was shot straight into the jug and Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) watched the precious diamonds spill out of his treasure chest. He was ashamed to face little Sakinah and summoned his horse to turn the other way.

Yazid's men enclosed him from all sides and he fell from his horse saying, "My salutations to you, *Maula* (master)." Hearing his voice, Imam al-Hussain (*as*) lost all energy and dragged towards his brother. Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) then felt the affectionate touch of his master's hand. Barely breathing, he asked a few favors of his master. One of his eyes was shot with an arrow and the other was covered in blood, so he asked Imam al-Hussain (*as*) to wipe the blood away from his eye. Since he had come into the world seeing Imam al-Hussain's face, he wanted to leave the world while looking at his brother. Next, he asked Imam al-Hussain (*as*) not to carry his body back to the camp because he felt ashamed in front of Sakinah and would not be able to face her, even in death. Also, he comprehended the fact that Imam al-Hussain's body was battered from the fighting and it would be difficult for him to carry his weight. He asked that Sakinah not be brought to see his body because her affection and devotion to her uncle would break her heart to see him in that condition. Imam al-Hussain (*as*), in a flood of tears, asked Hazrat

al-Abbas (*as*) for a favor as well. Ever since childhood he had called Imam al-Hussain (*as*) *Master* and now with his last breath, Imam al-Hussain (*as*) wished to hear him be called “brother”. Alas, Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) proclaimed “My brother!” with his last breath, and his soul was freed. The sacred hero was martyred at age 35, with more valor than that of the 10,000 combined enemy personnel.

\* \* \*

The story of the Moon of the Hashimites is more than just a heart-rending tale of tremendous dedication; it teaches every Muslim a number of very important lessons, which can strengthen the entire community. Firstly, it depicts the magnitude of family, which is of very high rank in Islam. Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) was the pinnacle of family affection, and sacrificed his life for the very kin which were so dear to him. If Muslims today were devoted to their families, they would flourish in the sight of Allah and the world. Since Islam is so wrongly depicted, people need to see how involved and successful Islam is in creating such harmonious family relationships. Once families are living in peace, society will be safe and at ease. Most problems stem from early family problems, therefore, children will be inculcated with a strong sense of family, which would be passed to the next generation as well. The simple idea of family devotion as Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*) portrayed, would better the world in the name of Islam, creating a society which fosters love and peace.

Hazrat al-Abbas’ loyalty to his faith and Imam helped revive Islam in all of its purity; the same Islam that Allah had presented to Prophet Muhammad. In today’s world, the enemies of Islam are striving more than ever to destroy the religion and to lead Muslims astray. It is the duty of every follower to be loyal to Islam and stand up proud and united, to shield and pursue this religion in its entirety. In addition, Muslims need to be loyal to the Ahlul Bayt (*as*), who had so much love for us that they

sacrificed a great deal in order to make sure we are presented with a true Islam. They were the shining role models who paved the way for their followers to stay proud and feel their support. Furthermore, it is vital for Muslims to be firm in allegiance to the Imam of their time, Imam Mahdi (*as*). Our loyalty to him should be deep enough to resemble Hazrat al-Abbas' passionate reliability to Imam al-Hussain (*as*). In today's developing world, there are many Yazid's but few Abbas' who can save Islam from the enemies. Now, all pressure is on Muslims to decide whether they will join the abundant forces of Yazid, or the pious companions of Hazrat al-Abbas (*as*).

*A Time for Thinking*  
*Fear of Committing Sins*

*Imam Ali (as) said: “Be fearful of nothing but your sin[s]”<sup>1</sup>*

Sins will not leave the sinner alone; They are always with him.  
When the world is conquered by justice,  
Sinners and oppressors will be trapped,  
Oppression will overcome the oppressor itself.  
Then will come the time for punishment, for judgment, and for  
receiving whatever you have done!  
Sins, one by one, if not erased by a sincere repentance, will turn  
into “a mountain of sins”,  
which will be very hard to displace or eradicate,  
A burden,  
which our weak and trembling shoulders can never carry.  
Every sin is like a drop, helping to create a “sea of sins” ,  
drowning the sinner in its waves.  
Our most feared enemy is our sins and even if we escape their  
results and their disgracing effects in this world, there is no  
getaway tomorrow, in the “Hereafter”.

“Repentance” is a way to eradicate our “sins”.  
Let's repent while we still have the opportunity to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul-Wahid ibn Muhammad al-Tamimi, *Ghorar al-Hikam Va Durar al-Kilam*,  
p. 192

## *Book Introduction*

# *Kamal Al-Din Va Tamam Al-Nimah<sup>1</sup>*

**Introduction:** Amongst the books of Hadith that have been passed down to us throughout the centuries, less is well-known like “Kamal al-Din va Tamam al-Nimah”. In this book –which presents the Shia's perspective about Imam Mahdi's (as) occultation and longevity- many related subjects have been mentioned in a special order and proof of each claim has been put forward using narrations and sound reasoning.

The author of the book is “the elder of the learned scholars (Sheikh al-fuqaha)” and “the leader of Shia narrators (ra'is al-muhaddesin)”, Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hussein ibn babvayh al-Qumi (d. 381 AH / 991 AD), known as: “Sheikh al-Saduq”.

In this article, we will briefly introduce “Sheikh al-Saduq” and his book “Perfection of religion and completion of blessings” (Kamal al-Din va Tamam al-Nimah).

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<sup>1</sup>Book introduction from Dr.Mansour Pahlavan  
Translator: Somayeh Alehousseini

### *The Author*

Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hussein ibn Babvayh al-Qumi, known as “Sheikh al-Saduq” was the elder of the scholars of Rey<sup>1</sup> and the leader of Khorasan's<sup>2</sup> Shia's. Al-Tusi in his book “al-Estebzar”, has referred to him by the title “Imad al-Din (The pillar of religion)”. Ibn Idris has remembered him as “al-Saduq (the truthful)”. Khatib al-Baghdadi has remembered him with honor and Dhahaby (a prominent Sunni scholar) has mentioned him as “the leader of the Imamiah” and Ibn Shahr Ashoob and al-Helli have praised him much.

According to Sayyed ibn Tavoos, there is a consensus among Shia clerics on his justice and he has been called “the charitable and blessed scholar” by Imam Mahdi (*as*). He was born in 305 AH / 917 AD in the city of Qom following prayers made by Imam Mahdi (*as*).

He was a pupil of prominent scholars like: his father - Hussein bin Ali bin Babvayh (d. 329 AH / 941 AD), Muhammad ibn Huseinn ibn Ahmad ibn al-Walid, Muhammad bin Ali Majiluye and Ahmad Ibn Ali Ibn Ibrahim al-Qumi. He became famous among Qum Scholars for his talent and genius in learning knowledge. He left Qom for “Rey” which in those times was the capital of the Buwayyids (*Ale Buyeh*). Once he settled there he attended the school of scholars like Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Saqr al-Sa'igh and Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Ishaq al-Taleqani.

In 352 AH / 963 AD, al-Saduq went to Mashhad with the permission of Rokn al-Dowlah the lord of the Buwayyids and at the same time learned many narrations from the scholars of Neishabour (a city close to Mashhad). He then returned to Rey

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<sup>1</sup> A place located at the south of Tehran, Iran.

<sup>2</sup> One of Iran's provinces which neighbors Afghanistan. Imam al-Ridha's tomb is also located in this province.

and set off for the Hajj pilgrimage near the end of the year 353 AH / 964 AD. On his return Journey he traveled to Iraq and met with its leading scholars. It was in this Journey that he gave al-Mufid (d. 412 AH / 1021 AD) “permission for narration (ijazah)”.

In Baghdad, al-Saduq had scientific and theological debates with the scholars of other religions. Najashi says: “Despite his young age, (Iraq’s) prominent scholars learned hadith from him.”

In one of his journeys, Al-Saduq met a scholar in Ilaq which is in southeastern Uzbekistan. The scholar was called: ‘Sharif Mohammed Bin Hassan al-avi’ known as “Ne'mah”. It was because of this meeting that al-Saduq wrote his famous book, “He who has no access to a scholar” (*man la yahdharohu al-faqih*).<sup>1</sup>

On returning from Ilaq, he settled in Neishabour and continued promoting Shia beliefs. Writing “Kamal al-Din” happened during this same time. In the introduction of the book he expresses his willingness to return to Rey. After returning to Rey he stayed there till the end of his life in 381 AH / 991 AD. Today, his tomb receives great attention from Shi’s who visit it.

He has written more than three hundred books and booklets of which some have reached us and others have perished in the pages of time.

Some of these works are dialectics (*kalami*), such as: *Itiqadat* (Beliefs) and *Ibtal al-laghv va al-Taghsir*, some parts of *al-Amali* which are his debates with the followers of other religions in the presence of Rokn al-Dollah. His other works have to do with *fiqh*, the most comprehensive being: “He who has no access to a scholar” (*Man la yahdharohu al-faqih*) which consists

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Saduq, *Man la yahdharohu al-faqih*, vol. 1, p. 2

of narrations with the chain of narrators omitted (The scholars of Qom used this method when issuing a verdict (fatwa)).

### *The Book*

“Perfection of religion and completion of blessings” (*Kamal al-din va tamam al-Ni'mah*) is the book al-Saduq wrote near the ends of his life.

The book has been written in Nishabour<sup>1</sup>, which was one of the large Islamic cities of those times. Its population was estimated to be more than one million people. In those days, many of the people who visited al-Saduq expressed their surprise about the occultation of Imam Mahdi (*as*) and had doubts and questions about this matter. Al-Saduq did his best to guide them and restore them to the right path using the Quran and the Sayings of the Ahlul-Bayt (*as*)<sup>2</sup>. This situation continued until he met Sheikh Najm al-Din Saeed Mohammed bin Hassan bin Mohammad bin Ahmad bin Ali bin Salt al-Qumi. Sheikh Najm al-Din had lived in Bukhara for a while and there, under the influence of the speeches of one of its dialecticians and philosophers, he had become doubtful about Imam Mahdi's (*as*) occultation. To Prove Imam Mahdi's (*as*) presence and his occultation, al-Saduq made many elaborate discussions and brought forward many narrations from the Prophet (*as*) and the Imams (*as*). When Sheikh Najm al-Din's doubts turned to certainty and he became convinced, he asked al-Saduq to compile a book with the same topic. Al-Saduq promised him that if God provided him with the chance to return to his hometown “Rey”, he would write such a book<sup>3</sup>.

Some nights later, al-Saduq sees Imam Mahdi (*as*) in a dream while he himself is performing *tawaf* (the circling ritual

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Saduq, *Kamal al-din va tamam al-ni'mah*, vol. 1, p. 2

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 3

around Kaba). The Imam (*as*) says to him “Why don't you write a book about the occultation ... and (also) mention in it the occultation of the Prophets”. He woke up crying and started writing the book the same morning<sup>1</sup>.

### The Books subjects

The book consists of a relatively long introduction and fifty-five chapters. The introduction, which is considered by some as the first chapter, takes up about one-fifth of the book by itself and includes reasoning on the correctness of the Shia belief about Imam Mahdi (*as*), and answers the questions and doubts raised by the Zaidiyyah, Ismailiah and other sects that don't believe in the twelve Imams. The introduction shows that al-Saduq is not only unique in the field of Hadiths and narration, but also unique in dialectical reasoning and Hadith meanings (*derayah*). At the end of this introduction, he argues that, because in our time the Zaydiah are showing fierce enmity towards the Twelver Shia, I made the most comprehensive reasoning to answer them, so that those who are looking for the truth can use these reasons<sup>2</sup>.

The first chapter after the introduction begins with the occultation of the Prophet Idris (*as*) and then refers to the occultation of Noah, Saleh, Ibrahim, Yousof, and then Moses (*as*). After that, he mentions the occultation of those *Hujjaj* (proofs) who were between the time of Moses and Jesus (*as*). He then brings forward narrations that show the glad tidings of Jesus about the Prophet Muhammad (*as*). He then goes on to explain why people need an Imam. One of the long chapters of his book is called:

“The connectedness of the wills (*vasi'yah*) (of the Prophets) starting from Adam (*as*) and that earth will not become

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 4

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 126

empty of a proof from God (hujjat Allah) until the Day of Rising”.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of this chapter there is a discussion about the meanings of *Etrah*, *Al* and *Ahl*.

The other chapters of the book are dedicated to proving the twelfth Imam (*as*). The ending chapters speak about the rewards and virtues of those who await the Imam's appearance, and some other issues.

### *Why such a title was selected for the book*

The title of the book -“Perfection of religion and completion of blessings” (*Kamal al-din va tamam al-Ni'mah*)- is based on the verse of the Holy Quran which states:

*“Today, I have perfected your religion and completed my blessings for you. And I am satisfied with Islam as your religion.” (The holy Quran 5:3)*

Islamic commentators have mentioned that this verse was revealed at Ghadir Khum and after the appointment of Ali ibn Abi-Talib (*as*) as the successor of the Prophet (*as*). Tabari quotes Abu-Saeed al-Khidri as saying: “When this verse was revealed the Prophet (*as*) said: ‘God is Great [for] perfecting the religion and completing the blessings and being satisfied by my mission and the *Wilayah* (successor-ship) of Ali ibn Abi-Talib (*as*) after me.’ He also said: ‘He who I had authority over, now Ali has authority over them. O' God, love everyone who loves him and be enemy with everyone who is his enemy and let down all who let him down.’”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 211

<sup>2</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Majma Al-Bayan*, vol. 3, p. 246

Since the perfection of religion is based on the *Imamah* (leadership) of Ali (*as*) and the perfection of leadership is dependent on the presence of the twelfth Imam (*as*), al-Saduq chose this name for his precious book: "Perfection of religion and completion of blessings".

### *The value and credibility of the book*

This book has been compiled with regard to one of the brightest and most original ideals and promises of the Divine Prophets. All the divine religions have promised a bright future for the world and foretold the coming of a savior. Not only divine religions but also other schools of thought have mentioned "Utopia" and the world being ruled by a righteous government. The Holy Quran has spoken of this bright future in over one hundred and twenty verses and has explicitly promised the governance of the faithful, and a religious establishment in which fear will be turned into security and only God will be worshipped<sup>1</sup>. God has also mentioned in The Torah and Psalms that the righteous people shall inherit the earth<sup>2</sup>. And that God's religion shall prevail over all false religions<sup>3</sup>, and that those who have been oppressed on the earth will become the leaders and inheritors<sup>4</sup>.

The explanations and tafsirs of these verses have been put forward in the narrations of the Holy Prophet (*s*) and the Imams (*as*) sayings. They have also described the characteristics of the savior who will come and take mankind to salvation.

Al-Saduq (*May God bestow him with his mercies*) mentions this original belief of the Shia in this book. The authenticity of such a belief is just like the authenticity of all divine scriptures, Quranic

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<sup>1</sup> Quran 24:55

<sup>2</sup> Quran 21:105

<sup>3</sup> Quran 9:33

<sup>4</sup> Quran 28:5

verses and the Imam's narrations. He who denies this belief, has denied the divine prophets and the Imams (*as*).

Another reason that gives this book such stature and value is the dignity, justice and credibility of its author. Al-Saduq is probably the most prominent and honorable scholar of the Islamic world. Shia scholars regard his and his father's sayings as authentic narrations and regard him to be as reliable as Salman and Abudhar. A large group of Shia scholars, like Al-Helli and Shahid al-Avval believe that the narrations he mentions without the chain of narrators, are condemned to be correct.

Many prominent Shia scholars have shown great respect toward this book and have used many of its narrations in their books. Al-Majlesi refers to al-Saduq's books at the top of his list of references; Feiz al-Kashani praised this book and used it to compile his invaluable book *Navadir al-akhbar* (Rare News). Hor al-Ameli in *ithabt al-hoda* and al-Nuri in *Kashf al-astar* and *al-najm al-thaqib*, are just some of the great scholars that have referred to this book in their writings.

Another part of the book includes the stories of those people who have lived a very long life and also has quotes from the sayings of people other than the infallibles. This is historically valuable because an honest and informant narrator like al-Saduq has provided us with information and events that happened more than a thousand years ago in large cities like Iraq, Hejaz, Rey, Hamadan, Neyshabour and Faghaneh. He has also gathered the narrations of the Ahlul Bayt which were dispersed far and wide amongst the scholars of these cities. In fact, if al-Saduq hadn't mentioned these traditions in his book, we would have been deprived of many of them today.

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